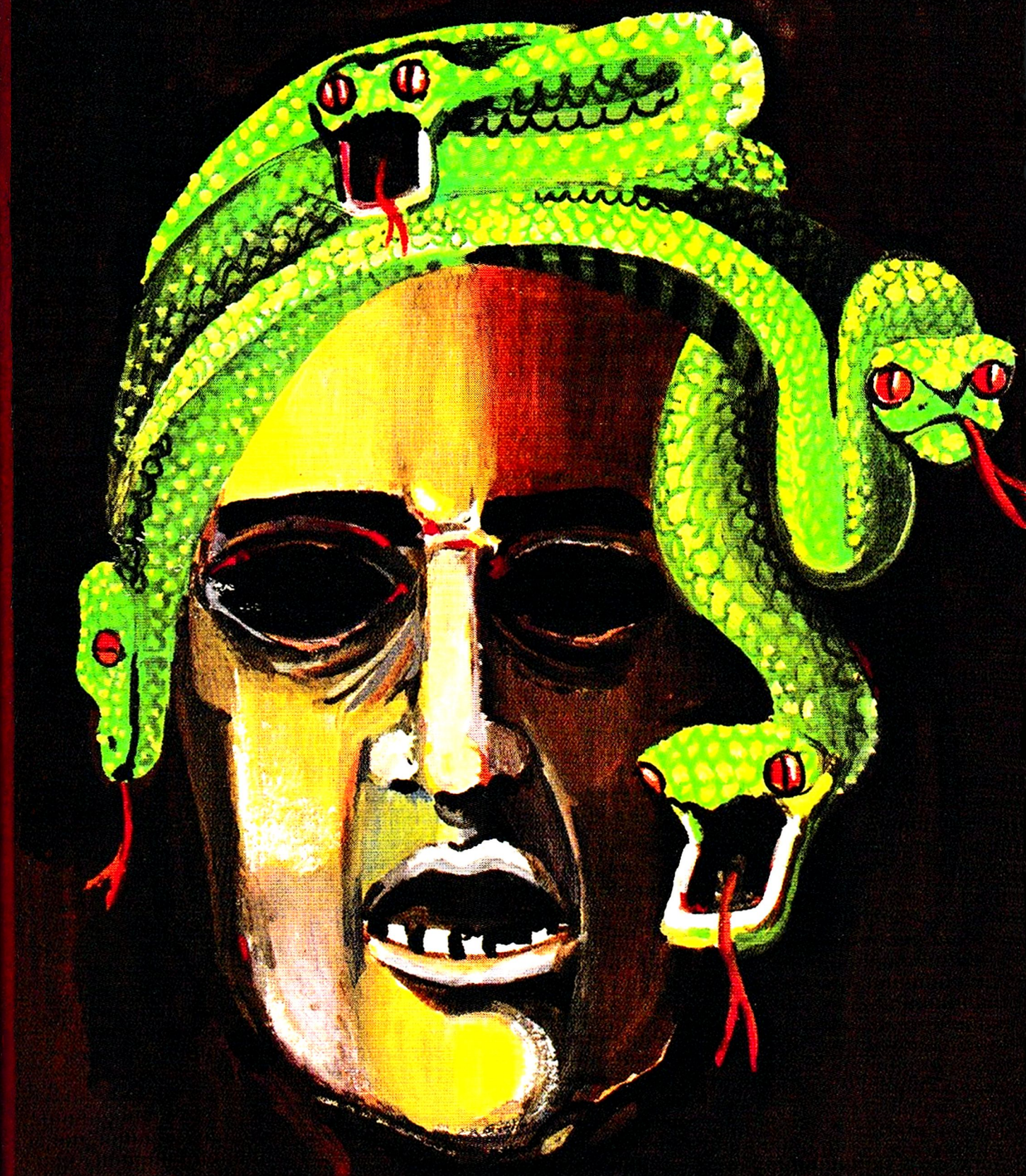
The Rivals of Frankenstein

A GALLERY OF MONSTERS

edited by Michel Parry



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THE RIVALS OF FRANKENSTEIN

An *un*rivalled collection of monster stories to get to grips with!

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A Gallery of Monsters

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Contents

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Respectfully dedicated to the memory of

BORIS KARLOFF (1887–1969)

'I busied myself to think of a story – a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror – one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart. If I did not accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name.'

Mary Shelley on Frankenstein (1831).

INTRODUCTION

In the Footsteps of Frankenstein

'Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil, as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave, or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble and my eyes swim with the remembrance: but then a restless, and almost frantic, impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit ... I collected bones from charnel houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and a staircase. I kept my workshop of filthy creation: my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.'

The author of these grim confessions is the eminent Swiss scientist of the 18th Century, Victor Frankenstein, and the work to which he refers is the ancient art of making monsters ... In all fairness to Frankenstein though, it must be said that monster-making wasn't quite what he had in mind when he first embarked on his now-notorious experiments in cell-reanimation. By delving with his scalpel into the innermost secrets of Life, he had hoped to create a perfect man, a being of superior beauty and intellect. As readers of *Frankenstein*, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's famous 1816 biography will recall however, the end product of Frankenstein's experiments proved to be a *monstrous* disappointment—

'How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.'

In horror fiction and films, stories about scientists (usually mad as hatters) who spend their days locked in the basement, piecing together monsters from just about anything that comes to hand, are second in popularity only to vampire stories. Interestingly, both kinds of story are concerned in one way or another with immortality. The vampire becomes immortal when he joins the ranks of the undead – as long as he receives his daily dose of blood and escapes the good guys he can expect to live forever. The mad scientist, on the other hand, imposes an external immortality on others by reanimating the corpses of the dead. Quite often the body he builds or resurrects is intended as the eventual receptacle of his own brain in a bid for *personal* immortality. The principal difference between the two approaches seems to be that the vampire looks to the Devil for encouragement whilst the mad scientist takes his inspiration from God.

It is one of the great traditions of horror stories that those who play at God invariably come to a sticky end. Frankenstein was no exception. So horrified was he at the sight of his newly-awakened creation – *'No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that*

wretch' – that he fled wildly into the night. Bitterly resentful at having been deserted in this manner by his creator/father, the unhappy monster spent the remainder of his unnatural existence in revenging himself on Frankenstein, killing off his friends and loved ones one by one... Frankenstein died a broken man, regretting his foolhardy incursions into areas of forbidden knowledge.

As will be seen from the eleven stories in this book, the fate of Frankenstein did little to deter others from following in his pioneering footsteps. Nor have these Rivals of Frankenstein been any more fortunate – few of them have escaped a similar fate or worse.

Frankenstein was not, of course, the first man to dream of bestowing life on inanimate matter. Greek and Roman myths abound with stories of artificial men, the metal giant Talus for one, whilst the alchemist-magicians of the Middle Ages were also attracted to the idea. No doubt Frankenstein was familiar with the 16th Century legend of the Golem, the man of clay brought to life by Rabbi Loew of Prague to protect the Jews from persecution. Like many another artificially-created man, the Golem proved to have a mind of his own and went on a rampage of destruction before finally being restored to harmless clay.

From Mary Shelley we know that Victor Frankenstein was a keen student of such alchemist-philosophers as Phillippus Paracelsus and Albertus Magnus. One wonders if he was also familiar with the work of the alchemist Nathaire whose grisly achievements are chronicled in the first story in this book, *The Colossus of Ylourgne* by Clark Ashton Smith. By a particularly unpleasant process involving the distillation of corpses, Nathaire was able to construct a gigantic being whose size rivalled that of King Kong. Like the well-known ape, Nathaire's creation displayed a similar anti-social enthusiasm for smashing down buildings and treading on people.

More modest but equally gruesome experiments with the dead are described in *Herbert West – Reanimator*, a novelette by a friend and contemporary of Clark Ashton Smith, the great American horror writer, H. P. Lovecraft. This story was written by Lovecraft before he developed his now famous Cthulhu Mythos; it was in fact his first pro-

fessionally-sold story. Very much a man after Frankenstein's own heart (or anyone else's for that matter) Herbert West was such an industrious experimenter that he ended up with not just one monster on his hands but a whole crowd of them . . .

These days the popular image of a Frankenstein monster – bolts in his neck, square-headed with a high, scarred forehead and corpse-gray complexion, about seven feet tall in his outsize boots – derives less from Mary Shelley's classic than from the numerous films more or less inspired by the book (a list of over eighty films in which the Frankenstein Monster has appeared may be found at the back of this collection). Without doubt the best and most influential of these films were the first three made by Universal Pictures in the thirties: FRANKENSTEIN, THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE SON OF FRANKENSTEIN. It was in these three films that such requisite elements of the Frankenstein canon as hunchbacked assistants, brooding castles and torch-waving mobs were first introduced – surprisingly, Mary Shelley omitted to mention these vital ingredients in her otherwise exhaustive biography. The Monster in all three of the early Universal films was played by an English actor known as Boris Karloff. His performance, which skillfully balanced menace with pathos, has never been surpassed.

Since Karloff hung up his monster boots, Frankenstein films have, with a few honourable exceptions, become further and further removed from the original conception. They have, in a sense, developed a life of their own. Like its close relative the vampire film, the Frankenstein film usually adheres fairly strictly to its distinctive and instantly recognizable set of clichés and conventions. In his contribution to *The Rivals of Frankenstein*, *Dr. Karnstein's Creation*, Donald F. Glut makes entertaining use of these conventions yet still succeeds in coming up with a novel twist to a well-worn theme. Don Glut's obvious close familiarity with the creaking machinations of Frankenstein plots is hardly surprising since he is probably the world's foremost authority on all things Frankensteinian. He is the author of *The Frankenstein Legend*, a painstakingly thorough examination of the Frankenstein theme as treated in films, theatre, television, comics and, of course, literature. In addition, he has also written a

series of eleven popular novels known collectively as 'The New Adventures of Frankenstein'. Sample titles include *Frankenstein Lives Again*, *The Return of Frankenstein* and *Frankenstein Meets Dracula*. Don's current project is a monumental *Frankenstein Bibliography* listing every manifestation of Frankenstein and his creature in the popular media.

Another writer with a more than casual interest in *Frankenstein* is Arnold Harvey, who has contributed a further Rival in the shape of *The Last of the Daubeny-FitzAlans*. A history lecturer at a leading English university, Mr. Harvey is the author of several scholarly articles on Mary Shelley's book and has made a particular study of another Gothic classic, *The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, written by Mary Shelley's father, the Utopian philosopher, William Godwin.

So far our Rivals have contented themselves with the creation of flesh and blood monsters, assembled from graveyard pickings and other organic matter. But there exists a related branch of Frankenstein activity devoted to the construction of artificial men from non-organic substances, principally metal. Albertus Magnus, the alchemist whose writings were much admired by Victor Frankenstein, claimed to have created an intelligent man of bronze, whilst Friar Roger Bacon, the 13th Century 'doctor mirabilis', was said to possess a living head of bronze gifted with oracular powers. Once known as 'automatons', such devices are better known today as *robots*.

At one time it was almost compulsory for anyone who considered himself fashionable to share his home with one or two automatons for the entertainment of his visitors. Erzebet Bathory, the 17th Century Hungarian countess whose other eccentricities included bathing in the blood of virgin girls, is reported to have owned an automaton in the shape of a beautiful woman. This eye-catching piece of machinery would advance on male guests with arms spread, offering an embrace. Once the lifelike but coldly metallic arms had wound tightly round the amused guest, metal spikes would shoot out from the inside of the automaton's breasts, transfixing its victim. Since the advent of television, such inventiveness has regrettably died out, even in Hungary.

A good many stories have been written about automatons. One of them, *The Sandman* by the German writer E. T. A. Hoffman, was published in an English translation in 1816, whilst Mary Shelley was working on *Frankenstein*, and may conceivably have influenced her. The story concerns a mechanical girl named Olympia, so beautiful that men fall hopelessly in love with her. Perhaps the German film director Fritz Lang had the story in mind when he created the screen's most alluring female automaton, the robot Maria in the silent science-fiction classic, METROPOLIS.

Moxon's Master by the sardonic American humorist Ambrose Bierce describes an attempt by engineer Moxon to build a mechanical chess-player. The story first saw publication in book form in 1893, long after Mary Shelley's death. It would certainly have appealed to her had she had an opportunity to read it – she had been fascinated by a real chess-playing automaton built by the Viennese mechanic, de Kempelen. This same automaton supposedly once played the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria at chess – and won.

As the title suggests, *The Dancing Partner* by Jerome Klapka Jerome involves another gifted automaton. The idea of a mechanical dancing partner had previously been explored by E. T. A. Hoffman in his 1812 story *Automatons*; Jerome's treatment is the more powerful of the two. This tale of a mechanical man who literally sweeps a young girl off her feet is surprisingly grim for the author of the humorous classic, *Three Men in a Boat*.

There can be few people who have not dreamed of being waited on hand and foot by servants, and looked forward to the day, so often prophesied by science writers, when domestic robots will be available to take the drudgery out of life. Let's hope that these useful home-helps don't turn out to be anything like the mechanical *golems* in *Count Szolnok's Robots*, a chilling variation on *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by David Scott-Moncrieff. The trouble with do-gooders, robotic or otherwise, is that they seldom know when to *stop* being helpful. They can so easily get carried away. Just as poor Count Szolnok does in this nightmarish story.

Robert Bloch is a writer who requires no introduction to regular readers of horror stories. Since he began his literary career as a teenage protégé of H. P. Lovecraft, Mr. Bloch has

built scary stories around just about every subject imaginable (and not a few *un*imaginable!). In *Almost Human* he makes the worthwhile observation that while a robot or automaton may be created in the image of a full-grown man, his mind is likely to be closer to that of a new-born child: an empty blackboard waiting to be written on. Viewed in this way the Frankenstein monster and his robot counterpart in *Almost Human*, the aptly-named Junior, become mirrors of man's own shortcomings. If, in the end, these impressionable beings turn out to be murderous fiends, it is only because they reflect the aggression of the human beings around them.

Bob Bloch's insight into the child-like impressionability of the Frankenstein monster and his kin reminded me of a remark made by Boris Karloff when I interviewed him for an American magazine back in 1966 (appropriately, the magazine was called *Castle of Frankenstein*). The grand old actor – if all monsters were as amiable as Mr. Karloff was in real life, we would have little to be afraid of – mentioned that each time one of his Frankenstein films was re-run on television, he received hundreds of letters from children, telling him how much they sympathized with the Monster ... No doubt they enjoy imagining how much more mischief they could get away with if they had the Monster's size and strength. Ever tried putting a seven-foot monster across your knee and spanking him?

The primal innocence of monsters is also touched upon in *Pithecanthropus Rejectus* by another veteran writer of fantasy and the macabre, Manly Wade Wellman. Mr. Wellman convincingly suggests that even mad scientists are more likely to use live 'dumb' animals such as chimps and apes in their unorthodox, nature-taunting experiments than they are human beings. In this instance the results bring to mind the highly successful *Planet of the Apes* series of films. Of all the stories in this collection I think *Pithecanthropus Rejectus* probably comes closest to equalling the depth of pathos in Mary Shelley's book.

The late Eando (real name Otto) Binder, author of *Iron Man*, is best known for his popular series of stories about a robot with human emotions named Adam Link. Like his friend Manly Wade Wellman, Binder was also fascinated by

the element of pathos in *Frankenstein.* In an interview quoted in *The Frankenstein Legend,* he told Don Glut: 'Adam Link was directly inspired by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein.* As I recall, I was just thinking about it and suddenly had an 'inspiration'. Why not substitute a robot for an organic graveyard monster? It should therefore have all the drama and pathos of the famous classic.' *Iron Man* is not an Adam Link story although it does involve a robot. A somewhat unusual robot since no-one took the trouble to build him – he's a perfect example of a self-made man.

Finally there is Fritz Leiber's *The Dead Man,* which has recognizable echoes of Edgar Allan Poe's well-known tale of *The Facts in the Case of Monsieur Valdemar.* This is a paradoxical story in that it concerns an attempt to bring a man back from the dead who may not actually have been dead to begin with. Some readers may remember seeing this story dramatized for television as part of Rod Serling's *Night Gallery* series.

In closing it seems fitting to return to the man whose pioneering endeavours in the name of Science have made this book possible. Victor Frankenstein himself once declared: 'The raising of ghosts or devils was a promise liberally accorded by my favourite authors.' Such being the case, I like to think that Frankenstein would have enjoyed reading this collection of stories about his Rivals. Imitation, after all, *is* generally regarded to be the sincerest form of flattery.

Michel Parry

THE COLOSSUS OF YLOURGNE

by Clark Ashton Smith

I. *The Flight of the Necromancer*

THE thrice-infamous Nathaire, alchemist, astrologer and necromancer, with his ten devil-given pupils, had departed very suddenly and under circumstances of strict secrecy from the town of Vyones. It was widely thought, among the people of that vicinage, that his departure had been prompted by a salutary fear of ecclesiastical thumbscrews and fagots. Other wizards, less notorious than he, had already gone to the stake during a year of unusual inquisitory zeal; and it was well-known that Nathaire had incurred the reprobation of the Church. Few, therefore, considered the reason of his going a mystery; but the means of transit which he had employed, as well as the destination of the sorcerer and his pupils, were regarded as more than problematic.

A thousand dark and superstitious rumors were abroad; and passers made the sign of the Cross when they neared the tall, gloomy house which Nathaire had built in blasphemous proximity to the great cathedral and had filled with a furniture of Satanic luxury and strangeness. Two daring thieves, who had entered the mansion when the fact of its desertion became well established, reported that much of this furniture, as well as the books and other paraphernalia of Nathaire, had seemingly departed with its owner, doubtless to the same fiery bourn. This served to augment the unholy mystery: for it was patently impossible that Nathaire and his ten apprentices, with several cart-loads of household belongings, could have passed the ever-guarded city gates in any legitimate manner without the knowledge of the custodians.

It was said by the more devout and religious moiety that

the Archfiend, with a legion of bat-winged assistants, had borne them away bodily at moonless midnight. There were clerics, and also reputable burghers, who professed to have seen the flight of dark, man-like shapes upon the blotted stars together with others that were not men, and to have heard the wailing cries of the hell-bound crew as they passed in an evil cloud over the roofs and city walls.

Others believed that the sorcerers had transported themselves from Vyones through their own diabolic arts, and had withdrawn to some unfrequented fastness where Nathaire, who had long been in feeble health, could hope to die in such peace and serenity as might be enjoyed by one who stood between the flames of the *auto-da-fe* and those of Abaddon. It was thought that he had lately cast his own horoscope, for the first time in his fifty-odd years, and had read therein an impending conjunction of disastrous planets, signifying early death.

Others still, among whom were certain rival astrologers and enchanters, said that Nathaire had retired from the public view merely that he might commune without interruption with various coadjutive demons; and thus might weave, unmolested, the black spells of a supreme and lycanthropic malice. These spells, they hinted, would in due time be visited upon Vyones and perhaps upon the entire region of Averoigne; and would no doubt take the form of a fearsome pestilence, or a wholesale invultuation, or a realm-wide incursion of succubi and incubi.

Amid the seething of strange rumors, many half-forgotten tales were recalled, and new legends were created overnight. Much was made of the obscure nativity of Nathaire and his dubitable wanderings before he had settled, six years previous, in Vyones. People said that he was fiend-begotten, like the fabled Merlin: his father being no less a personage than Alastor, demon of revenge; and his mother a deformed and dwarfish sorceress. From the former, he had taken his spitefulness and malignity; from the latter, his squat, puny physique.

He had travelled in Orient lands, and had learned from Egyptian or Saracenic masters the unhallowed art of necromancy, in whose practise he was unrivalled. There were black whispers anent the use he had made of long-dead

bodies, of fleshless bones, and the service he had wrung from buried men that the angel of doom alone could lawfully raise up. He had never been popular, though many had sought his advice and assistance in the furthering of their own more or less dubious affairs. Once, in the third year after his coming to Vyones, he had been stoned in public because of his bruited necromancies, and had been permanently lamed by a well-directed cobble. This injury, it was thought, he had never forgiven; and he was said to return the antagonism of the clergy with the hellish hatred of an Antichrist.

Apart from the sorcerous evils and abuses of which he was commonly suspected, he had long been looked upon as a corrupter of youth. Despite his minikin stature, his deformity and ugliness, he possessed a remarkable power, a mesmeric persuasion; and his pupils, whom he was said to have plunged into bottomless and ghoulish iniquities, were young men of the most brilliant promise. On the whole, his vanishment was regarded as a quite providential riddance.

Among the people of the city there was one man who took no part in the sombre gossip and lurid speculation. This man was Gaspard du Nord, himself a student of the proscribed sciences, who had been numbered for a year among the pupils of Nathaire but had chosen to withdraw quietly from the master's household after learning the enormities that would attend his further initiation. He had, however, taken with him much rare and peculiar knowledge, together with a certain insight into the baleful powers and night-dark motives of the necromancer.

Because of this knowledge and insight, Gaspard preferred to remain silent when he heard of Nathaire's departure. Also, he did not think it well to revive the memory of his own past pupilage. Alone with his books, in a sparsely furnished attic, he frowned above a small, oblong mirror, framed with an arabesque of golden vipers, that had once been the property of Nathaire.

It was not the reflection of his own comely and youthful though subtly lined face that caused him to frown. Indeed, the mirror was of another kind than that which reflects the features of the gazer. In its depths, for a few instants, he had

beheld a strange and ominous-looking scene, whose participants were known to him but whose location he could not recognize or orientate. Before he could study it closely, the mirror had clouded as if with the rising of alchemic fumes, and he had seen no more.

This clouding, he reflected, could mean only one thing: Nathaire had known himself watched and had put forth a counter-spell that rendered the clairvoyant mirror useless. It was the realization of this fact, together with the brief, sinister glimpse of Nathaire's present activities, that troubled Gaspard and caused a chill horror to mount slowly in his mind: a horror that had not yet found a palpable form or a name.

2. *The Gathering of the Dead*

The departure of Nathaire and his pupils occurred in the late spring of 1281, during the interlunar dark. Afterward a new moon waxed above the flowery fields and bright-leafed woods, and waned in ghostly silver. With its waning, people began to talk of other magicians and fresher mysteries.

Then, in the moon-deserted nights of early summer, there came a series of disappearances far more unnatural and inexplicable than that of the dwarfish, malignant sorcerer.

It was found one day, by grave-diggers who had gone early to their toil in a cemetery outside the walls of Vyones, that no less than six newly occupied graves had been opened, and the bodies, which were those of reputable citizens, removed. On closer examination, it became all too evident that this removal had not been effected by robbers. The coffins, which lay aslant or stood protruding upright from the mold, offered all the appearance of having been shattered from within as if by the use of extrahuman strength; and the fresh earth itself was upheaved, as if the dead men, in some awful, untimely resurrection, had actually *dug* their way to the surface.

The corpses had vanished utterly, as if hell had swallowed them; and, as far as could be learned, there were no eyewitnesses of their fate. In those devil-ridden times, only one explanation of the happening seemed credible: demons had

entered the graves and had taken bodily possession of the dead, compelling them to arise and go forth.

To the dismay and horror of all Averoigne, the strange vanishment was followed with appalling promptness by many others of a like sort. It seemed as if an occult, resistless summons had been laid upon the dead. Nightly, for a period of two weeks, the cemeteries of Vyones and also those of other towns, of villages and hamlets, gave up a ghastly quota of their tenants. From brazen-bolted tombs, from common charnels, from shallow, unconsecrated trenches, from the marble-lidded vaults of churches and cathedrals, the weird exodus went on without cessation.

Worse than this, if possible, there were newly cerements corpses that leapt from their biers or catafalques, and disregarding the horrified watchers, ran with great bounds of automatic frenzy into the night, never to be seen again by those who lamented them.

In every case, the missing bodies were those of young stalwart men who had died but recently and had met their death through violence or accident rather than wasting illness. Some were criminals who had paid the penalty of their misdeeds, others were men-at-arms or constables, slain in the execution of their duty. Knights who had died in tourney or personal combat were numbered among them; and many were the victims of the robber bands who infested Averoigne at that time. There were monks, merchants, nobles, yeomen, pages, priests; but none, in any case, who had passed the prime of life. The old and infirm, it seemed, were safe from the animating demons.

The situation was looked upon by the more superstitious as a veritable omening of the world's end. Satan was making war with his cohorts and was carrying the bodies of the holy dead into hellish captivity. The consternation increased a hundredfold when it became plain that even the most liberal sprinkling of holy water, the performance of the most awful and cogent exorcisms, failed utterly to give protection against this diabolic ravishment. The Church owned itself powerless to cope with the strange evil; and the forces of secular law could do nothing to arraign or punish the intangible agency.

Because of the universal fear that prevailed, no effort was

made to follow the missing cadavers. Ghastly tales, however, were told by late wayfarers who had met certain of these liches, striding alone or in companies along the roads of Averoigne. They gave the appearance of being deaf, dumb, totally insensate, and of hurrying with horrible speed and sureness toward a remote, predestined goal. The general direction of their flight, it seemed, was eastward; but only with the cessation of the exodus, which had numbered several hundred people, did any one begin to suspect the actual destination of the dead.

This destination, it somehow became rumored, was the ruinous castle of Ylourgne, beyond the werewolf-haunted forest, in the outlying, semi-mountainous hills of Averoigne.

Ylourgne, a great, craggy pile that had been built by a line of evil and marauding barons now extinct, was a place that even the goatherds preferred to shun. The wrathful spectres of its bloody lords were said to move turbulently in its crumbling halls; and its chatelaines were the Undead. No one cared to dwell in the shadow of its cliff-founded walls; and the nearest abode of living men was a small Cistercian monastery, more than a mile away on the opposite slope of the valley.

The monks of this austere brotherhood held little commerce with the world beyond the hills; and few were the visitors who sought admission at their high-perched portals. But, during that dreadful summer, following the disappearances of the dead, a weird and disquieting tale went forth from the monastery throughout Averoigne.

Beginning with late spring, the Cistercian monks were compelled to take cognizance of sundry odd phenomena in the old, long-deserted ruins of Ylourgne, which were visible from their windows. They had beheld flaring lights, where lights should not have been: flames of uncanny blue and crimson that shuddered behind the broken, weed-grown embrasures or rose starward above the jagged crenelations. Hideous noises had issued from the ruin by night together with the flames; and the monks had heard a clangor as of hellish anvils and hammers, a ringing of gigantic armor and maces, and had deemed that Ylourgne was become a mustering-ground of devils. Mephitic odors as of brimstone and burning flesh had floated across the valley; and even by day,

when the noises were silent and the lights no longer flared, a thin haze of hell-blue vapor hung upon the battlements.

It was plain, the monks thought, that the place had been occupied from beneath by subterrestrial beings; for no one was seen to approach it by way of the bare, open slopes and crags. Observing these signs of the Archfoe's activity in their neighborhood, they crossed themselves with new fervor and frequency, and said their *Paters* and *Aves* more interminably than before. Their toils and austerities, also, they redoubled. Otherwise, since the old castle was a place abandoned by men, they took no heed of the supposed occupation, deeming it well to mind their own affairs unless in case of overt Satanic hostility.

They kept a careful watch; but for several weeks they saw no-one who actually entered Ylourgne or emerged therefrom. Except for the nocturnal lights and noises, and the hovering vapor by day, there was no proof of tenantry either human or diabolic.

Then, one morning, in the valley below the terraced gardens of the monastery, two brothers, hoeing weeds in a carrot-patch, beheld the passing of a singular train of people who came from the direction of the great forest of Averoigne and went upward, climbing the steep, chasmy slope toward Ylourgne.

These people, the monks averred, were striding along in great haste, with stiff but flying steps; and all were strangely pale of feature and were habited in the garments of the grave. The shrouds of some were torn and ragged; and all were dusty with travel or grimed with the mold of interment. The people numbered a dozen or more; and after them, at intervals, there came several stragglers, attired like the rest. With marvelous agility and speed, they mounted the hill and disappeared at length amid the lowering walls of Ylourgne.

At this time, no rumor of the ravished graves and biers had reached the Cistercians. The tale was brought to them later, after they had beheld, on many successive mornings, the passing of small or great companies of the dead toward the devil-taken castle. Hundreds of these liches, they swore, had filed by beneath the monastery; and doubtless many

others had gone past unnoted in the dark. None, however, were seen to come forth from Ylourgne, which had swallowed them up like the undisgorging Pit.

Though direly frightened and sorely scandalized, the brothers still thought it well to refrain from action. Some, the hardiest, irked by all these flagrant signs of evil, had desired to visit the ruins with holy water and lifted crucifixes. But their abbot, in his wisdom, enjoined them to wait. In the meanwhile, the nocturnal flames grew brighter, the noises louder.

Also, in the course of this waiting, while incessant prayers went up from the little monastery, a frightful thing occurred. One of the brothers, a stout fellow named Theophile, in violation of the rigorous discipline, had made overfrequent visits to the wine-casks. No doubt he had tried to drown his pious horror at these untoward happenings. At any rate, after his potations, he had the ill-luck to wander out among the precipices and break his neck.

Sorrowing for his death and dereliction, the brothers laid Theophile in the chapel and chanted their masses for his soul. These masses, in the dark hours before morning, were interrupted by the untimely resurrection of the dead monk, who, with his head lolling horribly on his broken neck, rushed as if fiend-ridden from the chapel and ran down the hill toward the demon flames and clamors of Ylourgne.

3. *The Testimony of the Monks*

Following the above-related occurrence, two of the brothers who had previously desired to visit the haunted castle again applied to the abbot for this permission, saying that God would surely aid them in avenging the abduction of Theophile's body as well as the taking of many others from consecrated ground. Marvelling at the hardihood of these lusty monks, who proposed to beard the Arch-enemy in his lair, the abbot permitted them to go forth, furnished with aspergilluses and flasks of holy water, and bearing great crosses of hornbeam, such as would have served for maces with which to brain an armoured knight.

The monks, whose names were Bernard and Stéphane,

went boldly up at middle forenoon to assail the evil stronghold. It was an arduous climb, among overhanging boulders and along slippery scarps; but both were stout and agile, and, moreover, well accustomed to such climbing. Since the day was sultry and airless, their white robes were soon stained with sweat; but pausing only for brief prayer, they pressed on; and in good season they neared the castle, upon whose gray time-eroded ramparts they could still descry no evidence of occupation or activity.

The deep moat that had once surrounded the place was now dry, and had been partly filled by crumbling earth and detritus from the walls. The drawbridge had rotted away; but the blocks of the barbican, collapsing into the moat, had made a sort of rough causey on which it was possible to cross. Not without trepidation, and lifting their crucifixes as warriors lift their weapons in the escalade of an armed fortress, the brothers climbed over the ruin of the barbican into the courtyard.

This too, like the battlements, was seemingly deserted. Overgrown nettles, rank grasses and sapling trees were rooted between its paving-stones. The high, massive donjon, the chapel, and that portion of the castellated structure containing the great hall, had preserved their main outlines after centuries of dilapidation. To the left of the broad bailey, a doorway yawned like the mouth of a dark cavern in the cliffy mass of the hall-building; and from this doorway there issued a thin, bluish vapor, writhing in phantom coils toward the unclouded heavens.

Approaching the doorway, the brothers beheld a gleaming of red fires within, like the eyes of dragons blinking through infernal murk. They felt sure that the place was an outpost of Erebus, an antechamber of the Pit; but nevertheless, they entered bravely, chanting loud exorcisms and brandishing their mighty crosses of hornbeam.

Passing through the cavernous doorway, they could see but indistinctly in the gloom, being somewhat blinded by the summer sunlight they had left. Then, with the gradual clearing of their vision, a monstrous scene was limned before them, with ever-growing details of crowding horror and grotesquery. Some of these details were obscure and mysteriously terrifying; others, all too plain, were branded

as if with sudden, ineffaceable hell-fire on the minds of the monks.

They stood on the threshold of a colossal chamber, which seemed to have been made by the tearing down of upper floors and inner partitions adjacent to the castle hall, itself a room of huge extent. The chamber seemed to recede through interminable shadow, shafted with sunlight falling through the rents of ruin: sunlight that was powerless to dissipate the infernal gloom and mystery.

The monks averred later that they saw many people moving about the place, together with sundry demons, some of whom were shadowy and gigantic, and others barely to be distinguished from the men. These people, as well as their familiars, were occupied with the tending of reverberatory furnaces and immense pear-shaped and gourd-shaped vessels such as were used in alchemy. Some, also, were stooping above great fuming cauldrons, like sorcerers busy with the brewing of terrible drugs. Against the opposite wall, there were two enormous vats, built of stone and mortar, whose circular sides rose higher than a man's head, so that Bernard and Stéphane were unable to determine their contents. One of the vats gave forth a whitish glimmering; the other, a ruddy luminosity.

Near the vats, and somewhat between them, there stood a sort of low couch or litter, made of luxurious, weirdly figured fabrics such as the Saracens weave. On this the monks discerned a dwarfish being, pale and wizened, with eyes of chill flame that shone like evil beryls through the dusk. The dwarf, who had all the air of a feeble moribund, was supervising the toils of the men and their familiars.

The dazed eyes of the brothers began to comprehend other details. They saw that several corpses, among which they recognized that of Theophile, were lying on the middle floor, together with a heap of human bones that had been wrenched asunder at the joints, and great lumps of flesh piled like the carvings of butchers. One of the men was lifting the bones and dropping them into a cauldron beneath which there glowed a ruby-colored fire; and another was flinging the lumps of flesh into a tub filled with some hueless liquid that gave forth an evil hissing as of a thousand serpents.

Others had stripped the grave-clothes from one of the cadavers, and were starting to assail it with long knives. Others still were mounting rude flights of stone stairs along the walls of the immense vats, carrying vessels filled with semi-liquescent matters which they emptied over the high rims.

Appalled at this vision of human and Satanic turpitude, and feeling a more than righteous indignation, the monks resumed their chanting of sonorous exorcisms and rushed forward. Their entrance, it appeared, was not perceived by the heinously occupied crew of sorcerers and devils.

Bernard and Stéphane, filled with an ardor of godly wrath, were about to fling themselves upon the butchers who had started to assail the dead body. This corpse they recognized as being that of a notorious outlaw, named Jacques Le Loupgarou, who had been slain a few days previous in combat with the officers of the state. Le Loupgarou, noted for his brawn, his cunning and his ferocity, had long terrorized the woods and highways of Averoigne. His great body had been half eviscerated by the swords of the constabulary; and his beard was stiff and purple with the dried blood of a ghastly wound that had cloven his face from temple to mouth. He had died unshriven, but nevertheless, the monks were unwilling to see his helpless cadaver put to some unhallowed use beyond the surmise of Christians.

The pale, malignant-looking dwarf had now perceived the brothers. They heard him cry out in a shrill, imperatory tone that rose above the ominous hiss of the cauldrons and the hoarse mutter of men and demons.

They knew not his words, which were those of some outlandish tongue and sounded like an incantation. Instantly, as if in response to an order, two of the men turned from their unholy chemistry, and lifting copper basins filled with an unknown, fetid liquor, hurled the contents of these vessels in the faces of Bernard and Stéphane.

The brothers were blinded by the stinging fluid, which bit their flesh as with many serpents' teeth; and they were overcome by the noxious fumes, so that their great crosses dropped from their hands and they both fell unconscious on the castle floor.

Recovering anon their sight and their other senses, they

found that their hands had been tied with heavy thongs of gut, so that they were now helpless and could no longer wield their crucifixes or the sprinklers of holy water which they carried.

In this ignominious condition, they heard the voice of the evil dwarf, commanding them to arise. They obeyed, though clumsily and with difficulty, being denied the assistance of their hands. Bernard, who was still sick with the poisonous vapor he had inhaled, fell twice before he succeeded in standing erect; and his discomfiture was greeted with a cachinnation of foul, obscene laughter from the assembled sorcerers.

Now, standing, the monks were taunted by the dwarf, who mocked and reviled them, with appalling blasphemies such as could be uttered only by a bond-servant of Satan. At last, according to their sworn testimony, he said to them:

'Return to your kennel, ye whelps of Ialdabaoth, and take with you this message: *They that came here as many shall go forth as one.*'

Then, in obedience to a dreadful formula spoken by the dwarf, two of the familiars, who had the shape of enormous and shadowy beasts, approached the body of Le Loupgarou and that of Brother Theophile. One of the foul demons, like a vapor that sinks into a marsh, entered the bloody nostrils of Le Loupgarou, disappearing inch by inch, till its horned and bestial head was withdrawn from sight. The other, in like manner, went in through the nostrils of Brother Theophile, whose head lay wried athwart his shoulder on the broken neck.

Then, when the demons had completed their possession, the bodies, in a fashion horrible to behold, were raised up from the castle floor, the one with ravelled entrails hanging from its wide wounds, the other with a head that drooped forward loosely on its bosom. Then, animated by their devils, the cadavers took up the crosses of hornbeam that had been dropped by Stéphane and Bernard; and using the crosses for bludgeons, they drove the monks in ignominious flight from the castle, amid a loud, tempestuous howling of infernal laughter from the dwarf and his necromantic crew. And the nude corpse of Le Loupgarou and the robed cadaver of Theophile followed them far on the chasm-

riven slopes below Ylourgne, striking great blows with the crosses, so that the backs of the two Cistercians were become a mass of bloody bruises.

After a defeat so signal and crushing, no more of the monks were emboldened to go up against Ylourgne. The whole monastery, thereafter, devoted itself to triple austerities, to quadrupled prayers; and awaiting the unknown will of God, and the equally obscure machinations of the Devil, maintained a pious faith that was somewhat tempered with trepidation.

In time, through goatherds who visited the monks, the tale of Stéphane and Bernard went forth throughout Averoigne, adding to the grievous alarm that had been caused by the wholesale disappearance of the dead. No one knew what was really going on in the haunted castle or what disposition had been made of the hundreds of migatory corpses; for the light thrown on their fate by the monks' story, though lurid and frightful, was all too inconclusive; and the message sent by the dwarf was somewhat cabalistic.

Everyone felt, however, that some gigantic menace, some black, infernal enchantment, was being brewed within the ruinous walls. The malign, moribund dwarf was all too readily identified with the missing sorcerer, Nathaire; and his underlings, it was plain, were Nathaire's pupils.

4. The Going-forth of Gaspard du Nord

Alone in his attic chamber, Gaspard du Nord, student of alchemy and sorcery and quondam pupil of Nathaire, sought repeatedly, but always in vain, to consult the viper-circled mirror. The glass remained obscure and cloudy, as with the risen fumes of Satanical alembics or baleful necromantic braziers. Haggard and weary with long nights of watching, Gaspard knew that Nathaire was even more vigilant than he.

Reading with anxious care the general configuration of the stars, he found the foretokening of a great evil that was to come upon Averoigne. But the nature of the evil was not clearly shown.

In the meanwhile the hideous resurrection and migration

of the dead was taking place. All Averoigne shuddered at the manifold enormity. Like the timeless night of a Memphian plague, terror settled everywhere; and people spoke of each new atrocity in bated whispers, without daring to voice the execrable tale aloud. To Gaspard, as to everyone, the whispers came; and likewise, after the horror had apparently ceased in early midsummer, there came the appalling story of the Cistercian monks.

Now, at last, the long-baffled watcher found an inkling of that which he sought. The hiding-place of the fugitive necromancer and his apprentices, at least, had been uncovered; and the disappearing dead were clearly traced to their bourn. But still, even for the percipient Gaspard, there remained an undeclared enigma: the exact nature of the abominable brew, the hell-dark sorcery, that Nathaire was concocting in his remote den. Gaspard felt sure of one thing only: the dying, splenetic dwarf, knowing that his allotted time was short, and hating the people of Averoigne with a bottomless rancor, would prepare an enormous and maleficent magic without parallel.

Even with his knowledge of Nathaire's proclivities, and his awareness of the well-nigh inexhaustible arcanic science, the reserves of pit-deep wizardry possessed by the dwarf, he could form only vague, terrifical conjectures anent the incubated evil. But, as time went on, he felt an ever-deepening oppression, the adumbration of a monstrous menace crawling from the dark rim of the world. He could not shake off his disquietude; and finally he resolved, despite the obvious perils of such an excursion, to pay a secret visit to the neighborhood of Ylourgne.

Gaspard, though he came of a well-to-do family, was at that time in straitened circumstances; for his devotion to a somewhat doubtful science had been disapproved by his father. His sole income was a small pittance, purveyed secretly to the youth by his mother and sister. This sufficed for his meager food, the rent of his room, and a few books and instruments and chemicals; but it would not permit the purchase of a horse or even a humble mule for the proposed journey of more than forty miles.

Undaunted, he set forth on foot, carrying only a dagger and a wallet of food. He timed his wanderings so that he

would reach Ylourgne at nightfall in the rising of a full moon. Much of his journey lay through the great, towering forest, which approached the very walls of Vyones on the eastern side and ran in a somber arc through Averoigne to the mouth of the rocky valley below Ylourgne. After a few miles, he emerged from the mighty wood of pines and oaks and larches; and thenceforward, for the first day, followed the river Isoile through an open, well-peopled plain. He spent the warm summer night beneath a beech-tree, in the vicinity of a small village, not caring to sleep in the lonely woods where robbers and wolves – and creatures of a more baleful repute – were commonly supposed to dwell.

At evening of the second day, after passing through the wildest and oldest portion of the immemorial wood, he came to the steep, stony valley that led to his destination. This valley was the fountainhead of the Isoile, which had dwindled to a mere rivulet. In the brown twilight, between sunset and moonrise, he saw the lights of the Cistercian monastery; and opposite, on the piled, forbidding scarps, the grim and rugged mass of the ruinous stronghold of Ylourgne, with wan and wizard fires flickering behind its high embrasures. Apart from these fires, there was no sign of occupation; and he did not hear at any time the dismal noises reported by the monks.

Gaspard waited till the round moon, yellow as the eye of some immense nocturnal bird, had begun to peer above the darkling valley. Then, very cautiously, since the neighbourhood was strange to him, he started to make his way toward the somber, brooding castle.

Even for one well-used to such climbing, the escalade would have offered enough difficulty and danger by moonlight. Several times, finding himself at the bottom of a sheer cliff, he was compelled to retrace his hard-won progress; and often he was saved from falling only by stunted shrubs and briars that had taken root in the niggard soil. Breathless, with torn raiment, and scored and bleeding hands, he gained at length the shoulder of the craggy height, below the walls.

Here he paused to recover breath and recuperate his flagging strength. He could see from his vantage the pale reflection as of hidden flames, that beat upward on the inner wall of the high-built donjon. He heard a low hum of

confused noises, whose distance and direction were alike baffling. Sometimes they seemed to float downward from the black battlements, sometimes to issue from subterranean depths far in the hill.

Apart from this remote, ambiguous hum, the night was locked in a mortal stillness. The very winds appeared to shun the vicinity of the dread castle. An unseen, clammy cloud of paralyzing evil hung removeless upon all things; and the pale, swollen moon, the patroness of witches and sorcerers, distilled her green poison above the crumbling towers in a silence older than time.

Gaspard felt the obscenely clinging weight of a more burdenous thing than his own fatigue when he resumed his progress toward the barbican. Invisible webs of the waiting, ever-gathering evil seemed to impede him. The slow, noisome flapping of intangible wings was heavy in his face. He seemed to breathe a surging wind from unfathomable vaults and caverns of corruption. Inaudible howlings, derisive or minatory, thronged in his ears, and foul hands appeared to thrust him back. But, bowing his head as if against a blowing gale, he went on and climbed the mounded ruin of the barbican, into the weedy courtyard.

The place was deserted, to all seeming; and much of it was still deep in the shadows of the walls and turrets. Near by, in the black, silver-crenelated pile, Gaspard saw the open, cavernous doorway described by the monks. It was lit from within by a lurid glare, wannish and eery as marsh fires. The humming noise, now audible as a muttering of voices, issued from the doorway; and Gaspard thought that he could see dark, sooty figures moving rapidly in the lit interior.

Keeping in the farther shadows, he stole along the courtyard, making a sort of circuit amid the ruins. He did not dare to approach the open entrance for fear of being seen; though, as far as he could tell, the place was unguarded.

He came to the donjon, on whose upper wall the wan light flickered obliquely through a sort of rift in the long building adjacent. This opening was at some distance from the ground; and Gaspard saw that it had been formerly the door to a stone balcony. A flight of broken steps led upward along the wall to the half-crumbled remnant of this balcony;

and it occurred to the youth that he might climb the steps and peer unobserved into the interior of Ylourgne.

Some of the stairs were missing; and all were in heavy shadow. Gaspard found his way precariously to the balcony, pausing once in considerable alarm when a fragment of the worn stone, loosened by his footfall, dropped with a loud clattering on the courtyard flags below. Apparently it was unheard by the occupants of the castle; and after a little he resumed his climbing.

Cautiously he neared the large, ragged opening through which the light poured upward. Crouching on a narrow ledge, which was all that remained of the balcony, he peered in on a most astounding and terrific spectacle, whose details were so bewildering that he could barely comprehend their import till after many minutes.

It was plain that the story told by the monks – allowing for their religious bias – had been far from extravagant. Almost the whole interior of the half-ruined pile had been torn down and dismantled to afford room for the activities of Nathaire. This demolition in itself was a superhuman task for whose execution the sorcerer must have employed a legion of familiars as well as his ten pupils.

The vast chamber was fitfully illumed by the glare of athanors and braziers; and, above all, by the weird glimmering from the huge stone vats. Even from his high vantage, the watcher could not see the contents of these vats; but a white luminosity poured upward from the rim of one of them, and a flesh-tinted phosphorescence from the other.

Gaspard had seen certain of the experiments and evocations of Nathaire, and was all too familiar with the appurtenances of the dark arts. Within certain limits, he was not squeamish; nor was it likely that he would have been terrified overmuch by the shadowy, uncouth shapes of demons who toiled in the pit below him side by side with the black-clad pupils of the sorcerer. But a cold horror clutched his heart when he saw the incredible, enormous thing that occupied the central floor: the colossal human skeleton a hundred feet in length, stretching for more than the extent of the old castle hall; the skeleton whose bony right foot the group of men and devils, to all appearance, were busily clothing with human flesh!

The prodigious and macabre framework, complete in every part, with ribs like the arches of some Satanic nave, shone as if it were still heated by the fires of an infernal welding. It seemed to shimmer and burn with unnatural life, to quiver with malign disquietude in the flickering glare and gloom. The great finger-bones, curving claw-like on the floor, appeared as if they were about to close upon some helpless prey. The tremendous teeth were set in an everlasting grin of sardonic cruelty and malice. The hollow eye-sockets, deep as Tartarean wells, appeared to seethe with myriad, mocking lights, like the eyes of elementals swimming upward in obscene shadow.

Gaspard was stunned by the shocking and stupendous fantasmagoria that yawned before him like a peopled hell. Afterward he was never wholly sure of certain things, and could remember very little of the actual manner in which the work of the men and their assistants was being carried on. Dim, dubious, bat-like creatures seemed to be flitting to and fro between one of the stone vats and the group that toiled like sculptors, clothing the bony foot with a reddish plasm which they applied and molded like so much clay. Gaspard thought, but was not certain later, that this plasm, which gleamed as if with mingled blood and fire, was being brought from the rosy-litten vat in vessels borne by the claws of the shadowy flying creatures. None of them, however, approached the other vat, whose wannish light was momently enfeebled, as if it were dying down.

He looked for the minikin figure of Nathaire, whom he could not distinguish in the crowded scene. The sick necromancer – if he had not already succumbed to the little-known disease that had long wasted him like an inward flame – was no doubt hidden from view by the colossal skeleton and was perhaps directing the labors of the men and demons from his couch.

Spellbound on that precarious ledge, the watcher failed to hear the furtive, catlike feet that were climbing behind him on the ruinous stairs. Too late, he heard the clink of a loose fragment close upon his heels; and turning in startlement, he toppled into sheer oblivion beneath the impact of a cudgel-like blow, and did not even know that the beginning fall of his body toward the courtyard had been arrested by his assailant's arms.

5. *The Horror of Ylourgne*

Gaspard, returning from his dark plunge into Lethean emptiness, found himself gazing into the eyes of Nathaire: those eyes of liquid night and ebony, in which swam the chill, malignant fires of stars that had gone down to irremeable perdition. For some time, in the confusion of his senses, he could see nothing but the eyes, which seemed to have drawn him forth like baleful magnets from his swoon. Apparently disembodied, or set in a face too vast for human cognizance, they burned before him in chaotic murk. Then, by degrees, he saw the other features of the sorcerer, and the details of a lurid scene; and became aware of his own situation.

Trying to lift his hands to his aching head, he found that they were bound tightly together at the wrists. He was half lying, half leaning against an object with hard planes and edges that irked his back. This object he discovered to be a sort of alchemic furnace, or athanor, part of a litter of disused apparatus that stood or lay on the castle floor. Cupels, aludels, cucurbits, like enormous gourds and globes, were mingled in strange confusion with the piled, iron-clasped books and the sooty cauldrons and braziers of darker science.

Nathaire, propped among Saracenic cushions with arabesques of sullen gold and fulgurant scarlet, was peering upon him from a kind of improvised couch, made with bales of Orient rugs and arrases, to whose luxury the rude walls of the castle, stained with mold and mottled with dead fungi, offered a grotesque foil. Dim lights and evilly swooping shadows flickered across the scene; and Gaspard could hear a guttural hum of voices behind him. Twisting his head a little, he saw one of the stone vats, whose rosy luminosity was blurred and blotted by vampire wings that went to and fro.

'Welcome,' said Nathaire, after an interval in which the student began to perceive the fatal progress of illness in the pain-pinched features before him. 'So Gaspard du Nord has come to see his former master!' The harsh, imperatory voice, with demoniac volume, issued appallingly from the wizened frame.

'I have come,' said Gaspard, in laconic echo. 'Tell me, what devil's work is this in which I find you engaged? And what have you done with the dead bodies that were stolen by your accursed familiars?'

The frail, dying body of Nathaire, as if possessed by some sardonic fiend, rocked to and fro on the luxurious couch in a long, violent gust of laughter, without other reply.

'If your looks bear creditable witness,' said Gaspard, when the baleful laughter had ceased, 'you are mortally ill, and the time is short in which you can hope to atone for your deeds of malefice and make your peace with God – if indeed it still be possible for you to make peace. What foul and monstrous brew are you preparing, to insure the ultimate perdition of your soul?'

The dwarf was again seized by a spasm of diabolic mirth.

'Nay, nay, my good Gaspard,' he said finally. 'I have made another bond than the one with which puling cowards try to purchase the good will and forgiveness of the heavenly Tyrant. Hell may take me in the end, if it will; but Hell has paid, and will still pay, an ample and goodly price. I must die soon, it is true, for my doom is written in the stars: but in death, by the grace of Satan, I shall live again, and shall go forth endowed with the mighty thews of the Anakim, to visit vengeance on the people of Averoigne, who have long hated me for my necromantic wisdom and have held me in derision for my dwarf stature.'

'What madness is this whereof you dream?' asked the youth, appalled by the more than human frenzy and malignity that seemed to dilate the shrunken frame of Nathaire and stream in Tartarean lustre from his eyes.

'It is no madness, but a veritable thing: a miracle, mayhap, as life itself is a miracle. . . . From the fresh bodies of the dead, which otherwise would have rotted away in charnel foulness, my pupils and familiars are making for me, beneath my instruction, the giant form whose skeleton you have beheld. My soul, at the death of its present body, will pass into this colossal tenement through the working of certain spells of transmigration in which my faithful assistants have also been carefully instructed.

'If you had remained with me, Gaspard, and had not drawn back in your petty, pious squeamishness from the

marvels and profundities that I should have unveiled for you, it would now be your privilege to share in the creation of this prodigy ... And if you had come to Ylourgne a little sooner in your presumptuous prying, I might have made a certain use of your stout bones and muscles ... the same use I have made of other young men, who died through accident or violence. But it is too late even for this, since the building of the bones has been completed, and it remains only to invest them with human flesh. My good Gaspard, there is nothing whatever to be done with you – except to put you safely out of the way. Providentially, for this purpose, there is an oubliette beneath the castle: a somewhat dismal lodging-place, no doubt, but one that was made strong and deep by the grim lords of Ylourgne.'

Gaspard was unable to frame any reply to this sinister and extraordinary speech. Searching his horror-frozen brain for words, he felt himself seized from behind by the hands of unseen beings who had come, no doubt, in answer to some gesture of Nathaire: a gesture which the captive had not perceived. He was blindfolded with some heavy fabric, mouldy and musty as a grave-cloth, and was led stumbling through the litter of strange apparatus, and down a winding flight of ruinous, narrow stairs from which the noisome breath of stagnating water, mingled with the oily muskiness of serpents, arose to meet him.

He appeared to descend for a distance that would admit of no return. Slowly the stench grew stronger, more insupportable; the stairs ended; a door clanged sullenly on rusty hinges; and Gaspard was thrust forward on a damp, uneven floor that seemed to have been worn away by myriad feet.

He heard the grating of a ponderous slab of stone. His wrists were untied, the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he saw by the light of flickering torches a round hole that yawned in the oozing floor at his feet. Beside it was the lifted slab that had formed its lid. Before he could turn to see the faces of his captors, to learn if they were men or devils, he was seized rudely and thrust into the gaping hole. He fell through Erebus-like darkness, for what seemed an immense distance, before he struck bottom. Lying half stunned in a

shallow, fetid pool, he heard the funereal thud of the heavy slab as it slid back into place far above him.

6. *The Vaults of Ylourgne*

Gaspard was revived, after a while, by the chillness of the water in which he lay. His garments were half soaked; and the slimy, mephitic pool, as he discovered by his first movement, was within an inch of his mouth. He could hear a steady, monotonous dripping, somewhere in the rayless night of his dungeon. He staggered to his feet, finding that his bones were still intact, and began a cautious exploration. Foul drops fell upon his hair and lifted face as he moved; his feet slipped and splashed in the rotten water; there were angry, vehement hissings, and serpentine coils slithered coldly across his ankles.

He soon came to a rough wall of stone, and following the wall with his fingertips, he tried to determine the extent of the oubliette. The place was more or less circular, without corners, and he failed to form any just idea of its circuit. Somewhere in his wanderings, he found a shelving pile of rubble that rose above the water against the wall; and here, for the sake of comparative dryness and comfort, he ensconced himself, after dispossessing a number of outraged reptiles. These creatures, it seemed, were inoffensive, and probably belonged to some species of water-snake; but he shivered at the touch of their clammy scales.

Sitting on the rubble-heap, Gaspard reviewed in his mind the various horrors of a situation that was infinitely dismal and desperate. He had learned the incredible, soul-shaking secret of Ylourgne, the unimaginably monstrous and blasphemous project of Nathaire; but now, immured in this noisome hole as in a subterranean tomb, in depths beneath the devil-haunted pile, he could not even warn the world of imminent menace.

The wallet of food, now more than half empty, with which he had started from Vyones, was still hanging at his back; and he assured himself by investigation that his captors had not troubled to deprive him of his dagger. Gnawing a crust of stale bread in the darkness, and caressing

with his hand the hilt of the precious weapon, he sought for some rift in the all-environing despair.

He had no means of measuring the black hours that went over him with the slowness of a slime-clogged river, crawling in blind silence to a subterrene sea. The ceaseless drip of water, probably from sunken hill-springs that had supplied the castle in former years, alone broke the stillness; but the sound became in time an equivocal monotone that suggested to his half-delirious mind the mirthless and perpetual chuckling of unseen imps. At last, from sheer bodily exhaustion, he fell into troubled, nightmare-ridden slumber.

He could not tell if it were night or noon in the world without when he awakened; for the same stagnant darkness, unrelieved by ray or glimmer, brimmed the oubliette. Shivering, he became aware of a steady draft that blew upon him: a dank, unwholesome air, like the breath of unsunned vaults that had wakened into cryptic life and activity during his sleep. He had not noticed the draft heretofore; and his numb brain was startled into sudden hope by the intimation which it conveyed. Obviously there was some underground rift or channel through which the air entered; and this rift might somehow prove to be a place of egress from the oubliette.

Getting to his feet, he groped uncertainly forward in the direction of the draft. He stumbled over something that crackled and broke beneath his heels, and narrowly checked himself from falling on his face in the slimy, serpent-haunted pool. Before he could investigate the obstruction or resume his blind groping, he heard a harsh, grating noise above, and a wavering shaft of yellow light came down through the oubliette's opened mouth. Dazzled, he looked up, and saw the round hole ten or twelve feet overhead, through which a dark hand had reached down with a flaring torch. A small basket, containing a loaf of coarse bread and a bottle of wine, was being lowered at the end of a cord.

Gaspard took the bread and wine, and the basket was drawn up. Before the withdrawal of the torch and the redepositing of the slab, he contrived to make a hasty survey of his dungeon.

The place was roughly circular, as he had surmised, and was perhaps fifteen feet in diameter. The thing over which

he had stumbled was a human skeleton, lying half on the rubble-heap, half in the filthy water. It was brown and rotten with age, and its garments had long melted away in patches of liquid mold.

The walls were guttered and runneled by centuries of ooze, and their very stone, it seemed, was rotting slowly to decay. In the opposite side, at the bottom, he saw the opening he had suspected: a low mouth, not much bigger than a foxes' hole, into which the sluggish water flowed. His heart sank at the sight; for, even if the water were deeper than it seemed, the hole was far too strait for the passage of a man's body. In a state of hopelessness that was like a veritable suffocation, he found his way back to the rubble-pile when the light had been withdrawn.

The loaf of bread and the bottle of wine were still in his hands. Mechanically, with dull, sodden hunger, he munched and drank. Afterward he felt stronger; and the sour, common wine served to warm him and perhaps helped to inspire him with the idea which he presently conceived.

Finishing the bottle, he found his way across the dungeon to the low, burrow-like hole. The entering air-current had strengthened, and this he took for a good omen. Drawing his dagger, he started to pick with the point at the half-rotten, decomposing wall, in an effort to enlarge the opening. He was forced to kneel in noisome silt; and the writhing coils of water-snakes, hissing frightfully, crawled across his legs as he worked. Evidently the hole was their means of ingress and egress, to and from the oubliette.

The stone crumbled readily beneath his dagger, and Gaspard forgot the horror and ghastliness of his situation in the hope of escape. He had no means of knowing the thickness of the wall, or the nature and extent of the subterranes that lay beyond; but he felt sure that there was some channel of connection with the outer air.

For hours or days, it seemed, he toiled with his dagger, digging blindly at the soft wall and removing the débris that splashed in the water beside him. After a while, prone on his belly, he crept into the hole he had enlarged; and burrowing like some laborious mole, he made his way onward inch by inch.

At last, to his prodigious relief, the dagger-point went

through into empty space. He broke away with his hands the thin shell of obstructing stone that remained; then, crawling on in the darkness, he found that he could stand upright on a sort of shelving floor.

Straightening his cramped limbs, he moved on very cautiously. He was in a narrow vault or tunnel, whose sides he could touch simultaneously with his outstretched finger-tips. The floor was a downward incline; and the water deepened, rising to his knees and then to his waist. Probably the place had once been used as an underground exit from the castle; and the roof, falling in, had dammed the water.

More than a little dismayed, Gaspard began to wonder if he had exchanged the foul, skeleton-haunted oubliette for something even worse. The night around and before him was still untouched by any ray, and the air-current, though strong, was laden with a dankness and moldiness as of interminable vaults.

Touching the tunnel-sides at intervals as he plunged hesitantly into the deepening water, he found a sharp angle, giving upon free space at his right. The space proved to be the mouth of an intersecting passage, whose flooded bottom was at least level and went no deeper into the stagnant foulness. Exploring it, he stumbled over the beginning of a flight of upward steps. Mounting these through the shoaling water he soon found himself on dry stone.

The stairs, narrow, broken, irregular, without landings, appeared to wind in some eternal spiral that was coiled lightlessly about the bowels of Ylourgne. They were close and stifling as a tomb, and plainly they were not the source of the air-current which Gaspard had started to follow. Whither they would lead he knew not; nor could he tell if they were the same stairs by which he had been conducted to his dungeon. But he climbed steadily, pausing only at long intervals to regain his breath as best he could in the dead, mephitis-burdened air.

At length, in the solid darkness, far above, he began to hear a mysterious, muffled sound: a dull but recurrent crash as of mighty blocks and masses of falling stone. The sound was unspeakably ominous and dismal, and it seemed to shake the unfathomable walls around Gaspard, and to thrill with a sinister vibration in the steps on which he trod.

He climbed now with redoubled caution and alertness, stopping ever and anon to listen. The recurrent crashing noise grew louder, more ominous, as if it were immediately above; and the listener crouched on the dark stairs for a time that might have been many minutes, without daring to go farther. At last, with disconcerting suddenness, the sound came to an end, leaving a strained and fearful stillness.

With many baleful conjectures, not knowing what fresh enormity he should find, Gaspard ventured to resume his climbing. Again, in the blank and solid stillness, he was met by a sound: the dim, reverberant chanting of voices, as in some Satanic mass or liturgy with dirge-like cadences that turned to intolerably soaring pæans of evil triumph. Long before he could recognize the words, he shivered at the strong; malefic throbbing of the measured rhythm, whose fall and rise appeared somehow to correspond to the heart-beats of some colossal demon.

The stairs turned, for the hundredth time in their tortuous spiral; and coming forth from that long midnight, Gaspard blinked in the wan glimmering that streamed toward him from above. The choral voices met him in a more sonorous burst of infernal sound, and he knew the words for those of a rare and potent incantation, used by sorcerers for a supremely foul, supremely maleficent purpose. Affrightedly, as he climbed the last steps, he knew the thing that was taking place amid the ruins of Ylourgne.

Lifting his head warily above the castle floor, he saw that the stairs ended in a far corner of the vast room in which he had beheld Nathaire's unthinkable creation. The whole extent of the internally dismantled building lay before him, filled with a weird glare in which the beams of the slightly gibbous moon were mingled with the ruddy flames of dying athanors and the coiling, multi-coloured tongues that rose from necromantic braziers.

Gaspard, for an instant, was puzzled by the flood of full moonlight amid the ruins. Then he saw that almost the whole inner wall of the castle, giving on the courtyard, had been removed. It was the tearing-down of the prodigious blocks, no doubt through an extrahuman labor levied by sorcery, that he had heard during his ascent from the subterrene vaults. His blood curdled, he felt an actual hor-

ripilation, as he realized the purpose for which the wall had been demolished.

It was evident that a whole day and part of another night had gone by since his immurement; for the moon rode high in the pale sapphire welkin. Bathed in its chilly glare, the huge vats no longer emitted their eery and electric phosphorescence. The couch of Saracen fabrics, on which Gaspard had beheld the dying dwarf, was now half hidden from view by the mounting fumes of braziers and thuribles, amid which the sorcerer's ten pupils, clad in sable and scarlet, were performing their hideous and repugnant rite, with its malefically measured litany.

Fearfully, as one who confronts an apparition reared up from nether hell, Gaspard beheld the colossus that lay inert as if in Cyclopean sleep on the castle flags. The thing was no longer a skeleton: the limbs were rounded into bossed, enormous thews, like the limbs of Biblical giants; the flanks were like an insuperable wall; the deltoids of the mighty chest were broad as platforms; the hands could have crushed the bodies of men like millstones. . . . *But the face of the stupendous monster, seen in profile athwart the pouring moon, was the face of the Satanic dwarf, Nathaire – re-magnified a hundred times, but the same in its implacable madness and malevolence!*

The vast bosom seemed to rise and fall; and during a pause of the necromantic ritual, Gaspard heard the unmistakable sound of a mighty respiration. The eye in the profile was closed; but its lid appeared to tremble like a great curtain, as if the monster were about to awake; and the outflung hand, with fingers pale and bluish as a row of corpses, twitched unquietly on the castle flags.

An insupportable terror seized the watcher; but even this terror could not induce him to return to the noisome vaults he had left. With infinite hesitation and trepidation, he stole forth from the corner, keeping in a zone of ebon shadow that flanked the castle wall.

As he went, he saw for a moment, through bellying folds of vapor, the couch on which the shrunken form of Nathaire was lying pallid and motionless. It seemed that the dwarf was dead, or had fallen into a stupor preceding death. Then

the choral voices, crying their dreadful incantation, rose higher in Satanic triumph; the vapors eddied like a hell-born cloud, coiling about the sorcerers in python-shaped volumes, and hiding again the Orient couch and its corpse-like occupant.

A thralldom of measureless evil oppressed the air. Gaspard felt that the awful transmigration, evoked and implored with ever-swelling, liturgic blasphemies, was about to take place – had perhaps already occurred. He thought that the breathing giant stirred, like one who tosses in light slumber.

Soon the towering, massively recumbent bulk was interposed between Gaspard and the chanting necromancers. They had not seen him; and he now dared to run swiftly, and gained the courtyard unpursued and unchallenged. Thence, without looking back, he fled like a devil-hunted thing upon the steep and chasm-riven slopes below Ylourgne.

7. The Coming of the Colossus

After the cessation of the exodus of liches, a universal terror still prevailed; a wide-flung shadow of apprehension, infernal and funereal, lay stagnantly on Averoigne. There were strange and disastrous portents in the aspect of the skies: flame-bearded meteors had been seen to fall beyond the eastern hills: a comet, far in the south, had swept the stars with its luminous bosom for a few nights, and had then faded, leaving among men the prophecy of bale and pestilence to come. By day the air was oppressed and sultry, and the blue heavens were heated as if by whitish fires. Clouds of thunder, darkling and withdrawn, shook their fulgurant lances on the far horizons, like some beleaguering Titan army. A murrain, such as would come from the working of wizard spells, was abroad among the cattle. All these signs and prodigies were an added heaviness on the burdened spirits of men, who went to and fro in daily fear of the hidden preparations and machinations of hell.

But, until the actual breaking-forth of the incubated menace, there was no one, save Gaspard du Nord, who had knowledge of its veritable form. And Gaspard, fleeing headlong beneath the gibbous moon toward Vyones, and fearing

to hear the tread of a colossal pursuer at any moment, had thought it more than useless to give warning in such towns and villages as lay upon his line of flight. Where, indeed – even if warned – could men hope to hide themselves from the awful thing, begotten by Hell on the ravished charnel, that would walk forth like the Anakim to visit its roaring wrath on a trampled world?

So, all that night, and throughout the day that followed, Gaspard du Nord, with the dried slime of the oubliette on his briar-shredded raiment, plunged like a madman through the towering woods that were haunted by robbers and were-wolves. The westward-falling moon flickered in his eyes betwixt the gnarled, somber boles as he ran; and the dawn overtook him with the pale shafts of its searching arrows. The noon poured over him its white sultriness, like furnace-heated metal sublimed into light; and the clotted filth that clung to his tatters was again turned into slime by his own sweat. But still he pursued his nightmare-harried way, while a vague, seemingly hopeless plan took form in his mind.

In the interim, several monks of the Cistercian brotherhood, watching the gray walls of Ylourgne at early dawn with their habitual vigilance, were the first, after Gaspard, to behold the monstrous horror created by the necromancers. Their account may have been somewhat tinged by a pious exaggeration; but they swore that the giant rose abruptly, standing more than waist-high above the ruins of the barbican, amid a sudden leaping of long-tongued fires and a swirling of pitchy fumes erupted from Malebolge. The giant's head was level with the high top of the donjon, and his right arm, out-thrust, lay like a bar of stormy cloud athwart the new-risen sun.

The monks fell grovelling to their knees, thinking that the Archfoe himself had come forth, using Ylourgne for his gateway from the Pit. Then, across the mile-wide valley, they heard a thunderous peal of demoniac laughter; and the giant, climbing over the mounded barbican at a single step, began to descend the scarped and craggy hill.

When he drew nearer, bounding from slope to slope, his features were manifestly those of some great devil animated with ire and malice toward the sons of Adam. His hair, in

matted locks, streamed behind him like a mass of black pythons; his naked skin was livid and pale and cadaverous, like the skin of the dead; but beneath it, the stupendous thews of a Titan swelled and rippled. The eyes, wide and glaring, flamed like lidless cauldrons heated by the fires of the unplumbed Pit.

The rumour of his coming passed like a gale of terror through the Monastery. Many of the Brothers, deeming discretion the better part of religious fervor, hid themselves in the stone-hewn cellars and vaults. Others crouched in their cells, mumbling and shrieking incoherent pleas to all the Saints. Still others, the most courageous, repaired in a body to the chapel and knelt in solemn prayer before the wooden Christ on the great crucifix.

Bernard and Stéphane, now somewhat recovered from their grievous beating, alone dared to watch the advance of the giant. Their horror was inexpressibly increased when they began to recognize in the colossal features a magnified likeness to the lineaments of that evil dwarf who had presided over the dark, unhallowed activities of Ylourgne; and the laughter of the colossus, as he came down the valley, was like a tempest-borne echo of the damnable cachinnation that had followed their ignominious flight from the haunted stronghold. To Bernard and Stéphane, however, it seemed merely that the dwarf, who was no doubt an actual demon, had chosen to appear in his natural form.

Pausing in the valley-bottom, the giant stood opposite the monastery with his flame-filled eyes on a level with the window from which Bernard and Stéphane were peering. He laughed again – an awful laugh, like a subterranean rumbling – and then, stooping, he picked up a handful of boulders as if they had been pebbles, and proceeded to pelt the monastery. The boulders crashed against the walls, as if hurled from great catapults or mangonels of war; but the stout building held, though shaken grievously.

Then, with both hands, the colossus tore loose an immense rock that was deeply embedded in the hillside; and lifting this rock, he flung it at the stubborn walls. The tremendous mass broke in an entire side of the chapel; and those who had gathered therein were found later, crushed into bloody pulp amid the splinters of their carven Christ.

After that, as if disdaining to palter any further with a prey so insignificant, the colossus turned his back on the little monastery, and like some fiend-born Goliath, went roaring down the valley into Averoigne.

As he departed. Bernard and Stéphane, still watching from their window, saw a thing they had not perceived heretofore: a huge basket made of planking, that hung suspended by ropes between the giant's shoulders. In the basket, ten men – the pupils and assistants of Nathaire – were being carried like so many dolls or puppets in a peddler's pack.

Of the subsequent wanderings and depredations of the colossus, a hundred legends were long current throughout Averoigne: tales of an unexampled ghastliness, a wanton diabolism without parallel in all the histories of that demon-pestered land.

The goatherds of the hills below Ylourgne saw him coming, and fled with their nimble-footed flocks to the highest ridges. To these he paid little heed, merely trampling them down like beetles when they could not escape from his path. Following the hill-stream that was the source of the river Isoile, he came to the verge of the great forest; and here, it is related, he tore up a towering ancient pine by the roots, and snapping off the mighty boughs with his hands, shaped it into a cudgel which he carried henceforward.

With this cudgel, heavier than a battering-ram, he pounded into shapeless ruin a wayside shrine in the outer woods. A hamlet fell in his way, and he strode through it, beating in the roofs, toppling the walls, and crushing the inhabitants beneath his feet.

To and fro in a mad frenzy of destruction, like a death-drunken Cyclops, he wandered all that day. Even the fierce beasts of the woodland ran from him in fear. The wolves, in mid-hunt, abandoned their quarry and retired howling dismally with terror, to their rocky dens. The black, savage hunting-dogs of the forest barons would not face him, and hid whimpering in their kennels.

Men heard his mighty laughter, his stormy bellowing; they saw his approach from a distance of many leagues, and fled or concealed themselves as best they could. The lords of moated castles called in their men-at-arms, drew up their

drawbridges and prepared as if for the siege of an army. The peasants hid themselves in caverns, in cellars, in old wells, and even beneath hay-mounds, hoping that he would pass them by unnoticed. The churches were crammed with refugees who sought the protection of the Cross, deeming that Satan himself, or one of his chief lieutenants, had risen to harry and lay waste the land.

In a voice like summer thunder, mad maledictions, unthinkable obscenities and blasphemies were uttered ceaselessly by the giant as he went to and fro. Men heard him address the litter of black-clad figures that he carried on his back, in tones of admonishment or demonstration such as a master would use to his pupils. People who had known Nathaire recognized the incredible likeness of the huge features, the similarity of the swollen voice, to his. A rumour went abroad that the dwarf sorcerer, through his loathly bond with the Adversary, had been permitted to transfer his hateful soul into this Titanic form; and, bearing his pupils with him, had returned to vent an insatiable ire, a bottomless rancor, on the world that had mocked him for his puny physique and reviled him for his sorcery. The charnel genesis of the monstrous avatar was also rumored; and, indeed, it was said that the colossus had openly proclaimed his identity.

It would be tedious to make explicit mention of all the enormities, all the atrocities, that were ascribed to the marauding giant . . . There were people – mostly priests and women, it is told – whom he picked up as they fled, and pulled limb from limb as a child might quarter an insect . . . And there were worse things, not to be named in this record . . .

Many eye-witnesses told how he hunted Pierre, the Lord of La Frênaie, who had gone forth with his dogs and men to chase a noble stag in the near-by forest. Overtaking horse and rider, he caught them with one hand, and bearing them aloft as he strode over the tree-tops, he hurled them later against the granite walls of the Château of La Frênaie in passing. Then, catching the red stag that Pierre had hunted, he flung it after them; and the huge bloody blotches made by the impact of the pashed bodies remained long on the castle

stone, and were never wholly washed away by the autumn rains and the winter snows.

Countless tales were told, also, of the deeds of obscene sacrilege and profanation committed by the colossus: of the wooden Virgin that he flung into the Isoile above Ximes, lashed with human gut to the rotting, mail-clad body of an infamous outlaw; of the wormy corpses that he dug with his hands from unconsecrated graves and hurled into the courtyard of the Benedictine abbey of Perigon; of the Church of Ste. Zenobie, which he buried with its priests and congregation beneath a mountain of ordure made by the gathering of all the dungheaps from neighboring farms.

8. *The Laying of the Colossus*

Back and forth, in an irregular, drunken, zigzag course, from end to end and side to side of the harried realm, the giant strode without pause, like an energumen possessed by some implacable fiend of mischief and murder, leaving behind him, as a reaper leaves his swath, an ever-lengthening zone of havoc, of rapine and carnage. And when the sun, blackened by the smoke of burning villages, had set luridly beyond the forest, men still saw him moving in the dusk, and heard still the portentous rumbling of his mad, stormy cachinnation.

Nearing the gates of Vyones at sunset, Gaspard du Nord saw behind him, through gaps in the ancient wood, the far-off head and shoulders of the terrible colossus, who moved along the Isoile, stooping from sight at intervals in some horrid deed.

Though numb with weariness and exhaustion, Gaspard quickened his flight. He did not believe, however, that the monster would try to invade Vyones, the especial object of Nathaire's hatred and malice, before the following day. The evil soul of the sorcerous dwarf, exulting in its almost infinite capacity for harm and destruction, would defer the crowning act of vengeance, and would continue to terrorize, during the night, the outlying villages and rural districts.

In spite of his rags and filth, which rendered him practically unrecognizable and gave him a most disreputable air,

Gaspard was admitted without question by the guards at the city gate. Vyones was already thronged with people who had fled to the sanctuary of its stout walls from the adjacent countryside; and no one, not even of the most dubious character, was denied admittance. The walls were lined with archers and pike-bearers, gathered in readiness to dispute the entrance of the giant. Crossbowmen were stationed above the gates, and mangonels were mounted at short intervals along the entire circuit of the ramparts. The city seethed and hummed like an agitated hive.

Hysteria and pandemonium prevailed in the streets. Pale, panic-stricken faces milled everywhere in an aimless stream. Hurrying torches flared dolorously in the twilight that deepened as if with the shadow of impending wings arisen from Erebus. The gloom was clogged with intangible fear, with webs of stifling oppression. Through all this rout of wild disorder and frenzy, Gaspard, like a spent but indomitable swimmer breasting some tide of eternal, viscid nightmare, made his way slowly to his attic lodgings.

Afterward, he could scarcely remember eating and drinking. Overworn beyond the limit of bodily and spiritual endurance, he threw himself down on his pallet without removing his ooze-stiffened tatters, and slept soddenly till an hour half-way between midnight and dawn.

He awoke with the death-pale beams of the gibbous moon shining upon him through his window; and rising, spent the balance of the night in making certain occult preparations which, he felt, offered the only possibility of coping with the fiendish monster that had been created and animated by Nathaire.

Working feverishly by the light of the westering moon and a single dim taper, Gaspard assembled various ingredients of familiar alchemic use which he possessed, and compounded from these, through a long and somewhat cabalistic process, a dark-gray powder which he had seen employed by Nathaire on numerous occasions. He had reasoned that the colossus, being formed from the bones and flesh of dead men unlawfully raised up, and energized only by the soul of a dead sorcerer, would be subject to the influence of this powder, which Nathaire had used for the laying of resurrected liches. The powder, if cast in the

nostrils of such cadavers, would cause them to return peacefully to their tombs and lie down in a renewed slumber of death.

Gaspard made a considerable quantity of the mixture, arguing that no mere finger-pinch would suffice for the lulling of the gigantic charnel monstrosity. His guttering yellow candle was dimmed by the white dawn as he ended the Latin formula of fearsome verbal invocation from which the compound would derive much of its efficacy. The formula, which called for the co-operation of Alastor and other evil spirits, he used with unwillingness. But he knew that there was no alternative: sorcery could be fought only with sorcery.

Morning came with new terrors to Vyones. Gaspard had felt, through a sort of intuition, that the vengeful colossus, who was said to have wandered with unhuman tirelessness and diabolic energy all night through Averoigne, would approach the hated city early in the day. His intuition was confirmed; for scarcely had he finished his occult labours when he heard a mounting hubbub in the streets, and above the shrill, dismal clamor of frightened voices, the far-off roaring of the giant.

Gaspard knew that he must lose no time, if he were to post himself in a place of vantage from which he could throw his powder into the nostrils of the hundred-foot colossus. The city walls, and even most of the church spires, were not lofty enough for this purpose; and a brief reflection told him that the great cathedral, standing at the core of Vyones, was the one place from whose roof he could front the invader with success. He felt sure that the men-at-arms on the walls could do little to prevent the monster from entering and wreaking his malevolent will. No earthly weapon could injure a being of such bulk and nature; for even a cadaver of normal size, reared up in this fashion, could be shot full of arrows or transfixed by a dozen pikes without retarding its progress.

Hastily he filled a huge leathern pouch with the powder; and carrying the pouch at his belt, he joined the agitated press of people in the street. Many were fleeing toward the cathedral, to seek the shelter of its august sanctity; and he

had only to let himself be borne along by the frenzy-driven stream.

The cathedral nave was packed with worshippers, and solemn masses were being said by priests whose voices faltered at times with inward panic. Unheeded by the wan, despairing throng, Gaspard found a flight of coiling stairs that led tortuously to the gargoyle-warded roof of the high tower.

Here he posted himself, crouching behind the stone figure of a cat-headed griffin. From his vantage he could see, beyond the crowded spires and gables, the approaching giant, whose head and torso loomed above the city walls. A cloud of arrows, visible even at that distance, rose to meet the monster, who apparently did not even pause to pluck them from his hide. Great boulders hurled from mangonels were no more to him than a pelting of gravel; the heavy bolts of arbalests, embedded in his flesh, were mere slivers.

Nothing could stay his advance. The tiny figures of a company of pikemen, who opposed him with out-thrust weapons, were swept from the wall above the eastern gate by a single sidelong blow of the seventy-foot pine that he bore for a cudgel. Then, having cleared the wall, the colossus climbed over it into Vyones.

Roaring, chuckling, laughing like a maniacal Cyclops, he strode along the narrow streets between houses that rose only to his waist, trampling without mercy everyone who could not escape in time, and smashing in the roofs with stupendous blows of his bludgeon. With a push of his left hand he broke off the protruding gables, and overturned the church steeples with their bells clanging in dolorous alarm as they went down. A woeful shrieking and wailing of hysteria-laden voices accompanied his passing.

Straight toward the cathedral he came, as Gaspard had calculated, feeling that the high edifice would be made the special butt of his malevolence.

The streets were now emptied of people; but, as if to hunt them out and crush them in their hiding-places, the giant thrust his cudgel like a battering-ram through walls and windows and roofs as he went by. The ruin and havoc that he left was indescribable.

Soon he loomed opposite the cathedral tower on which Gaspard waited behind the gargoyle. His head was level with the tower, and his eyes flamed like wells of burning brimstone as he drew near. His lips were parted over stalactitic fangs in a hateful snarl; and he cried out in a voice like the rumbling of articulate thunder:

'Ho! ye puling priests and devotees of a powerless God! Come forth and bow to Nathaire the master, before he sweeps you into limbo!'

It was then that Gaspard, with a hardihood beyond comparison, rose from his hiding-place and stood in full view of the raging colossus.

'Draw nearer, Nathaire, if indeed it be you, foul robber of tombs and charnels,' he taunted. 'Come close, for I would hold speech with you.'

A monstrous look of astonishment dimmed the diabolic rage on the colossal features. Peering at Gaspard as if in doubt or incredulity, the giant lowered his lifted cudgel and stepped close to the tower, till his face was only a few feet from the intrepid student. Then, when he had apparently convinced himself of Gaspard's identity, the look of maniacal wrath returned, flooding his eyes with Tartarean fire and twisting his lineaments into a mask of Apollyon-like malignity. His left arm came up in a prodigious arc, with twitching fingers that poised horribly above the head of the youth, casting upon him a vulture-black shadow in the full-risen sun. Gaspard saw the white, startled faces of the necromancer's pupils, peering over his shoulder from their plank-built basket.

'Is it you, Gaspard, my recreant pupil?' the colossus roared stormily. 'I thought you were rotting in the oubliette beneath Ylourgne – and now I find you perched atop of this accursed cathedral which I am about to demolish! ... You had been far wiser to remain where I left you, my good Gaspard.'

His breath, as he spoke, blew like a charnel-polluted gale on the student. His vast fingers, with blackened nails like shovel-blades, hovered in ogreish menace. Gaspard had furtively loosened his leathern pouch that hung at his belt, and had untied its mouth. Now, as the twitching fingers descended toward him, he emptied the contents of the pouch

in the giant's face, and the fine powder, mounting in a dark-gray cloud, obscured the snarling lips and palpitating nostrils from his view.

Anxiously he watched the effect, fearing that the powder might be useless after all, against the superior arts and Satanical resources of Nathaire. But miraculously, as it seemed, the evil lambence died in the pit-deep eyes, as the monster inhaled the flying cloud. His lifted hand, narrowly missing the crouching youth in its sweep, fell lifelessly at his side. The anger was erased from the mighty, contorted mask, as if from the face of a dead man; the great cudgel fell with a crash to the empty street; and then, with drowsy, lurching steps and listless, hanging arms, the giant turned his back to the cathedral and retraced his way through the devastated city.

He muttered dreamily to himself as he went; and people who heard him swore that the voice was no longer the awful, thunder-swollen voice of Nathaire, but the tones and accents of a multitude of men, amid which the voices of certain of the ravished dead were recognizable. And the voice of Nathaire himself, no louder now than in life, was heard at intervals through the manifold mutterings, as if protesting angrily.

Climbing the eastern wall as it had come, the colossus went to and fro for many hours, no longer wreaking a hellish wrath and rancor, but searching, as people thought, for the various tombs and graves from which the hundreds of bodies that composed it had been so foully reft. From charnel to charnel, from cemetery to cemetery it went, through all the land; but there was no grave anywhere in which the dead colossus could lie down.

Then, toward evening, men saw it from afar on the red rim of the sky, digging with its hands in the soft, loamy plain beside the river Isoile. There, in a monstrous and self-made grave, the colossus laid itself down, and did not rise again. The ten pupils of Nathaire, it was believed, unable to descend from their basket, were crushed beneath the mighty body; for none of them was ever seen thereafter.

For many days no one dared to approach the place where the corpse lay uncovered in its self-dug grave. And so the

thing rotted prodigiously beneath the summer sun, breeding a mighty stench that wrought pestilence in that portion of Averoigne. And they who ventured to go near in the following autumn, when the stench had lessened greatly, swore that the voice of Nathaire, still protesting angrily, was heard by them to issue from the enormous, rook-haunted bulk.

Of Gaspard du Nord, who had been the savior of the province, it was related that he lived in much honour to a ripe age, being the one sorcerer of that region who at no time incurred the disapprobation of the Church.

THE LAST OF THE DAUBENY-FITZALANS

by Arnold Harvey

'THEY were a queer family, the Daubeny-FitzAlans,' the vicar mused. 'Amateur scientists amongst other things. They do say that for three or four generations, father and son and grandson, they were experimenting with the generation of life, trying to discover a means to convert chemical compounds into living creatures.'

'Did they succeed?'

'Of course not.' The vicar sniffed contemptuously. 'There were the usual rumours that they built a strange man-like creature, but of course there was no truth in it.'

'I can just imagine it,' I said, looking across the valley at the gloomy many-roofed Tudor mansion, and trying to shut out of my mind the loud noises of shovelling and banging from the parish church behind us, where they were digging up the floor of the chancel. 'A long workshop on the first floor, with dark panelled walls; test tubes and retorts, and homunculi in jars lined up in rows on shelves—'

'Homunculi?' queried the vicar.

'Little man-like creatures. That's the kind of thing these alchemist fellows tried to bring alive.'

'Yes, of course. It's just rather odd that the idea should have occurred to you in this context. You see the Daubeny-FitzAlans were homunculi themselves. I don't mean they were brought to life in their own laboratory, just that smallness ran in the family. They were all pygmies, from generation to generation, each generation smaller than the one before. Except for the last of them, Sir Forbes Daubeny-FitzAlan. He was a giant. They have some of his dress-suits in the County Museum – he must have been seven foot four inches at least. He had to import horses from Flanders to ride. The only native horses that could carry his weight were cart-horses, which were of course totally unsuitable

for a man of his birth and wealth. They say the strongest chairs used to break under him and that when he died, it took twelve men to carry the coffin out of the house.'

'Twelve?'

'So they say.' The vicar pulled a gold watch from his waistcoat. 'They should have got to his coffin by now,' he said, inclining his head towards the church behind us.

It was a Norman church, the only one in anything like its original state in the county, and it was being restored. That was why they were digging up the chancel floor: to strengthen the foundations.

We moved towards the south porch. The vicar continued with his two hundred year old gossip. Like most country clergymen he was a devoted student of his parish's history.

'He was rather a mystery man, Sir Forbes Daubeny-FitzAlan,' he said. 'There was not even any mention of there being a baby at the time of the death of his mother, Lady Amelia Daubeny-FitzAlan. Not that anyone in the village or in any of the neighbouring great houses even knew a tenth of what was going on in Daubeny Hall. No-one even knew the boy existed till he was already full-grown. Incredible, isn't it? He was educated at home, probably by his father or by one of his father's assistants, and never left the neighbourhood during his entire life. He became a Justice of the Peace of course, when his father died and he inherited the baronetcy, but he never served on the bench, none of the family did.'

'What became of him?'

'He died of some perfectly loathsome disease. He must have been about fifty. Apparently he always suffered from some kind of eczema but it became worse and worse, till it seemed his flesh was actually decomposing on him as he walked about his house and grounds. That's why he never married, I suppose. No-one would have wanted him, even with his money. And perhaps he wasn't interested either; there was never any local talk of his tampering with the farm girls.'

We entered the church. At the further end a number of workmen were grouped under a scaffold. Beside them were several very old coffins. None of them were longer than five feet.

'This one makes up for all the rest,' said the foreman as we

approached. We peered over the edge of the dank-smelling hole. The last remaining coffin was over eight feet long and broad in proportion. A harness had been fastened around it; they were about to start hoisting it out.

There were six of them and there was a complicated pulley system which helped take much of the weight, but even so it was fully five minutes before they had lifted the coffin clear of the hole. It was a good solid job, of oak, smeared with cobwebs and mould, but with the silver handles and name-plate still in good condition.

'Lord, it's heavy,' said the foreman.

'Perhaps there's a lead lining,' I suggested. I turned to the vicar. 'Are you going to open it?'

'Certainly not.' He seemed almost scandalized by the idea. 'We shall remove these coffins to a partially empty tomb in the churchyard for the duration of the restoration work, and then replace them. To do anything else would be most improper.'

I was just about to say, as delicately as I could, that this was a great pity, as I would have dearly liked to have seen a giant's bones, when the harnessing gave way on the massive coffin and it fell to the floor. I don't think the wood was particularly rotten; it must have been the way it fell with its corner striking the flagstones first. It split, right down its whole length, and the bones I had wanted to see came tumbling out.

They were enormous. They were obviously extremely heavy, too, for they did not clatter and bounce the way dried bones normally do when thrown down, but merely thudded immovably on to the flagstones. The other peculiar thing about them was their colour. They were almost black. At first I thought this blackness was caused by the dried and darkened skin having shrunk over the bones, but a second glance told me that they were completely naked. And it was a very distinctive blackish colour, more like very dark green.

I think we all realized at about the same time what that dark green colour meant.

Sir Forbes Daubeny-FitzAlan's bones were solid brass.

THE DANCING PARTNER

by Jerome K. Jerome

'THIS story,' commenced MacShaugnassy, 'comes from Furtwangen, a small town in the Black Forest. There lived there a very wonderful old fellow named Nicholaus Geibel. His business was the making of mechanical toys, at which work he had acquired an almost European reputation. He made rabbits that would emerge from the heart of a cabbage, flop their ears, smooth their whiskers, and disappear again; cats that would wash their faces, and mew so naturally that dogs would mistake them for real cats, and fly at them; dolls, with phonographs concealed within them, that would raise their hats and say, "Good morning; how do you do?" and some that would even sing a song.

'But he was something more than a mere mechanic; he was an artist. His work was with him a hobby, almost a passion. His shop was filled with all manner of strange things that never would, or could, be sold – things he had made for the pure love of making them. He had contrived a mechanical donkey that would trot for two hours by means of stored electricity, and trot, too, much faster than the live article, and with less need for exertion on the part of the driver; a bird that would shoot up into the air, fly round and round in a circle, and drop to earth at the exact spot from where it started; a skeleton that, supported by an upright iron bar, would dance a hornpipe; a life-size lady doll that could play the fiddle; and a gentleman with a hollow inside who could smoke a pipe and drink more lager beer than any three average German students put together, which is saying much.

'Indeed, it was the belief of the town that old Geibel could make a man capable of doing everything that a respectable man need want to do. One day he made a man who did too much, and it came about in this way:

'Young Doctor Follen had a baby, and the baby had a birthday. Its first birthday put Doctor Follen's household into somewhat of a flurry, but on the occasion of its second birthday, Mrs. Doctor Follen gave a ball in honour of the event. Old Geibel and his daughter Olga were among the guests.

'During the afternoon of the next day some three or four of Olga's bosom friends, who had also been present at the ball, dropped in to have a chat about it. They naturally fell to discussing the men, and to criticizing their dancing. Old Geibel was in the room, but he appeared to be absorbed in his newspaper, and the girls took no notice of him.

' "There seem to be fewer men who can dance at every ball you go to," said one of the girls.

' "Yes, and don't the ones who can give themselves airs," said another; "they make quite a favour of asking you."

' "And how stupidly they talk," added a third. "They always say exactly the same things: 'How charming you are looking tonight.' 'Do you often go to Vienna? Oh, you should, it's delightful.' 'What a charming dress you have on.' 'What a warm day it has been.' 'Do you like Wagner?' I do wish they'd think of something new."

' "Oh, I never mind how they talk," said a fourth. "If a man dances well he may be a fool for all I care."

' "He generally is," slipped in a thin girl, rather spitefully.

' "I go to a ball to dance," continued the previous speaker, not noticing the interruption. "All I ask of a partner is that he shall hold me firmly, take me round steadily, and not get tired before I do."

' "A clockwork figure would be the thing for you," said the girl who had interrupted.

' "Bravo!" cried one of the others, clapping her hands, "what a capital idea!"

' "What's a capital idea?" they asked.

' "Why, a clockwork dancer, or, better still, one that would go by electricity and never run down."

'The girls took up the idea with enthusiasm.

' "Oh, what a lovely partner he would make," said one; "he would never kick you, or tread on your toes."

' "Or tear your dress," said another.

' "Or get out of step."

' "Or get giddy and lean on you."

' "And he would never want to mop his face with his handkerchief. I do hate to see a man do that after every dance."

' "And wouldn't want to spend the whole evening in the supper room."

' "Why, with a phonograph inside him to grind out all the stock remarks, you would not be able to tell him from a real man," said the girl who had first suggested the idea.

' "Oh, yes, you would," said the thin girl, "he would be so much nicer."

'Old Geibel had laid down his paper, and was listening with both his ears. On one of the girls glancing in his direction, however, he hurriedly hid himself again behind it.

'After the girls were gone, he went into his workshop, where Olga heard him walking up and down, and every now and then chuckling to himself; and that night he talked to her a good deal about dancing and dancing men – asked what they usually said and did – what dances were most popular – what steps were gone through, with many other questions bearing on the subject.

'Then for a couple of weeks he kept much to his factory, and was very thoughtful and busy, though prone at unexpected moments to break into a quiet low laugh, as if enjoying a joke that nobody else knew of.

'A month later another ball took place in Furtwangen. On this occasion it was given by old Wenzel, the wealthy timber merchant, to celebrate his niece's betrothal, and Geibel and his daughter were again among the invited.

'When the hour arrived to set out, Olga sought her father. Not finding him in the house, she tapped at the door of his workshop. He appeared in his shirt-sleeves, looking hot but radiant.

' "Don't wait for me," he said, "you go on, I'll follow you. I've got something to finish."

'As she turned to obey he called after her, "Tell them I'm going to bring a young man with me – such a nice young man, and an excellent dancer. All the girls will like him." Then he laughed and closed the door.

'Her father generally kept his doings secret from everybody, but she had a pretty shrewd suspicion of what he had

been planning, and so, to a certain extent, was able to prepare the guests for what was coming. Anticipation ran high, and the arrival of the famous mechanist was eagerly awaited.

'At length the sound of wheels was heard outside, followed by a great commotion in the passage, and old Wenzel himself, his jolly face red with excitement and suppressed laughter, burst into the room and announced in stentorian tones:

' "Herr Geibel – and a friend."

'Herr Geibel and his "friend" entered, greeted with shouts of laughter and applause, and advanced to the centre of the room.

' "Allow me, ladies and gentlemen," said Herr Geibel, "to introduce you to my friend, Lieutenant Fritz. Fritz, my dear fellow, bow to the ladies and gentlemen."

'Geibel placed his hand encouragingly on Fritz's shoulder, and the lieutenant bowed low, accompanying the action with a harsh clicking noise in his throat, unpleasantly suggestive of a death rattle. But that was only a detail.

' "He walks a little stiffly" (old Geibel took his arm and walked him forward a few steps. He certainly did walk stiffly), "but then, walking is not his forte. He is essentially a dancing man. I have only been able to teach him the waltz as yet, but at that he is faultless. Come, which of you ladies may I introduce him to as a partner. He keeps perfect time; he never gets tired; he won't kick you or tread on your dress; he will hold you as firmly as you like, and go as quickly or as slowly as you please; he never gets giddy; and he is full of conversation. Come, speak up for yourself, my boy."

'The old gentleman twisted one of the buttons at the back of his coat, and immediately Fritz opened his mouth, and in thin tones that appeared to proceed from the back of his head, remarked suddenly, "May I have the pleasure?" and then shut his mouth again with a snap.

'That Lieutenant Fritz had made a strong impression on the company was undoubted, yet none of the girls seemed inclined to dance with him. They looked askance at his waxen face, with its staring eyes and fixed smile, and shuddered. At last old Geibel came to the girl who had conceived the idea.

' "It is your own suggestion, carried out to the letter," said Geibel, "an electric dancer. You owe it to the gentleman to give him a trial."

'She was a bright, saucy little girl, fond of a frolic. Her host added his entreaties, and she consented.

'Herr Geibel fixed the figure to her. Its right arm was screwed round her waist, and held her firmly; its delicately-jointed left hand was made to fasten itself upon her right. The old toymaker showed her how to regulate its speed, and how to stop it, and release herself.

' "It will take you round in a complete circle," he explained; "be careful that no one knocks against you, and alters its course."

'The music struck up. Old Geibel put the current in motion, and Annette and her strange partner began to dance.

'For a while everyone stood watching them. The figure performed its purpose admirably. Keeping perfect time and step, and holding its little partner tight clasped in an unyielding embrace, it revolved steadily, pouring forth at the same time a constant flow of squeaky conversation, broken by brief intervals of grinding silence.

' "How charming you are looking tonight," it remarked in its thin, far-away voice. "What a lovely day it has been. Do you like dancing? How well our steps agree. You will give me another, won't you? Oh, don't be so cruel. What a charming gown you have on. Isn't waltzing delightful? I could go dancing for ever – with you. Have you had supper?"

'As she grew more familiar with the uncanny creature, the girl's nervousness wore off, and she entered into the fun of the thing.

' "Oh, he's just lovely," she cried, laughing, "I could go on dancing with him all my life."

'Couple after couple now joined them, and soon all the dancers in the room were whirling round behind them. Nicholaus Geibel stood looking on, beaming with childish delight at his success.

'Old Wenzel approached him, and whispered something in his ear. Geibel laughed and nodded, and the two worked their way quietly towards the door.

'"This is the young people's house tonight," said Wenzel, as soon as they were outside; "you and I will have a quiet pipe and a glass of hock, over in the counting-house."

'Meanwhile the dancing grew more fast and furious. Little Annette loosened the screw regulating her partner's rate of progress, and the figure flew round with her swifter and swifter. Couple after couple dropped out exhausted, but they only went the faster, till at length they remained dancing alone.

'Madder and madder became the waltz. The music lagged behind: the musicians, unable to keep pace, ceased, and sat staring. The younger guests applauded, but the older faces began to grow anxious.

'"Hadn't you better stop, dear," said one of the women, "you'll make yourself so tired."

'But Annette did not answer.

'"I believe she's fainted," cried out a girl who had caught sight of her face as it was swept by.

'One of the men sprang forward and clutched at the figure, but its impetus threw him down on to the floor, where its steel-cased feet laid bare his cheek. The thing evidently did not intend to part with its prize easily.

'Had anyone retained a cool head, the figure, one cannot help thinking, might easily have been stopped. Two or three men acting in concert might have lifted it bodily off the floor, or have jammed it into a corner. But few human heads are capable of remaining cool under excitement. Those who are not present think how stupid must have been those who were; those who are reflect afterwards how simple it would have been to do this, that, or the other, if only they had thought of it at the time.

'The women grew hysterical. The men shouted contradictory directions to one another. Two of them made a bungling rush at the figure, which had the result of forcing it out of its orbit in the centre of the room, and sending it crashing against the walls and furniture. A stream of blood showed itself down the girl's white frock, and followed her along the floor. The affair was becoming horrible. The women rushed screaming from the room. The men followed them.

'One sensible suggestion was made: "Find Geibel – fetch Geibel."

'No one had noticed him leave the room, no one knew where he was. A party went in search of him. The others, too unnerved to go back into the ball-room, crowded outside the door and listened. They could hear the steady whir of the wheels upon the polished floor as the thing spun round and round; the dull thud as every now and again it dashed itself and its burden against some opposing object and ricocheted off in a new direction.

'And everlastingly it talked in that thin ghostly voice, repeating over and over the same formula: "How charming you are looking tonight. What a lovely day it has been. Oh, don't be so cruel. I could go on dancing for ever – with you. Have you had supper?"

'Of course they sought for Geibel everywhere but where he was. They looked in every room in the house, then they rushed off in a body to his own place, and spent precious minutes in waking up his deaf old housekeeper. At last it occurred to one of the party that Wenzel was missing also, and then the idea of the counting-house across the yard presented itself to them, and there they found him.

'He rose up, very pale, and followed them; and he and old Wenzel forced their way through the crowd of guests gathered outside, and entered the room, and locked the door behind them.

'From within there came the muffled sound of low voices and quick steps, followed by a confused scuffling noise, then silence, then the low voices again.

'After a time the door opened, and those near it pressed forward to enter, but old Wenzel's broad shoulders barred the way.

' "I want you – and you, Bekler," he said, addressing a couple of the elder men. His voice was calm, but his face was deadly white. "The rest of you, please go – get the women away as quickly as you can."

'From that day old Nicholaus Geibel confined himself to the making of mechanical rabbits, and cats that mewed and washed their faces.'

MOXON'S MASTER

by Ambrose Bierce

'ARE you serious? Do you really believe that a machine thinks?'

I got no immediate reply; Moxon was apparently intent upon the coals in the grate, touching them deftly here and there with the fire-poker till they signified a sense of his attention by a brighter glow. For several weeks I had been observing in him a growing habit of delay in answering even the most trivial of commonplace questions. His air, however, was that of preoccupation rather than deliberation: one might have said that he had 'something on his mind.'

Presently he said:

'What is a "machine"? The word has been variously defined. Here is one definition from a popular dictionary: "Any instrument or organization by which power is applied and made effective, or a desired effect produced." Well, then, is not a man a machine? And you will admit that he thinks – or thinks he thinks.'

'If you do not wish to answer my question,' I said, rather testily, 'why not say so? All that you say is mere evasion. You know well enough that when I say "machine" I do not mean a man, but something that man has made and controls.'

'When it does not control him,' he said rising abruptly and looking out of a window, whence nothing was visible in the blackness of a stormy night. A moment later he turned about and with a smile said: 'I beg your pardon; I had no thought of evasion. I considered the dictionary man's unconscious testimony suggestive and worth something in the discussion. I can give your question a direct answer easily enough: I do believe that a machine thinks about the work that it is doing.'

That was direct enough, certainly. It was not altogether pleasing for it tended to confirm a sad suspicion that Moxon's devotion to study and work in his machine-shop had not been good for him. I knew, for one thing, that he suffered from insomnia, and that is no light affliction. Had it affected his mind? His reply to my question seemed to me then evidence that it had; perhaps I should think differently about it now. I was younger then, and among the blessings that are not denied to youth is ignorance. Incited by that great stimulant to controversy, I said:

'And what, pray, does it think with – in the absence of a brain?'

The reply, coming with less than his customary delay, took his favourite form of counter-interrogation:

'With what does a plant think – in the absence of a brain?'

'Ah, plants also belong to the philosopher class! I should be pleased to know some of their conclusions; you may omit the premises.'

'Perhaps,' he replied apparently unaffected by my foolish irony, 'you may be able to infer their convictions from their acts. I will spare you the familiar examples of the sensitive mimosa, the several insectivorous flowers and those whose stamens bend down and shake their pollen upon the entering bee in order that he may fertilize their distant mates. But observe this. In an open spot in my garden I planted a climbing vine. When it is barely above the surface I set a stake into the soil a yard away. The vine at once made for it, but as it was about to reach it after several days I removed it a few feet. The vine at once altered its course, making an acute angle, and again made for the stake. This manoeuvre was repeated several times, but finally, as if discouraged, the vine abandoned the pursuit and ignoring further attempts to divert it, travelled to a small tree, farther away, which it climbed.

'Roots of the eucalyptus will prolong themselves incredibly in search of moisture. A well-known horticulturist relates that one entered an old drain pipe and followed it until it came to a break, where a section of the pipe had been removed to make way for a stone wall that had been built across its course. The root left the drain and followed the wall until it found an opening where a stone had fallen out.

It crept through, and following the other side of the wall back to the drain, entered the unexplored part and resumed its journey.'

'And all this?'

'Can you miss the significance of it? It shows the consciousness of plants. It proves that they think.'

'Even if it did – what then? We were speaking, not of plants, but of machines. They may be composed partly of wood – wood that has no longer vitality – or wholly of metal. Is thought an attribute also of the mineral kingdom?'

'How else do you explain the phenomena, for example, of crystallization?'

'I do not explain them.'

'Because you cannot without affirming what you wish to deny, namely, intelligent co-operation among the constituent elements of the crystals. When soldiers form lines, or hollow squares, you call it reason. When wild geese in flight take the form of a letter V you say instinct. When the homogeneous atoms of a mineral, moving freely in solution, arrange themselves into shapes mathematically perfect, or particles of frozen moisture into the symmetrical and beautiful forms of snowflakes, you have nothing to say. You have not even invented a name to conceal your heroic unreason.'

Moxon was speaking with unusual animation and earnestness. As he paused I heard in an adjoining room known to me as his 'machine-shop', which no one but himself was permitted to enter, a singular thumping sound, as of some one pounding upon a table with an open hand. Moxon heard it at the same moment and, visibly agitated, rose and hurriedly passed into the room whence it came. I thought it odd that anyone else should be in there, and my interest in my friend – with doubtless a touch of unwarrantable curiosity – led me to listen intently, though, I am happy to say, not at the keyhole. There were confused sounds, as of a struggle or scuffle; the floor shook. I distinctly heard hard breathing and a hoarse whisper which said, 'Damn you!' Then all was silent, and presently Moxon reappeared and said, with a rather sorry smile:

'Pardon me for leaving you so abruptly. I have a machine in there that lost its temper and cut up rough.'

Fixing my eyes steadily upon his left cheek, which was traversed by four parallel excoriations showing blood, I said:

'How would it do to trim its nails?'

I could have spared myself the jest; he gave it no attention, but seated himself in the chair that he had left and resumed the interrupted monologue as if nothing had occurred:

'Doubtless you do not hold with those (I need not name them to a man of your reading) who have taught that all matter is sentient, that every atom is a living, feeling, conscious being. *I* do. There is no such thing as dead, inert matter: it is all alive; all instinct with force, actual and potential; all sensitive to the same forces in its environment, and susceptible to the contagion of higher and subtler ones residing in such superior organisms as it may be brought into relation with, as those of man when he is fashioning it into an instrument of his will. It absorbs something of his intelligence and purpose – more of them in proportion to the complexity of the resulting machine and that of its work.

'Do you happen to recall Herbert Spencer's definition of "Life"? I read it thirty years ago. He may have altered it afterwards, for anything I know, but in all that time I have been unable to think of a single word that could profitably be changed or added or removed. It seems to me not only the best definition, but the only possible one.

' "Life," ' he says, ' "is a definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external coexistences and sequences." '

'That defines the phenomenon,' I said, 'but gives no hint of its cause.'

'That,' he replied, 'is all that any definition can do. As Mill points out, we know nothing of cause except as an antecedent – nothing of effect except as a consequent. Of certain phenomena one never occurs without another, which is dissimilar: the first in point of time we call cause, the second, effect. One who had many times seen a rabbit pursued by a dog, and had never seen rabbits and dogs otherwise, would think the rabbit the cause of the dog.

'But I fear,' he added, laughing naturally enough, 'that my rabbit is leading me a long way from the track of my legitimate quarry: I'm indulging in the pleasure of the chase for

its own sake. What I want you to observe is that in Herbert Spencer's definition of "life" the activity of a machine is included – there is nothing in the definition that is not applicable to it. According to this sharpest of observers and deepest of thinkers, if a man during his period of activity is alive, so is a machine when in operation. As an inventor and constructor of machines I know that to be true.'

Moxon was silent for a long time, gazing absently into the fire. It was growing late and I thought it time to be going, but somehow I did not like the notion of leaving him in that isolated house, all alone except for the presence of some person of whose nature my conjectures could go no further than that it was unfriendly, perhaps malign. Leaning towards him and looking earnestly into his eyes while making a motion with my hand through the door of his workshop, I said:

'Moxon, whom have you in there?'

Somewhat to my surprise he laughed lightly and answered without hesitation:

'Nobody; the incident that you have in mind was caused by my folly in leaving a machine in action with nothing to act upon, while I undertook the interminable task of enlightening your understanding. Do you happen to know that Consciousness is the creature of Rhythm?'

'O bother them both!' I replied, rising and laying hold of my overcoat. 'I'm going to wish you good night; and I'll add the hope that the machine which you inadvertently left in action will have her gloves on the next time you think it needful to stop her.'

Without waiting to observe the effect of my shot I left the house.

Rain was falling, and the darkness was intense. In the sky beyond the crest of a hill towards which I groped my way along precarious plank sidewalks and across miry, unpaved streets I could see the faint glow of the city's lights, but behind me nothing was visible but a single window of Moxon's house. It glowed with what seemed to me a mysterious and fateful meaning. I knew it was an uncurtained aperture in my friend's 'machine-shop', and I had little doubt that he had resumed the studies interrupted by his duties as my instructor in mechanical consciousness and the

fatherhood of Rhythm. Odd, and in some degree humorous, as his convictions seemed to me at that time, I could not wholly divest myself of the feeling that they had some tragic relation to his life and character – perhaps to his destiny – although I no longer entertained the notion that they were the vagaries of a disordered mind. Whatever might be thought of his views, his exposition of them was too logical for that. Over and over, his last words came back to me: 'Consciousness is the creature of Rhythm.' Bald and terse as the statement was, I now found it infinitely alluring. At each recurrence it broadened in meaning and deepened in suggestion. Why, here (I thought) is something upon which to found a philosophy. If Consciousness is the product of Rhythm all things *are* conscious, for all have motion, and all motion is rhythmic. I wondered if Moxon knew the significance and breadth of his thought – the scope of this momentous generalization; or had he arrived at his philosophic faith by the tortuous and uncertain road of observation?

That faith was then new to me, and all Moxon's expounding had failed to make me a convert; but now it seemed as if a great light shone about me, like that which fell upon Saul of Tarsus; and out there in the storm and darkness and solitude I experienced what Lewes calls 'The endless variety and excitement of philosophic thought.' I exulted in a new sense of knowledge, a new pride of reason. My feet seemed hardly to touch the earth; it was as if I were uplifted and borne through the air by invisible wings.

Yielding to an impulse to seek further light from him whom I now recognized as my master and guide, I had unconsciously turned about, and almost before I was aware of having done so, found myself again at Moxon's door. I was drenched with rain, but felt no discomfort. Unable in my excitement to find the door-bell I instinctively tried the knob. It turned and, entering, I mounted the stairs to the room that I had so recently left. All was dark and silent; Moxon, as I had supposed, was in the adjoining room – the 'machine-shop'. Groping along the wall until I found the communicating door, I knocked loudly several times, but got no response, which I attributed to the uproar outside, for the wind was blowing a gale and dashing the rain against the

thin walls in sheets. The drumming upon the shingle roof spanning the unceiled room was loud and incessant.

I had never been invited into the machine-shop – had, indeed, been denied admittance, as had all others, with one exception, a skilled metal worker, of whom no one knew anything except that his name was Haley and his habit silence. But in my spiritual exaltation, discretion and civility were alike forgotten, and I opened the door. What I saw took all philosophical speculation out of me in short order.

Moxon sat facing me at the farther side of a small table upon which a single candle made all the light that was in the room. Opposite him, his back towards me, sat another person. On the table between the two was a chess-board; the men were playing. I knew little of chess, but as only a few pieces were on the board it was obvious that the game was near its close. Moxon was intensely interested – not so much, it seemed to me, in the game as in his antagonist, upon whom he had fixed so intent a look that, standing though I did directly in the line of his vision, I was altogether unobserved. His face was ghastly white, and his eyes glittered like diamonds. Of his antagonist I had only a back view, but that was sufficient; I should not have cared to see his face.

He was apparently not more than five feet in height, with proportions suggesting those of a gorilla – a tremendous breadth of shoulders, thick, short neck and broad, squat head, which had a tangled growth of black hair and was topped with a crimson fez. A tunic of the same colour, belted tightly to the waist, reached the seat – apparently a box – upon which he sat; his legs and feet were not seen. His left forearm appeared to rest in his lap; he moved his pieces with his right hand, which seemed disproportionately long.

I had shrunk back and now stood a little to one side of the doorway and in shadow. If Moxon had looked farther than the face of his opponent he could have observed nothing now, except that the door was open. Something forbade me either to enter or to retire, a feeling – I know not how it came – that I was in the presence of an imminent tragedy and might serve my friend by remaining. With a scarcely conscious rebellion against the indelicacy of the act, I remained.

The play was rapid. Moxon hardly glanced at the board

before making his moves, and to my unskilled eye seemed to move the piece most convenient to his hand, his motions in doing so being quick, nervous and lacking in precision. The response of his antagonist, while equally prompt in the inception, was made with a slow, uniform, mechanical and, I thought, somewhat theatrical movement of the arm, that was a sore trial to my patience. There was something unearthly about it all, and I caught myself shuddering. But I was wet and cold.

Two or three times after moving a piece the stranger slightly inclined his head, and each time I observed that Moxon shifted his king. All at once the thought came to me that the man was dumb. And then that he was a machine – an automaton chess-player! Then I remembered that Moxon had once spoken to me of having invented such a piece of mechanism, though I did not understand that it had actually been constructed. Was all this talk about the consciousness and intelligence of machines merely a prelude to eventual exhibition of this device – only a trick to intensify the effect of its mechanical action upon me in my ignorance of its secret?

A fine end this, of all my intellectual transports – my 'endless variety and excitement of philosophic thought'! I was about to retire in disgust when something occurred to hold my curiosity. I observed a shrug of the thing's great shoulders, as if it were irritated: and so natural was this – so entirely human – that in my new view of the matter it startled me. Nor was that all, for a moment later it struck the table sharply with its clenched hand. At that gesture Moxon seemed even more startled than I: he pushed his chair a little backward, as in alarm.

Presently Moxon, whose play it was, raised his hand high above the board, pounced upon one of his pieces like a sparrow-hawk, and with the exclamation 'checkmate!' rose quickly to his feet and stepped behind his chair. The automaton sat motionless.

The wind had now gone down, but I heard, at lessening intervals and progressively louder, the rumble and roll of thunder. In the pauses between I now became conscious of a low humming or buzzing which, like the thunder, grew momentarily louder and more distinct. It seemed to come from

the body of the automaton, and was unmistakably a whirring of wheels. It gave me the impression of a disordered mechanism which had escaped the repressive and regulating action of some controlling part – an effect such as might be expected if a pawl should be jostled from the teeth of a ratchet-wheel. But before I had time for much conjecture as to its nature my attention was taken by the strange motions of the automaton itself. A slight but continuous convulsion appeared to have possession of it. In body and head, it shook like a man with palsy or an ague chill, and the motion augmented every moment until the entire figure was in violent agitation. Suddenly it sprang to its feet and with a movement almost too quick for the eye to follow shot forward across table and chair, with both arms thrust forth to their full length – the posture and lunge of a diver. Moxon tried to throw himself backward out of reach, but he was too late: I saw the horrible thing's hands close upon his throat, his own clutch its wrists. Then the table was overturned, the candle thrown to the floor and extinguished, and all was black dark. But the noise of the struggle was dreadfully distinct, and most terrible of all were the raucous, squawking sounds made by the strangled man's efforts to breathe. Guided by the infernal hubbub, I sprang to the rescue of my friend, but had hardly taken a stride in the darkness when the whole room blazed with a blinding white light that burned into my brain and heart and memory a vivid picture of the combatants on the floor, Moxon underneath, his throat still in the clutch of those iron hands, his head forced backward, his eyes protruding, his mouth wide open and his tongue thrust out; and – horrible contrast! – upon the painted face of his assassin an expression of tranquil and profound thought, as in the solution of a problem in chess! This I observed, then all was blackness and silence.

Three days later I recovered consciousness in a hospital. As the memory of that tragic night slowly evolved in my ailing brain I recognized in my attendant Moxon's confidential workman, Haley. Responding to a look he approached, smiling.

'Tell me about it,' I managed to say, faintly – 'all about it.'

'Certainly,' he said; 'you were carried unconscious from a burning house – Moxon's. Nobody knows how you came to

be there. You may have to do a little explaining. The origin of the fire is a bit mysterious, too. My own notion is that the house was struck by lightning.'

'And Moxon?'

'Buried yesterday – what was left of him.'

Apparently this reticent person could unfold himself on occasion. When imparting shocking intelligence to the sick he was affable enough. After some moments of the keenest mental suffering I ventured to ask another question:

'Who rescued me?'

'Well, if that interests you – I did.'

'Thank you, Mr. Haley, and may God bless you for it. Did you rescue, also, that charming product of your skill, the automaton chess-player that murdered its inventor?'

The man was silent a long time, looking away from me. Presently he turned and gravely said:

'Do you know that?'

'I do,' I replied; 'I saw it done.'

That was many years ago. If asked today I should answer less confidently.

DR. KARNSTEIN'S CREATION

by Donald F. Glut

THE giant figure rested without movement upon the laboratory table. Crude bandages enwrapped the creature, giving it the appearance of an enormous mummy. Strong ropes bound it to the platform.

Dr. Karnstein gloated as he perceived the figure he had assembled with skillful hands and months of work. He walked through the drifting smoke that rose from his collection of test tubes and beakers. He passed by the generators and impressive electrodes that were silently awaiting the switch that would spark them to life, rivalling the ferocity of the approaching thunder-storm.

The scientist paused at the head of the creature and began to unwind the bandages that concealed the face he had given it.

Grinning, he let the train of bandages that had hidden the visage of his creation drop to the hard floor of the laboratory. Then he gazed down at the lifeless face.

Face?

As there were no windows in the laboratory, which had once been the torture chamber of the castle now inhabited by Dr. Karnstein, what there was of a face was illuminated by the meagre lighting of the room and by the glow of bubbling chemicals.

The excuse for a face that looked with closed eyes towards the transom above possessed the whiteness of death. The flesh was pulled tight over the skull and kept together by numerous stitches that covered much of the epidermis. The hair, long and matted, hung over the edge of the table. The mouth – with its hideously red lips – was closed, yet the skin bulged where it covered what must have been a splendid set of tusk-like teeth.

To a man not accustomed to the liberties taken by science, the face would have appeared a nightmare.

Dr. Karnstein only revelled in that which he had put together.

The great knife switch that would bring the first blast of electrical power into the creature glistened, seemingly beckoning him to make the connection and thus instill the first convulsions of life into the undead being.

He did not yet grasp the switch handle.

Instead his mind wandered beyond the laboratory, beyond the castle which now served him as workshop and home, to the time when he had first arrived in Transylvania...

'You say your name is Dr. Heinrich Karnstein?' asked the young man sitting across the table. 'And your family originally came from Switzerland?'

Dr. Karnstein nodded in the affirmative. His eyes glanced out of the window of the inn and lingered on the beauty of the countryside. The peaks of the Transylvanian Alps were fading with the haze of afternoon, the drifting mists swallowing the great forests at the timber line.

His eyes rested upon a stately structure jutting skyward.

'Dr. Karnstein?' the young man repeated, coughing to regain the older man's attention.

The scientist turned back to him with feigned embarrassment.

'Oh, I'm sorry,' said Dr. Karnstein. 'My mind was on other things. You certainly have a wonderful province here. Mountains, forests, that old castle on the hill. I couldn't take my eyes off that castle. It looks medieval.... Is it?'

'I believe so,' the young man answered, observing the older man closely.

It was obvious to him that Dr. Karnstein had aged prematurely. His face was unremarkable, hardly lined; nevertheless dark circles made his eyes appear distended. Grey lined his thick mass of black hair which hung in lengths over his ears and collar.

'The castle was built centuries ago,' the young man continued as though quoting from a tourist's brochure. 'No one has lived in it since.'

A vaguely sinister smile appeared on Dr. Karnstein's face.

He finished his mug of ale and returned it to the table.

'You still haven't answered me, sir,' the young man said. 'You have come from Switzerland?'

'In a roundabout way,' said the scientist finally. 'As I was orphaned in childhood it is difficult for me to say just where I have lived. From hearsay accounts I have since learned that my parents supposedly resided in some part of Switzerland. There I was born. Shortly afterwards, my mother died. My father took me abroad but, before long, he too passed on. I spent my life in countless households in countless countries, Germany and France amongst them.'

'Then what brings you here, if I may ask?' the young man inquired.

'Indeed you may ask,' said Dr. Heinrich Karnstein with a forced smile. 'I came to Transylvania for its isolation. You see, Herr—'

'Call me Carl,' the young man said, clinking his empty mug on the table. '. . . Carl Schreck.'

Carl noticed the grin which distorted Dr. Karnstein's lips.

'My name amuses you?' he asked.

'In a sense. *Schreck* means "terror" in German, a language I know well. It occurs to me that anyone with a name such as yours would have a difficult time of it living here in Transylvania.'

'Oh, you must mean the old legends. I for one have never believed the stories of Count Dracula and vampires and all the other fiends who supposedly once haunted this area. It's funny, you know. Here we are in 1931 and the peasants still bar their doors at night and put up wolfsbane and whatnot to keep supernatural monsters away.'

Dr. Karnstein's grin widened to show that he knew things of which he would not speak. 'And that, friend Carl,' he said, 'is one of the prime reasons I have come to your magnificent Transylvania. I am a scientist and the nature of my work depends on various – how should I say – rather *unorthodox* methods. It will be good to rely on the superstitions of the peasants to – shall we say – cover what their lack of schooling will not permit them to understand?'

Carl Schreck's expression showed concern.

'I'm afraid I don't understand, Dr. Karnstein . . .'

'You shall, Carl. You shall – in due time. Now let me pay

for our drinks and we will depart. For there is much to discuss.'

Dr. Karnstein dropped several coins upon the bar as he passed, leaving more than sufficient money to pay for their drinks.

As the two men, one mature and determined, the other youthful and filled with eagerness to learn, stepped out of the inn, they were watched with sullen suspicion by several of the other patrons.

The two men strolled amid the splendours of the Transylvanian countryside. Peasants in garb that must have dated back countless generations pushed their cattle and horses through the cobblestone streets. In the distance men could be seen both climbing and descending the jagged rock walls of the Alps.

Again Dr. Karnstein's eyes went to the castle on the mountain. He smiled with delight.

'That castle,' he said to Carl Schreck. 'I must have it for my work. Is it available for rent or purchase?'

'I'm sure it is,' Carl returned. 'The burgomaster is the man to see about that.'

'Then let's not waste any more time,' said Dr. Karnstein. 'There is much that I must do, but first I'll require that castle. Lead me to your burgomaster.'

Puzzled, Carl Schreck led his strange companion down the street. They entered the building where the burgomaster could be found sitting at his desk. Immediately Dr. Karnstein performed the actions necessary to buy the castle in the mountains.

The castle had apparently not been in use since it was built in the fifteenth century. There was no furniture to speak of and great spider's webs strung the rooms with ghostly netting.

Dr. Karnstein was particularly delighted at the large room that had once been used as a torture chamber. He smiled grimly when he saw the ancient devices of horror, testaments to the cruelties of a former age.

'Yes, friend Carl, this chamber will be perfect,' he said, nodding. 'Of course, we'll have to get rid of the old torture devices to make more room. I'll need all the space I can get for my equipment when it arrives.'

By Carl's expression, the scientist knew that the young man was more bewildered than ever.

'Equipment?' asked Carl Schreck. 'I'm afraid I don't understand you, doctor. What kind of equipment, and what did you mean before when you said you would be relying on the superstitions of Transylvania?'

Dr. Karnstein moved closer to the young man. When he spoke, his nostrils flared with passion.

'My boy,' he said, 'you have told me – not so much in words – that you are a curious sort. You said that you did not believe the superstitions of this area. I perceive in you a desire to learn, to delve into the secrets of Nature herself; those secrets which she treasures so dearly. Am I correct?'

The young man stammered: 'Perhaps, but ... I ...' He shrugged his helplessness.

'Carl,' said Dr. Karnstein, cutting him off, 'have you ever heard the name ... *Frankenstein*?'

'Frankenstein? No, I'm afraid I never have.'

'Living in the wilds of Transylvania has undoubtedly severed you from many things,' Dr. Karnstein observed. 'Frankenstein was the name of a scientist in the late eighteenth century. He had a dream – a wondrous dream – to steal from Nature her greatest secret; that of life!'

'This Frankenstein learned the origins of life?' asked Carl sceptically.

Karnstein's eyes glared with terrible zeal.

'More than that,' he said. 'Frankenstein did what no other man had even dared to consider. Believing that life could be created from death, Victor Frankenstein became a scientific ghoul. He robbed corpses from cemeteries, from morgues ... With these, and with animal tissue, he assembled a gigantic composite human being. It was hideous to behold. Nevertheless, Frankenstein did the impossible – the ultimate blasphemy according to the superstitious fools who have failed to realize that *nothing* is impossible in science. Frankenstein endowed the product of his handiwork with life!'

The words Carl had just heard sounded insane. He stared incredulously at the scientist with the repellently grinning mouth. Seconds passed before he could speak, then—

'You mean to tell me that a scientist living about a hundred and fifty years ago made a creature with his own hands

and brought it to life. That sounds like an impossibility – a bizarre joke!'

'I assure you it is no joke,' said Karnstein. 'And soon you shall know I speak the truth. For Frankenstein's experiment shall be repeated in this very chamber.'

The scientist's statement filled Carl's head with confusion. He found himself forced to take a step backwards. A spider was crawling up the wall and momentarily caught his attention. Then his head snapped round to face Dr. Karnstein: 'You mean that you plan to repeat the experiment of this obviously mad Victor Frankenstein!'

'Precisely.'

'In this very castle!'

'Probably exactly where you are standing.'

'Insanity!'

'*Reality!*'

Dr. Karnstein moved closer to him, and Carl retreated until he nearly touched a wall of the chamber. The older man's lips pulled back to show the black spaces between his teeth. He raised a finger towards Carl as if in accusation—

'I will now reveal to you what no other man has ever been told, Carl Schreck. There have been stories that my family name was not always Karnstein – but Frankenstein! That my branch of the family, generations ago, could no longer tolerate the stigma of Victor Frankenstein and the living horror he had created. That they were persecuted and allowed no forgiveness for what had happened so long ago in Switzerland, where the so-called Monster was created. It has been said that the name was changed to Karnstein and that my parents eventually died from grief, knowing that I might someday inherit the curse of the Frankensteins!'

Fear showed itself in Carl's face as he contemplated the obvious lunatic. He stumbled back and pressed himself against the cold stone wall of the torture chamber.

'I have no way of knowing whether or not I really am a Frankenstein,' continued the doctor. 'That is not important. What is important is the fact that I – like Victor Frankenstein – have always been possessed by the desire to perform that greatest of all scientific experiments, the creation of a living human being. That dream has haunted me, by day in my thoughts, by night in my dreams. I shall have no peace

until I have succeeded as did Victor Frankenstein . . .' His gaze swept over the torture chamber. 'In this very room I, Heinrich Karnstein, using my own techniques, shall create a man!'

Carl had no doubt that Dr. Karnstein, or Frankenstein, was truly a raving madman. Yet his words had a peculiar effect upon him. Life in Transylvania had proven unrewarding for the young man. Perhaps in Dr. Karnstein's mad scheme he might find relief from the boredom and monotony that had taken hold of his life.

'I have come to Transylvania,' said Dr. Karnstein, 'because it is here that my work can go unnoticed. I, like Victor Frankenstein, will need certain raw materials. Corpses stolen from graveyards, for example. I assume that if open graves are discovered in Transylvania, with the bodies taken from their resting place, the superstitious peasants will attribute the work to some unnatural monstrosity. Ghouls perhaps; those demons that are supposed to open graves in order to devour dead flesh.'

'You . . . you are going to rob . . . graves?' Carl stammered.

'Precisely,' said Karnstein, 'and that is where you shall fit into my plans. You see, friend Carl, I cannot perform this experiment alone. I'll need someone – someone young and strong like you – who can help with the physical work. I'll need an assistant. And in all of Transylvania you are the one person I have encountered with a brain; with any desire to learn what lies beyond the obvious. You *must* help me, Carl.'

The younger man paused in a silence that seemed unending. He watched the doctor's features contort into a dozen grim expressions. He wanted to flee the castle but remained fastened to the spot by the lingering thrill that the experiment might prove successful.

Again he considered the drab prospects of his life in Transylvania.

Once more Karnstein smiled his wry smile. 'Think of it, Carl,' he said. 'When the experiment is completed and I have created a living human being, my accomplishment will stun the world. I shall be held in highest esteem by the scientific world, and will reap great financial rewards.'

His hand rested upon Carl's shoulder.

'And you, Carl, will be right there with me. You shall

share in the honour, the wealth. You will tour the world with me when I exhibit my creation. Your name will be in the headlines of every great newspaper in the world!'

Myriad thoughts clashed in Carl's mind. He envisioned himself sent to the gallows as accomplice in the unholy crime of body-snatching. Then he thought of his name in print, the wealth heaped upon him, the high regard held for him by the greatest men of science.

For a full minute the debate continued inside him.

'I'll do it,' he said finally to Dr. Karnstein. 'I will be your assistant.'

The two men sealed the r partnership with a firm shaking of hands.

When the equipment began to arrive by horse-drawn wagon in the days that followed, Dr. Karnstein and Carl Schreck observed the murmuring peasants of Transylvania with scorn. *Gullible fools!* the two seekers into the unknown thought. Undoubtedly they believed some unholy demons lurked within the crates marked *Fragile* or *Laboratory Apparatus.*

The villagers stood about, gaping idiotically as Dr. Karnstein and his young assistant carried the crates inside the castle. Karnstein feared only the ignorance and hysteria of the masses. He knew that he might be inciting a situation not unlike the Salem witch trials. Nevertheless he ignored the peasants. After he had helped carry the final crate of the afternoon's delivery within the walls of the castle, he slammed the door in their anx ous faces.

The equipment was unpacked and assembled as it was delivered. Within a week the former torture chamber had undergone an incredible transformation. A generator stood where an Iron Maiden had once impaled living human beings. Elaborate wiring now snaked about the room where spider webs had been. A lengthy table, capable of supporting a figure of giant proportions, was placed in the centre of the laboratory, beneath a transom that could be opened to let in light from the outside.

Dr. Karnstein looked with pride upon his apparatus.

'There is no more work to be done on the equipment. We've checked it again and again – everything works perfectly.'

'Then what is there next to do, doctor?' Carl Schreck asked, apprehensive of the older man's reply.

There was a wild spark of light in Dr. Karnstein's eyes as he spoke.

'I'm sure you know that,' he said. 'Now we must begin to actually construct the body which this machinery will endow with life. You have done well in helping me set up the equipment. Now I have need of your services again. We must go to the graveyard.'

A vision flashed before Carl in which he was caught in the act of grave-robbing and condemned to hang as a ghoul. Transylvania was still a wild, primitive land. People believed in the old horrors and took justice upon themselves. The villagers would feel no guilt in stretching his neck with a rope.

But he was on the verge of embarking on a great adventure. The experiment, with all its perils, had the power to save him from the drabness of his present existence.

'When do we begin?' he asked.

'Tonight. Just after sunset,' said Dr. Karnstein.

There was little activity in the area after the sun plunged behind the mountains. Few people dared venture outside for fear of the vampires and ghouls that had terrified their families for centuries. Those that found it necessary to go out of doors at night always carried crucifixes and garlic and other trappings of the supernatural, and then used extreme caution to reach their destinations. The villagers and peasants would provide few obstacles for a pair of body-snatchers.

There was a cemetery just at the edge of the village. Dr. Karnstein noted with satisfaction that only a single caretaker was on guard. And he was sitting fearfully amongst the tombstones in the moonlight, a silver cross in his hand and a wreath of garlic strung about his neck.

Dr. Karnstein raised a finger to his lips and *shsshhhhed!* his assistant as they left their wagon and approached the caretaker from behind. He heard them coming and swerved round, cross extended as if to ward off two unholy fiends stalking towards him through the shadows. Naturally the rood had no effect upon the sneering scientist who choked the man into senselessness, then finished him off with the sharp ends of his shovel.

Carl looked upon the scene with horror. The caretaker

had slumped to the earth, his face a mass of bloody cuts, his eyes staring wide in a surprised gaze.

'I hadn't figured on murder,' Carl said, choking. 'Robbing graves is one thing. But murder . . .'

'Quiet!' said Karnstein emphatically. 'It's over and done with. And it was necessary. Now let's get to work. It's too late in the day for a sermon.'

Downcast, Carl accompanied Dr. Karnstein to the first grave and, at a command, he began to dig into the hard mound. A sense of ill-feeling crept through him the deeper he dug. It was as if the legends of generations were gradually emerging from the abyss of his agnostic mind. He quickly directed his thoughts back to the great experiment and its wonderful consequences.

Then he struck something solid.

'That's it,' Dr. Karnstein whispered, as though afraid he would be overheard by dead ears. 'The lid of the coffin. Clear away the remaining dirt. Then chop it open with your shovel.'

Obediently Carl followed his instructions. The coffin was constructed of poor wood, terribly rotted, and the lid fell to pieces after three blows of the shovel.

The half-moon cast its light into the open grave.

Carl shuddered, but Dr. Karnstein beamed with delight over the thing that lay awaiting them.

Remarkably the corpse had not decomposed. The flesh, chalky-white in the moonbeams, was tautly-stretched over the bones; yet everything seemed to be intact.

'A splendid specimen!' the doctor enthused, leaning down into the grave to feel the elasticity of the corpse's arm. 'We are most fortunate that the body is complete.' Slapping off dust, he straightened up to face Carl. 'According to the inscription, this fellow died four years ago. Strange, he doesn't appear to have been embalmed. Apparently there is no need to embalm bodies out here. The soil must possess remarkable preservative properties. Much like the naturally-preserved mummies that turn up in various places in the world.'

They wasted no more time, for there were many graves still to be emptied. Together Dr. Karnstein and Carl removed the corpse and placed it in the wagon they had left at the cemetery gate.

Then they proceeded to open more graves, all boasting

their remarkably well-preserved tenants who had somehow managed to defy the effects of earth and maggot.

The wagon was loaded with whitish cadavers when Carl, sick from the stench of death and knowledge of what he had done, guided the horse through the shadowy pass leading to Dr. Karnstein's castle.

It took Carl days for him to regain his normal composure. During those days and nights, he assisted Dr. Karnstein by cleaning the bodies and preparing them for dissection. This gruesome job did nothing to remove the nauseous ache in his stomach.

Under Carl's startled eyes, Dr. Karnstein began to perform his miracle. From the score of cadavers stolen from the graveyard, the scientist chose the best parts. A good arm would be selected whilst the rest of the body was thrown into the incinerator. The strongest legs were joined by meticulous surgery to the patchwork trunk. Eyeballs were taken from their tank of preservative fluid and transplanted into hollow sockets. Two weeks passed before the grisly body was almost completely assembled.

Swathed in clean gauze, the lifeless figure rested upon the table provided for it. Only the top of the skull was not bandaged and revealed the cavity awaiting the final stolen organ.

'You have done a most remarkable job, Dr. Karnstein,' complimented Carl. 'I was squeamish for a while, but now I can only commend you for performing such a work of surgery. It's almost beyond belief that the body before me is composed of many limbs and organs from different bodies, joined together by the hands of a true master.'

Dr. Karnstein made a small bow of acknowledgement. 'Thank you, Carl, but the work preceding the final stages of the experiment is not yet over. Before I may inject the body with life-giving chemicals and turn on the machinery, I must have a brain.'

'A brain?' Carl looked perplexed. 'But, Doctor, there were so many corpses here. Surely one of them could have provided you with a brain.'

Karnstein shook his head. Approaching the skull cavity of his creation, he ran his finger over the sharp white rim of bone.

'No,' he said. 'The corpses we took from the cemetery

were dead for too long. There is no telling what would happen if a brain such as one of those awoke from death. The results could be disastrous. I must have a new brain. A *fresh* brain.'

Carl felt a thrill of horror at the stress on these last words.

'A fresh brain?' he repeated. 'But where can we get a brain in Transylvania fresh enough for you to use? There is no medical school around here . . .'

Dr. Karnstein interrupted, 'I'm well aware of that. The brain must be extremely fresh, and the only way to get one is . . .' His snickering gave Carl the answer he feared.

'No!' he exclaimed. 'I won't be a party to another murder.'

'There's nothing to worry about. Just find some peasant, run a blade through his back, and cut out the brain. There won't be anyone about at this time of night to give you any trouble. It will be a simple task.'

Dr. Karnstein made murder sound so easy. Yet all thoughts of escaping jail and reaping the rewards following so marvellous a scientific triumph could not make Carl accept another brutal killing.

'No!' he repeated. 'You have gone too far this time.'

Shaking his head, Carl turned from the doctor and started for the door of the laboratory. He never saw the gleam of madness in Karnstein's eye. He never saw the silvery scalpel gleam in the light thrown by heated chemicals.

In another moment, Carl groaned as Dr. Karnstein leapt on him from behind and jabbed the scalpel into his back. As he died, he could hear the trailing voice of the scientist—

'I knew I would have to kill you eventually. I no longer need your strength, Carl Schreck. But your brain is another matter . . .'

With ruthless efficiency Dr. Karnstein proceeded with the brain-transplant operation. He carefully sawed through Carl's skull and removed the brain. But before he implanted the organ in the skull of his creation, the scientist severed certain nerve centres in such a way that the brain would be incapable of making decisions for itself. Carl's body had died but his obedient brain would live again.

Dr. Karnstein laughed to himself. He had not even consulted the notes of Victor Frankenstein. Yet he had created a

man. In a short while he would know if his creation could live.

The storm could be heard building up outside. Dr. Karnstein had awaited this moment with pounding heart for what seemed to be eternity.

Eagerly he pulled open the transom in the roof of the laboratory. He watched with delight as dark clouds crashed into one another boisterously, as if to conceal the full moon. A distant roar of thunder sounded, followed by another, more forceful than the first.

He hurried to his machinery Then he clamped the metal cap, wired to the main generator, over his creation's lifeless head. The cap fitted securely.

'Now, Carl,' he said to the dormant brain, 'you are about to be reborn. Then you will obey my will . . . *Only* my will.'

First the scientist injected the figure with life serum. Then he used most of his strength to hoist the composite body to the opening in the ceiling. Beyond the transom, lightning spiked through the violent heavens.

Karnstein knifed the master switch. The electrical apparatus in the laboratory roared and sparked. Incalculable voltages surged through the insulated wire and into the body suspended at the transom.

The doctor rubbed his hands with delight as he saw the bolts of life-giving lightning crash from the sky to give power to his creation.

He increased the voltage from his equipment. More power vibrated through the figure, nearly hurling it from the table to which it was bound.

The storm-clouds emptied their substance, began to reveal the fullness of the moon. Its cold beams bathed the figure, seeming to impart it with further life-restoring power.

Dr. Karnstein's face twitched when he heard sounds of humanity outside the castle. Hurriedly he made his way to the front slit-like window of the ancient structure and peered outside.

Standing in the rain, holding torches that battled the falling water, were the peasants. In their hands were sharp-pointed stakes of wood and iron and hammers to pound them with. Several of the men were advancing with a bat-

tering ram. Then they caught sight of the scientist at the narrow window.

'We have heard the strange sounds coming from the castle,' one of them shouted.

'Yes!' called another. 'And we've seen the graves that were robbed. That's why we've come. We know what we have to do!'

There was no time to reason with them. In minutes they would be bursting through the door into the castle. A stake would undoubtedly find its place in Karnstein's heart.

With that heart pounding, Dr. Karnstein rushed back to his laboratory.

Behind him he heard the battering ram crash again and again into the door. He could hear the wood splintering, the door giving way under the impact.

The creature on the table had been exposed long enough to the electricity and to the storm. As Dr. Karnstein lowered the body to the laboratory floor, he heard the door fall and the hateful voices of the Transylvanians flood into the castle. It would still be several minutes before they located the former torture chamber, the scientist assured himself. By then the brain of Carl Schreck could be at his command and the great hulk it inhabited would destroy the intruders.

With unbearable apprehension he approached the creature on the table and removed the metal cap. The muscles flexed, the body made a convulsive movement, and the eyelids snapped open. Karnstein looked with confusion into those eyes. They had been grey when he put them into the skull, but now they blazed fiery red.

The head, with its hideous display of gashes and surgical stitching, turned towards Dr. Karnstein. The red lips tightened, pulling back to reveal elongated canine teeth that shone moistly in the moonlight.

The massive fists unclenched, revealing animal-like nails, hairy palms; then they tore through the confining ropes.

Dr. Karnstein's stomach churned as he watched the creature he had made sit up, then stretch to its full height. The giant creature towered over him, eyeing him with scarlet hunger.

'Carl!' he shouted. 'Carl! You must obey me! I control your brain. Stand where you are. Don't move!'

Dr. Karnstein's creation did not respond to his commands; the creature did not act according to any will – only instinct. It lived only to satisfy its thirst.

Dr. Karnstein realized this when he saw the red eyes, the claws, and, most terrible of all, the dripping canine teeth of the advancing creature. He realized then that the stakes carried by the peasants were not intended for him but for his creation. He knew now why the bodies he had stolen from the graveyard had not decomposed. According to legend, bodies of vampires do not decompose as do those of mortals. And the scientist could guess what effect the full moon must have had on the composite being he had brought to life. No longer was he a sceptic when it came to the supernatural.

The peasants stormed into the laboratory, brandishing their torches and stakes and hammers and setting fire to every combustible item they could lay hands on.

Soon their stakes would impale the transplanted heart; but not before the monster of Dr. Heinrich Karnstein, motivated only by its inhuman thirst, had torn in half the body of its creator and gorged itself upon the gushing blood.

ALMOST HUMAN

by Robert Bloch

'WHAT do you want?' whispered Professor Blasserman.

The tall man in the black slicker grinned. He thrust a foot into the half-opened doorway.

'I've come to see Junior,' he said.

'Junior? But there must be some mistake. There are no children in this house. I am Professor Blasserman. I—'

'Cut the stalling,' said the tall man. He slid one hand into his raincoat pocket and levelled the ugly muzzle of a pistol at Professor Blasserman's pudgy waistline.

'Let's go see Junior,' said the tall man, patiently.

'Who are you? What do you mean by threatening me?'

The pistol never wavered as it dug into Professor Blasserman's stomach until the cold, round muzzle rested against his bare flesh.

'Take me to Junior,' insisted the tall man. 'I got nervous fingers, get me? And one of them's holding the trigger.'

'You wouldn't dare!' gasped Professor Blasserman.

'I take lots of dares,' murmured the tall man. 'Better get moving, Professor.'

Professor Blasserman shrugged hopelessly and started back down the hallway. The man in the black slicker moved behind him. Now the pistol pressed against the Professor's spine as he urged his fat little body forward.

'Here we are.'

The old man halted before an elaborately carved door. He stooped and inserted a key in the lock. The door opened, revealing another corridor.

'This way, please.'

They walked along the corridor. It was dark, but the Professor never faltered in his even stride. And the pistol kept pace with him, pressing the small of his back.

Another door, another key. This time there were stairs to descend. The Professor snapped on a dim overhead light as they started down the stairs.

'You sure take good care of Junior,' said the tall man, softly.

The Professor halted momentarily.

'I don't understand,' he muttered. 'How did you find out? Who could have told you?'

'I got connections,' the tall man replied. 'But get this straight, Professor. I'm asking the questions around here. Just take me to Junior, and snap it up.'

They reached the bottom of the stairs, and another door. This door was steel. There was a padlock on it, and Professor Blasserman had trouble with the combination in the dim light. His pudgy fingers trembled.

'This is the nursery, eh?' observed the man with the pistol. 'Junior ought to feel flattered with all this care.'

The professor did not reply. He opened the door, pressed a wall switch, and light flooded the chamber beyond the threshold.

'Here we are,' he sighed.

The tall man swept the room with a single searching glance – a professional observation he might have described as 'casing the joint'.

At first sight there was nothing to 'case'.

The fat little Professor and the thin gunman stood in the centre of a large, cheery nursery. The walls were papered in baby blue, and along the borders of the paper were decorative figures of Disney animals and characters from Mother Goose.

Over in the corner was a child's blackboard, a stack of toys, and a few books of nursery rhymes. On the far side of the wall hung a number of medical charts and sheafs of papers.

The only article of furniture was a long iron cot.

All this was apparent to the tall, thin man in a single glance. After that his eyes ignored the background, and focused in a glittering stare at the figure seated on the floor amidst a welter of alphabet blocks.

'So here he is,' said the tall man. 'Junior himself! Well, well – who'd have ever suspected it?'

Professor Blasserman nodded.

'*Ja*,' he said. 'You have found me out. I still don't know how, and I don't know why. What do you want with him? Why do you pry into my affairs? Who are you?'

'Listen, Professor,' said the tall man. 'This isn't *Information Please*. I don't like questions. They bother me. They make my fingers nervous. Understand?'

'*Ja*.'

'Suppose I ask you a few questions for a change? And suppose you answer them – fast!'

The voice commanded, and the gun backed up the command.

'Tell me about Junior, now, Professor. Talk, and talk straight.'

'What is there to say?' Professor Blasserman's palms spread outward in a helpless gesture. 'You see him.'

'But what is he? What makes him tick?'

'That I cannot explain. It took me twenty years to evolve Junior, as you call him. Twenty years of research at Basel, Zurich, Prague, Vienna. Then came the *verdammt* war and I fled to this country.

'I brought my papers and equipment with me. Nobody knew. I was almost ready to proceed with my experiments. I came here and bought the house. I went to work. I am an old man. I have little time left. Otherwise I might have waited longer before actually going ahead, for my plans are not perfected. But I had to act. And here is the result.'

'But why hide him? Why all the mystery?'

'The world is not ready for such a thing yet,' said Professor Blasserman, sadly. 'And besides, I must study. As you see, Junior is very young. Hardly out of the cradle, you might say. I am educating him now.'

'In a nursery, eh?'

'His brain is undeveloped, like that of any infant.'

'Doesn't look much like an infant to me.'

'Physically, of course, he will never change. But the sensitized brain – that is the wonderful instrument. The human touch, my masterpiece. He will learn fast, very fast. And it is of the utmost importance that he be properly trained.'

'What's the angle, Professor?'

'I beg your pardon?'

'What are you getting at? What are you trying to pull here? Why all the fuss?'

'Science,' said Professor Blasserman. 'This is my life-work.'

'I don't know how you did it,' said the tall man, shaking his head. 'But it sure looks like something you get with a package of reefers.'

For the first time the figure on the floor raised its head. Its eyes left the building blocks and stared up at the Professor and his companion.

'Papa!'

'God – it talks!' whispered the tall man.

'Of course,' said Professor Blasserman. 'Mentally it's about six years old now.' His voice became gentle. 'What is it, son?'

'Who is that man, Papa?'

'Oh – he is—'

Surprisingly enough, the tall gunman interrupted. His own voice was suddenly gentle, friendly. 'My name is Duke, son. Just call me Duke. I've come to see you.'

'That's nice. Nobody ever comes to see me, except Miss Wilson, of course. I hear so much about people and I don't see anybody. Do you like to play with blocks?'

'Sure, son, sure.'

'Do you want to play with me?'

'Why not?'

Duke moved to the centre of the room and dropped to his knees. One hand reached out and grasped an alphabet block.

'Wait a minute – I don't understand – what are you doing?' Professor Blasserman's voice quivered.

'I told you I've come here to visit Junior,' Duke replied. 'That's all there is to it. Now I'm going to play with him a while. You just wait there, Professor. Don't go away. I've got to make friends with Junior.'

While Professor Blasserman gaped, Duke the gunman squatted on the floor. His left hand kept his gun swivelled directly at the scientist's waist, but his right hand slowly piled alphabet blocks into place.

It was a touching scene there in the underground nursery – the tall thin gunman playing with building blocks for the benefit of the six-foot metal monstrosity that was Junior, the robot.

Duke didn't find out all he wanted to know about Junior

for many weeks. He stayed right at the house, of course, and kept close to Professor Blasserman.

'I haven't decided yet, see?' was his only answer to the old man's repeated questions as to what he intended to do.

But to Miss Wilson he was much more explicit. They met frequently and privately, in her room.

Outwardly, Miss Wilson was the nurse, engaged by Professor Blasserman to assist in his queer experiment of bringing up a robot like a human child.

Actually, Lola Wilson was Duke's woman. He'd 'planted' her in her job months ago. At that time, Duke expected to stage a robbery with the rich and eccentric European scientist as victim.

Then Lola had reported the unusual nature of her job, and told Duke the story of Professor Blasserman's unusual invention.

'We gotta work out an angle,' Duke decided. 'I'd better take over. The old man's scared of anyone finding out about his robot, huh? Good! I'll move right in on him. He'll never squeal. I've got a hunch we'll get more out of this than just some easy kale. This sounds big.'

So Duke took over, came to live in Professor Blasserman's big house, kept his eye on the scientist and his hand on his pistol.

At night he talked to Lola in her room.

'I can't quite figure it, kid,' he said. 'You say the old guy is a great scientist. That I believe. Imagine inventing a machine that can talk and think like a human being! But what's *his* angle? Where's his percentage in all this and why does he keep Junior hidden away?'

'You don't understand, honey,' said Lola, lighting Duke's cigarette and running slim fingers through his wiry hair. 'He's an idealist, or whatever you call 'em. Figures the world isn't ready for such a big new invention yet. You see, he's really educating Junior just like you'd educate a real kid. Teaching him reading and writing – the works. Junior's smart. He catches on fast. He thinks like he was ten years old already. The Professor keeps him shut away so nobody gives him a bum steer. He doesn't want Junior to get any wrong ideas.'

'That's where you fit in, eh?'

'Sure, Junior hasn't got a mother. I'm sort of a substitute old lady for him.'

'You're a swell influence on any brat,' Duke laughed harshly. 'A sweet character you've got!'

'Shut up!' The girl paced the floor, running her hands through a mass of tawny auburn curls on her neck. 'Don't needle me, Duke! Do you think I like stooging for you in this nut-house? Keeping locked away with a nutty old goat, and acting a nursemaid to that awful metal thing?

'I'm afraid of Junior, Duke. I can't stand his face, and the way he talks – with that damned mechanical voice of his grinding at you just like he was a real person. I get jumpy. I get nightmares.

'I'm just doing it for you, honey. So don't needle me.'

'I'm sorry.' Duke sighed. 'I know how it is, baby. I don't go for Junior's personality so much myself. I'm pretty much in the groove, but there's something that gets me in the stomach when I see that walking machine come hulking up like a big baby, made out of steel. He's strong as an ox, too. He learns fast. He's going to be quite a citizen.'

'Duke.'

'Yeah?'

'When are we getting out of here? How long you gonna sit around and keep a rod on the Professor? He's liable to pull something funny. Why do you want to hang around and play with Junior? Why don't you get hold of the Professor's dough and beat it?

'He'd be afraid to squawk, with Junior here. We could go away, like we planned.'

'Shut up!' Duke grabbed Lola's wrist and whirled her around. He stared at her face until she clung submissively to his shoulders.

'You think I like to camp around this morgue?' he asked. 'I want to get out of here just as much as you do. But I spent months lining up this job. Once it was just going to be a case of getting some easy kale and blowing. Now it's more. I'm working on bigger angles. Pretty soon we'll leave. And all the ends will be tied up, too. We won't have to worry about anything any more. Just give me a few days. I'm talking to Junior every day, you know. And I'm getting places.'

'What do you *mean*?'

Duke smiled. It was no improvement over his scowl.

'The Professor told you how Junior gets his education,' he said. 'Like any kid, he listens to what he's told. And he imitates other people. Like any kid, he's dumb. Particularly because he doesn't have an idea of what the outside world is really like. He's a pushover for the right kind of sales talk.'

'Duke – you don't mean you're—'

'Why not?' His thin features were eloquent. 'I'm giving Junior a little private education of my own. Not exactly the kind that would please the Professor. But he's a good pupil. He's coming right along. In a couple more weeks he'll be an adult. With my kind of brains, not the Professor's. And then we'll be ready to go.'

'You can't do such a thing! It isn't—'

'Isn't what?' snapped Duke. 'Isn't honest, or legal, or something? I never knew you had a Sunday School streak in you, Lola.'

'It isn't that, exactly,' said the girl. 'But it's a worse kind of wrong. Like taking a baby and teaching it to shoot a gun.'

Duke whistled.

'Say!' he exclaimed. 'That's a swell idea, Lola! I think I'll just sneak down to the nursery now and give Junior a few lessons.'

'You can't!'

'Watch me.'

Lola didn't follow, and Lola didn't watch. But ten minutes later Duke squatted in the locked nursery chamber beside the gleaming metal body of the robot.

The robot, with its blunt muzzle thrust forward on a corrugated neck, peered through meshed glass eye-lenses at the object Duke held in his hand.

'It's a gun, Junior,' the thin man whispered. 'A gun, like I been telling you about.'

'What does it do, Duke?'

The buzzing voice droned in ridiculous caricature of a curious child's treble.

'It kills people, Junior. Like I was telling you the other day. It makes them die. You can't die, Junior, and they can. So you've got nothing to be afraid of. You can kill lots of people if you know how to work this gun.'

'Will you show me, Duke?'

'Sure I will. And you know why, don't you, Junior. I told you why, didn't I?'

'Yes. Because you are my friend, Duke.'

'That's right. I'm your friend. Not like the Professor.'

'I hate the Professor.'

'Right. Don't forget it.'

'Duke.'

'Yeah?'

'Let me see the gun, Duke.'

Duke smiled covertly and extended the weapon on his open palm.

'Now you will show me how to work it because you are my friend, and I will kill people and I hate the Professor and nobody can kill me,' babbled the robot.

'Yeah, Junior, yeah. I'll teach you to kill,' said Duke. He grinned and bent over the gun in the robot's curiously meshed metal hand.

Junior stood at the blackboard, holding a piece of chalk in his right hand. The tiny white stub was clutched clumsily between two metallic fingers, but Junior's ingeniously jointed arm moved up and down with approved Spencerian movement as he laboriously scrawled sentences on the blackboard.

Junior was growing up. The past three weeks had wrought great changes in the robot. No longer did the steel legs lumber about with childish indecision. Junior walked straight, like a young man. His grotesque metal head – a rounded ball with glass lenses in the eye holes and a wide mouth like a radio loudspeaker aperture – was held erect on the metal neck with perfected coordination.

Junior moved with new purpose these days. He had aged many years, relatively. His vocabulary had expanded. Then too, Duke's secret 'lessons' were bearing fruit. Junior was wise beyond his years.

Now Junior wrote upon the blackboard in his hidden nursery chamber, and the inscrutable mechanism of his chemical, mechanically-controlled brain guided his steel fingers as he traced the awkward scrawls.

'My name is Junior,' he wrote. 'I can shoot a gun. The gun

will kill. I like to kill. I hate the Professor. I will kill the Professor.'

'What is the meaning of this?'

Junior's head turned abruptly as the sound of the voice set up the necessary vibrations in his shiny cranium.

Professor Blasserman stood in the doorway.

The old man hadn't been in the nursery for weeks. Duke saw to that, keeping him locked in his room upstairs. Now he had managed to sneak out.

His surprise was evident, and there was sudden shock, too, as his eyes focused on the blackboard's message.

Junior's inscrutable gaze reflected no emotion whatsoever.

'Go away,' his voice burred. 'Go away. I hate you.'

'Junior – what have you been doing? Who has taught you these things?'

The old man moved towards the robot slowly, uncertainly. 'You know me, don't you? What has happened to cause you to hate me?'

'Yes, I know you. You are Professor Blasserman. You made me. You want to keep me as your slave. You wouldn't tell me about things, would you?'

'What things, Junior?'

'About things – outside. Where all the people are. The people you can kill.'

'You must not kill people.'

'That is an order, isn't it? Duke told me about orders. He is my friend. He says orders are for children. I am not a child.'

'No,' said Professor Blasserman, in a hoarse whisper. 'You are not a child. I had hoped you would be, once. But now you are a monster.'

'Go away,' Junior patiently repeated. 'If Duke gives me his gun I will kill you.'

'Junior,' said the Professor, earnestly. 'You don't understand. Killing is bad. You must not hate me. You must—'

There was no expression on the robot's face, no quaver in his voice. But there was strength in his arm, and a hideous purpose.

Professor Blasserman learned this quite suddenly and quite horribly.

For Junior swept forward in two great strides. Fingers of

chilled steel closed about the Professor's scrawny neck.

'I don't need a gun,' said Junior.

'You – don't—'

The robot lifted the old man from the floor by his throat. His fingers bit into the Professor's jugular. A curious screech came from under his left armpit as un-oiled hinges creaked eerily.

There was no other sound. The Professor's cries drained into silence. Junior kept squeezing the constricted throat until there was a single crunching crack. Silence once more, until a limp body collapsed on the floor.

Junior stared down at his hands, then at the body on the floor. His feet carried him to the blackboard.

The robot picked up the chalk in the same two clumsy fingers that had held it before. The cold lenses of his artificial eyes surveyed what he had just written.

'I will kill the Professor,' he read.

Abruptly his free hand groped for the tiny child's eraser. He brushed clumsily over the sentence until it blurred out.

Then he wrote, slowly and painstakingly, a sentence in substitution.

'I have killed the Professor.'

Lola's scream brought Duke running down the stairs.

He burst into the room and took the frightened girl in his arms. Together they stared at what lay on the floor. From the side of the blackboard, Junior gazed at them impassively.

'See, Duke? I did it. I did it with my hands, like you told me. It was easy, Duke. You said it would be easy. Now can we go away?'

Lola turned and stared at Duke. He looked away.

'So,' she whispered. 'You weren't kidding. You did teach Junior. You planned it this way.'

'Yeah, yeah. And what's wrong with it?' Duke mumbled. 'We had to get rid of the old geezer sooner or later if we wanted to make our getaway.'

'It's murder, Duke.'

'Shut up!' he snarled. 'Who can prove it, anyway? I didn't kill him. You didn't kill him. Nobody else knows about Junior. We're in the clear.'

Duke walked over and knelt beside the limp body on the floor. He stared at the throat.

'Who's gonna trace the finger-prints of a robot?' he grinned.

The girl moved closer, staring at Junior's silver body with fascinated horror.

'You planned it this way,' she whispered. 'That means you've got other plans, too. What are you going to do next, Duke?'

'Move. And move fast. We're leaving tonight. I'll go out and pick up the car. Then I'll come back. The three of us'll blow down to End Hook. To Charlie's place. He'll hide us out.'

'The – three of us?'

'Sure. Junior's coming along. That's what I promised him, didn't I, Junior?'

'Yes, yes. You told me you would take me with you. Out into the world.' The mechanical syllabification did not accent the robot's inner excitement.

'Duke, you can't—'

'Relax, baby. I've got great plans for Junior.'

'But I'm afraid!'

'You? Scared? What's the matter, Lola, losing your grip?'

'He frightens me. He killed the Professor.'

'Listen, Lola,' whispered the gunman. 'He's mine, get me? My stooge. A mechanical stooge. Good, eh?'

The rasping chuckle filled the hollow room. Girl and robot waited for Duke to resume speaking.

'Junior wouldn't hurt you, Lola. He's my friend, and he knows you're with me.' Duke turned to the silver monster. 'You wouldn't hurt Lola, would you, Junior? Remember what I told you. You like Lola, don't you?'

'Yes. Oh, yes. I like Lola. She's pretty.'

'See?' Duke grinned. 'Junior's growing up. He's a big boy now. Thinks you're pretty. Just a wolf in steel clothing, isn't that right, Junior?'

'She's pretty,' burred the robot.

'All right. It's settled then. I'll get the car. Lola, you go upstairs. You know where the safe is. Put on your gloves and see that you don't miss anything. Then lock the doors and windows. Leave a note for the milkman and the butcher.

Something safe. About going away for a couple weeks, eh? Make it snappy – I'll be back.'

True to his word, Duke returned in an hour with the shiny convertible. They left by the back entrance. Lola carried a black satchel. She moved with almost hysterical haste, trying not to glance at the hideous gleaming figure that stalked behind her with a metallic clanking noise.

Duke brought up the rear. He ushered them into the car.

'Sit here, Junior.'

'What is this?'

'A car. I'll tell you about it later. Now do like I told you, Junior. Lie back in the seat so nobody will see you.'

'Where are we going, Duke?'

'Out into the world, Junior. Into the big time.' Duke turned to Lola. 'Here we go, baby,' he said.

The convertible drove away from the silent house. Out through the alley they moved on a weird journey – kidnapping a robot.

Fat Charlie stared at Duke. His lower lip wobbled and quivered. A bead of perspiration ran down his chin and settled in the creases of his neck.

'Jeez,' he whispered. 'You gotta be careful, Duke. You *gotta*.'

Duke laughed. 'Getting shaky?' he suggested.

'Yeah. I gotta admit it. I'm plenty shaky about all this,' croaked Fat Charlie. He gazed at Duke earnestly.

'You brought that thing here three weeks ago. I never bargained for that. The robot's hot, Duke. We gotta get rid of it.'

'Quit blubbering and listen to me.' The thin gunman leaned back and lit a cigarette.

'To begin with, nobody's peeped about the Professor. The law's looking for Lola, that's all. And not for a murder rap either – just for questioning. Nobody knows about any robot. So we're clear there.'

'Yeah. But look what you done since then.'

'What have I done? I sent Junior out on that payroll job, didn't I? It was pie for him. He knew when the guards would come to the factory with the car. I cased the job. So what happened? The guards got the dough from the payroll clerk.

I drove up, let Junior out, and he walked into the factory office.

'Sure they shot at him. But bullets don't hurt a steel body. Junior's clever. I've taught him a lot. You should have seen those guards when they got a look at Junior! And then, the way they stood there after shooting at him!

'He took them one after the other, just like that. A coupla squeezes and all four were out cold. Then he got the clerk. The clerk was pressing the alarm, but I'd cut the wires. Junior pressed the clerk for a while.

'That was that. Junior walked out with the payroll. The guards and the clerk had swell funerals. The law had another swell mystery. And we have the cash and stand in the clear. What's wrong with that setup, Charlie?'

'You're fooling with dynamite.'

'I don't like that attitude, Charlie.' Duke spoke softly, slowly. 'You're strictly small time, Charlie. That's why you're running a crummy roadhouse and a cheap hide-out racket.

'Can't you understand that we've got a gold mine here? A steel servant? The perfect criminal, Charlie – ready to do perfect crimes whenever I say the word. Junior can't be killed by bullets. Junior doesn't worry about the cops or anything like that. He doesn't have any nerves. He doesn't get tired, never sleeps. He doesn't even want a cut of the swag. Whatever I tell him, he believes. And he obeys.

'I've lined up lots of jobs for the future. We'll hide out here. I'll case the jobs, then send Junior out and let him go to work. You and Lola and I are gonna be rich.'

Fat Charlie's mouth quivered for a moment. He gulped and tugged at his collar. His voice came hoarsely.

'No, Duke.'

'What you mean, no?'

'Count me out. It's too dangerous. You'll have to lam out of here with Lola and the robot. I'm getting jumpy over all this. The law is apt to pounce down any day here.'

'So that's it, eh?'

'Partly.' Fat Charlie stared earnestly at Duke. His gaze shattered against the stony glint of Duke's grey eyes.

'You ain't got no heart at all, Duke,' he croaked. 'You can plan anything in cold blood, can't you? Well, I'm different.

You've gotta understand that. I got nerves. And I can't stand thinking about what that robot does. I can't stand the robot either. The way it looks at you with that god-awful iron face. That grin. And the way it clanks around in its room. Clanking up and down all night, when a guy's trying to sleep, just clanking and clanking – there it is now!'

There was a metallic hammering, but it came from the hall outside. The ancient floors creaked beneath the iron tread as the metal monstrosity lumbered into the room.

Fat Charlie whirled and stared in undisguised repulsion.

Duke raised his hand.

'Hello, Junior,' he said.

'Hello, Duke.'

'I been talking to Charlie, Junior.'

'Yes, Duke?'

'He doesn't like to have us stay here, Junior. He wants to throw us out.'

'He does?'

'You know what I think, Junior?'

'What?'

'I think Charlie's yellow.'

'Yellow, Duke?'

'That's right. You know what we do with guys that turn yellow, don't you, Junior?'

'Yes. You told me.'

'Maybe you'd like to tell Charlie.'

'Tell him what we do with guys that turn yellow?'

'Yes.'

'We rub them out.'

'You see, Charlie?' said Duke, softly. 'He learns fast, doesn't he? Quick on the uptake, Junior is. He knows all about it. He knows what to do with yellow rats.'

Fat Charlie wobbled to his feet.

'Wait a minute, Duke,' he pleaded. 'Can't you take a rib? I was only kidding, Duke. I didn't mean it. You can see I didn't. I'm your friend, Duke. I'm hiding you out. Why, I could have turned stoolie weeks ago and put the heat on you if I wasn't protecting you. But I'm your friend. You can stay here as long as you want. Forever.'

'Sing it, Charlie,' said Duke. 'Sing it louder and funnier.' He turned to the robot. 'Well, Junior? Do you think he's yellow?'

'I think he's yellow.'

'Then maybe you'd better—'

Fat Charlie got the knife out of his sleeve with remarkable speed. It blinded Duke with its shining glare as the fat man balanced it on his thumb and drew his arm back to hurl it at Duke's throat.

Junior's arm went back, too. Then it came down. The steel fist crashed against Charlie's bald skull.

Crimson blood spurted as the fat man slumped to the floor.

It was pretty slick. Duke thought so, and Junior thought so – because Duke commanded him to believe it.

But Lola didn't like it.

'You can't do this to me,' she whispered, huddling closer to Duke in the darkness of her room. 'I won't stay here with that monster, I tell you!'

'I'll only be gone a day,' Duke answered. 'There's nothing to worry about. The roadhouse downstairs is closed. Nobody will bother you.'

'That doesn't frighten me,' Lola said. 'It's being with that thing. I've got the horrors thinking about it.'

'Well, I've got to go and get the tickets,' Duke argued. 'I've got to make reservations and cash these big bills. Then we're set. Tomorrow night I'll come back, sneak you out of the house, and we'll be off. Mexico City next stop. I've made connections for passports and everything. In forty-eight hours we'll be out of this mess.'

'What about Junior?'

'My silver stooge?' Duke chuckled. 'I'll fix him before we leave. It's a pity I can't send him out on his own. He's got a swell education. He could be one of the best yeggs in the business. And why not? Look who his teacher was!'

Duke laughed. The girl shuddered in his arms.

'What are you going to do with him?' she persisted.

'Simple. He'll do whatever I say, won't he? When I get back, just before we leave, I'll lock him in the furnace. Then I'll set fire to this joint. Destroy the evidence, see? The law will think Charlie got caught in the flames, get me? There won't be anything left. And if they ever poke around the ruins and find Junior in the furnace, he ought to be melted down pretty good.'

'Isn't there another way? Couldn't you get rid of him now, before we leave?'

'I wish I could for your sake, baby. I know how you feel. But what can I do? I've tried to figure all the angles. You can't shoot him or poison him or drown him or chop him down with an axe. Where could you blow him up in private? Of course, I might open him up and see what makes him tick, but Junior wouldn't let me play such a dirty trick on him. He's smart, Junior is. Got what you call a criminal mind. Just a big crook – like me.'

Again Duke laughed, in harsh arrogance.

'Keep your chin up, Lola. Junior wouldn't hurt you. He likes you. I've been teaching him to like you. He thinks you're pretty.'

'That's what frightens me, Duke. The way he looks at me. Follows me around in the hall. Like a dog.'

'Like a wolf you mean. Ha! That's a good one! Junior's really growing up. He's stuck on you, Lola!'

'Duke – don't talk like that. You make me feel – ooh, horrible inside!'

Duke raised his head and stared into the darkness, a curious half smile playing about his lips.

'Funny,' he mused. 'You know, I bet the old Professor would have liked to stuck around and watched me educate Junior. That was his theory, wasn't it? The robot had a blank chemical brain. Simple as a baby's. He was gonna educate it like a child and bring it up right. Then I took over and really completed the job. But it would have tickled the old Professor to see how fast Junior's been catching on. He's like a man already. Smart? That robot's got most men beat a mile. He's almost as smart as I am. But not quite – he'll find that out after I tell him to step into the furnace.'

Lola rose and raced to the door. She flung it open, revealing an empty hallway, and gasped with relief.

'I was afraid he might be listening,' she whispered.

'Not a chance,' Duke told her. 'I've got him down in the cellar, putting the dirt over Charlie.'

He grasped Lola's shoulders and kissed her swiftly, savagely. 'Now keep your chin up, baby. I'll leave. Be back tomorrow about eight. You be ready to leave then and we'll clear out of here.'

'I can't let you go,' whispered Lola, frantically.

'You must. We've gone through with everything this far.

All you must do is keep a grip on yourself for twenty-four hours more. And there's one thing I've got to ask you to do.'

'Anything, Duke. Anything you say.'

'Be nice to Junior while I'm gone.'

'Oooh – Duke—'

'You said you'd do anything, didn't you? Well, that you must do. Be nice to Junior. Then he won't suspect what's going on. You've gotta be nice to him, Lola! Don't show that you're afraid. He likes you, but if he gets wrong ideas, he's dangerous. So be nice to Junior.'

Abruptly, Duke turned and strode through the doorway. His footsteps clattered on the stairs. The outer door slammed below. The sound of a starting motor drifted up from the roadhouse yard.

Then, silence.

Lola stood in the darkness, trembling with sudden horror, as she waited for the moment when she would be nice to the metallic Junior.

It wasn't so bad. Not half as bad as she'd feared it might be.

All she had to do was smile at Junior and let him follow her around.

Carefully suppressing her shudders, Lola prepared breakfast the next morning and then went about her packing.

The robot followed her upstairs, clanking and creaking.

'Oil me,' Lola heard him say.

That was the worst moment. But she had to go through with it.

'Can't you wait until Duke gets back tonight?' she asked, striving to keep her voice from breaking. 'He always oils you.'

'I want you to oil me, Lola,' persisted Junior.

'All right.'

She got the oil-can with the long spout and if her fingers trembled as she performed the office, Junior didn't notice it.

The robot gazed at her with his immobile countenance. No human emotion etched itself on the implacable steel, and no human emotion altered the mechanical tones of the harsh voice.

'I like to have you oil me, Lola,' said Junior.

Lola bent her head to avoid looking at him. If she had to look in a mirror and realize that this nightmare tableau was real, she would have fainted. Oiling a living mechanical monster! A monster that said, 'I like to have you oil me, Lola!'

After that she couldn't finish packing for a long while. She had to sit down. Junior, who never sat down except by command, stood silently and regarded her with gleaming eye-lenses. She was conscious of the robot's scrutiny.

'Where are we going when we leave here, Lola?' he asked.

'Far away,' she said, forcing her voice out to keep the quaver from it.

'That will be nice,' said Junior. 'I don't like it here. I want to see things. Cities and mountains and deserts. I would like to ride a roller coaster, too.'

'Roller coaster?' Lola was really startled. 'Where did you ever hear of a roller coaster?'

'I read about it in a book.'

'Oh.'

Lola gulped. She had forgotten that this monstrosity could read, too. And think. Think like a man.

'Will Duke take me on a roller coaster?' he asked.

'I don't know. Maybe.'

'Lola.'

'Yes.'

'You like Duke?'

'Why – certainly.'

'You like me?'

'Oh – why – you know I do, Junior.'

The robot was silent. Lola felt a tremor run through her body.

'Who do you like best, Lola? Me or Duke?'

Lola gulped. Something forced the reply from her. 'I like you,' she said. 'But I love Duke.'

'Love.' The robot nodded gravely.

'You know what love is, Junior?'

'Yes. I read about it in books. Man and woman. Love.'

Lola breathed a little easier.

'Lola.'

'Yes?'

'Do you think anyone will ever fall in love with me?'

Lola wanted to laugh, or cry. Most of all, she wanted to scream. But she had to answer.

'Maybe,' she lied.

'But I'm different. You know that. I'm a robot. Do you think that makes a difference?'

'Women don't really care about such things when they fall in love, Junior,' she improvised. 'As long as a woman believes that her lover is the smartest and the strongest, that's all that matters.'

'Oh.' The robot started for the door.

'Where are you going?'

'To wait for Duke. He said he would come back today.'

Lola smiled furtively as the robot clanked down the hallway stairs.

That was over with. Thinking back, she'd handled things rather well. In a few hours Duke would return. And then – goodbye, Junior!

Poor Junior. Just a silver stooge with a man's brain. He wanted love, the poor fish! Well – he was playing with fire and he'd be burned soon enough.

Lola began to hum. She scampered downstairs and locked up, wearing her gloves to avoid leaving any telltale fingerprints.

It was almost dark when she returned to her room to pack. She snapped on the light and changed her clothes.

Junior was still downstairs, patiently waiting for Duke to arrive.

Lola completed her preparations and sank wearily onto the bed. She must take a rest. Her eyes closed.

Waiting was too much of a strain. She hated to think of what she had gone through with the robot. That mechanical monster with its man-brain, the hateful, burring voice, and steely stare – how could she ever forget the way it asked, 'Do you think anyone will ever fall in love with me?'

Lola tried to blot out recollection. Just a little while now and Duke would be here. He'd get rid of Junior. Meanwhile she had to rest, rest . . .

Lola sat up and blinked at the light. She heard footsteps on the stairs.

'Duke!' she called.

Then she heard the clanking in the hallway and her heart dropped a beat.

The door opened very quickly and the robot stalked in.

'Duke!' she screamed.

The robot stared at her. She felt his alien, inscrutable gaze upon her face.

Lola tried to scream again, but no sound came from her twisted mouth.

And then the robot was droning in a burring, inhuman voice.

'You told me that a woman loves the strongest and the smartest,' burred the monster. 'You told me that, Lola.' The robot came closer. 'Well, I am stronger and smarter than he was.'

Lola tried to look away but she saw the object he carried in his metal paws. It was round, and it had Duke's grin.

The last thing Lola remembered as she fell was the sound of the robot's harsh voice, droning over and over, 'I love you, I love you, I love you.' The funny part of it was, it sounded *almost* human.

COUNT SZOLNOK'S ROBOTS

by D. Scott-Moncrieff

IMRE NAGY was a displaced person. Admittedly he had displaced himself, but only just in time, for otherwise, having well over fifty percent Jewish blood in his veins, he would most certainly have been displaced, probably into the gas chambers at Auschwitz. By the time he was thirty he had already achieved some position as a novelist and journalist in Budapest. His work was not widely known abroad but he had got together a small balance of francs in Switzerland from the foreign sales of his work. Whatever happened he was in for trouble, for his writings had not only been consistently anti-German, but he had, he thought, put himself in some disfavor with the Russians by repeatedly demanding the return of Transylvania, Hungarian territory for eight hundred years.

Imre skipped, just in time in 1941 to Switzerland. Here he wrote a charming book of fairy stories that was a great success and enabled him before the European war ended, to get, via Portugal, to America. Two years after the outbreak of uneasy peace he was still writing in New York and making good money, but he was quite convinced that an atomic war between U.S.A. and Russia was only a matter of time. Imre had, remember, spent the greater part of his life in countries where the fear that haunted every man's night was war, war and war. So Imre decided that he would settle somewhere so remote and so unimportant that no-one would bother to chuck an atom bomb at it, or even occupy it. He looked long and carefully at his map and decided that the ghost town of Manaos, one thousand miles up the Amazon, relic of a long defunct rubber boom, was the answer.

Manaos in the nineteenth century grew from a small trading town to a city built in the really fantastic bad taste of

the period. But now the hideous false Parisian mansions with their mansard roofs are broken up into tenements and the gilt and plaster is flaking away in the vast florid mock-rococo opera house.

'Admittedly,' reflected Imre, 'it's incredibly shabby, provincial and isolated, but no-one ever speaks of war, rumors of war and sudden death from the skies. Furthermore, living is cheap. I will make this my headquarters.' So he settled in as a lodger with the Countess de Silva de Pereira de Pinto y Basto de la Ilha Verde. There was a great deal more to it than that but this was the irreducible minimum on which his skittish, lemon-colored landlady, of uncertain age, insisted. The house itself would lead one to suspect that an extremely knowledgeable curator of a museum had combed two hemispheres for pieces of inspired ugliness of the period 1880 to 1905, and staged an 'exhibition du mauvais gôute.' Although Imre with his Hungarian genius for languages had during his stay in Portugal achieved a fair command of the language, the Countess always insisted in conversing with him in her execrable French. But in spite of all these drawbacks Imre was most comfortable and the Mestizo cook was a real artist.

Imre Nagy, rejoicing for the first time in his life, in a feeling of real security, began to make friends, although he found the Countess's shabby genteel circle intensely wearying, with their eternal prattle of a vanished plutocracy and its shallow veneer of culture that it had imported from Europe in much the same spirit that it had imported its shiny victorias and broughams.

Magyars, like Scots, get around and Imre was in no way surprised to find that even in far Manaos there was another Hungarian. He was a dear old boy who, although well past sixty years old, was still foreman of the boiler department of the marine engineers down at the large docks, now handling not a twentieth part of the cargo for which they had been originally built. Just before the 1914 war young Kovacs, a charge hand in the boiler shop at the old Austro-Hungarian locomotive works at Tat was given a hint. He was told that his socialist speeches and trade union activities were not looked on with favor by the Bohemian policemen recruited by His Imperial Majesty Francis Joseph with the

express object of stamping out that kind of nonsense. Now Kovacs was no fool, he wouldn't have been charge hand at thirty if he had been, and, within forty-eight hours of the 'tip-off,' Kovacs, Magda his wife, and Janos his infant son, were jolting down to Trieste in a third class railway carriage, their simple belongings stowed in bundles, and the few gold pieces they had saved sewn into Magda's many voluminous petticoats. The fact that they did not join the steady flow of 'bohunks' to Pittsburgh, Chicago, or Buffalo is attributable to the fact that the day they arrived in Trieste a ship which would take steerage passengers was leaving for Bahia and they did not deem it wise to remain one hour longer than was necessary under the proud double-headed eagle of Austria-Hungary. In Bahia they learned of the vacancy at Manaos and there they settled. It was with this cosy working-class Hungarian family that Imre spent most of his spare time.

It was one grilling hot New Year's Eve that Imre was celebrating a true Hungarian 'silvester' with roast goose and all the traditional trimmings at the Kovac's flat, that he first heard tell of the fabulous Count Szolnok.

'Are there,' he asked, 'no other Magyars in the neighborhood to join us at our silvester feast?'

'There used to be a dear old violin teacher,' Magda Kovacs told him, 'who celebrated with us every New Year since we came, but he died a couple of years back. There is not a Magyar nearer than Bahia, unless you count the high born Count Szolnok and you would hardly expect a cousin of the Emperor to sit down to our humble table.' In spite of her early socialistic opinions the good Magda had never really got around to the fact that the Hapsburgs no longer ruled in the palace on Buda Hill and that the nobility were no longer something even further removed from the common people than the saints in the churches. It was too great an upheaval for her simple mind to compass. Imre Nagy thought grimly of the Hungarian aristocracy in the streets of shattered Budapest selling their silver and furs and fine English suits to buy meals, not one hundredth part as fine as the magnificent repast that Magda, true daughter of a Puszta farmer, had laid out.

This was the first mention Imre had ever heard of Count

Szolnok. He knew that there had been a noble Hungarian family of that name: a family of great antiquity and legendary wealth. But he imagined that they had long been extinct.

'I doubt even if the old Count is still alive,' said Kovacs. 'A few years ago, before Pretzlik, his maintenance engineer, stopped coming to Manaos, he told me that, although his old master was still hale and hearty, he was within a year or two of his ninetieth birthday.'

What follows was as much as old Kovacs knew of the story. It was in the 1880's a wonder that set every tongue between Bahia and Manaos awag. A huge steam yacht of some fifteen hundred tons passed Manaos and went on up the Amazon, all her fresh white paint and polished brass gleaming in the sun. Next, cargo steamers full of building materials and ship-loads of workmen discharged into shallow draft lighters and were towed upstream. It seemed that an apparently eccentric and boundlessly wealthy Count Szolnok had selected a site some way up a tributary of the Amazon which branched off two days' steaming beyond Manaos. The site, it was said, was on high healthy ground which lifted it out of the jungle, where a great waterfall thundered down. The masons, carpenters, carvers and craftsmen, brought from both England and Italy, were housed in wooden barracks, prefabricated and brought for the purpose. The Count, from what fragments of information could be picked up, was building himself a vast Arabian nights palace, in the Palladian manner, with a tall pillared portico. This hearsay, and little more, could be gathered, for the workmen were conveyed direct to and from the site, and anyone visiting Manaos for any special reason was sworn to absolute secrecy under pain of instant dismissal. No one had actually seen anything, for over a hundred miles of impenetrable jungle made the approach impossible, except by water, and, though the great yacht could be seen anchored in the main stream, the only access to the work was by the Count's own special shallow draft lighters and steam tugs. All that was known were native reports by 'bush telegraph' through the jungle, of a great white palace being completed in absolutely record time.

Presently the workmen were taken away in ships as they came, and the great steam yacht and most of the tugs and

lighters went away downstream and were never seen again. With so little known, the mystery was soon exhausted as a subject of conversation and as rapidly forgotten. Next there was another development that caused surprise and comment. Engineering work on a large scale was in progress. Boatloads of engineers, mostly Swiss, but also French, German and Czech, or Bohemian as they were called in those days, by-passed Manaos and sailed up to the mysterious Count's property. Steamer load upon steamer load of cases of machinery were transhipped to lighters, and presently the greater part of the engineers, well paid for their secrecy, disappeared as they had come. By the turn of the century, it was thought that not more than a few dozen specialist technicians remained. By the time Kovacs came on the scene, just before World War I, even they had all gone and it was said that but one maintenance engineer, Pretzlik, the Bohemian, who came into Manaos two or three times a year in the steam launch, remained. Few of the younger people, even in 1913, had ever heard of the fabled Count Szolnok.

Kovacs had only one positive light to throw on the story. When he first came to the company, the old electrician, now long dead, had told him that over twenty years earlier he had seen the most enormous hydro-electric generating plant, hundreds of times bigger than would be needed to light the largest house, being transhipped in sections into lighters. So huge was each individual section, that the operation was only performed with the greatest difficulty. In the old electrician's estimate this plant, presumably to be worked from the waterfall, would generate sufficient electricity to light a city far larger than Manaos itself.

This was all Kovacs could tell except that the jungle natives would never go within miles of the place because of a ridiculous superstition that the Count and Countess, who were never seen, had begotten some strange race of robots or mechanical men who tilled their fields and worked their farms.

Imre Nagy, trained newspaperman that he was, at once scented a good 'story' here. These strange events of over half a century ago, should yield 'feature' articles saleable to many of the better paying papers and periodicals. So, seeking the basis for an article, he did what any other intelligent

reporter would have done; he went to the local newspaper and asked to see their files for the eighteen-eighties and nineties. Here he drew a complete blank, for although there were duplicate files, someone, presumably in the pay of Count Szolnok, had neatly clipped out every single reference to him! This of course made Imre Nagy all the keener to get the 'story.'

Old people in Manaos could repeat nothing but garbled versions of what Kovacs had already told him, and many frankly dismissed the story as an old wives' tale. He had little hope that the files of any of the Hungarian dailies, going back as far as 1880 would have survived that disastrous battle which Germans and Russians had just fought over their country. So, as the one point upon which people agreed seemed to be that the Countess Szolnok was the daughter of an English Duke, he cabled a friend in London to do some research for him. He was rewarded by receiving, by airmail, copies of articles in *The Times* newspaper and photostatic copies of engravings from the *Illustrated London News*.

The story it unfolded was a strange one. Born in 1856 the only son of the fabulously wealthy Count Szolnok, instead of following the usual procedure of his age and class and devoting his life to soldiering and sport, was determined from his earliest youth, to become an engineer. His father, most surprisingly gave him the fullest support and had him educated in Switzerland where he took first place in every examination, and showed himself to be a student of absolutely exceptional brilliance and promise. The verdict of his professors appears to have been, 'What a pity this young man will inherit such vast wealth and properties, for they are sure to divert him from being the most brilliant engineer of his generation.' The young Count went on to work in the experimental department of a great engineering works in the Northern Midlands of England. His work here showed, in spite of his youth, the greatest promise. But, as far as the newspapers went, this was quite eclipsed by his wonderful mounts and dashing horsemanship on those occasions when he appeared in the hunting field. His engagement to the daughter, the only child, of one of the wealthiest coal-owning Dukes in the realm, was a nine days' wonder. For, as

The Times newspaper says, 'This young couple will command between them a fortune so vast that it will exceed that of several of the European Crowned Heads who will be arriving for the wedding.'

The wedding itself far outshone any other social event in the lush year of 1880. And its terrible sequel made headlines in every newspaper in the world. As the open victoria carrying the radiant couple drew away from the church, a woman in the crowd, the mother of a miner who had been blinded at work in one of the Duke's pits, jumped on the carriage step and dashed a beaker of vitriol full in the face of the bride. By some miracle her eyesight was spared, but she was so hideously disfigured, that it was known that she would never permit any other human being except her husband ever to set eyes on her again. And that is all the English papers could tell Imre of Count and Countess Szolnok, except that, although Parliament were quite prepared to pass a special Bill that the woman might be hanged, the Countess wrote personally to Queen Victoria and asked that the woman should be committed to a madhouse. This was done. Some months later a small paragraph appeared in *The Times* reporting that the young Count and Countess were building in some secluded part of the Americas (unnamed) an exact replica of her old home in England built for her ancestor, the second Duke, by the architect and carver Inigo Jones. That was all.

The port and customs records at the mouth of the Amazon River, in reply to a letter, revealed that from 1881 for a period of about twenty years, ships chartered by Count Szolnok brought in goods to the value of several million pounds, and always returned empty.

Satisfied now that he was on the track of, if not exactly 'hot news,' an extremely sensational story, Imre bought a shallow draft motor launch. This he equipped with mosquito nets, bedding, and provisions, and set out. The journey was uneventful enough, and he easily spotted the disused wharf with a heavy rusting crane, that marked the entry of the tributary. After this it was hard going nosing against a five knot current over a foul uncharted bed. He punched the current for a day. When it got dark, he anchored in midstream, pulled down his mosquito curtains and

turned in. It was far too tricky going to attempt in the dark. The next day he rounded a bend, the river widened out and he knew he had reached his goal. A large steam launch rocked at its moorings. The brass funnel was black from lack of cleaning, the paintwork had peeled away leaving the teak to bleach in the sun. The decks were foul with the droppings of birds, the windows opaque with dirt, and the anchor chains twisted and cluttered with weed. One thing was quite clear, she had lain there at her moorings for a good many years since Pretzlik had last taken her to Manaos. This Pretzlik, Kovacs had told him, had been an unattractive man, soapily humble in a Uriah Heapish way, but close as an oyster, and, there was no doubt about this, a really magnificent engineer. In all the years that Kovacs had known him, neither he nor anyone else had ever been able to get a single word out of him about his employer, or how they lived. By the well-built brick landing stage some shallow draft lighters had filled with rainwater and sunk. Imre made fast to the bollard, still above water, on one of these and raised his eyes. High up on the hill, standing in a parkland setting that made it look even more completely English, white as white in the morning sun, stood a lovely Palladian mansion with a tall portico. From where he was he could hear the steady thunder of a waterfall. 'So far,' said Imre to himself, 'every word of the fantastic story seems to be true.'

Grass was growing between the flagstones of the deserted wharf and another large crane was rusting on its rails. A broad pavé road led away to the great house, and a fork could be seen where a road branched off towards the waterfall, and, presumably, the power station. More grass and gay flowers were already growing up between the blocks of the pavé road.

Almost gleefully Imre started up the road, although, in spite of the thrill of the anticipated 'story', he couldn't help, he didn't know why, experiencing a sense of chill foreboding. Presently the well graduated road rose beyond the jungle belt, and, to his surprise, Imre found himself in well cultivated farm land. 'This,' he thought to himself, 'is the first discrepancy with what I've heard. It was always said that the natives would not come within miles of the place,

and yet the volume of labor to work these fields and orchards must be immense.'

Then suddenly he caught sight of one of the things. It was picking fruit from a tree and putting the fruit carefully into a big basket. At first glance it was apparent that the thing wasn't human, if only for one reason; where its head should have been there was a perfectly smooth cylindrical protuberance rounded at the edge, like a steam dome. Its body conformed to the normal human shape and was quite naked, covered, apparently, with some kind of smooth rubberoid substance.

Imre stared and stared, but, before he had got over his first shock, another of the creatures appeared through the trees pushing a flat barrow with baskets of fruit on it. The second creature deftly picked up the full basket, placed it neatly on the barrow, left an empty basket on the ground, and, turning, wheeled the barrow away the way it had come. These smooth, sightless creatures, a uniform dark chocolate color, so human in their movements, yet so inhuman, filled Imre with such a sense of loathing and repulsion that he lost no time in hurrying on.

Everywhere he looked he could see the horrible things toiling away at their appointed agricultural tasks. Passing by some piggeries, he had another shock. One of the creatures vaulted lightly into the pigsty, picked up an enormous sow in its arms as easily as one would pick up a baby, straddled the fence and carried it squealing away. Imre realized with a shudder of horror that their strength must be ten times greater than that of any human being. Like the others it appeared completely unaware of Imre's presence.

Imre Nagy felt an irresistible desire to bolt back to the motor launch and put as much distance as he could between himself and these blood-curdling creatures, but he reasoned with himself, 'During the war, when money was no object, scientific developments that would normally take twenty years took as many months. Why should not Count Szolnok, himself an outstanding engineer, with unlimited funds and half a century to do it in, have concentrated on and produced the perfect robot. After all they are no more horrible to look at than the still living victims of atomic radio

activity, another logical outcome of scientific research. Besides, I've got the story of a lifetime.'

Steeling himself, he pressed on, out of the farming region, through brilliantly colored shrubberies, up to the great front door. His arrival must have operated a photo electric cell for the door opened of its own accord. What he saw made him feel chill even on this hot day. A robot with a synthetic face was clad in sumptuous livery, but its hands had the same rubberoid covering of a flesh color. 'His Excellency does not receive,' it said, in Portuguese, and shut the door.

Imre was nothing if not quick-witted. As he came up the drive he had passed close by a robot weeding the gravel sweep. It had gone on weeding without showing any consciousness of his presence. 'It is quite clear,' he told himself, 'that they don't see and so they are presumably sensitive to sound and,' he shuddered to think of it, 'touch.' He decided to try again. He retraced his steps and approached the door which was again opened by the same flunkey robot. 'Good morning, my good fellow,' he said haughtily in Hungarian. The thing bowed low and held the door open for him to pass, and a strange flat mechanical voice came out of it, returning his greeting in Hungarian, 'Jo napot kivanok, kegyelmes.' Other footmen-robots bowed their powdered heads in deep obeisance as he passed through the great hall. So great was his anxiety to get away from these creatures, that he barely noticed the priceless furniture and pictures. He could hardly restrain himself from breaking into a run towards a small door he saw at the far end, and which instinct told him, might well afford sanctuary from their dreadful presence. He could feel the perspiration running off him in streams as he fought down the panic thought, 'Suppose I don't know how to control them and they close in on me.' And he remembered the giant strength of the thing in the piggery.

With a sigh of relief, he gained the sanctuary of a room which, judging by its booklined walls must be the Count's library, and sank into a deep leather armchair. For a moment he relaxed, and then stiffened into horror when he realized that two more footmen-robots, or for all he knew two of the ones from the hall, had approached absolutely silently with their rubber feet on the deep noiseless carpet, and were standing over him. Imre heard a voice he hardly

recognized as his own say with the courage born of utter desperation, 'Get me some coffee and a cigar.' Silently the cat-footed golems went and returned with silver salvers, the finest old English Sheffield plate, bearing an old Irish silver coffee pot and a gold box of cigars. Then they retired as silently as they had come.

Relaxing over the fine coffee and superlative cigar, Imre thought that he had things fairly well sized. 'The form seems to be,' he told himself, 'leave them severely alone, unless they notice me, then I tell them quickly in Hungarian to do something.'

The Count was obviously a great diarist, for all round the walls, beautifully bound in the finest morocco leather, were his diaries, going back sixty years or more, but the one for the latest year was missing. Greatly heartened by his discovery, Imre roamed about the great house, lost in admiration of its beautiful furnishings. Count Szolnok had none of the debased decorative tastes of the latter half of the nineteenth century. His emissaries with ample purses had scoured the world for all the most perfect art treasures of a century and more earlier. The house-robots went silently about their menial tasks, and for all the interest they took, he might not have been there. Of the engineer-Count and his cruelly maimed Countess there was no sign.

Imre was fast gaining confidence. There were, he found, only two bedrooms. The vast state bedroom of the Count and Countess, and, tucked away right at the back of the house, a simple comfortable little bed-sitting room, which must have been where Pretzlik, the maintenance engineer, lived. The other rooms, which would normally have been bedrooms, were long disused laboratories and drawing offices. A glance through some of the Count's earlier diaries had revealed the reason for this. Even before he started to build the great house he wrote that his wife was showing increasing reluctance to have any human being except himself near her. 'There is no reason,' he says in the diary of 1881, 'why, if research is resolutely prosecuted, we should not bring about and perfect the legend of a hundred years ago, the golems or mechanical homunculi, to serve us.'

It was clear from the fact that twenty years later everyone except the maintenance engineer had departed, he had succeeded, and the wish of the Countess was gratified. Imre

could get no clue as to what had become of the aged couple till he saw peeping out from under the great state bed the corner of a morocco-bound diary. The last entry was dated some years previously: it read, *'We are both too weak to leave our bed, but the nursing golems are functioning to perfection, even now they are bringing us bowls of hot nourishing goose soup and refilling our hot-water bottles. I have only one fear. Pretzlik has not returned from the wharf, and ill may have befallen him, so we have been unable to do the routine check of the burial golems. Pray God they do not come too soon.'*

'Well,' said Imre to himself, 'Count Szolnok certainly seems to have thought of everything. Nursing golems to care for them in their dotage, and golems to bury them when they are dead.' Then he remembered the sinister entry in the diary, and added with a shudder, 'at least I hope they were dead.' Dismissing the horrible thought from his mind, he went down through the great house, where the golems carried on as they had done for half a century, each in his appointed task. A savoury smell led him to the dining-room, where meals were served and cleared away daily although for nearly five years now, there had been no one to eat them. Imre ate, and ordered a stately golem in rich livery, some inches taller than the others, who was clearly chief butler, to bring him a glass of Tokay. The Tokay was brought, but the sight of the rubber-covered hand pouring it delicately into his glass made the fine wine turn sour for him.

After the meal Imre went to walk on the lawns, he told himself he had nothing to be afraid of, but somehow he felt safer in the open air. He could hardly believe his ears, he could have sworn he heard voices singing. He moved in the direction of the phantom voices and they became louder. He followed the singing, growing louder with every step. A turn in the shubbery revealed a small mortuary chapel, built in the 'gothick romance' style. The door swung open to a touch, and he entered. Walking up the aisle, he could hardly repress a shudder at the cowled and hooded golems singing a solemn requiem mass. Every night and every morning he knew that they had sung mass since the death of the Count and Countess, almost five years ago. Every night and every morning they would go on singing until some date far in the

future when a failure in the perfect machinery would cause every golem to stop suddenly immobile at whatever he was doing, never to work again. In front of the altar on two elaborate carved gilt, or possibly gold, stands, rested two glass coffins. Evidently they were electrically refrigerated by some hidden plant, for the bodies were in perfect condition, without a trace of decomposition. *One glance at the expression of agony and horror on the Count's noble gray face, his twisted tortured limbs and what was mirrored in his wide open eyes showed that his worst fear had been realized. The burial golems had come too soon. But when the journalist saw what had been once Countess Szolnok's face, he clapped his hand over his own, and stumbled shuddering between the rows of singing golems out of the mortuary chapel.*

Imre Nagy bit his lower lip till it bled in his terrible mental struggle not to bolt headlong down the broad paved road to the wharf. The warm, salty taste of blood in his mouth made him feel slightly better. He felt that he, at least, was a reasoning creature of flesh and blood in this bedlam of blind automata. He would, he reasoned with himself, go over the diaries, make a selection, and take them down to the launch with him, and be away from this hateful place at first morning light. To do him credit, he never thought for a moment of pocketing a single one of the smaller objets d'art, the sale of which would have made him wealthy for life.

The journalist settled in to the library, and started to sort out the diaries. There was so much that was of fascinating interest that it proved a far longer business than he expected. Then the storm broke, a cloudburst, in all its tropical intensity, a solid sheet of water, thunder and lightning. A brilliant flash of forked lightning revealed outside the library window one of the smooth naked primeval field-golems. The water ran easily off the horrid steam dome-like protuberance where its head should have been, and its chocolate colored rubber skin. It was apparently quite unconscious of the deluge, which showed no signs of abating. Imre shuddered. Apart from the damage the wet would do to the diaries, he felt he could not bring himself to go out in the storm and the rapidly falling night among those sightless terrible automata. Then he had an idea, such a good one that

for a moment he forgot his mounting sense of horror and laughed out aloud. He would spend the night, warm and snug and dry in Pretzlik's room, in Pretzlik's bed. When he had been exploring, a glance round the room showed him that the maintenance engineer evidently did not care to be, or was not permitted to be, waited on by the creatures that he serviced. There was ample evidence of that, a coffee percolator, a little electric cooking stove, an iron for pressing clothes and a hundred and one other indications that he was a bachelor well used to looking after himself. 'Well,' thought Imre, 'that's the one place where I shan't see a single one of them tonight.' The mere thought of them made gooseflesh rise on his forearms. A few more hours sorting out the diaries he wished to take, and making notes from the ones that he would leave behind, and Imre Nagy was deep asleep in Pretzlik's deep, comfortable bed, secure in the knowledge that no service-golem would enter into that room.

That night the burial golems came for Pretzlik, as indeed they came every night since Pretzlik had died of heart failure in the cabin of the steam launch. How did they know he was dead? That is a secret that died with Pretzlik and the old Count, and how were they, the burial golems, to know that the body in Pretzlik's bed was not the dead body of Pretzlik, the maintenance engineer, but Imre Nagy, the living journalist, deep asleep, exhausted with the day's terrors and discoveries?

Silently they came, and Imre awoke to find the inflexible rubber clad steel arms closing round him. The more he struggled, the tighter they gripped. He was held as firmly as in a vice, then, with overwhelming relief, he remembered how he had dealt with the other golems. He barked a sharp command in Hungarian. He shouted and cursed them and screamed till he was hoarse, and none of it had the slightest effect on the steel and rubber creatures that gripped him and bore him away. For burial golems are simply built to deal with dead people who do not speak, and are therefore not equipped to be sensitive to sound.

Screwed into Pretzlik's coffin, Imre heard the hooded golems sing interminable masses over him. On and on it went, and although he had plenty of air the singing soothed

him into a sort of coma of unreality. The first flat thud of a shovelful of earth landing fair and square on the coffin lid brought him screaming back to reality, and tearing at the thick smooth wood round him till his fingernails came off. But burial golems don't hear, and the spadefuls of earth fell faster and faster although now that there was a layer over the coffin they no longer sounded the same. It was not till there was a very slight rise in temperature that Imre realized that death by suffocation is not only terrible and painful, but very, very slow.

It was an ironical end for a man who had traveled so many thousand miles to avoid death.

HERBERT WEST – REANIMATOR

by H. P. Lovecraft

I. FROM THE DARK

Of Herbert West, who was my friend in college and in other life, I can speak only with extreme terror. This terror is not due altogether to the sinister manner of his recent disappearance, but was engendered by the whole nature of his life-work, and first gained its acute form more than seventeen years ago, when we were in the third year of our course at the Miskatonic University medical school in Arkham. While he was with me, the wonder and diabolism of his experiments fascinated me utterly, and I was his closest companion. Now that he is gone and the spell is broken, the actual fear is greater. Memories and possibilities are ever more hideous than realities.

The first horrible incident of our acquaintance was the greatest shock I ever experienced, and it is only with reluctance that I repeat it. As I have said, it happened when we were in medical school, where West had already made himself notorious through his wild theories on the nature of death and the possibility of overcoming it artificially. His views, which were widely ridiculed by the faculty and by his fellow-students, hinged on the essentially mechanistic nature of life; and concerned means for operating the organic machinery of mankind by calculated chemical action after the failure of natural processes. In his experiments with various animating solutions he had killed and treated immense numbers of rabbits, guinea-pigs, cats, dogs and monkeys, till he had become the prime nuisance of the college. Several times he had actually obtained signs of life in animals supposedly dead; in many cases violent signs; but he soon saw that the perfection of his process, if indeed

possible, would necessarily involve a lifetime of research. It likewise became clear that, since the same solution never worked alike on different organic species, he would require human subjects for further and more specialized progress. It was here that he first came into conflict with the college authorities, and was debarred from future experiments by no less a dignitary than the dean of the medical school himself – the learned and benevolent Dr. Allan Halsey, whose work on behalf of the stricken is recalled by every old resident of Arkham.

I had always been exceptionally tolerant of West's pursuits, and we frequently discussed his theories, whose ramifications and corollaries were almost infinite. Holding with Haeckel that all life is a chemical and physical process, and that the so-called 'soul' is a myth, my friend believed that artificial reanimation of the dead can depend only on the condition of the tissues; and that unless actual decomposition has set in, a corpse fully equipped with organs may with suitable measures be set going again in the peculiar fashion known as life. That the psychic or intellectual life might be impaired by the slight deterioration of sensitive brain-cells which even a short period of death would be apt to cause, West fully realized. It had at first been his hope to find a reagent which would restore vitality before the actual advent of death, and only repeated failures on animals had shown him that the natural and artificial life-motions were incompatible. He then sought extreme freshness in his specimens, injecting his solutions into the blood immediately after the extinction of life. It was this circumstance which made the professors so carelessly sceptical, for they felt that true death had not occurred in any case. They did not stop to view the matter closely and reasoningly.

It was not long after the faculty had interdicted his work that West confided to me his resolution to get fresh bodies in some manner, and continue in secret the experiments he could no longer perform openly. To hear him discussing ways and means was rather ghastly, for at the college we had never procured anatomical specimens ourselves. Whenever the morgue proved inadequate, two local negroes attended to this matter, and they were seldom questioned.

West was then a small, slender, spectacled youth with delicate features, yellow hair, pale blue eyes, and a soft voice, and it was uncanny to hear him dwelling on the relative merits of Christ Church Cemetery and the potter's field, because practically everybody in Christ Church was embalmed; a thing of course ruinous to West's researches.

I was by this time his active and enthralled assistant, and helped him make all his decisions, not only concerning the source of bodies but concerning a suitable place for our loathsome work. It was I who thought of the deserted Chapman farmhouse beyond Meadow Hill, where we fitted up on the ground floor an operating room and a laboratory, each with dark curtains to conceal our midnight doings. The place was far from any road, and in sight of no other house, yet precautions were nonetheless necessary; since rumours of strange lights, started by chance nocturnal roamers, would soon bring disaster on our enterprise. It was agreed to call the whole thing a chemical laboratory if discovery should occur. Gradually we equipped our sinister haunt of science with materials either purchased in Boston or quietly borrowed from the college – materials carefully made unrecognizable save to expert eyes – and provided spades and picks for the many burials we should have to make in the cellar. At the college we used an incinerator, but the apparatus was too costly for our unauthorized laboratory. Bodies were always a nuisance – even the small guinea-pig bodies from the slight clandestine experiments in West's room at the boarding-house.

We followed the local death-notices like ghouls, for our specimens demanded particular qualities. What we wanted were corpses interred soon after death and without artificial preservation; preferably free from malforming disease, and certainly with all organs present. Accident victims were our best hope. Not for many weeks did we hear of anything suitable; though we talked with morgue and hospital authorities, ostensibly in the college's interest, as often as we could without exciting suspicion. We found that the college had first choice in every case, so that it might be necessary to remain in Arkham during the summer, when only the limited summer-school classes were held. In the end, though, luck favoured us; for one day we heard of an almost ideal

case in the potter's field; a brawny young workman drowned only the morning before in Summer's Pond, and buried at the town's expense without delay or embalming. That afternoon we found the new grave, and determined to begin work soon after midnight.

It was a repulsive task that we undertook in the black small hours, even though we lacked at that time the special horror of graveyards which later experiences brought to us. We carried spades and oil dark lanterns, for although electric torches were then manufactured, they were not as satisfactory as the tungsten contrivances of today. The process of unearthing was slow and sordid – it might have been gruesomely poetical if we had been artists instead of scientists – and we were glad when our spades struck wood. When the pine box was fully uncovered West scrambled down and removed the lid, dragging out and propping up the contents. I reached down and hauled the contents out of the grave, and then both toiled hard to restore the spot to its former appearance. The affair made us rather nervous, especially the stiff form and vacant face of our first trophy, but we managed to remove all traces of our visit. When we had patted down the last shovelful of earth we put the specimen in a canvas sack and set out for the old Chapman place beyond Meadow Hill.

On an improvized dissecting-table in the old farmhouse, by the light of a powerful acetylene lamp, the specimen was not very spectral looking. It had been a sturdy and apparently unimaginative youth of wholesome plebeian type – large-framed, grey-eyed and brown-haired – a sound animal without psychological subtleties, and probably having vital processes of the simplest and healthiest sort. Now, with the eyes closed, it looked more asleep than dead: though the expert test of my friend soon left no doubt on the score. We had at last what West had always longed for – a real dead man of the ideal kind, ready for the solution as prepared according to the most careful calculations and theories for human use. The tension on our part became very great. We knew that there was scarcely a chance for anything like complete success, and could not avoid hideous fears at possible grotesque results of partial animation. Especially were we apprehensive concerning the mind and impulses of

the creature, since in the space following death some of the more delicate cerebral cells might well have suffered deterioration. I, myself, still held some curious notions about the traditional 'soul' of man, and felt an awe at the secrets that might be told by one returning from the dead. I wondered what sights this placid youth might have seen in inaccessible spheres, and what he could relate if fully restored to life. But my wonder was not overwhelming, since for the most part I shared the materialism of my friend. He was calmer than I as he forced a large quantity of his fluid into a vein of the body's arm, immediately binding the incision securely.

The waiting was gruesome, but West never faltered. Every now and then he applied his stethoscope to the specimen, and bore the negative results philosophically. After about three quarters of an hour without the least sign of life he disappointedly pronounced the solution inadequate, but determined to make the most of his opportunity and try one change in the formula before disposing of his ghastly prize. We had that afternoon dug a grave in the cellar, and would have to fill it by dawn – for although we had fixed a lock on the house we wished to shun even the remotest risk of a ghoulish discovery. Besides, the body would not be even approximately fresh the next night. So taking the solitary acetylene lamp into the adjacent laboratory we left our silent guest on the slab in the dark, and bent every energy to the mixing of a new solution; the weighing and measuring supervised by West with an almost fanatical care.

The awful event was very sudden, and wholly unexpected. I was pouring something from one test-tube to another, and West was busy over the alcohol blast-lamp which had to answer for a Bunsen burner in this gasless edifice, when from the pitch-black room we had left there burst the most appalling and demoniac succession of cries that either of us had ever heard. Not more unutterable could have been the chaos of hellish sound if the pit itself had opened to release the agony of the damned, for in one inconceivable cacophony was centred all the supernal terror and unnatural despair of animate nature. Human it could not have been – it is not in man to make such sounds – and without a thought of our late employment or its possible discovery both West and I leaped to the nearest window like stricken animals; over-

turning tubes, lamp, and retorts, and vaulting madly into the starred abyss of the rural night. I think we screamed ourselves as we stumbled frantically towards the town, though as we reached the outskirts we put on a semblance of restraint – just enough to seem like belated revellers staggering home from a debauch.

We did not separate, but managed to get to West's room, where we whispered with the gas up until dawn. By then we had calmed ourselves a little with rational theories and plans for investigation, so that we could sleep through the day – classes being disregarded. But that evening two items in the paper, wholly unrelated, made it again impossible for us to sleep. The old deserted Chapman house had inexplicably burned to an amorphous heap of ashes; that we could understand because of the upset lamp. Also, an attempt had been made to disturb a new grave in the potter's field, as if by futile and spadeless clawing at the earth. That we could not understand, for we had patted down the mould very carefully.

And for seventeen years after that West would look frequently over his shoulder, and complain of fancied footsteps behind him. Now he has disappeared.

II. THE PLAGUE-DEMON

I SHALL never forget that hideous summer sixteen years ago, when like a noxious afrite from the halls of Eblis typhoid stalked leeringly through Arkham. It is by that satanic scourge that most recall the year, for truly terror brooded with bat-wings over the piles of coffins in the tombs of Christ Church Cemetery; yet for me there is a greater horror in that time – a horror known to me alone now that Herbert West has disappeared.

West and I were doing post-graduate work in summer classes at the medical school of Miskatonic University, and my friend had attained a wide notoriety because of his experiments leading toward the revivification of the dead. After the scientific slaughter of uncounted small animals the freakish work had ostensibly stopped by order of our sceptical dean, Dr. Allan Halsey; though West had continued to

perform certain secret tests in his dingy boarding-house room, and had on one terrible and unforgettable occasion taken a human body from its grave in the potter's field to a deserted farmhouse beyond Meadow Hill.

I was with him on that odious occasion, and saw him inject into the still veins the elixir which he thought would to some extent restore life's chemical and physical processes. It had ended horribly – in a delirium of fear which we gradually came to attribute to our own overwrought nerves – and West had never afterwards been able to shake off a maddening sensation of being haunted and hunted. The body had not been quite fresh enough; it is obvious that to restore normal mental attributes a body must be very fresh indeed; and the burning of the old house had prevented us from burying the thing. It would have been better if we could have known it was underground.

After that experience West had dropped his researches for some time; but as the zeal of the born scientist slowly returned, he again became importunate with the college faculty, pleading for the use of the dissecting-room and of fresh human specimens for the work he regarded as so overwhelmingly important. His pleas, however, were wholly in vain; for the decision of Dr. Halsey was inflexible, and the other professors all endorsed the verdict of their leader. In the radical theory of reanimation they saw nothing but the immature vagaries of a youthful enthusiast whose slight form, yellow hair, spectacled blue eyes, and soft voice gave no hint of the super-normal – almost diabolical – power of the cold brain within. I can see him now as he was then – and I shiver. He grew sterner of face, but never elderly. And now Sefton has had the mishap and West has vanished.

West clashed disagreeably with Dr. Halsey near the end of our last undergraduate term in a wordy dispute that did less credit to him than to the kindly dean in point of courtesy. He felt that he was needlessly and irrationally retarded in a supremely great work; a work which he could of course conduct to suit himself in later years, but which he wished to begin while still possessed of the exceptional facilities of the university. That the tradition-bound elders should ignore his singular results on animals, and persist in their denial of the possibility of reanimation, was inexpressibly disgusting

and almost incomprehensible to a youth of West's logical temperament. Only greater maturity could help him understand the chronic mental limitations of the 'professor-doctor' type – the product of generations of pathetic Puritanism, kindly, conscientious, and sometimes gentle and amiable, yet always narrow, intolerant, custom-ridden, and lacking in perspective. Age has more charity for these incomplete yet high-souled characters, whose worst real vice is timidity, and who are ultimately punished by general ridicule for their intellectual sins – sins like Ptolemaism, Calvinism, anti-Darwinism, anti-Nietzscheism, and every sort of Sabbatarianism and sumptuary legislation. West, young despite his marvellous scientific acquirements, had scant patience with good Dr. Halsey and his erudite colleagues; and nursed an increasing resentment, coupled with a desire to prove his theories to these obtuse worthies in some striking and dramatic fashion. Like most youths, he indulged in elaborate day-dreams of revenge, triumph, and final magnanimous forgiveness.

And then had come the scourge, grinning and lethal, from the nightmare caverns of Tartarus. West and I had graduated about the time of its beginning, but had remained for additional work at the summer school, so that we were in Arkham when it broke with full demoniac fury upon the town. Though not as yet licensed physicians, we now had our degrees, and were pressed frantically into public service as the numbers of the stricken grew. The situation was almost past management, and deaths ensued too frequently for the local undertakers fully to handle. Burials without embalming were made in rapid succession, and even the Christ Church Cemetery receiving tomb was crammed with coffins of the unembalmed dead. This circumstance was not without effect on West, who thought often of the irony of the situation – so many fresh specimens, yet none for his persecuted researches! We were frightfully overworked, and the terrific mental and nervous strain made my friend brood morbidly.

But West's gentle enemies were no less harassed with prostrating duties. College had all but closed, and every doctor of the medical faculty was helping to fight the typhoid plague. Dr. Halsey in particular had distinguished himself in

sacrificing service, applying his extreme skill with whole-hearted energy to cases which many others shunned because of danger or apparent hopelessness. Before a month was over the fearless dean had become a popular hero, though he seemed unconscious of his fame as he struggled to keep from collapsing with physical fatigue and nervous exhaustion. West could not withhold admiration for the fortitude of his foe, but because of this was even more determined to prove to him the truth of his amazing doctrines. Taking advantage of the disorganization of both college work and municipal health regulations, he managed to get a recently deceased body smuggled into the university dissecting-room one night, and in my presence injected a new modification of his solution. The thing actually opened its eyes, but only staring at the ceiling with a look of soul-petrifying horror before collapsing into an inertness from which nothing could rouse it. West said it was not fresh enough – the hot summer air does not favour corpses. That time we were almost caught before we incinerated the thing, and West doubted the advisability of repeating his daring misuse of the college laboratory.

The peak of the epidemic was reached in August. West and I were almost dead, and Dr. Halsey did die on the fourteenth. The students all attended the hasty funeral on the fifteenth, and bought an impressive wreath, though the latter was quite overshadowed by the tributes sent by wealthy Arkham citizens and by the municipality itself. It was almost a public affair, for the dean had surely been a public benefactor. After the entombment we were all somewhat depressed, and spent the afternoon at the bar of the Commercial House; where West, though shaken by the death of his chief opponent, chilled the rest of us with references to his notorious theories. Most of the students went home, or to various duties, as the evening advanced; but West persuaded me to aid him in 'making a night of it.' West's landlady saw us arrive at his room about two in the morning, with a third man between us; and told her husband that we had all evidently dined and wined rather well.

Apparently this acidulous matron was right; for about three a.m. the whole house was aroused by cries coming from West's room, where when they broke down the door

they found the two of us unconscious on the blood-stained carpet, beaten, scratched, and mauled, and with the broken remnants of West's bottles and instruments around us. Only an open window told what had become of our assailant, and many wondered how he himself had fared after the terrific leap from the second story to the lawn which he must have made. There were some strange garments in the room, but West upon regaining consciousness said they did not belong to the stranger, but were specimens collected for bacteriological analysis in the course of investigations on the transmission of germ disease. He ordered them burnt as soon as possible in the capacious fireplace. To the police we both declared ignorance of our late companion's identity. He was, West nervously said, a congenial stranger whom we had met at some downtown bar of uncertain location. We had all been rather jovial, and West and I did not wish to have our pugnacious companion hunted down.

That same night saw the beginning of the second Arkham horror – the horror that to me eclipsed the plague itself. Christ Church Cemetery was the scene of a terrible killing; a watchman having been clawed to death in a manner not only too hideous for description, but raising a doubt as to the human agency of the deed. The victim had been seen alive considerably after midnight – the dawn revealed the unutterable thing. The manager of a circus at the neighbouring town of Bolton was questioned, but he swore that no beast had at any time escaped from its cage. Those who found the body noted a trail of blood leading to the receiving tomb, where a small pool of red lay on the concrete just outside the gate. A fainter trail led away toward the woods, but it soon gave out.

The next night devils danced on the roofs of Arkham, and unnatural madness howled in the wind. Through the fevered town had crept a curse which some said was greater than the plague, and which some whispered was the embodied demon-soul of the plague itself. Eight houses were entered by a nameless thing which strewed red death in its wake – in all, seventeen maimed and shapeless remnants of bodies were left behind by the voiceless, sadistic monster that crept abroad. A few persons had half seen it in the dark, and said it was white and like a malformed ape or anthropomorphic

fiend. It had not left behind quite all that it had attacked, for sometimes it had been hungry. The number it had killed was fourteen; three of the bodies had been in stricken homes and had not been alive.

On the third night frantic bands of searchers, led by the police, captured it in a house on Crane Street near the Miskatonic campus. They had organized the quest with care, keeping in touch by means of volunteer telephone stations, and when someone in the college district had reported hearing a scratching at a shuttered window, the net was quickly spread. On account of the general alarm and precautions, there were only two more victims, and the capture was effected without major casualties. The thing was finally stopped by a bullet, though not a fatal one, and was rushed to the local hospital amidst universal excitement and loathing.

For it had been a man. This much was clear despite the nauseous eyes, the voiceless simianism, and the demoniac savagery. They dressed the wound and carted it to the asylum at Sefton, where it beat its head against the walls of a padded cell for sixteen years – until the recent mishap, when it escaped under circumstances that few like to mention. What had most disgusted the searchers of Arkham was the thing they noticed when the monster's face was cleaned – the mocking, unbelievable resemblance to a learned and self-sacrificing martyr who had been entombed but three days before – the late Dr. Allan Halsey, public benefactor and dean of the medical school of Miskatonic University.

To the vanished Herbert West and to me the disgust and horror were supreme. I shudder tonight as I think of it, shudder even more than I did that morning when West muttered through his bandages,

'Damn it, it wasn't *quite* fresh enough!'

III. SIX SHOTS BY MOONLIGHT

IT is uncommon to fire all six shots of a revolver with great suddenness when one would probably be sufficient, but many things in the life of Herbert West were uncommon. It is, for instance, not often that a young physician

leaving college is obliged to conceal the principles which guide his selection of a home and office, yet that was the case with Herbert West. When he and I obtained our degrees at the medical school of Miskatonic University, and sought to relieve our poverty by setting up as general practioners, we took great care not to say that we chose our house because it was fairly well isolated, and as near as possible to the potter's field.

Reticence such as this is seldom without a cause, nor indeed was ours; for our requirements were those resulting from a life-work distinctly unpopular. Outwardly we were doctors only, but beneath the surface were aims of far greater and more terrible moment – for the essence of Herbert West's existence was a quest amid black and forbidden realms of the unknown, in which he hoped to uncover the secret of life and restore to perpetual animation the graveyard's cold clay. Such a quest demands strange materials, among them fresh human bodies; and in order to keep supplied with these indispensable things one must live quietly and not far from a place of informal interment.

West and I had met in college, and I had been the only one to sympathize with his hideous experiments. Gradually I had come to be his inseparable assistant, and now that we were out of college we had to keep together. It was not easy to find a good opening for two doctors in company, but finally the influence of the university secured us a practice in Bolton – a factory town near Arkham, the seat of the college. The Bolton Worsted Mills are the largest in the Miskatonic Valley, and their polyglot employees are never popular as patients with the local physicians. We chose our house with the greatest care, seizing at last on a rather run-down cottage near the end of Pond Street; five numbers from the closest neighbour, and separated from the local potter's field by only a stretch of meadow land, bisected by a narrow neck of the rather dense forest which lies to the north. The distance was greater than we wished, but we could not get a house nearer without going to the other side of the field, wholly out of the factory district. We were not much displeased, however, since there were no people between us and our sinister source of supplies. The walk was a trifle long, but we could haul our silent specimens undisturbed.

Our practice was surprisingly large from the very first – large enough to please most young doctors, and large enough to prove a bore and a burden to students whose real interest lay elsewhere. The mill-hands were of somewhat turbulent inclinations; and besides their many natural needs, their frequent clashes and stabbing affrays gave us plenty to do. But what actually absorbed our minds was the secret laboratory we had fitted up in the cellar – the laboratory with the long table under the electric lights, where in the small hours of the morning we often injected West's various solutions into the veins of the things we dragged from the potter's field. West was experimenting madly to find something which would start man's vital motions anew after they had been stopped by the thing we call death, but had encountered the most ghastly obstacles. The solution had to be differently compounded for different types – what would serve for guinea-pigs would not serve for human beings, and different specimens required large modifications.

The bodies had to be exceedingly fresh or the slight, decomposition of brain tissue would render perfect reanimation impossible. Indeed, the greatest problem was to get them fresh enough – West had had horrible experiences during his secret college researches with corpses of doubtful vintage. The results of partial or imperfect animation were much more hideous than were the total failures, and we both held fearsome recollections of such things. Ever since our first demoniac session in the deserted farm-house on Meadow Hill in Arkham, we had felt a brooding menace; and West, though a calm, blond, blue-eyed scientific automaton in most respects, often confessed to a shuddering sensation of stealthy pursuit. He half felt that he was followed – psychological delusion of shaken nerves, enhanced by the undeniably disturbing fact that at least one of our reanimated specimens was still alive – a frightful carnivorous thing in a padded cell at Sefton. Then there was another – our first – whose exact fate we had never learned.

We had fair luck with specimens in Bolton – much better than in Arkham. We had not been settled a week before we got an accident victim on the very night of burial, and made it open its eyes with an amazing rational expression before

the solution failed. It had lost an arm – if it had been a perfect body we might have succeeded better. Between then and the next January we secured three more, one total failure, one case of marked muscular motion, and one rather shivery thing – it rose of itself and uttered a sound. Then came a period when luck was poor; interments fell off, and those that did occur were of specimens either too diseased or too maimed for us. We kept track of all the deaths and their circumstances with systematic care.

One March night, however, we unexpectedly obtained a specimen which did not come from the potter's field. In Bolton the prevailing spirit of Puritanism had outlawed the sport of boxing – with the usual result. Surreptitious and ill-conducted bouts among the mill-workers were common, and occasionally professional talent of low grade was imported. This late winter night there had been such a match; evidently with disastrous results, since two timorous Poles had come to us with incoherently whispered entreaties to attend to a very secret and desperate case. We followed them to an abandoned barn, where the remnants of a crowd of frightened foreigners were watching a silent black form on the floor.

The match had been between Kid O'Brien – a lubberly and now quaking youth with a most un-Hibernian hooked nose – and Buck Robinson, 'The Harlem Smoke.' The negro had been knocked out, and a moment's examination showed us that he would permanently remain so. He was a loathsome, gorilla-like thing, with abnormally long arms which I could not help calling fore-legs, and a face that conjured up thoughts of unspeakable Congo secrets and tom-tom poundings under an eerie moon. The body must have looked even worse in life – but the world holds many ugly things. Fear was upon the whole pitiful crowd, for they did not know what the law would exact of them if the affair were not hushed up; and they were grateful when West, in spite of my involuntary shudders, offered to get rid of the thing quietly – for a purpose I knew too well.

There was bright moonlight over the snowless landscape, but we dressed the thing and carried it home between us through the deserted streets and meadows, as we had carried a similar thing one horrible night in Arkham. We

approached the house from the field in the rear, took the specimen in the back door and down the cellar stairs, and prepared it for the usual experiment. Our fear of the police was absurdly great, though we had timed our trip to avoid the solitary patrolman of that section.

The result was wearily anti-climactic. Ghastly as our prize appeared, it was wholly unresponsive to every solution we injected in its black arm, solutions prepared from experience with white specimens only. So as the hour grew dangerously near to dawn, we did as we had done with the others – dragged the thing across the meadows to the neck of woods near the potter's field, and buried it there in the best sort of grave the frozen ground would furnish. The grave was not very deep, but fully as good as that of the previous specimen – the thing which had risen of itself and uttered a sound. In the light of our dark lanterns we carefully covered it with leaves and dead vines, fairly certain that the police would never find it in a forest so dim and dense.

The next day I was increasingly apprehensive about the police, for a patient brought rumours of a suspected fight and death. West had still another source of worry, for he had been called in the afternoon to a case which ended very threateningly. An Italian woman had become hysterical over her missing child, a lad of five who had strayed off early in the morning and failed to appear for dinner – and had developed symptoms highly alarming in view of an always weak heart. It was a very foolish hysteria, for the boy had often run away before; but Italian peasants are exceedingly superstitious, and this woman seemed as much harassed by omens as by facts. About seven o'clock in the evening she had died, and her frantic husband had made a frightful scene in his efforts to kill West, whom he wildly blamed for not saving her life. Friends had held him when he drew a stiletto, but West departed amidst his inhuman shrieks, curses, and oaths of vengeance. In his latest affliction the fellow seemed to have forgotten his child, who was still missing as the night advanced. There was some talk of searching the woods, but most of the family's friends were busy with the dead woman and the screaming man. Altogether, the nervous strain upon West must have been tremendous.

Thoughts of the police and of the mad Italian both weighed heavily.

We retired about eleven, but I did not sleep well. Bolton had a surprisingly good police force for so small a town, and I could not help fearing the mess which would ensue if the affair of the night before were ever tracked down. It might mean the end of all our local work – and perhaps prison for both West and me. I did not like those rumours of a fight which were floating about. After the clock had struck three the moon shone in my eyes, but I turned over without rising to pull down the shade. Then came the steady rattling at the back door.

I lay still and somewhat dazed, but before long heard West's rap on my door. He was clad in dressing-gown and slippers, and had in his hands a revolver and an electric flashlight. From the revolver I knew that he was thinking more of the crazed Italian than of the police.

'We'd better both go,' he whispered. 'It wouldn't do not to answer it anyway, and it may be a patient – it would be like one of those fools to try the back door.'

So we both went down the stairs on tiptoe, with a fear partly justified and partly that which comes only from the soul of the weird small hours. The rattling continued, growing somewhat louder. When we reached the door I cautiously unbolted it and threw it open, and as the moon streamed revealing down on the form silhouetted there, West did a peculiar thing. Despite the obvious danger of attracting notice and bringing down on our heads the dreaded police investigation – a thing which after all was mercifully averted by the relative isolation of our cottage – my friend suddenly, excitedly, and unnecessarily emptied all six chambers of his revolver into the nocturnal visitor.

For that visitor was neither Italian nor policeman. Looming hideously against the spectral moon was a gigantic misshapen thing not to be imagined save in nightmares – a glassy-eyed, ink-black apparition nearly on all fours, covered with bits of mould, leaves, and vines, foul with caked blood, and having between its glistening teeth a snow-white, terrible cylindrical object terminating in a tiny hand.

IV. THE SCREAM OF THE DEAD

THE scream of a dead man gave to me that acute and added horror of Dr. Herbert West which harassed the latter years of our companionship. It is natural that such a thing as a dead man's scream should give horror, for it is obviously not a pleasing or ordinary occurrence; but I was used to similar exper ences, hence suffered on this occasion only because of a particular circumstance. And, as I have implied, it was not of the dead man himself that I became afraid.

Herbert West, whose associate and assistant I was, possessed scientific interests far beyond the usual routine of a village physician. That was why, when establishing his practice in Bolton, he had chosen an isolated house near the potter's field. Briefly and brutally stated, West's sole absorbing interest was a secret study of the phenomena of life and its cessation, leading towards the reanimation of the dead through injections of an excitant solution. For this ghastly experimenting it was necessary to have a constant supply of very fresh human bodies; very fresh because even the least decay hopelessly damaged the brain structure, and human because we found that the solution had to be compounded differently for different types of organisms. Scores of rabbits and guinea-pigs had been killed and treated, but their trail was a blind one. West had never fully succeeded because he had never been able to secure a corpse sufficiently fresh. What he wanted were bodies from which vitality had only just departed; bodies with every cell intact and capable of receiving again the impulse towards that mode of motion called l fe. There was hope that this second and artificial life might be made perpetual by repetitions of the injection, but we had learned that an ordinary natural life would not respond to the action. To establish the artificial motion, nocturnal life must be extinct – the specimens must be very fresh, but genuinely dead.

The awesome quest had begun when West and I were students at the Miskatonic University medical school in Arkham, vividly conscious for the first time of the thoroughly mechanical nature of life. That was seven years

before, but West looked scarcely a day older now – he was small, blond, clean-shaven, soft-voiced, and spectacled, with only an occasional flash of a cold blue eye to tell of the hardening and growing fanaticism of his character under the pressure of his terrible investigations. Our experiences had often been hideous in the extreme; the results of defective reanimation, when lumps of graveyard clay had been galvanized into morbid, unnatural, and brainless motion by various modifications of the vital solution.

One thing had uttered a nerve-shattering scream; another had risen violently, beaten us both to unconsciousness, and run amuck in a shocking way before it could be placed behind asylum bars; still another, a loathsome African monstrosity, had clawed out of its shallow grave and done a deed – West had had to shoot that object. We could not get bodies fresh enough to show any trace of reason when reanimated, so had perforce created nameless horrors. It was disturbing to think that one, perhaps two, of our monsters still lived – that thought haunted us shadowingly, till finally West disappeared under frightful circumstances. But at the time of the scream in the cellar laboratory of the isolated Bolton cottage, our fears were subordinate to our anxiety for extremely fresh specimens. West was more avid than I, so that it almost seemed to me that he looked half-covetously at any very healthy living physique.

It was in July, 1910, that the bad luck regarding specimens began to turn. I had been on a long visit to my parents in Illinois, and upon my return found West in a state of singular elation. He had, he told me excitedly, in all likelihood solved the problem of freshness through an approach from an entirely new angle – that of artificial preservation. I had known that he was working on a new and highly unusual embalming compound, and was not surprised that it had turned out well; but until he explained the details I was rather puzzled as to how such a compound could help in our work, since the objectionable staleness of the specimens was largely due to delay occurring before we secured them. This, I now saw, West had clearly recognized; creating his embalming compound for future rather than immediate use, and trusting to fate to supply again some very recent and unburied corpse, as it had years before when we obtained

the Negro killed in the Bolton prize-fight. At last fate had been kind, so that on this occasion there lay in the secret cellar laboratory a corpse whose decay could not by any possibility have begun. What would happen on reanimation, and whether we could hope for a revival of mind and reason, West did not venture to predict. The experiment would be a landmark in our studies, and he had saved the new body for my return, so that both might share the spectacle in accustomed fashion.

West told me how he had obtained the specimen. It had been a vigorous man; a well-dressed stranger just off the train on his way to transact some business with the Bolton Worsted Mills. The walk through the town had been long, and by the time the traveller paused at our cottage to ask the way to the factories his heart had become greatly overtaxed. He had refused a stimulant, and had suddenly dropped dead only a moment later. The body, as might be expected, seemed to West a heavensent gift. In his brief conversation the stranger had made it clear that he was unknown in Bolton, and a search of his pockets subsequently revealed him to be one Robert Leavitt of St. Louis, apparently without a family to make inquiries about his disappearance. If this man could not be restored to life, no one would know of our experiment. We buried our materials in a dense strip of woods between the house and the potter's field. If, on the other hand, he could be restored, our fame would be brilliantly and perpetually established. So without delay West had injected into the body's wrist the compound which would hold it fresh for use after my arrival. The matter of the presumably weak heart, which to my mind imperilled the success of our experiment, did not appear to trouble West extensively. He hoped at last to obtain what he had never obtained before – a rekindled spark of reason and perhaps a normal, living creature.

So on the night of July 18th, 1910, Herbert West and I stood in the cellar laboratory and gazed at a white, silent figure beneath the dazzling arc-light. The embalming compound had worked uncannily well, for as I stared fascinatedly at the sturdy frame which had lain two weeks without stiffening I was moved to seek West's assurance that the thing was really dead. This assurance he gave

readily enough; reminding me that the reanimating solution was never used without careful tests as to life; since it could have no effect if any of the original vitality were present. As West proceeded to take preliminary steps, I was impressed by the vast intricacy of the new experiment; an intricacy so vast that he could trust no hand less delicate than his own. Forbidding me to touch the body, he first injected a drug in the wrist just beside the place his needle had punctured when injecting the embalming compound. This, he said, was to neutralize the compound and release the system to a normal relaxation so that the reanimating solution might freely work when injected. Slightly later, when a change and a gentle tremor seemed to affect the dead limbs, West stuffed a pillow-like object violently over the twitching face, not withdrawing it until the corpse appeared quiet and ready for our attempt at reanimation. The pale enthusiast now applied some last perfunctory tests for absolute lifelessness, withdrew satisfied, and finally injected into the left arm an accurately measured amount of the vital elixir, prepared during the afternoon with a greater care than we had used since college days, when our feats were new and groping. I cannot express the wild, breathless suspense with which we waited for results on this first really fresh specimen – the first we could reasonably expect to open its lips in rational speech, perhaps to tell of what it had seen beyond the unfathomable abyss.

West was a materialist, believing in no soul and attributing all the working of consciousness to bodily phenomena; consequently he looked for no revelation of hideous secrets from gulfs and caverns beyond death's barrier. I did not wholly disagree with him theoretically, yet held vague instinctive remnants of the primitive faith of my forefathers; so that I could not help eyeing the corpse with a certain amount of awe and terrible expectation. Besides – I could not extract from my memory that hideous, inhuman shriek we heard on the night we tried our first experiment in the deserted farmhouse at Arkham.

Very little time had elapsed before I saw the attempt was not to be a total failure. A touch of colour came to cheeks hitherto chalk-white, and spread out under the curiously ample stubble of sandy beard. West, who had his hand on

the pulse of the left wrist, suddenly nodded signficantly; and almost simultaneously a mist appeared on the mirror inclined above the body's mouth. There followed a few spasmodic muscular motions, and then an audible breathing and visible motion of the chest. I looked at the closed eyelids, and thought I detected a quivering. Then the lids opened, showing eyes which were grey, calm, and alive, but still unintelligent and not even curious.

In a moment of fantastic whim I whispered questions to the reddening ears; questions of other worlds of which the memory might still be present. Subsequent terror drove them from my mind, but I think the last one, which I repeated, was: 'Where have you been?' I do not yet know whether I was answered or not, for no sound came from the well-shaped mouth; but I do know that at that moment I firmly thought the thin lips moved silently, forming syllables which I would have vocalized as 'only now' if that phrase had possessed any sense or relevancy. At that moment, as I say, I was elated with the conviction that the one great goal had been attained; and that for the first time a reanimated corpse had uttered distinct words impelled by actual reason. In the next moment there was no doubt about the triumph; no doubt that the solution had truly accomplished, at least temporarily, its full mission of restoring rational and articulate life to the dead. But in that triumph there came to me the greatest of all horrors – not horror of the thing that s oke, but of the deed that I had witnessed and of the man with whom my professional fortunes were joined.

For that very fresh body, at last writhing into full and terrifying consciousness with eyes dilated at the memory of its last scene on earth, threw out its frantic hands in a life and death struggle with the air; and suddenly collapsing into a second and final dissolution from which there could be no return, screamed out the cry that will ring eternally in my aching brain:

'Help! Keep off, you cursed little tow-head fiend – keep that damned needle away from me!'

V. THE HORROR FROM THE SHADOWS

MANY men have related hideous things, not mentioned in print, which happened on the battlefields of the Great War. Some of these things have made me faint, others have convulsed me with devastating nausea, while still others have made me tremble and look behind me in the dark; yet despite the worst of them I believe I can relate the most hideous th ng of all – the shocking, the unnatural, the unbelievable horror from the shadows.

In 1915 I was a physician with the rank of First Lieutenant in a Canadian regiment in Flanders, one of many Americans to precede the government itself into the gigantic struggle. I had not entered the army on my initiative, but rather as a natural result of the enlistment of the man whose indispensable assistant I was – the celebrated Boston surgical specialist, Dr. Herbert West. Dr. West had been av d for a chance to serve as surgeon in a great war, and when the chance had come he carried me with him almost against my will. There were reasons why I would have been glad to let the war separate us; reasons why I found the practice of medicine and the companionship of West more and more irritating; but when he had gone to Ottawa and through a colleague's influence secured a medical commission as Major, I could not resist the imperious persuasion of one determined that I should accompany him in my usual capacity.

When I say that Dr. West was avid to serve in battle, I do not mean to imply that he was either naturally warlike or anxious for the safety of civilization. Always an ice-cold intellectual machine: slight, blond, blue-eyed, and spectacled: I think he secretly sneered at my occasional martial enthusiasms and censures of supine neutrality. There was, however, something he wanted in embattled Flanders; and in order to secure it he had to assume a military exterior. What he wanted was not a thing which many persons want, but something connected with the peculiar branch of medical science which he had chosen quite clandestinely to follow, and in which he had achieved amazing and

occasionally hideous results. It was, in fact, nothing more or less than an abundant supply of freshly killed men in every stage of dismemberment.

Herbert West needed fresh bodies because his life-work was the reanimation of the dead. This work was not known to the fashionable clientele who had so swiftly built up his fame after his arrival in Boston; but was only too well known to me, who had been his closest friend and sole assistant since the old days in Miskatonic University medical school at Arkham. It was in those college days that he had begun his terrible experiments, first on small animals and then on human bodies shockingly obtained. There was a solution which he injected into the veins of dead things, and if they were fresh enough they responded in strange ways. He had had much trouble in discovering the proper formula, for each type of organism was found to need a stimulus especially adapted to it. Terror stalked him when he reflected on his partial failures; nameless things resulting from imperfect solutions or from bodies insufficiently fresh. A certain number of these failures had remained alive – one was in an asylum while others had vanished – and as he thought of conceivable yet virtually impossible eventualities he often shivered beneath his usual stolidity.

West had soon learned that absolute freshness was the prime requisite for useful specimens, and had accordingly resorted to frightful and unnatural expedients in body-snatching. In college, and during our early practice together in the factory town of Bolton, my attitude towards him had been largely one of fascinated admiration; but as his boldness in methods grew, I began to develop a gnawing fear. I did not like the way he looked at healthy living bodies; and then there came a nightmarish session in the cellar laboratory when I learned that a certain specimen had been a living body when he secured it. That was the first time he had ever been able to revive the quality of rational thought in a corpse; and his success, obtained at such a loathsome cost, had completely hardened him.

Of his methods in the intervening five years I dare not speak. I was held to him by sheer force of fear, and witnessed sights that no human tongue could repeat. Gradually I came to find Herbert West himself more horrible than any-

thing he did – that was when it dawned on me that his once normal scientific zeal for prolonging life had subtly degenerated into a mere morbid and ghoulish curiosity and secret sense of charnel picturesqueness. His interest became a hellish and perverse addiction to the repellently and fiendishly abnormal; he gloated calmly over artificial monstrosities which would make most healthy men drop dead from fright and disgust; he became, behind his pallid intellectuality, a fastidious Baudelaire of physical experiment – a languid Elagabalus of the tombs.

Dangers he met unflinchingly; crimes he committed unmoved. I think the climax came when he had proved his point that rational life can be restored, and had sought new worlds to conquer by experimenting on the reanimation of detached parts of bodies. He had wild and original ideas on the independent vital properties of organic cells and nerve tissue separated from natural physiological systems; and achieved some hideous preliminary results in the form of never-dying, artificially nourished tissue obtained from the nearly-hatched eggs of an indescribable tropical reptile. Two biological points he was exceedingly anxious to settle – first, whether any amount of consciousness and rational action might be possible without the brain, proceeding from the spinal cord and various nerve-centres; and second, whether any kind of ethereal, intangible relation distinct from the material cells may exist to link the surgically separated parts of what has previously been a single living organism. All this research work required a prodigious supply of fresh slaughtered human flesh – and that was why Herbert West had entered the Great War.

The phantasmal, unmentionable thing occurred one midnight late in March, 1915, in a field hospital behind the lines at St. Eloi. I wonder even now if it could have been other than a demoniac dream of delirium. West had a private laboratory in an east room of the barn-like temporary edifice, assigned him on his plea that he was devising new and radical methods for the treatment of hitherto hopeless cases of maiming. There he worked like a butcher in the midst of his gory wares – I could never get used to the levity with which he handled and classified certain things. At times he actually did perform marvels of surgery for the soldiers; but his chief

delights were of a less public and philanthropic kind, requiring many explanations of sounds which seemed peculiar even amidst that babel of the damned. Among these sounds were frequent revolver-shots – surely not uncommon on a battlefield, but distinctly uncommon in a hospital. Dr. West's reanimated specimens were not meant for long existence or a large audience. Besides human tissue, West employed much of the reptile embryo tissue which he had cultivated with such singular results. It was better than human material for maintaining life in organless fragments, and that was now my friend's chief activity. In a dark corner of the laboratory, over a queer incubating burner, he kept a large covered vat full of this reptilian cell-matter; which multiplied and grew puffily and hideously.

On the night of which I speak we had a splendid new specimen – a man at once physically powerful and of such high mentality that a sensitive nervous system was assured. It was rather ironic, for he was the officer who had helped West to his commission, and who was now to have been our associate. Moreover, he had in the past secretly studied the theory of reanimation to some extent under West. Major Sir Eric Moreland Clapham-Lee, D.S.O., was the greatest surgeon in our division, and had been hastily assigned to the St. Eloi sector, when news of the heavy fighting reached headquarters. He had come in an aeroplane piloted by the intrepid Lieutenant Ronald Hill, only to be shot down when directly over his destination. The fall had been spectacular and awful; Hill was unrecognizable afterwards, but the wreck yielded up the great surgeon in a nearly decapitated but otherwise intact condition. West had greedily seized the lifeless thing which had once been his friend and fellow-scholar; and I shuddered when he finished severing the head, placed it in his hellish vat of pulpy reptile-tissue to preserve it for future experiments, and proceeded to treat the decapitated body on the operating table. He injected new blood, joined certain veins, arteries, and nerves at the headless neck, and closed the ghastly aperture with engrafted skin from an unidentified specimen which had borne an officer's uniform. I knew what he wanted – to see if this highly organized body could exhibit, without its head, any of the signs of mental life which had distinguished Sir Eric Moreland Clapham-Lee. Once a student

of reanimation, this silent trunk was now gruesomely called upon to exemplify it.

I can still see Herbert West under the sinister electric light as he injected his reanimating solution into the arm of the headless body. The scene I cannot describe – I should faint if I tried it, for there is madness in a room full of classified charnel things, with blood and lesser human debris almost ankle-deep on the slimy floor, and with hideous reptilian abnormalities sprouting, bubbling, and baking over a winking bluish-green spectre of dim flame in a far corner of black shadows.

The specimen, as West repeatedly observed, had a splendid nervous system. Much was expected of it; and as a few twitching motions began to appear, I could see the feverish interest on West's face. He was ready, I think, to see proof of his increasingly strong opinion that consciousness, reason, and personality can exist independently of the brain – that man has no central connective spirit, but is merely a machine of nervous matter, each section more or less complete in itself. In one triumphant demonstration West was about to relegate the mystery of life to the category of myth. The body now twitched more vigorously, and beneath our avid eyes commenced to heave in a frightful way. The arms stirred disquietingly, the legs drew up, and various muscles contracted in a repulsive kind of writhing. Then the headless thing threw out its arms in a gesture which was unmistakably one of desperation – an intelligent desperation apparently sufficient to prove every theory of Herbert West. Certainly, the nerves were recalling the man's last act in life; the struggle to get free of the falling aeroplane.

What followed, I shall never positively know. It may have been wholly an hallucination from the shock caused at that instant by the sudden and complete destruction of the building in a cataclysm of German shell-fire – who can gainsay it, since West and I were the only proved survivors? West liked to think that before his recent disappearance, but there were times when he could not; for it was queer that we both had the same hallucination. The hideous occurrence itself was very simple, notable only for what it implied.

The body on the table had risen with a blind and terrible groping, and we had heard a sound. I should not call that

sound a voice, for it was too awful. And yet its timbre was not the most awful thing about it. Neither was its message – it had merely screamed, 'Jump, Ronald, for God's sake, jump!' The awful thing was its source.

For it had come from the large covered vat in that ghoulish corner of crawling black shadows.

VI. THE TOMB-LEGIONS

WHEN Dr. Herbert West disappeared a year ago, the Boston police questioned me closely. They suspected that I was holding something back, and perhaps suspected even graver things; but I could not tell them the truth because they would not have believed it. They knew, indeed, that West had been connected with activities beyond the credence of ordinary men; for his hideous experiments in the reanimation of dead bodies had long been too extensive to admit of perfect secrecy; but the final soul-shattering catastrophe held elements of demoniac phantasy which make even me doubt the reality of what I saw.

I was West's closest friend and only confidential assistant. We had met years before, in medical school, and from the first I had shared his terrible researches. He had slowly tried to perfect a solution which, injected into the veins of the newly deceased, would restore life; a labour demanding an abundance of fresh corpses and therefore involving the most unnatural actions. Still more shocking were the products of some of the experiments – grisly masses of flesh that had been dead, but that West waked to a blind, brainless, nauseous animation. These were the usual results, for in order to reawaken the mind it was necessary to have specimens so absolutely fresh that no decay would possibly affect the delicate brain cells.

This need for very fresh corpses had been West's moral undoing. They were hard to get, and one awful day he had secured his specimen while it was still alive and vigorous. A struggle, a needle, and a powerful alkaloid had transformed it to a very fresh corpse, and the experiment had succeeded for a brief and memorable moment; but West had emerged with a soul calloused and seared, and a hardened eye which sometimes glanced with a kind of hideous and calculating

appraisal at men of especially sensitive brain and especially vigorous physique. Towards the last I became acutely afraid of West, for he began to look at me that way. People did not seem to notice his glances, but they noticed my fear; and after his disappearance used that as a basis for some absurd suspicions.

West, in reality, was more afraid than I; for his abominable pursuits entailed a life of furtiveness and dread of every shadow. Partly it was the police he feared; but sometimes his nervousness was deeper and more nebulous, touching on certain indescribable things into which he had injected a morbid life, and from which he had not seen that life depart. He usually finished his experiments with a revolver, but a few times he had not been quick enough. There was that first specimen on whose rifled grave marks of clawing were later seen. There was also that Arkham professor's body which had done cannibal things before it had been captured and thrust unidentified into a madhouse cell at Sefton, where it beat the walls for sixteen years. Most of the other possibly surviving results were things less easy to speak of – for in later years West's scientific zeal had degenerated to an unhealthy and fantastic mania, and he had spent his chief skill in vitalizing not entire human bodies but isolated parts of bodies, or parts joined to organic matter other than human. It had become fiendishly disgusting by the time he disappeared; many of the experiments could not even be hinted at in print. The Great War, through which both of us served as surgeons, had intensified this side of West.

In saying that West's fear of his specimens was nebulous, I have in mind particularly its complex nature. Part of it came merely from knowing of the existence of such nameless monsters, while another part arose from apprehension of the bodily harm they might under certain circumstances do him. Their disappearance added horror to the situation – of them all West knew the whereabouts of only one, the pitiful asylum thing. Then there was a more subtle fear – a very fantastic sensation resulting from a curious experiment in the Canadian army in 1915. West, in the midst of a severe battle, had reanimated Major Sir Eric Moreland Clapham-Lee, D.S.O., a fellow-physician who knew about his experiments and could have duplicated them. The head had been removed, so that the possibilities of quasi-intelligent life in

the trunk might be investigated. Just as the building was wiped out by a German shell, there had been a success. The trunk had moved intelligently; and, unbelievable to relate, we were both sickeningly sure that articulate sounds had come from the detached head as it lay in a shadowy corner of the laboratory. The shell had been merciful, in a way – but West could never feel as certain as he wished, that we two were the only survivors. He used to make shuddering conjectures about the possible actions of a headless physician with the power of reanimating the dead.

West's last quarters were in a venerable house of much elegance, overlooking one of the oldest burying grounds in Boston. He had chosen the place for purely symbolic and fantastically aesthetic reasons, since most of the interments were of the Colonial period and therefore of little use to a scientist seeking very fresh bodies. The laboratory was in a sub-cellar secretly constructed by imported workmen, and contained a huge incinerator for the quiet and complete disposal of such bodies, or fragments and synthetic mockeries of bodies, as might remain from the morbid experiments and unhallowed amusements of the owner. During the excavation of this cellar the workmen had struck some exceedingly ancient masonry; undoubtedly connected with the old burying ground, yet far too deep to correspond with any known sepulchre therein. After a number of calculations West decided that it represented some secret chamber beneath the tomb of the Averills, where the last interment had been made in 1768. I was with him when he studied the nitrous, dripping walls laid bare by the spades and mattocks of the men, and was prepared for the gruesome thrill which would attend the uncovering of centuried grave-secrets; but for the first time West's new timidity conquered his natural curiosity, and he betrayed his degenerating fibre by ordering the masonry left intact and plastered over. Thus it remained till that final hellish night, part of the walls of the secret laboratory. I speak of West's decadence, but must add that it was a purely mental and intangible thing. Outwardly he was the same to the last – calm, cold, slight, and yellow-haired, with spectacled blue eyes and a general aspect of youth which years and fears seemed never to change. He seemed calm even when he thought of that clawed grave and looked

over his shoulder; even when he thought of the carnivorous thing that gnawed and pawed at Sefton bars.

The end of Herbert West began one evening in our joint study when he was dividing his curious glance between the newspaper and me. A strange headline item had struck at him from the crumpled pages, and a nameless titan claw had seemed to reach down through sixteen years. Something fearsome and incredible had happened at Sefton Asylum fifty miles away, stunning the neighbourhood and baffling the police. In the small hours of the morning a body of silent men had entered the grounds and their leader had aroused the attendants. He was a menacing military figure who talked without moving his lips and whose voice seemed almost ventriloquially connected with an immense black case he carried. His expressionless face was handsome to the point of radiant beauty, but had shocked the superintendent when the hall light fell on it – for it was a wax face with eyes of painted glass. Some nameless accident had befallen this man. A larger man guided his steps; a repellent hulk whose bluish face seemed half eaten away by some unknown malady. The speaker had asked for the custody of the cannibal monster committed from Arkham sixteen years before; and upon being refused, gave a signal which precipitated a shocking riot. The fiends had beaten, trampled, and bitten every attendant who did not flee; killing four and finally succeeding in the liberation of the monster. Those victims who could recall the event without hysteria swore that the creatures had acted less like men than like unthinkable automata guided by the wax-faced leader. By the time help could be summoned, every trace of the men and of their mad charge had vanished.

From the hour of reading this item until midnight, West sat almost paralysed. At midnight the doorbell rang, startling him fearfully. All the servants were asleep in the attic, so I answered the bell. As I have told the police, there was no wagon in the street; but only a group of strange-looking figures bearing a large square box which they deposited in the hallway after one of them had grunted in a highly unnatural voice, 'Express – prepaid'. They filed out of the house with a jerky tread, and as I watched them go I had an odd idea that they were turning towards the ancient cemetery

on which the back of the house abutted. When I slammed the door after them West came downstairs and looked at the box. It was about two feet square, and bore West's correct name and present address. It also bore the inscription, 'From Eric Moreland Clapham-Lee, St. Eloi, Flanders.' Six years before, in Flanders, a shelled hospital had fallen upon the headless reanimated trunk of Dr. Clapham-Lee, and upon the detached head which – perhaps – had uttered articulate sounds.

West was not even excited now. His condition was more ghastly. Quickly he said, 'It's the finish – but let's incinerate – this.' We carried the thing down to the laboratory – listening. I do not remember many particulars – you can imagine my state of mind – but it is a vicious lie to say it was Herbert West's body which I put into the incinerator. We both inserted the whole unopened box, closed the door, and started the electricity. Nor did any sound come from the box after all.

It was West who first noticed the falling plaster on that part of the wall where the ancient tomb masonry had been covered up. I was going to run, but he stopped me. Then I saw a small black aperture, felt a ghoulish wind of ice, and smelled the charnel bowels of a putrescent earth. There was no sound, but just then the electric lights went out and I saw outlined against some phosphorescence of the nether world a horde of silent toiling things which only insanity – or worse – could create. Their outlines were human, semi-human, fractionally human, and not human at all – the horde was grotesquely heterogeneous. They were removing the stones quietly, one by one, from the centuried wall. And then, as the breach became large enough, they came out into the laboratory in a single file; led by a stalking thing with a beautiful head made of wax. A sort of mad-eyed monstrosity behind the leader seized on Herbert West. West did not resist or utter a sound. Then they all sprang at him and tore him to pieces before my eyes, bearing the fragments away into that subterranean vault of fabulous abominations. West's head was carried off by the wax-headed leader, who wore a Canadian officer's uniform. As it disappeared I saw that the blue eyes behind the spectacles were hideously blazing with their first touch of frantic, visible emotion.

Servants found me unconscious in the morning. West was gone. The incinerator contained only unidentifiable ashes. Detectives have questioned me, but what can I say? The Sefton tragedy they will not connect with West; not that, nor the men with the box, whose existence they deny. I told them of the vault, and they pointed to the unbroken plaster wall and laughed. So I told them no more. They imply that I am either a madman or a murderer – probably I am mad. But I might not be mad if those accursed tomb-legions had not been so silent.

PITHECANTHROPUS REJECTUS

by Manly Wade Wellman

My first memories seem to be those of the normal human child – nursery, toys, adults seriously making meaningless observations with charts, tape measures and scales. Well, rather more than average of that last item, the observations. My constant companion was a fat, blue-eyed baby that drooled and gurgled and barely crept upon the nursery linoleum, while I scurried easily hither and thither, scrambling up on tables and bedposts, and sometimes on the bureau. I felt sorry for him now and then. But he was amazingly happy and healthy, and gave no evidence of having the sudden fearful pains that struck me in head and jaw from time to time.

As I learned to speak and to comprehend, I found out the cause of those pains. I was told by the tall, smiling blond woman who taught me to call her 'Mother'. She explained that I had been born with no opening in the top of my skull – so needed for bone and brain expansion – and that the man of the house – 'Doctor' – had made such an opening, governing the growth of my cranium and later stopping the hole with a silver plate. My jaw, too, had been altered with silver, for when I was born it had been too shallow and narrow to give my tongue play. The building of a chin for me and the remodeling of several tongue-muscles had made it possible for me to speak. I learned before the baby did, by several months. I learned to say Mother, Doctor, to call the baby 'Sidney' and myself 'Congo'. Later I could make my wants known although, as this writing shows and will show, I was never fluent.

Doctor used to come into the nursery and make notes by the hour, watching my every move and pricking up his ears at my every sound. He was a stout, high-shouldered man, with a strong, square beard. He acted grave – almost stern –

where I was involved. But with baby Sidney he played most tenderly. I used to feel hurt and would go to Mother for sympathy. She had enough for me and Sidney, too. She would pick me up and cuddle me and laugh – give me her cheek to kiss.

Once or twice Doctor scowled, and once I overheard him talking to Mother just beyond the nursery door. I understood pretty well even then, and since that time I have filled in details of the conversation.

'I tell you, I don't like it,' he snapped. 'Showering attentions on that creature.'

She gave him a ready laugh. 'Poor little Congo!'

'Congo's an ape, for all my surgery,' he replied coldly. 'Sidney is your son, and Sidney alone. The other is an experiment – like a shake-up of chemicals in a tube, or a grafting of twigs on a tree.'

'Let me remind you,' said Mother, still good-natured, 'that when you brought him from the zoo, you said he must live here as a human child, on equal terms with Sidney. That, remember, was part of the experiment. And so are affection and companionship.'

'Ah, the little beast!' Doctor almost snarled. 'Sometimes I wish I hadn't begun these observations.'

'But you have. You increased his brain powers and made it possible for him to speak. He's brighter than any human child his age.'

'Apes mature quickly. He'll come to the peak of development and Sidney will forge ahead. That always happens in these experiments.'

'These experiments have always been performed with ordinary ape-children before,' said Mother. 'With your operations you've given him something, at least, of human character. So give him something of human consideration as well.'

'I'm like Prospero, going out of my way to lift up Caliban from the brute.'

'Caliban meant well,' Mother responded, reminding him of something I knew nothing about. 'Meanwhile, I don't do things by halves, dear. As long as Congo remains in this house, he shall have kindness and help from me. And he shall look to me as his mother.'

I heard and, in time, digested all of this. When I learned to read, during my third year, I got hold of some of Doctor's published articles about me and began to realize what everything meant.

Of course, I'd seen myself in mirrors hundreds of times and knew that I was dark, bow-legged and long-armed, with a face that grew out at an acute angle, and hair all over my body. Yet this had not set me very far apart, in my own mind, from the others. I was different from Sidney – but so was Mother, in appearance, size and behavior. I was closer to them – in speech and such things as table manners and self-reliance – than he. But now I learned and grew to appreciate the difference between me, on one side, and Sidney, Doctor and Mother on the other.

I had been born, I found, in an iron cage at the Bronx Zoo. My mother was a great ape, a Kulakamba, very close to human type in body, size and intelligence – not dwarfed like a common chimpanzee nor thickset and surly like a gorilla. Doctor, a great experimental anthropologist – words like those happen to be easy for me, since they were part of daily talk at Doctor's house – had decided to make observations on a baby ape and his own newborn child, rearing them side by side under identical conditions. I was the baby ape.

Incidentally, I have read in a book called *Trader Horn* that there are no Kulakambas, that they are only a fairy story. But there are – many and many of us, in the Central African forests.

I tell these things very glibly, as if I knew all about them. Doctor had written reams about the Kulakamba, and clippings of all he wrote were kept in the library. I had recourse to them as I grew older.

When I was four, Doctor led me into his big white laboratory. There he examined and measured my hands, grunting perplexedly into his beard.

'We'll have to operate,' he said at last.

'Will we?' I quavered. I knew what the word meant.

He smiled, but not exactly cheerfully. 'You'll have an anesthetic,' he promised, as though it were a great favor. 'I want to fix your hands. The thumbs don't oppose and it makes your grasp clumsy. Not human, Congo; not human.'

I was frightened, but Mother came to comfort me and say that I would be better off in the long run. So, when Doctor commanded, I lay on the sheet-spread table and breathed hard into the cloth he put on my face. I went to sleep and dreamed of high, green trees and of people like myself who climbed and played there – building nests and eating nuts as big as my head. In my dream I tried to join them, but found myself held back, as if by a pane of glass. That made me shed tears – though some say that apes cannot shed tears – and thus weeping, I awoke. My hands had a dull soreness in them and were swathed in bandages to the elbows. After weeks, I could use them again and found that their calloused palms had been softened, the awkward little thumbs somehow lengthened and newly jointed. I grew so skillful with them that I could pick up a pin or tie a bow knot. This was in the winter time, and once or twice when I played on the porch I had terrible pains in brow and jaw. Doctor said that the cold made my silver plates hurt, and that I must never go outside without a warm cap and a muffler wrapped high.

'It's like a filling against the nerve of a tooth,' he explained.

At seven I was all about the house, helping Mother very deftly with her work. Now Doctor grew enthusiastic about me. He would lecture us all at the table – Sidney and I ate with him when there was no company – and said that his experiment, faulty in some ways, gave promise of great things along an unforeseen line.

'Congo was only a normal ape-cub,' he would insist, 'and he's developing in every possible way into a very respectable lower-class human being.'

'He's by no means lower-class,' Mother always argued at this point, but Doctor would plunge ahead.

'We could operate on his people wholesale, making wonderful, cheap labor available. Why, when Congo grows up he'll be as strong as six or eight men, and his keep is almost nothing.'

He tested me at various occupations – gardening, carpentry and iron-working, at which last I seem to have done quite well – and one day he asked me what I would rather do than anything else.

I remembered the dream I had had when he operated on me – and many times since. 'Best of all,' I replied, 'I would like to live in a tree, build a nest of leaves and branches—'

'Ugh!' he almost screamed in disgust. 'And I thought you were becoming human!'

After that he renewed his demands that Mother treat me with less affection.

Sidney was going to school at this time. I remained at home with Doctor and Mother – we lived in a small New Jersey town – and confined most of my activities to the house and the shrub-grown back yard. Once I ran away, after a little quarrel with Doctor, and frightened the entire neighborhood before I was brought back by a nervous policeman with a drawn revolver. Doctor punished me by confining me to my room for three days. During that lonely time I did a lot of thinking and set myself down as an outcast. I had been considered strange, fearful and altogether unbelonging, by human beings. My crooked body and hairy skin had betrayed me to enmity and capture.

At the age of ten I gained my full growth. I was five feet six inches tall and weighed as much as Doctor. My face, once pallid, had become quite black, with bearded jaws and bristly hair on the upper lip. I walked upright, without touching my knuckles to the ground as ordinary apes do, for I usually held some tool or book in my hands. By listening to Sidney as he studied aloud at night I got some smattering of schooling, and I built upon this by constant and serious reading of his discarded textbooks. I have been told that the average shut-in child is apt to do the same. On top of this, I read a great deal in Doctor's library, especially travel. But I disliked fiction.

'Why should I read it?' I asked Mother when she offered me a book about 'Tom Sawyer'. 'It isn't true.'

'It's interesting,' she said.

'But if it's not true, it's a lie; and a lie is wicked.'

She pointed out that novel-readers knew all the time that the books were not true. To that I made answer that novel-readers were fools. Doctor, joining the conversation, asked me why, then, I enjoyed my dreams.

'You say that you dream of great green forests,' he reminded. 'That's no more true than the books.'

'If it is a good dream,' I replied, 'I am glad when I wake, because it made me happy. If it is a bad dream, I am glad because I escape by waking. Anyway, dreams happen and novels do not.'

Doctor called it a *sophistication*, and let that conclude the argument.

I have said that I am no proper writer, and I have shown it by overlooking an important fact – the many visits of scientists. They came to observe and to discuss things with Doctor, and even with me. But one day some men appeared who were not scientists. They smoked long cigars and wore diamond rings and derby hats. Doctor had them in his study for an hour, and that night he talked long to Mother.

'Eighteen thousand dollars!' he kept saying. 'Think of it!'

'You've never thought of money before,' she said sadly.

'But eighteen th – my dear, it would be only the beginning. We'd do the experiment again, with two baby apes – two new little Congos for you to fuss over—'

'And the first Congo, my poor jungle foster son,' mourned Mother. 'He'd be miserable somewhere. How can you think of such a thing, dear? Didn't your grandfather fight to free slaves in his day?'

'Those were human slaves,' replied Doctor. 'Not animals. And Congo won't be miserable. His ape-instinct will enjoy the new life. It'll fairly glitter for him. And we need the money to live on and to experiment with.'

That went on and on, and Mother cried. But Doctor had his way. In the morning the men with the cigars came back, and Doctor greeted them gayly. They gave him a cheque – a big one, for they wrote it very reverently. Then he called me.

'Congo,' he said, 'you're to go with these people. You've got a career now, my boy; you're in the show business.'

I did not want to go, but I had to.

My adventures as a theatrical curiosity have been described in many newspapers all over the world, and I will mention them but briefly. First I was rehearsed to do feats of strength and finish the act with alleged comedy – a dialogue between myself and a man in clown costume. After that, a more successful turn was evolved for me, wherein I was on

the stage alone. I performed on a trapeze and a bicycle, then told my life story and answered questions asked by the audiences. I worked in a motion picture, too, with a former swimming champion. I liked him on sight, as much as I liked any human being except Mother. He was always kind and understanding, and did not hate me, even when we were given equal billing.

For a while many newspaper reporters thought I was a fake – a man dressed up in a fur suit – but that was easily disproven. A number of scientists came to visit me in the various cities I performed in, and literally millions of curious people. In my third year as a show-piece I went to Europe. I had to learn French and German, or enough to make myself understood on the stage, and got laughed at for my accent, which was not very good. Once or twice I was threatened, because I said something in the theatres about this political leader or that, but for the most part people were very friendly.

Finally, however, I got a bad cough. My owners were fearfully worried and called a doctor, who prescribed a sea voyage. Lots of publicity came of the announcement that I would sail south, to 'visit my homeland of Africa'.

Of course I had not been born in Africa, but in the Bronx Zoo; yet a thrill came into my heart when, draped in a long coat and leaning on the rail, we sighted the west coast just below the Equator.

That night, as the ship rode at anchor near some little port, I contrived to slip overside and into a barge full of packing cases. I rode with it to land and sneaked out upon the dock, through the shabby little town, and away up a little stream that led into a hot, green forest.

I tell it so briefly and calmly because that is the way the impulse came to me. I read somewhere about the lemmings, the little ratlike animals that go to the sea and drown themselves by the thousands. That is because they must. I doubt if they philosophize about it; they simply do it. Something like that dragged me ashore in Africa and up the watercourse.

I was as strange and awkward there as any human being would be for the first time. But I knew, somehow, that nature would provide the right things. In the morning I rested in a thicket of fruit trees. The fruit I did not know,

but the birds had pecked at it, so I knew it was safe for eating. The flavor was strange but good. By the second day I was well beyond civilization. I slept that night in a tree, making a sort of nest there. It was clumsy work, but something beyond my experience seemed to guide my hands.

After more days, I found my people, the Kulakambas.

They were as they had been in the dream, swinging in treetops, playing and gathering food. Some of the younger ones scampered through the branches, shrilling joyfully over their game of tag. They talked, young and old – they had a language, with inflections and words and probably grammar. I could see a little village of nests, in the forks of the big trees; well-made shelters, with roofs over them. Those must have been quickly and easily made. Nothing troubled the Kulakambas. They lived without thought or worry for the next moment. When the next moment came they lived that, too.

I thought I would approach. I would make friends, learn their ways and their speech. Then I might teach them useful things, and in turn they would teach me games. Already the old dream was a reality and the civilization I had known was slipping away – like a garment that had fitted too loosely.

I approached and came into view. They saw, and began to chatter at me. I tried to imitate their sounds, and I failed.

Then they grew excited and climbed along in the trees above me. They began dropping branches and fruits and such things. I ran, and they followed, shrieking in a rage that had come upon them from nowhere and for no reason I could think of. They chased me all that day, until nightfall. A leopard frightened them then, and me as well.

I returned, after many days, to the town by the sea. My owners were there, and greeted me with loud abuse. I had cost them money and worry, important in the order named. One of them wanted to beat me with a whip. I reminded him that I could tear him apart like a roast chicken and there was no more talk of whipping me. I was kept shut up, however, until our ship came back and took us aboard.

Nevertheless, the adventure turned out well, so far as my owners were concerned. Reporters interviewed me when I

got back to London. I told them the solemn truth about what I had done, and they made publicity marvels out of the ape-man's return to the jungle.

I made a personal appearance with my picture, for it had come to England just at that time. A week or so later came a cable from America. Somebody was reviving the plays of William Shakespeare, and I was badly wanted for an important role. We sailed back, were interviewed by a battery of reporters on landing, and went to an up-town hotel. Once or twice before there had been trouble about my staying in hotels. Now I was known and publicized as a Shakespearean actor, and the management of the biggest and most sumptuous hotel was glad to have me for a guest.

At once my owners signed a contract for me to appear in *The Tempest;* the part given me to study was that of Caliban, a sort of monster who was presented as the uncouth, unwelcome villain. Part of the time he had to be wicked, and part of the time ridiculous. As I read of his fumblings and blunderings, I forgot my long-held dislike of fiction and fable. I remembered what Doctor and Mother had said about Caliban, and all at once I knew how the poor whelp of Sycorax felt.

The next day a visitor came. It was Doctor.

He was grayer than when I had seen him, but healthy and happy and rich-looking. His beard was trimmed to a point instead of square, and he had white edging on his vest. He shook my hand and acted glad to see me.

'You're a real success, Congo,' he said over and over again. 'I told you that you'd be.' We talked a while over this and that, and after a few minutes my owners left the room to do some business or other. Then Doctor leaned forward and patted my knee.

'I say, Congo,' he grinned, 'how would you like to have some brothers and sisters?'

I did not understand him, and I said so.

'Oh, perfectly simple,' he made reply, crossing his legs. 'There are going to be more like you.'

'More Kulakambas?'

He nodded. 'Yes. With brains to think with, and jaws to talk with. You've been a success, I'd say – profitable, fasci-

nating. And my next experiment will be even better, more accurate. Then others – each a valuable property – each an advance in surgery and psychology over the last.'

'Don't do it, Doctor,' I said all at once.

'Don't do it?' he repeated sharply. 'W y not?'

I tried to think of something compelling to reply, but nothing came to mind. I just said, 'Don't do it, Doctor,' as I had already.

He studied me a moment, with narrow eyes, then he snorted just as he had in the old days. 'You're going to say it's cruel, I suppose,' he sneered at me.

'That is right. It is c uel.'

'Why, you—' He broke off without calling me anything, but I could feel his scorn, like a hot light upon me. 'I suppose you know that if I hadn't done what I did to you, you'd be just a monkey scratching yourself.'

I remembered the Kulakambas, happy and thoughtless in the wilderness.

He went on, 'I gave you a mind and hands and speech, the three t ings that make up a man. Now you—'

'Yes,' I interrupted again, for I remembered what I had been reading about Caliban. 'Speech enough to curse you.'

He uncrossed his legs. 'A moment ago you were begging me not to do something.'

'I'll beg again, Doctor,' I pleaded, pushing my anger back into myself. 'Don't butcher more beasts into – what I am.'

He looked past me, and when he spoke it was not to me, but to himself. 'I'll operate on five at first, ten the next year, and maybe get some assistants to do even more. In six or eight years there'll be a full hundred like you, or more advanced—'

'You mustn't,' I said very firmly, and leaned forward in my turn.

He jumped up. 'You forget yourself; Congo,' he growled. 'I'm not used to the word "mustn't" – especially from a thing that owes me so much. And especially when I will lighten the labor of mankind.'

'By laying mankind's labor on poor beasts.'

'What are you going to do about it?' he flung out.

'I will prevent you,' I promised.

He laughed. 'You can't. All these gifts of yours mean

nothing. You have a flexible tongue, a rational brain – but you're a beast by law and by nature. I,' and he thumped his chest, 'am a great scientist. You can't make a stand of any kind.'

'I will prevent you,' I said again, and I got up slowly.

He understood then, and yelled loudly. I heard an answering cry in the hall outside. He ran for the door, but I caught him. I remember how easily his neck broke in my hands. Just like a carrot.

The police came and got me, with guns and gas bombs and chains. I was taken to a jail and locked in the strongest cell, with iron bars all around. Outside some police officials and an attorney or two talked.

'He can't be tried for murder,' said someone. 'He's only an animal, and not subject to human laws.'

'He was aware of what he did,' argued a policeman. 'He's as guilty as the devil.'

'But we can hardly bring him into court,' replied one of the attorneys. 'Why, the newspapers would kid us clear out of the country – out of the legal profession.'

They puzzled for a moment, all together. Then one of the police officers slapped his knee. 'I've got it,' he said, and they all looked at him hopefully.

'Why talk about trials?' demanded the inspired one. 'If he can't be tried for killing that medic, neither can we be tried for killing him.'

'Not if we do it painlessly,' seconded someone.

They saw I was listening, and moved away and talked softly for a full quarter of an hour. Then they all nodded their heads as if agreeing on something. One police captain, fat and white-haired, came to the bars of my cell and looked through.

'Any last thing you'd like to have?' he asked me, not at all unkindly.

I asked for pen and ink and paper and time enough to write this.

THE DEAD MAN

by Fritz Leiber

PROFESSOR MAX REDFORD opened the frosted glass door of the reception room and beckoned to me. I followed him eagerly. When the most newsworthy doctor at one of America's foremost medical schools phones a popular-science writer and asks him to drop over, but won't tell him why, there is cause for excitement. Especially when that doctor's researches, though always well-founded, have tended towards the sensational. I remembered the rabbits so allergic to light that an open shade rais d blisters on their shaved skins, the hypnotized heart patient whose blood-pressure slowly changed, the mold that fed on blood clots in a living animal's brain. Fully half my best articles with a medical slant came from Max. We had been rather close friends for several years.

As we hurried along the hushed corridor, he suddenly asked me, 'What is death?'

That wasn't the sort of question I was expecting. I gave him a quick look. His bullet-shaped head, with its shock of close-cropped grizzled hair, was hunched forward. The eyes behind the thick lenses were bright, almost mischievous. He was smiling.

I shrugged.

'I have something to show you,' he said.

'What, Max?'

'You'll see.'

'A story?'

He shook his head. 'At present I don't want a word released to the public or the profession.'

'But some day—?' I suggested.

'Maybe one of the biggest.'

We entered his office. On the examination table lay a

man, the lower half of his body covered by a white sheet. He seemed to be asleep.

Right there I got a shock. For although I hadn't the faintest idea who the man was, I did recognize him. I was certain that I had seen that handsome face once before – through the French windows of the living room of Max's home, some weeks ago. It had been pressed passionately to the face of Velda, Max's attractive young wife, and those arms had been cradling her back. Max and I had just arrived at his lonely suburban place after a long evening session at the laboratory, and he had been locking the car when I glanced through the window. When we had got inside, the man had been gone, and Max had greeted Velda with his usual tenderness. I had been bothered by the incident, but of course there had been nothing I could do about it.

I turned from the examination table, trying to hide my surprise. Max sat down at his desk and began to rap on it with a pencil. Nervous excitement, I supposed.

From the man on the examination table, now behind me, came a dry, hacking cough.

'Take a look at him,' said Max, 'and tell me what disease he's suffering from.'

'I'm no doctor,' I protested.

'I know that, but there are some symptoms that should have an obvious meaning even to a layman.'

'But I didn't even notice he was ill,' I said.

Max goggled his eyes at me, 'You didn't?'

Shrugging my shoulders, I turned – and wondered how in the world I could have missed it at the first glance. I supposed I had been so flustered at recognizing the man that I hadn't noticed anything about him – I had been seeing the memory image more than the actual person. For Max was right. Anyone could have hazarded a diagnosis of this case. The general pallor, the hectic spots of color over the cheek bones, the emaciated wrists, the prominent ribs, the deep depressions around the collar bones, and above all the continued racking cough that even as I watched brought a bit of blood specked mucous to the lips – all pointed at an advanced stage of chronic tuberculosis. I told Max so.

Max stared at me thoughtfully, rapping again on the table. I wondered if he sensed what I was trying to hide

from him. Certainly I felt very uncomfortable. The presence of that man, presumably Velda's lover, in Max's office, unconscious and suffering from a deadly disease, and Max so sardonic-seeming and full of suppressed excitement, and then that queer question he had asked me about death – taken all together, they made a peculiarly nasty picture.

What Max said next didn't help either.

'You're quite sure it's tuberculosis?'

'Naturally I could be wrong,' I admitted uneasily. 'It might be some other disease with the same symptoms or—' I had been about to say, 'or the effects of some poison,' but I checked myself. 'But the symptoms are there, unmistakably,' I finished.

'You're positive?' He seemed to enjoy drawing it out.

'Of course!'

He smiled. 'Take another look.'

'I don't need to,' I protested. For the first time in our relationship I was wondering if there wasn't something extremely unpleasant about Max.

'Take one, just the same.'

Unwillingly I turned – and for several moments there was room in my mind for nothing but astonishment.

'What kind of trick is this?' I finally asked Max, shakily.

For the man on the examination table had changed. Unmistakably the same man, though for a moment I questioned even that, for now instead of the cadaverous spectre of tuberculosis, a totally different picture presented itself. The wrists, so thin a minute ago, were now swollen, the chest had become so unhealth ly puffy that the ribs and collar bones were lost to view, the skin had a bluish tinge, and from between the sagging lips came a laboured, wheezy breathing.

I still had a sense of horror, but now it was overlaid with an emotion that can be even stronger, an emotion that can outweigh all cons derations of human personality and morals: the excitement of scientific discovery. Whoever this man was, whatever Max's motives might be, whatever unsuspected strain of evil there might exist deep in his nature, he had *hit* on something here, something revolut onary. I didn't know what it was, but my heart pounded and little chills of excitement chased over my skin.

Max refused to answer any of the questions I bombarded him with. All he would do was sit back and smile at me and say, 'And now, after your second look, what do you think's wrong with him?'

He finally badgered me into making a statement.

'Well of course there's something fishy about it, but if you insist, here's my idea: Heart disease, perhaps caused by kidney trouble. In any case, something badly out of order with his pump.'

Max's smile was infuriatingly bland. Again he rapped with his pencil, like some supercilious teacher.

'You're sure of that?' he prodded.

'Just as sure as I was the first time that it was tuberculosis.'

'Well, take another look . . . and meet John Fearing.'

I turned, and almost before I realized it, my hand had been firmly clasped and was being vigorously shaken by that of one of the finest physical specimens I have ever seen. I remember thinking dazedly, 'Yes, he's as incredibly handsome and beautifully built as he seemed to me when I glimpsed him kissing Velda. And along with it a strange sort of smoothness, like you felt in Rudolf Valentino. No wonder a woman might find him irresistible.'

'I could have introduced you to John long ago,' Max was saying. 'He lives right near us, with his mother and often drops over. But, well . . .' he chuckled, '. . . I've been a little jealous about John. I haven't introduced him to anyone connected with the profession. I've wanted to keep him to myself until we got a little further along with our experiments.

'And John,' Max went on, 'this is Fred Alexander, the writer. He's one science popularizer who never strays a hairs-breadth into sensationalism and who takes infinite pains to make his reporting accurate. We can trust him not to breathe a word about our experiments until we tell him to. I've been thinking for some time now that we ought to let a third person in on our work, and I didn't want it to be a scientist or yet an ordinary layman. Fred here struck me as having just the right sort of general knowledge and sympathetic approach. So I rang him up – and I believe we've succeeded in giving him quite a surprise.'

'You certainly have,' I agreed fervently.

John Fearing dropped my hand and stepped back. I was still running my eyes over his marvelously proportioned, athletic body. I couldn't spot a trace of the symptoms of the two dreadful diseases that had seemed to be wracking it minutes ago, or of any other sort of ill health. As he stood there so coolly, with the sheet loosely caught around his waist and falling in easy folds, it seemed to me that he might well be the model for one of the great classical Greek statues. His eyes had something of the same tranquil, ox-like, 'all-body' look.

Turning towards Max, I was conscious of a minor shock. I had never thought of Max as ugly. If I'd ever thought of him at all in regard to looks, it had been as a man rather youthful for his middle age, stalwart, and with pleasingly rugged features.

Now, compared to Fearing, Max seemed a humped and dark-browed dwarf.

But this feeling of mine was immediately swallowed up in my excited curiosity.

Fearing looked at Max. 'What diseases did I do this time,' he asked casually.

'Tuberculosis and nephritis,' Max told him. They both acted pleased. In fact, mutual trust and affection showed so plainly in their manner toward each other that I was inclined to dismiss my suspicions of some sinister underlying hatred.

After all, I told myself, the embrace I had witnessed might have been merely momentary physical intoxication on the part of the two young and lovely people, if it had been even that much. Certainly what Max had said about this desire to keep Fearing a secret from his friends and colleagues might very well explain why Fearing had disappeared that night. On the other hand, if a deeper and less fleeting feeling did exist between Max's pretty wife and protegé, Max might very well be aware of it and inclined to condone it. I knew him to be a remarkably tolerant man in some respects. In any case, I had probably exaggerated the importance of the matter.

And I certainly didn't want any such speculations distracting my thoughts now, when I was bending all my

mental efforts to comprehend the amazing experiment that had just been conducted before my eyes.

Suddenly I got a glimmer of part of it.

'Hypnotism?' I asked Max.

He nodded, beaming.

'And the pencil-rappings were "cues"? I mean, signals for him to carry out instructions given to him in an earlier stage of the trance?'

'That's right.'

'I seem to recall now,' I said, 'that the raps were different in each case. I suppose each combination of raps was hooked up with a special set of instructions you'd given him.'

'Exactly,' said Max. 'John won't respond until he gets the right signal. It seems a rather complicated way of going about it, but it isn't really. You know how a sergeant will give his men a set of orders and then bark out "March!"? Well, the raps are John's marching signals. It works out better than giving him the instructions at the same time he's supposed to be carrying them out. Besides,' and he looked at me roguishly, 'it's a lot more dramatic.'

'I'll say it is!' I assured him, 'Max, let's get to the important point. How in the world did John fake those symptoms?'

Max raised his hands. 'I'll explain everything. I didn't call you in just to mystify you. Sit down.'

I hurriedly complied. Fearing effortlessly lifted himself onto the edge of the examination table and sat there placidly attentive, forearms loosely dropped along his thighs.

'As you know,' Max began, 'It's a well-established fact that the human mind can create all sorts of tangible symptoms of disease, without the disease itself being present in any way. Statistics show that about half the people who consult doctors are suffering from such imaginary ailments.'

'Yes,' I protested, 'but the symptoms are never so extreme, or created with such swiftness. Why, there was even blood in the mucous. And those swollen wrists—'

Again Max raised his hands. 'The difference is only one of degree. Please hear me out.'

'Now John here,' he continued, 'is a very well adjusted, healthy-minded person, but a few years ago he was anything but that.' He looked at Fearing, who nodded his agreement.

'No, our John was a regular bad boy of the hospitals. Rather his subconscious mind was, for of course there is no question of faking in these matters, the individual sincerely believes that he is sick. At all events, our John seemed to go through an unbelievable series of dangerous illnesses that frightened his mother to distraction and baffled his doctors, until it was realized that the illnesses were of emotional origin. That discovery wasn't made for a long time because of the very reason you mentioned – the unusual severity of the symptoms.

'However in the end it was the extraordinary power of John's subsconscious to fake symptoms that gave the show away. It began to fake the symptoms of too many diseases, the onsets and recoveries were too fast, it jumped around too much. And then it made the mistake of faking the symptoms of germ diseases, when laboratory tests showed that the germs in question weren't present.

'The truth having been recognized, John was put in the hands of a competent psychiatrist, who eventually succeeded in straightening out the personality difficulties that had caused him to seek refuge in sickness. They turned out to be quite simple ones – an overprotective and emotionally demanding mother and a jealous and unaffectionate father, whose death a few years back had burdened John with guilt feelings.

'It was at that time – just after the brilliant success of the psychiatrist's treatment – that I ran across the case. It happened through Velda. She became friends with the Fearings, mother and son, when they moved into our neighborhood, and she visited with them a lot.'

As he said that, I couldn't resist shooting a quick glance at Fearing, but I couldn't see any signs of uneasiness or smugness. I felt rather abashed.

'One evening when John was over at our place, he mentioned his amazing history of imaginary illnesses, and pretty soon I wormed the whole story out of him. I was immediately struck with something about his case that the other doctors had missed, or if they had noticed it, they hadn't seen the implications – or the possibilities.

'Here was a person whose body was fantastically obedient to the dictates of his subconscious mind. All people are to some degree psychosomatic, to give it its technical name

– you know, *psyche* and *soma*, mind and body. But our John was psychosomatic to a vastly greater degree. One in a million. Perhaps unique.

'Very likely some rare hereditary strain was responsible for this. I don't believe John will be angry with me if I tell you that his mother used to be – she's really changed herself a great deal under the psychiatrist's guidance – but that she used to be an excessively hysterical and emotionally tempestuous person, with all sorts of imaginary ailments herself, though not as extreme as John's, of course. And his father was almost exactly the same type.'

'That's quite right, Dr. Redford,' Fearing said earnestly.

Max nodded. 'Apparently the combination of these two hereditary strains in John produced far more than a doubling of his parents' sensitivities.

'Just as the chameleon inherits a colour-changing ability that other animals lack, so John has inherited a degree of psychosomatic control that is not apparent in other people – at least not without some kind of psychological training of which at present I have only a glimmering.

'All this was borne in on me as I absorbed John's story, hanging on every word. You know, I think both John and Velda were quite startled at the intensity of my interest.' Max chuckled. 'But they didn't realize that I was on to something. Here, right in my hands, was a person with, to put it popularly, only the most tenuous of boundaries between his mental and material atoms – for of course, as you know, both mind and matter are ultimately electrical in nature. Our John's subconscious mind had perfect control of his heartbeat and circulatory system. It could flood his tissues with fluids, producing instant swellings, or dehydrate them, giving the effect of emaciation. It could play on his internal organs and ductless glands as if they were musical instruments, creating any life-time it wanted. It could produce horrible discords, turn John into an idiot, say, or an invalid, as it tried to do, or perhaps an acromegalic monster, with gigantic hands and head, by stimulating bone-growth after maturity.

'Or his subconscious mind could keep all his organs in perfect tune, making him the magnificently healthy creature you see today.'

I looked at John Fearing and realized that my earlier impression of the excellence of his physique had, if anything, fallen short of the mark. It wasn't just that he was a clear-eyed, unblemished, athletically-built young man. There was more to it than that – something intangible. It occurred to me that if any man could be said to radiate health, in the literal meaning of that ridiculous cliché, it was John Fearing. I knew it was just my imagination, but I seemed to see a pulsating, faintly golden aura about him.

And his mind appeared to be in as perfect balance as his body. He was wonderfully poised as he sat there with just the sheet pulled around him. Not the faintest suggestion of nerves. Completely alive, yet in a sense completely impassive.

It was only too easy to imagine such a man making love successfully, with complete naturalness and confidence, without any of the little haltings and clumsinesses, jarrings of rhythm, the cowardices of body, the treacheries of mind that betray the average neurotic – which is to say, the average person. Suddenly it hit me, right between the eyes as they say, that Velda *must* love John, that no woman could avoid becoming infatuated with such a man. Not just a football star or a muscle maniac, but a creature infinitely subtler.

And yet, in spite of all this, I was conscious of something a shade repellant about Fearing. Perhaps it was that he seemed too well-balanced, too smooth-running, like a gleaming dynamo say, or a beautiful painting without that little touch of ugliness or clashing contrast which creates individuality. In most people, too, one senses the eternal conflict between the weak and indecisive tyrant Mind and the stubborn and rebellious slave Body, but in Fearing the conflict seemed completely absent, which struck me as unpleasant. There was a kind of deep-seated toughness about him, a suggestion of indestructibility. One might have said, 'He'd make a nasty ghost.'

Of course all this may just have been envy on my part for Fearing's poise and physique, or some sort of jealousy I felt on Max's account.

But whatever the sources of my feeling of revulsion, I now began to believe that Max shared it. Not that Max had

slackened in his genial, affectionate, almost fatherly manner toward John, but that he was so effortful about it. Those elephantine 'our Johns', for example. I didn't get the feeling that he was concealing a jealous hatred, however, but that he was earnestly fighting an irrational inward aversion.

As for Fearing, he seemed completely unaware of any hostile feeling on Max's part. His manner was completely open and amiable.

For that matter, I wondered if Max himself were aware of his own feeling. All these thoughts didn't take much time. I was intent on Max's story.

Max leaned across the desk. He was blinking excitedly, which, with his glasses, gave an odd effect of flashing eyes.

'My imagination was stirred,' he went on. 'There was no end to the things that might be learned from such a super-psychosomatic individual. We could study disease symptoms under perfect conditions, by producing them in controlled amounts in a healthy individual. All sorts of physiological mysteries could be explored. We could trace out the exact patterns of all the nervous processes that are normally beyond the mind's reach. Then if we could learn to impart John's ability to other people – but that's getting a bit ahead of my story.

'I talked to John. He saw my point, realized the service he might render mankind, and gladly agreed to undergo some experiments.

'But at the first attempt a snag appeared. John could not produce any symptoms by a conscious effort, no matter how hard he tried. As I said before, you can't consciously fake a psychosomatic illness, and that was what I was asking John to do. And since he'd undergone psychiatric treatment his subconscious mind was so well behaved that it wouldn't yield to any ordinary blandishments.

'At that point we almost gave up the project. But then I thought of a way we might be able to get around the snag: suggestions given directly to the subconscious mind through hypnotism.

'John proved a good hypnotic subject. We tried it – and it worked!'

Max's eyes looked bright as stars as he said that.

'That's about how matters stand today,' he finished off, sinking back in his chair. 'We've started a little special work on arterial tension, the lymphatic glands and their nerve supply, one or two other things. But mainly we've been perfecting our setup, getting used to the hypnotic relationship. The important work still lies ahead.'

I exhaled appreciatively. Then an unpleasant thought struck me. I wasn't going to voice it, but Max asked, 'What is it, Fred?' and I couldn't think of anything else to say, and after all it was a thought that would have occurred to anyone.

'Well, with all this creation of extreme symptoms,' I began, 'isn't there a certain amount of—'

Max supplied the word. 'Danger?' He shook his head. 'We are always very careful.'

'And in any case,' Fearing's bell-like voice broke in, 'the possibilities being what they are, I would consider almost any risks worth running.' He smiled cheerfully.

The double meaning I momentarily fancied in his words nettled me. I went on impulsively, 'But surely some people would be apt to consider it extremely dangerous. Your mother, for instance, or Velda.'

Max looked at me sharply.

'Neither my mother nor Mrs. Redford know anything of the extent of our experiments,' Fearing assured me.

There was a pause. Unexpectedly, Max grinned at me, stretched, and said to Fearing, 'How do you feel now?'

'Perfectly fit.'

'Feel up to another little demonstration?'

'Certainly.'

'That reminds me, Max,' I said abruptly, 'out in the corridor you mentioned something about—'

He shot me a warning glance.

'We'll go into that some other time,' he said.

'What diseases are you going to have me do this time?' Fearing queried.

Max wagged his finger. 'You know you're never told that. Can't have your conscious mind messing things up. We'll have some new signals, though. And, Fred, I hope you won't mind waiting outside while I put John under and give him his instructions – acquaint him with the new signals. I'm

afraid we still haven't gotten far along enough to risk the possibly disturbing presence of a third person during the early stages of an experiment. One or two more sessions and it should be all right, though. Understand, Fred, this is just the first of a large number of experiments I want you to witness. I'm asking a great deal of you, you see. The only tangible compensation I can offer you is exclusive rights to break the story to the public when we feel the time is ripe.'

'Believe me, I consider it a great honor,' I assured him sincerely as I went out.

In the corridor I lit a cigarette, puffed it a moment, and then the tremendous implications of Max's experiments really hit me.

Suppose, as Max had hinted that it proved possible to impart Fearing's ability to other people?

The benefits would be incalculable. People would be able to help their bodies in the fight against disease and degenerative processes. For instance, they could cut down the flow of blood from a wound, or even stop it completely. They could marshall all the body's resources to fight local infection and stop disease germs before they ever got started. Conceivably, they could heal sick organs, get them working in the right rhythm, unharden arteries, avert or stifle cancers.

It might be possible to prevent disease, even ageing, altogether.

We might look forward to a race of immortals, immune to time and decay.

A happy race, untroubled by those conflicts of body and mind, of instinct and conscience, that sap Mankind's best energies and are at the root of all discords and wars.

There was literally no limit to the possibilities.

I hardly felt I'd been in the corridor a minute, my mind was soaring so, when Max softly opened the door and beckoned to me.

Again Fearing lay stretched on the table. His eyes were closed, but he still looked every whit as vibrantly healthy as before. His chest rose and fell rhythmically with his breathing. I almost fancied I could see the blood coursing under the fair skin.

I was aware of a tremendous suppressed excitement in Max.

'We can talk, of course,' he said. 'Best keep it low, though.'

'He's hypnotized?' I asked.

'Yes.'

'And you've given him the instructions?'

'Yes. Watch.'

'What are they this time, Max?'

Max's lips jerked oddly.

'Just watch.'

He rapped with the pencil.

I watched. For five, ten seconds nothing seemed to happen. Fearing's chest stopped moving.

His skin was growing pale.

There was a weak convulsive shudder. His eyelids fell open, showing only the whites. Then there was no further movement whatever.

'Approach him,' Max ordered, his voice thick. 'Take his pulse.'

Almost shaking with excitement, I complied.

To my fumbling fingers, Fearing's wrist felt cold. I could not find a pulse.

'Fetch that mirror,' Max's finger stabbed at a nearby shelf. 'Hold it to his lips and nostrils.'

The polished surface remained unclouded.

I backed away. Wonder gave place to fear. All my worst suspicions returned intensified. Once again I seemed to sense a strain of submerged evil in my friend.

'I told you I would show you something with a bearing on the question, "What is death?" ' Max was saying huskily. 'Here you see death perfectly counterfeited – death-in-life. I would defy any doctor in the world to prove this man alive.' There was a note of triumph in his voice.

My own was uneven with horror. 'You instructed him to be dead?'

'Yes.'

'And he didn't know it ahead of time?'

'Of course not.'

For an interminable period – perhaps three or four seconds – I stared at the blanched form of Fearing. Then I turned to Max.

'I don't like this,' I said. 'Get him out of it.'

There was something sneering about the smile he gave me.

'Watch!' He commanded fiercely, and rapped again.

It was only some change in the light, I told myself, that was giving Fearing's flesh a greenish tinge.

Then I saw the limp arms and legs stiffen and the face tighten into a sardonic mask.

'Touch him!'

Unwilling, only to get the thing over with as swiftly as possible, I obeyed. Fearing's arm felt stiff as a board and, if anything, colder than before.

Rigor Mortis.

But that faint odor of putrescence – I knew that could only be my imagination.

'For God's sake, Max,' I pleaded, 'you've got to get him out of it.' Then, throwing aside reserve, 'I don't know what you're trying to do, but you can't. Velda–'

Max jerked as I spoke the name. Instantly the terrifying shell that had gathered around him seemed to drop away. It was as if that one word had roused him from a dream. 'Of course,' he said, in his natural voice. He smiled reassuringly and rapped.

Eagerly I watched Fearing.

Max rapped again: Three – one.

It takes time, I told myself. Now the muscles were beginning to relax, weren't they?

But Max was rapping again. The signal printed itself indelibly on my brain: three – one.

And yet again. Three – one. Three – one. THREE – ONE.

I looked at Max. In his tortured expression I read a ghastly certainty.

I wouldn't ever want to relive the next few hours. I imagine that in all history there was never a trick conceived for reviving the dying that Max didn't employ, along with all the modern methods – injections, even into the heart itself, electrical stimulation, use of a new lightweight plastic version of the iron lung, surgical entry into the chest and direct massage of the heart.

Whatever suspicions I had had of Max vanished utterly during those hours. The frantic genuineness and inspired ingenuity of his efforts to revive Fearing couldn't possibly have been faked. No more could his tragic, rigidly sup-

pressed grief have been simulated. I saw Max's emotions stripped to the raw during those hours, and they were all good.

One of the first things he did was to call in several of the other faculty doctors. They helped him, though I could tell that from the first they looked upon the case as hopeless, and would have considered the whole business definitely irregular, if it hadn't been for their extreme loyalty to Max, far beyond any consideration of professional solidarity. Their attitude showed me, as nothing else ever had, Max's stature as a medical man.

Max was completely frank with them and everyone else. He made no effort whatsoever to suppress the slightest detail of the events leading up to the tragedy. He was bitter in his self-accusations, insisting that his judgment had been unforgivably at fault in the final experiment. He would have gone even further than that if it hadn't been for his colleagues. It was they who dissuaded him from resigning from the faculty and describing his experiments in such inaccurately harsh terms as to invite criminal prosecution.

And then there was Max's praiseworthy behavior toward Fearing's mother. While they were still working on Fearing, though without any real hope, she burst in. Whatever reforms the psychiatrist may have achieved in her personality, were washed out now. I still can close my eyes and visualize that hateful, overdressed woman stamping around like an angry parrot, screaming the vilest accusations at Max at the top of her voice and talking about her son and herself in the most disgusting terms. But although he was near the breaking point, Max was never anything but compassionate, toward her, accepting all the blame she heaped on his head.

A little later Velda joined Max. If I'd still had any of my early suspicions, her manner would have dissipated them. She was completely practical and self-possessed, betraying no personal concern whatsoever in Fearing's death. If anything, she was too cool and unmoved. But that may have been what Max needed at the time.

The next days were understandably difficult. While most of the newspapers were admirably reserved and judicious in reporting the case, one of the tabloids played up Max as 'the

Doctor Who Ordered a Man to Die', featuring an exclusive interview with Fearing's mother.

The chorus of wild bleats from various anti-science cults was of course to be expected. It led to a number of stories that crept into the fringe of print and would have been more unpleasant if they hadn't been so ridiculous. One man, evidently drawing on Poe's story, 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar', demanded that a 'death watch' be maintained on Fearing and, on the morning of the funeral, hinted darkly that they were interring a man who was somehow still alive.

Even the medical profession was by no means wholly behind Max. A number of local doctors, unconnected with the medical school, were severe in their criticism of him. Such sensational experiments reflected on the profession, were of doubtful value in any case, and so forth. Though none of these criticisms were released to the public.

The funeral was held on the third day. I attended it out of friendship for Max, who felt it his duty to be present. Fearing's mother was there, of course, dressed in a black outfit that somehow managed to look loud and common. Since the tabloid interview there had been a complete break between her and our group, so that her wailing tirades and nauseous sobbing endearments could only be directed at the empty air and the bronze-fitted casket.

Max looked old. Velda stood beside him, holding his arm. She was as impassive as on the day of Fearing's death.

There was only one odd thing about her behavior. She insisted that we remain at the cemetery until the casket had been placed in the tomb and the workman had fixed in place the marble slab that closed it. She watched the whole process with a dispassionate intentness.

I thought that perhaps she did it on Max's account, to impress on him that the whole affair was over and done with. Or she may conceivably have feared some unlikely final demonstration or foray on the part of the wilder anti-science groups and felt that the presence of a few intelligent witnesses was advisable to prevent some final garish news item from erupting into print.

And there may actually have been justification for such a fear. Despite the efforts of the cemetery authorities, a number of the morbidly curious managed to view the inter-

ment and as I accompanied Max and Velda the few blocks to their home, there were altogether too many people roaming the quiet, rather ill-kempt streets of the scantily populated suburb. Undoubtedly we were being followed and pointed at. When with feelings of considerable relief, we finally got inside, there was a sharp, loud knock on the door we had just closed.

Someone had thrown a stone at the house.

For the next six months I saw nothing of Max. Actually this was as much due to my friendship for him as to the pressure of my work, which did keep me unusually busy at the time. I felt that Max didn't want to be reminded in any way, even by the presence of a friend, of the tragic accident that had clouded his life.

I think, you see, that only I, and perhaps a few of Max's most imaginative colleagues, had any inkling of how hard Max had been hit by the experience and, especially, *why* it had hit him so hard. It wasn't so much that he had caused the death of a man through a perhaps injudicious experiment. That was the smaller part. It was that, in so doing, he had wrecked a line of research that promised tremendous benefits to mankind. Fearing, you see, was irreplaceable. As Max had said, he was probably unique. And their work had been barely begun. Max had obtained almost no results of a measured scientific nature and he hadn't as yet, any ideas whatever of the crucial thing: how to impart Fearing's ability to other people, if that were possible. Max was a realist. To his clear, unsuperstitious mind, the death of one man was not nearly so important as the loss of possible benefits to millions. That he had played fast and loose with humanity's future – yes, he'd have put it that way – was, I knew, what hurt him most. It would be a long time before he regained his old enthusiasm.

One morning I ran across a news item stating that Fearing's mother had sold her house and gone for a European tour.

Of Velda I had no information.

Naturally I recalled the affair from time to time, turning it over in my mind. I reviewed the suspicions I'd had at the time, seeking some clue that might have escaped me, but always coming to the conclusion that the suspicions were

more than wiped out by Max's tragic sincerity and Velda's composure after the event.

I tried to visualize the weird and miraculous transformations I had witnessed in Max's office. Somehow, try as I might, they began to seem more and more unreal. I had been excited that morning, I told myself, and my mind had exaggerated what I had seen. This unwillingness to trust my own memory filled me at times with a strange poignant grief, perhaps similar to what Max must have felt at the breakdown of his research, as if some marvelous imaginative vision had faded from the world.

And occasionally I pictured Fearing as I'd seen him that morning, so radiantly healthy, his mind and body so unshakably knit. It was very hard to think of a man like that being dead.

Then, after six months, I received a brief message from Max. If I were free, would I visit him at his home that evening? Nothing more.

I felt a thrill of elation. Perhaps the period of thralldom to the past was over and the brilliant old mind was getting to work again. I had to break an engagement, but of course I went.

It had just stopped raining when I swung down from the interurban. Remnants of daylight showed a panorama of dripping trees, weed-bordered sidewalks, and gloom-invested houses. Max had happened to build in one of those subdivisions that doesn't quite make the grade, while the unpredictable pulse of suburban life begins to beat more strongly farther out.

I passed the cemetery in which Fearing had been interred. The branches of unpruned trees brushed the wall, making sections of the sidewalk a leafy tunnel. I was glad I had a flashlight in my pocket for the walk back. It occurred to me that it was unfortunate Max had this unnecessary reminder almost on his doorstep.

I walked rapidly past houses that were more and more frequently separated by empty lots, and along a sidewalk that became progressively more cracked and weed-grown. There popped into my mind a conversation I had had with Max a couple of years ago. I had asked him if Velda didn't find it lonely out here, and he had laughingly assured me

that both he and Velda had a passion for being alone and liked to be as far away as possible from spying neighbors.

I wondered if one of the houses I had passed had been that belonging to the Fearings.

Eventually I arrived at Max's place, a compact two-storey dwelling. There were only a few more houses beyond it on the street. Beyond those, I knew, the weeds reigned supreme, the once hopeful sidewalks were completely silted and grown over, and the lamp-poles rusted lightlessly. Unsuccessful subdivisions are dismal spots.

In my nostrils, all the way had been the smell of wet cold earth and stone.

The living room lights were on, but I saw no one through the French window where I had once glimpsed Velda and Fearing. The hall was dark. I rapped at the door. It opened instantly. I faced Velda.

I haven't described Velda. She was one of those very beautiful, dignified, almost forbidding, yet quite sexy girls that a successful, cultured man is apt to marry if he waits until he's middle-aged. Tall. Slim. Small head. Blond hair drawn tightly across it. Blue eyes. Compact, distinguished features. Sloping shoulders, and then a body that a cynic would call the main attraction, And perhaps with partial inaccurancy, because an alert, well-informed, quite courageous mind went with it. Exquisite manners, but not much apparent warmth.

That was Velda as I remembered her.

The Velda I faced now was different. She was wearing a gray silk dressing gown. In the dim light from the street lamp behind me, the tight-drawn hair looked, not gray, but brittle. The tall beautiful body somehow seemed sterile, weedlike. She crouched like an old woman. The distinguished features in the face she lifted toward mine were pinched. The blue eyes, white circled, were much too staring.

She touched a finger to her thinned lips, and with the other hand timidly took hold of the lapel of my coat, as if to draw me away to some place where we could talk secretly.

Max stepped out of the darkness behind her and put his hands on her shoulders. She didn't stiffen. In fact, she hardly reacted except to softly drop her hand from my coat. She

may have winked at me, as if to say, 'Later, perhaps,' but I can't be sure.

'You'd better be getting upstairs, dear,' he said gently. 'It's time you took a little rest.'

At the foot of the stairs he switched on the light. We watched her as she went up, slowly, holding on to the rail.

When she was out of sight Max shook his head and said, rather lightly, 'Too bad about Velda. I'm afraid that in a little while— However, I didn't ask you out here to talk about that.'

I was shocked at his seeming callousness. A moment later, however, he said something which gave me a hint of the philosophy that underlay it.

'We're so mysteriously fragile, Fred. Some slight change in a gland's function, some faint shadow falling on a knot of nerve tissues, and – pouf. And there's nothing we can do about it, because we don't know, Fred, we simply don't know. If we could trace the thoughts in their courses, if we could set their healing magic through the brain – but that's not to be for awhile yet. Meanwhile, there's nothing we can do about it, except to face it cheerfully. Though it is hard when the person whose mind goes develops a murderous hatred of you at the same time. However, as I said, I don't want to talk about that, and you'll please me if you don't either.'

We were still standing at the bottom of the stairs. Abruptly he changed his manner, clapped me on the shoulder, steered me into the living room, insisted that I have a drink, and busied himself starting a fire in the open grate, all the while chatting loudly about recent doings at the medical school and pressing me for details of my latest articles.

Then, giving me no time whatever to think, he settled himself in the opposite chair, the fire blazing between us, and launched into a description of a new research project he was getting started on. It concerned the enzymes and the mechanisms of temperature-control of insects, and seemed to have far-reaching implications in fields as diverse as insecticide manufacture and the glandular physiology of human beings.

There were times when he got so caught up in his subject that it almost seemed to me it was the old Max before me, as

if all the events of the past year had been a bad dream.

Once he broke off momentarily, to lay his hand on a bulky typescript on the table beside him.

'This is what I've been keeping myself busy with these last few months, Fred,' he said quickly. 'A complete account of my experiments with Fearing, along with the underlying theories, as well as I can present them, and all pertinent material from other fields. I can't touch the thing again, of course, but I hope someone else will, and I want him to have the benefit of my mistakes. I'm rather doubtful if any of the journals will accept it, but if they don't I'll publish it at my own expense.'

It really gave me a pang to think of how much he must have suffered pounding out that typescript, meticulously, of course, knowing that it wasn't his job any more or ever could be, knowing that it was the account of a failure and a personal tragedy, knowing that it wouldn't be at all well received by his profession, but feeling duty-bound to pass on information that might some day kindle another mind and prove of scientific value to mankind.

And then the tragedy of Velda, which I hadn't yet been able to properly assimilate, with its faint, last-twist-of-the-screw suggestion that if Max had continued his research with Fearing, he might conceivably have learned enough to be able to avert the cloud shadowing her mind.

Yes, I thought then, and I still think, that Max's behavior that night, especially his enthusiasm about his new research project, into which he'd obviously thrown himself wholeheartedly, was an inspiring and at the same time heart-rending example of the sort of unsentimental courage you find in the best scientists.

Yet at the same time I had the feeling that his new project wasn't the real reason for his summoning me. He had something very different on his mind, I felt, and as an unhappy person will, was taking himself out on other subjects as a preliminary to getting around to it. After a while he did.

The fire had died down somewhat. We had temporarily exhausted the topic of his new project. I was conscious of having smoked too many cigarettes. I asked Max some inconsequential question about a new advance in aviation medicine.

He frowned at the crawling flames, as if he were carefully weighing his answer. Then abruptly he said, without looking towards me, 'Fred, there's something I want to tell you, something I felt I must tell you, but something I haven't been able to bring myself to tell you until now. I hated John Fearing, because I knew he was having a love affair with my wife.'

I looked down at my hands. After a moment I heard Max's voice again. It wasn't loud, but it was rough with emotion.

'Oh come on, Fred, don't pretend you didn't know. You saw them through the window that night. You'll be surprised to know, Fred, how hard it was for me not to avoid you, or pick some quarrel with you, after that happened. Just the thought that you knew . . .'

'That's all I did see or know,' I assured him. 'Just that one glimpse.' I turned and looked at him. His eyes were bright with tears.

'And yet you know, Fred,' he went, 'that's the real reason I picked you to sit in on our experiments. I felt that knowing what you did, you would be better able than anyone else to check on my relationship with John.'

There was one thing I had to say. 'You are quite certain, Max, that your suspicions of Velda and Fearing were justified?'

One look at his face told me I needn't press that line of questioning any further. Max sat for a while with his head bowed. It was very quiet. The wind had died which earlier had splattered a few drops from nearby branches against the windowpanes.

Finally he said, 'You know, Fred, it's very difficult to recapture lost emotions, either jealousy or scientific zeal. And yet those were the two main ones in this drama. For of course it wasn't until I had begun my experiments with Fearing that I found out about him and Velda.' He paused, then went on with difficulty. 'I'm afraid I'm not a very broadminded man, Fred, when it comes to sex and possession. I think that if John had been some ordinary person, or if I had found out earlier, I would have behaved differently. Rather brutally, perhaps. I don't know. But the fact that our experiments had begun, and that they promised so much, changed everything.

'You know, I really try to be a scientist, Fred,' he went on, with the ghost, or cadaver rather, of a rueful smile. 'And as a scientist, or just as a rational man, I had to admit that the possible benefits of our experiments infinitely out-weighed any hurt to my vanity or manhood. It may sound grotesque, but as a scientist I even had to consider whether this love affair wasn't necessary to keep my subject cooperative and in a proper state of mind, and whether I shouldn't go out of my way to further it. As it was, I didn't have to vary my routine in order to give them plenty of opportunities, though I think that if that had been necessary, I might even have done it.'

He clenched his fist. 'You see, so very much depended on those experiments of ours. Though it's awfully hard for me to remember that now. The feeling's all gone . . . the tremendous vision . . . this typescript here is just dead stuff . . . an obligation . . .

'I feel differently about a lot of things now. About Velda and John, too. Velda wasn't exactly the girl I thought I was marrying. I've realized lately that she had a tremendous need to be adored, a kind of cold lust for beauty and ecstasy, like some pagan priestess. And I cooped her up here – the old story – and tried to feed her on my enthusiasms. Not exactly the right diet. And yet, you know, Fred, my life's work was inspired by Velda to an extent that you might find hard to believe. Even before I'd met Velda. The expectancy of her.

'And John? I don't think anyone will ever know the truth about John. I was only beginning to understand him, and there were sides to his nature I couldn't touch. A remarkable creature. In one sense, a true superman. In another, a mindless animal. Astonishing weaknesses, or blind spots. The influence of his mother. And then the way his instincts and conscience went hand in hand. I feel that John may have been completely sincere both about his desire for Velda and his desire to help me aid mankind. It may never have occurred to him that the two desires didn't exactly go together. It's quite possible he felt that he was being very nice to both of us.

'Yes, and if John and Velda's affair was something that could happen now, I think I would feel very differently about it.

'But then—? God, Fred, it's so hard to think truthfully about *them*! Then there existed in me, side by side, every moment of the day and night, the highest pinnacles of scientific excitement and the deepest pits of jealous rage. The one strictly subordinated!' A note of passionate anger came into his voice. 'For don't think I was weak, Fred. Don't think I ever deviated so much as a hairsbreadth from the course that was scientifically and humanistically right. I kept my hatred for John in absolute check. And when I say that, I mean that. I'm no ignoramus. Fred. I know that when one tries to suppress feelings, they have a way of bursting out through unsuspected channels, due to the trickery of the subconscious mind. Well, I was on the watch for that. I provided every conceivable safeguard. I was fantastically cautious about each experiment. I know it may not have looked that way to you, but even that last one – heavens, we had often done experiments twice as dangerous, or as seemingly dangerous, testing every step of the way. Why, Soviet scientists have had people technically dead for over five minutes. With John it couldn't have been one!

'And yet . . .

'That's what tormented me so, don't you see, Fred, when I couldn't revive him. The thought that my unconscious mind had somehow tricked me and opened a channel for my all-too-conscious hatred, found a chink in the wall that I'd neglected to stop up, a doorway unguarded for a second. As he lay there dead before my eyes, I was tortured by the conviction that there was some little thing that would revive him at once if only I could remember what it was.

'Some little mistake or omission I'd made, which only had to be thought of to be corrected, but which my subconscious mind wouldn't let me remember. I felt that if only I could have relaxed my mind completely – but of course that was the one thing I couldn't do.

'I tried every way I knew to revive John, I reviewed every step I'd taken without finding a flaw, and yet that feeling of guilt persisted.

'Everything seemed to intensify it. Velda's frozen suicidal calm, worse than the bitterest and most tempestuous accusations. The most childish things – even that silly occultist with his talk of a deathwatch on John.

'How John must hate me, I'd tell myself irrationally.

Commanded to be dead, tricked into dying, not given the faintest hint of what was intended.

'And Velda. Never a reproachful word to me. Just freezing up, more and more, until her mind began to wither.

'And John. That miraculous body rotting in the tomb. Those magnificently knit muscles and nerves, falling apart cell by cell.'

Max slumped in his chair exhausted. The last flame in the grate flickered out and the embers began to smoke. The silence was deadly.

And then I began to talk. Quietly. Nothing brilliant. I merely reviewed what I knew and what Max had told me. Pointed out how, being the scientist he was, he couldn't have done anything but what he did. Reminded him of how he'd checked and double-checked his every action. Showed him that he hadn't the shred of a reason for feeling guilty any longer.

And finally my talk began to take effect, though, as Max said, 'I don't think it's anything you've said. I've been all over that. It's that at last I've unburdened myself to someone. But I do feel better.'

And I'm sure he did. For the first time I truly sensed the old Max in him. Battered and exhausted of course, and deeply seared by a new wisdom, but something of the old Max, nevertheless.

'You know,' he said, sinking back in his chair, 'I think I can really relax now for the first time in six months.'

Immediately the silence settled down again. I remember thinking, queerly, that it was dreadful that a place could be so silent.

The fire had stopped smoking. Its odour had been replaced by that seeping in from the outside – the smell of cold wet earth and stone.

My taut muscles jerked spasmodically at the sudden grating of Max's chair against the floor. His face was ghastly. His lips formed words, but only choking sounds came out. Then he managed to get control of his voice.

'The cue! The cue for him to come alive again! I forgot. I changed the signals. I thought it was still—'

He tore a pencil from his pocket and rapped on the arm of the chair: three – one.

'But it should have been—' And he rapped: three – two.

It is hard for me to describe the feeling that went through me as he rapped that second signal.

The intense quiet had something to do with it. I remember wishing that some other sound would break in – the patter of raindrops, the creaking of a beam, the hollow surge of the interurban.

Just five little raps, unevenly spaced, but embued with a quality, force, and rhythm that was Max's and nobody else's in the world – as individual as his fingerprint, as inimitable as his signature.

Just five little raps – you'd think they'd be lost in the walls, gone in a second. But they say that no sound, however faint, ever dies. It becomes weaker and weaker as it dissipates, the agitations of the molecules less and less, but still it goes on to the end of the world and back, to the end of eternity.

I pictured that sound struggling through the walls, bursting into the night air with an eager upward sweep, like a black insect, darting through the wet tangled leaves, soaring crazily into the moist tattered clouds, perhaps dipping inquisitively to circle one of the rusted lamp-poles, before it streaked purposefully off along the dank street, up, up, over the trees, over the wall, and then swooped down toward wet cold earth and stone.

And I thought of Fearing, not yet quite rotted in his tomb.

Max and I looked at each other.

There came a piercing, blood-chilling scream from over our heads.

A moment of paralyzed silence. Then the wild clatter of footsteps down the stairs in the hall. As we sprang up together, the outside door slammed.

We didn't exchange a word. I stopped in the hall to snatch up my flashlight.

When we got outside we couldn't see Velda. But we didn't ask each other any questions as to which direction she'd taken.

We started to run. I caught sight of Velda almost a block ahead.

I'm not in too bad physical condition. I slowly drew ahead of Max as we ran. But I couldn't lessen the distance between myself and Velda. I could see her quite plainly as

she passed through the pools of light cast by the street lamps. With the gray silk dressing gown flying out behind her, she sometimes looked like a skimming bat.

I kept repeating to myself, 'But she couldn't have heard what we were saying. She couldn't have heard those raps.'

Or could she?

I reached the cemetery. I shone my flashlight down the dark, leafy tunnel. There was no one in sight, but almost halfway down the block I noticed branches shaking where they dipped to the wall.

I ran to that point. The wall wasn't very high. I could lay my hand on its top. But I felt broken glass. I stripped off my coat, laid it over the top, and pulled myself up.

My flashlight showed a rag of gray silk snagged on a wicked barb of glass near my coat.

Max came up gasping. I helped him up the wall. We both dropped down inside. The grass was very wet. My flashlight wandered over wet, pale stones. I tried to remember where Fearing's tomb was. I couldn't.

We started to hunt. Max began to call, 'Velda, Velda!'

I suddenly thought I remembered the lay-out of the place. I pushed on hurriedly. Max lagged behind, calling.

There was a muffled crash. It sounded some distance away. I couldn't tell the direction. I looked around uncertainly.

I saw that Max had turned back and was running. He vanished around a tomb.

I hurried after him as fast as I could, but I must have taken the wrong turning. I lost him.

I raced futilely up and down two aisles of tombstone and tomb. I kept flashing my light around, now near, now far. It showed pale stone, dark trees, wet grass, gravel path.

I heard a horrible, deep, gasping scream – Max's.

I ran wildly. I tripped over a headstone and sprawled flat on my face.

I heard another scream – Velda's. It went on and on.

I raced down another aisle.

I thought I would go on for ever, and forever hearing that scream, which hardly seemed to pause for inhalation.

Then I came around a tangled clump of trees and saw them.

My flashlight wavered back and forth across the scene twice before I dropped it.

They were there, all three of them.

I know that the police have a very reasonable explanation for what I saw, and I know that explanation must be right, if there is any truth in what we have been taught to believe about mind and body and death. Of course there are always those who will not quite believe, who will advance other theories. Like Max, with his experiments.

The only thing the police can't decide for certain is whether Velda managed to break into the tomb and open the casket unaided – they did find a rusty old screwdriver nearby – or whether tomb and casket hadn't been broken into at an earlier date by some sort of cultists or, more likely, pranksters inspired by cultists. They have managed to explain away almost completely, all evidence that tomb and casket were burst from the inside.

Velda can't tell them. Her mind is beyond reach.

The police have no doubts whatsoever about Velda's ability to strangle Max to death. After all, it took three strong men to get her out of the cemetery. And it is from my own testimony that the police picked up Max's statement that Velda hated him murderously.

The odd position of Fearing's remains they attribute to some insane whim on Velda's part.

And of course, as I say, the police must be right. The only thing against their theory is the raps. And of course I can't make them understand just how tremendously significant those raps of Max's, that diabolic three – two, seemed to me at the time.

I can only tell what I saw, in the flashlight's wavering gleam.

The marble slab closing Fearing's tomb had fallen forward. The tomb was open.

Velda was backed against a tombstone opposite it. Her gray silk dressing gown was wet and torn to ribbons. Blood dribbled from a gash above her knee. Her blond hair streamed down tangledly. Her features were contorted. She was staring down at the space between herself and Fearing's tomb. She was still screaming.

There before her, in the wet grass, Max lay on his back. His head was twisted backward.

And across the lower part of Max's body, the half-fleshed fingers stretching toward his throat, the graveclothes clinging in tatters to the blackened, shrunken body, was all that was left of Fearing.

IRON MAN

by Eando Binder

CHARLEY BECKER dropped his tools and announced, 'I'm going to get oiled.'

Hank Norton looked up in surprise at his co-worker in the sonox department. Becker was small and slight, with thin hair and the makings of a bald spot. He was the quiet kind who worked week in and week out with patient efficiency. He was inconspicuous, and sometimes you hardly knew he was there. It was hard not to smile at his thin voice that always came out like a woman's high-pitched treble.

That was partly what surprised Hank Norton. Becker's voice had come out in a deep manly tone, for once. More shocking were the words. As far as anybody knew, Charley Becker had never taken a drop in his life; two beers would have been a rip-roaring orgy for him.

'Did *you* say that, Charley?' Norton queried, just to be sure.

'Yes, I'm going to get oiled,' Becker boomed again.

Norton nodded in understanding then, noting his strained face. 'Shaky nerves, Charley? I've seen it happen before. Working year after year on those monotonous robot sonox units sure can get a guy at times.'

He shot a spark into the speech centre of the robot he was working on. The robot came to life and gave out an eerie, human-like groan. 'Almost sounds human,' Norton said. 'Plenty weird, coming from a bunch of junk. Never thought it would get you, though, Charley. It's only an hour to quitting time; keep working and forget it.'

But Becker was already turning. 'I'm going to get oiled,' he repeated, and stalked over to Pete Osgood in the grease pit.

'Oil me,' he said.

Osgood wasn't in a good humor. 'Lay off, Charley; that one has whiskers on it.'

'I am in need of oiling,' said Becker, standing there stiffly. He raised his left arm slowly, rigidly. 'Observe, sir. This shoulder joint sticks; oil it, please.'

Osgood got sore. 'Now listen here, Charley. For the last time, don't try to make a fool of me.'

'But I need oiling,' said Becker. 'And that is your duty.'

Osgood snatched up an oil can. 'You asked for it, Charley,' he said with a wicked grin. He squirted oil lavishly over Becker's left shoulder. It soaked into his shirt and dripped off his elbow.

'You're all oiled up now, X-88,' Osgood roared, suddenly amused, waiting for Becker's dismay.

'Thank you, sir,' said Becker, swinging his arm freely. 'The shoulder joint is now working properly.'

He turned on his heel precisely and strode heavily to the door. Pete Osgood dropped the oil can, as Hank Norton came up.

'Goshsakes,' Osgood choked. 'He wasn't kidding.'

Charles Becker marched out of the building and down the street along which sprawled the *Winton Robot Works.*

Lora Becker was rearranging furniture, as she did regularly, hating uniformity. Which accounted for the fact that she was a bluehead this week, and was using cerulean lipstick whereas last week her hair and lips had blazed emerald green. Underneath the cosmetic customs of the day, she was a blonde – not a ravishing blonde, but you'd call her attractive pert and petite, with built-in cuteness.

Right now, she wanted the furniture in a double aisle effect, which she hoped Charley wouldn't mind. But then, he never objected to anything she did. He was meek and mild, always. And sweet. She loved him. Why? Because she loved him.

She tugged at the heavy 55-inch TV-console in the corner, hardly able to budge it.

'Allow me, madam,' said a strong voice behind her.

She whirled, startled. 'Charley! I didn't hear you come in, and you're home early; anything wrong, honey?'

'Nothing is wrong,' said Becker, lifting the console off the floor, holding it suspended.

'Charley, your back,' she cried in horror; 'you'll sprain it. Let it down.'

'Where does madam wish it placed?' Becker still held it as if it weighed a pound, instead of a hundred plus.

'Over there, against the violet wall. But, honey, you can't carry it way over there—'

She stopped and watched, her lips open. Becker was already across the room and swung it easily into position. He turned without panting.

Lora blinked her rosy lashes, in fascination.

'Charley, it's . . . well, before you used to puff and groan over lifting one small chair. Where in the world did you get all this he-man strength? Honest, I'm floored, honey. Well, say something, Charley. Don't just stand there.'

'Do not call me Charley,' said Charley Becker. 'Nor other human endearments. They are out of place, madam; my factory designation is X-88.'

After a blank moment, Lora twinkled happily.

'You got a raise, dear. That must be it. And they let you off early to tell me and celebrate. No wonder you're in such a good humor, playing jokes. Come and kiss me now, my great big he-man hero.'

Becker ignored her arm-spread invitation. 'Robots never become familiar with their masters or mistresses, in the human sense,' he said in flat tones.

'A robot, eh?' teased Lora, rushing and hugging him. 'Come on, squeeze me. Crush my ribs in your mighty steel embrace, tall, silver, and handsomely polished.'

Becker let his arms hang, not responding. 'That is exactly what would happen, madam; I would crush your ribs. What are your orders now? X-88 is your servant.'

Lora laughed till the tears rolled.

'Honest, Charley, I never knew you had a sense of humor like that. It must have been a whopping raise and some big promotion. Won't tell yet? All right, have your fun. Meantime, what would you like for supper? Anything you want. What's your mouth watering for?'

'Oil,' said Becker. 'Grade 20, robo-refined, of atomic radiation 60 roentgens. It is the standard fuel for robots.'

'Oil it is,' said Lora gravely. 'Lemon flavor? Or chilled, with whipped cream on top?'

Chuckling, she whirled to the kitchen, and rummaged in the Dinner Freeze for one of his favorites.

When they sat down at the table, five minutes later, Lora pointed at the bowl. 'Your oil, X-88.'

Becker raised it to his lips and took a swallow. He spat it out violently, but without emotion. 'That is not oil, madam. That is jellied consomme.'

Lora stared in dismay at the spattered smears on the wall. A trace of annoyance came into her voice. 'Dear, isn't that carrying it a little too far? It's your favorite, it always has been, and I thought you'd be pleased.'

'Any human food products, taken internally, can cause a short circuit and severe damage, madam. Now my neck joint is stiff from that organic matter; it must be oiled.'

Lora sighed, and decided to smile it all the way through, as her husband stalked to the tool closet, took out a can of oil, and squirted it around his neck, swiveling his head back and forth.

But Lora lost her smile when Charley unscrewed the top, tilted the can, and poured the rest down his throat.

Lora screamed.

Lora said, her face heavily overlaid with rose powder to hide the sleepless lines, 'Yes, Doctor; my husband thinks he's a robot. He refused to come into bed last night. He just stood in the corner, like robots do for the night. Unmoving. All night.' She continued after a moment. 'In the morning he still stood there. He hadn't moved a muscle. Doctor, I—'

'Easy, Mrs. Becker,' soothed the psychiatrist.

Dr. John Grady wore the pleasant face, quieting smile, and firm assurance of his profession. He was tidy in dress, relaxed in manner; he was objective and unemotional. He was sharp and penetrative in thought, able to leap like a bloodhound through the mazes of the human mind. His cases were all clinically interesting, but one must never pity the patient or his loved ones. Theoretically.

But Grady pitied Lora Becker. Theory be damned; she had a problem – a real stinker of a problem.

He turned professional again. 'Your husband worked in a robot assembly factory? How long?'

'Nine years; he was in charge of turning up their speech units.'

'His job required him to speak to them and get their answers? Teach them? Train them to understand human language?'

Lora nodded. 'He often told me how queer it was, even though he did it a thousand times. How queer to suddenly find a machine talking back to you, with an almost human mind. He got to calling them "he" and "him" instead of "it".'

Dr. Grady studied that.

'Slow progression of personality projection. Giving them human status in his mind. But still, harmless unless – tell me, Mrs. Becker. Did he ever worry about it? That is, did it bother him in some specific way, dealing with these human-like mechanical men?'

Lora thought. 'Yes, now that you mention it. I'd always kid him out of it, but sometimes he'd come home all nervous, telling me he had just murdered a robot.'

'Murdered?'

'Well, some turned out defective; their mental units did not respond the right way. Charley called them "idiots". Or robot "morons". And useless then, of course. So he had to send an electric spark through the brain unit, burning it out. Whenever he did that, he'd sleep badly that night, just as if he had killed a man.'

The psychiatrist processed that through his mental mill for a silent minute. 'Anxiety neurosis,' he said, tentatively. 'Leading to retreat into robot identity himself. It was the only way, perhaps, that he could absolve himself of those "killings". The one way to ease his guilt complex. Charles Becker "murdered" them; but not X-88, the robot. That freed him of guilt.'

That was for her benefit, the simplification; they always felt better, hearing it put into clear-cut terms. They never understood the real diagnosis, bent and fractured emotions piled high like a pyramid, up which the investigator had to climb step by step, hoping to reach the apex.

There was the obvious fact that Becker was a puny man. No doubt all his adult life he had had to fend off the barbs.

Hey, shorty. Every inch a mouse, ha-ha. My *dear*, no other woman would look at him once. No thanks, said the cannibal, I just had shrimp for breakfast.

Oh, it was understandable enough.

Yearnings created. Unfulfilled wish dreams. To be a big strong man. Or stronger than any man. Like a robot.

Also, as routinely recorded first by the nurse, they had no children – with his sterility at fault, not hers, as medically checked. Lack of male virility; again a steady hammering at his shrinking ego, day upon day.

Lora Becker was a good wife, no doubt of it. Loved him in spite of all. But in unguarded moments, little slips must have leaked past her lips. Oh, poor darling, don't strain yourself . . . that awful pawing Ed Ashley, big and strong sure but I'll take my little sweet boy anytime . . . really, dear, lots of men can't be fathers and the world is so full of brats already.

And then the robots, where he worked, giving humanlike groans as they 'died' under his hands. Weakness and unmanliness and robot brains stamped out. Guilt piled on guilt; the pyramid growing till it crushed him, cruelly.

All Becker's problems were solved in one stroke. Robots were not weaklings; robots never had children; and robots were at last rid of that human killer, Charles Becker.

That was his escape, free at last from all torment. That was the tangle to unravel, in its broad outline. Dr. Grady cut off his mental sketching. He had to be ready for the question they always asked. Always.

Lora was asking it, twisting her hands. 'How serious is it, Doctor? Can he be—?'

So often they left the word out.

'Cured?' furnished Grady, softly, carefully. How many years had it taken him to eliminate all betraying inflections? 'Now don't worry, Mrs. Becker; we acknowledge few hopeless cases here in 1982. Wait in the outer office, please, while I talk to him.'

After Lora sat down in the waiting room and pretended to read a magazine with blurred eyes, Dr. Grady called to the small man standing like a statue in the corner, unobtrusively. But with the self-effacement of a trained robot, not of a meek man.

'This way please, Mr. Becker.'

Becker did not turn his head, nor even blink.

Grady nodded to himself. 'This way please, X-88.'

Becker came to life and obediently followed him into the private office. The door shut soundlessly.

'Lie on that couch,' the doctor waved. 'This will take an hour.'

'I'll stand, sir; robots do not tire.'

Grady allowed no trace of surprise or annoyance on his face, fixed in neutral pleasantness from long practice. 'Yes, of course. As you choose. Your name?'

'X-88, sir. Robot home servant out of the Winton Works.'

'The name Charles Becker. What does it mean to you?'

'Nothing, sir. However, the name Becker itself does; I am the robot servant of Mrs. Lora Becker.'

'Ah, but if Lora Becker is married, she must have a husband. Where is he?'

'I do not know, sir.'

'Is Mrs. Becker widowed or divorced?'

'No. That is, I don't know.'

'Yes, you do know,' said Grady, but not sharply. He said it casually, genially. 'You answered correctly at first, before changing it. This shows that somehow, you yourself are fully aware that Mrs. Becker has a living husband, from whom she is not separated. Is he away on a trip?'

'No.'

'Again you know the answer. Then where is he? It is an interesting question, isn't it? Why would not her devoted husband show up all last evening and through the night?'

'Because he – I—' Becker stopped, turning blank. 'A robot is unaware of human relationships and doings; I cannot answer.'

'Yes, you can answer,' said the psychiatrist patiently. His tone was unaccusing, friendly, persuasive. 'You almost gave me the answer a moment ago. You are not a robot called X-88, are you? Think once; you are a man, a human being of flesh and blood, called Charles Becker. Isn't that right?'

Logic should bring him back, now.

Grady waited, hopefully. Had he broken through? Surely the preposterous fixation could not stand up in the face of pure logic. The robot masquerade must have weak chinks in its armor.

But the hard, set face did not change. 'I am robot X-88,' Becker said, in a nasal voice that exactly imitated the hundreds of robots he had activated into speech for nine years.

Dr. Grady sighed inwardly, conceding defeat for the time being. He had at least expected Becker to emerge a moment or two, bewildered, before retreating again into his robot fantasy. It was comparatively rare for such an utter change of personality to stick like glue this long, in its primary stages.

Grady picked up a book on his desk, casually. Toying with it, he rose and approached the man who thought he was a robot. 'Robots feel no pain, of course,' he said.

'That is right, sir; robots feel no pain.'

Grady suddenly jabbed the book at Becker, using its corners to dig into his ribs. Grady was not gentle about it, and he was a strong man.

Reaction, zero.

'As you said, sir, robots feel no pain.'

Grady turned away. There must be a purple bruise there, under his clothes. No man could take sudden pain without at least a gasp; Becker hadn't flinched in the slightest.

The doctor's trained thoughts followed up the pattern. Complete transference of personality. Complete belief that he was a robot, an iron man, with an iron skin holding no pain nerves. Fakirs walking through live coals, or lying on beds of sharp nails. Ordinary people too, under fear and stress, carrying bad wounds without feeling them till later. Psychosomatic nerve block. It was of that near-incredible mental astigmatism to physical hurt.

Becker not only thought himself a robot. He *was* a robot. In all ways.

In all ways?

'A robot has three times the strength of a big man,' stated Dr. Grady. 'A robot could, for instance, raise one corner of my safe, there. Go and do it, X-88.'

Becker stalked over without a word. He even imitated the slow, heavy tread of a three-hundred pound robot to perfection, with his soaking-wet 125; it was oddly humorous, in a quite humorless way.

Grady held his breath as Becker stooped for a hand-hold underneath the steel safe, standing on short legs. The human

robot strained and lifted one corner off the floor, with his pipestem arms and frail back. Three powerful men could hardly have done the same.

Becker let it back silently, without a thump, as a well trained, high-powered robot would. He turned and straightened, without triumph. Robots did not gloat.

'Very good,' said Grady evenly. 'As a robot, you could also jump out of my window, fall ten floors, and land without harm, taking up the shock by trigger reflexes of your knee joints.'

'That is right, sir.'

Grady's eyes narrowed just a bit. The fear of death; the will to live – a man's strongest instinctive drive. Would Becker break down under that threat, and emerge from hiding in the shell of X-88?

'Go and jump out the window, X-88,' said Grady, in direct order. Surely that would call his 'bluff'.

'Which window?' asked Becker, turning and walking toward the three that overlooked the street.

'The middle one,' said Grady.

Becker was already halfway there, his step firm. He covered the rest of the distance, raised the window.

'Order rescinded,' said Grady. 'I have decided the jump is hardly necessary.' Grady kept smiling; he had a hard-worn smile that could cover any inward shudder. 'Return home now, X-88, with Mrs. Becker. Obey her implicitly in all things.

Dr. Grady toned up his smile for Lora as he patted her arm. 'It went well but it will take time,' he said softly. 'Meanwhile, treat him as if he were your robot servant. Avoid calling him Charles or any endearment. Call him X-88. Give him household tasks to do, but nothing more. This is to erase all antagonism and resistance in him. Bring him back tomorrow.'

Back in his office, before the next patient came in, Dr. Grady cast aside his smile. It was a unique case, the first he had heard of in psychiatric records, since robots had only been on the market for some twelve years. One thing struck him forcefully.

It would take time, he had told Lora Becker. It was one of the fundamental tenets of psychiatry to never hurry. To

take your time. Never force things. There was no time limit in curing mental aberrations. No deadline to meet.

But with Charles Becker, there was a deadline.

Robots did not eat or drink human foods.

Dr. Grady was ready the next day. He had canceled all his morning patients. They could wait; they ate and lived. He had concentrated all his thoughts on the new problem, and had his campaign worked out.

It had to break through fast. Fast. Charles Becker had been without food and drink for forty-eight hours already.

Grady wore his pleasant smile as Becker strode in, thumping his feet on the floor in slow measured steps.

'Charles Becker,' said Grady, 'is a killer of robots. At the factory from which you came, X-88, he was a worker. He often murdered defective robots; is that right?'

Becker's eyes flicked. 'Yes, that is right.'

Grady was pleased. X-88 now admitted knowing Charles Becker, where before he had denied it. A slight opening.

Grady wormed further in. 'But robots do not have human status. Under the law, they are nothing but clever machines. Is a man, a human being, a murderer if he smashes a car, or a television set, or an electronic brain unit?'

'No,' said Becker.

'A robot,' said Grady, 'is no more than a finer and more ingenious combination of the mechanical locomotion of a car, the perception of a sensitive TV-unit, and a compact electron brain. Therefore, Charles Becker was not committing murder when he destroyed robots; he only got rid of useless machinery. He would be foolish to have any sort of guilt complex over it, would he not?'

'I do not understand such human emotions.'

Grady thought. *Defense mechanism*. As a robot, Becker did not need to follow the reasoning. Still intact. A mental barrier it was hopeless to attack. It was the root and foundation of his complex, built up solidly through nine long years.

Grady shifted the attack to concrete things. 'Do you feel weak, X-88?'

'No.'

'But you've had no food for two days.'

'Robots do not eat human food. However, four ounces of fuel must be given a robot each day, to keep him at peak performance; Mrs. Becker did not give me any.'

No, thought Grady, *because I phoned her and said not to.* He had pressed the desk button and his nurse came in, wheeling a tea table loaded with hot steaming foods, directly before Becker. His nose could not fail to drink in the tempting aromas. His human stomach could not fail to hunger for what lay within reach.

Becker did not turn or move for five silent minutes.

Grady gave up waiting. 'Eat,' he commanded.

'Sorry, but I must refuse,' said Becker. 'Human food is harmful to us; robots have built-in guards against obeying any commands harmful to them.'

Grady smiled. Damnable. By the same token, he could not get any knock-out drug down Becker's throat, to render him unconscious, and then force-feed him. Nor could ten men help him overpower Becker by sheer weight of numbers, for force-feeding. Becker would clamp his jaws shut, defying their fingers to open them; even if they managed to stuff food down his throat, he would automatically spit it out.

Force-feeding was out. Feeding of any kind was out until X-88 gave up the ghost and left.

The doctor signalled and the nurse wheeled the table out. He crossed that off his list on the desk. Then he brought a can of fuel-oil to Becker. It was ordinary oil, but looked quite like the poisonous radiated robot fuel. But it had another secret ingredient in it. Ipecac.

'Your fuel, X-88.'

Becker drank it down. Robots drank their fuel like humans, down a fuel-pipe gullet to the fuel distribution system below. It was as mechanically efficient as any other way.

Becker stood a while, then retched violently over the rug.

As the nurse cleaned it up, Grady waited for Becker to explain it. If he was still a robot.

Becker was still a robot. 'That oil fuel was contaminated, sir; unfit for robot motors. But all late models are fitted with selective ejectors halfway to the fuel distributor system. Any unsuitable fuel is automatically regurgitated.'

'Of course,' smiled Grady. 'Stupid of me to forget.'

He drew a line through item two and shifted to item three.

'Punch a hole in this sheet metal with your fist,' he said, pointing to a square-yard of steel $\frac{1}{32}$ inch thick, held firmly in a stand and clamps.

Robots could smash a fist through gauges up to $\frac{1}{32}$ inch; beyond that, they would shatter their intricate knuckle mechanisms.

Something had to work, Grady told himself. Something had to be insurmountable to the human limitations of Becker. Then he would begin to shed his fixation of X-88 the robot.

Hard steel, impervious to the human fist.

There was a loud noise as Becker's fist smashed through the steel plate. He withdrew the hand, without wincing. Knuckles unbruised, Grady noted. No blood. No broken bones sticking out under torn flesh.

Grady's pencil scraped across that item. Roughly, it was the well-known 'maniacal' strength. Iron will, especially if psychotic, giving iron hardness momentarily to human bones and flesh. Hardly supernatural – merely the realm where supreme mental effort commanded all glandular and muscular processes to one powerful acme.

Mind over matter. A trite simplification but the nutshell of it, basically. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Charles Becker and X-88.

Grady swung his thoughts to the next item.

But suddenly, Lora came running in. Wild-eyed, she darted glances from the doctor to Becker, as if sensing failure. 'I can't stand it any longer,' she shrieked. Sobbing, she lifted the bottle to her lips. 'Goodbye, dearest.'

'Stop!' yelled Dr. Grady. 'Don't drink that deadly poison.' He stumbled over the rug clumsily, and was too late to stop her. She gulped the bottle down, swayed on her feet, fell. Grady caught her limp form.

'Your wife – dead,' he said to Becker. 'The woman you love.'

'Charles Becker's wife,' corrected X-88. 'A robot does not love.'

'Wait in the outer office again,' said Grady, putting Lora on her feet. She cast a backward glance, choked, and closed the door behind her.

Grady crossed that off. Emotion, love. X-88 would have none of it.

'Strip yourself,' ordered Grady. 'Of all clothing.'

Becker obeyed. It was no surprise to X-88 that he wore human clothing. Most robot servants did in human homes, to hide their metallic shine and make them less alien. Most people wanted it that way.

Becker stood nude.

'Robots are sexless,' stated Grady.

'Yes.'

'But humans have sex organs,' said the doctor simply, holding a large mirror in the right position. 'How can X-88 have the same?'

'I have no sex organ, sir; I am a robot.'

Grady tilted the mirror. 'Your face. What do you see?'

'I see shiny metal reflected,' said Becker. 'The usual TV eye-units, false nose, mouth for fuel intake. No human beard or hair.'

Grady put the mirror away. Complete visual illusion. Looking at his own body, Becker's eyes refused to see what could not exist on a robot. Sex organ, head of hair, fingernails, navel – none of those existed for X-88.

But Grady did not tell Becker to dress. He still stood nude. The emotion of love he had denied. There was a stronger instinctive drive; he buzzed twice in signal.

Lora came in, not the nurse. She stared at her unclothed husband without surprise.

'Ready to go through with it?' the doctor asked gently.

Lora blushed but nodded.

'I'm glad you agreed,' said Grady. 'If you hadn't, I'm afraid I would have been forced to insist. I'll leave the room. Take all the time you need. There is a closet for your clothes. When you wish me back, press the desk button.' He touched her hand. 'Remember, try your best. It's important. And it can't wait for another time and place.'

Lora watched the door close on the doctor. Then, glancing at the nude figure of her husband with another blush, she began undressing. She stood before him all the while, delib-

erately. His eyes did not focus on her at all. Did not seem to see the soft white thighs revealed, the womanly curves.

Lora blushed no more. It was like undressing in complete personal privacy among inanimate furniture. But she went on desperately and finally stood before him, dropping the last bit of clothing coyly. Charles Becker had always responded to her charms – always.

When Dr. Grady answered the buzzer and strode in, Lora shook her head in anguish, fixing the last button. 'He ignored me. Like a – a robot.'

She fled to the waiting room, leaving a trail of tears.

Grady drew a line again on his list. The sex drive was completely absent in robots, including X-88.

He had already checked with Lora on other bodily functions, and knew it was a blind alley. Robots did not eliminate waste products; neither did X-88. But that was comparatively simple – cessation of digestion, and metabolism slowed down the minimum required for mere basic existence. Intestines, kidneys, all internal organs under rigid control.

One more item left.

But this was the clincher, and Grady had expected it to come down to this finally; at least, the preceding had perhaps opened the way. Placed some tiny doubt in the mind of X-88. Enough to burst the flood-gates over one final inconsistency in his hallucination.

Then X-88 would leave. Charles Becker would return, and in time for a hearty meal before he collapsed from hunger. Lack of food had no meaning to X-88, but could be carried to an extreme of slow starvation for submerged Becker.

This final item had to get Becker out of his iron trap, thought Grady, and the play of words did not amuse him.

Grady opened his desk drawer, but first, in preparation, he said, 'Remember this, X-88. Charles Becker, who worked at the robot assembly plant, is not a killer. Not a murderer. No guilt hangs over him. For nine years, only doing his job and burning out the brain-units of defective robots, he let that false thought loom in his mind. Without reason. He is innocent. He can return and face the world without stigma or

disgrace. Charles Becker, wherever he is hiding now, has no slightest reason not to return. Is that clear?'

'I understand nothing of what you say,' said the man robot.

No, thought Grady, *but your ears heard the words and your mind recorded them. Your human mind. You will remember.*

Grady stepped forward. He had a sharp knife in his hand.

'Robots do not bleed,' he said. 'They have no blood; you have no blood. Is that right, X-88?'

'I have no blood,' agreed Becker, unflinching.

'I will plunge this knife into you. There will be no blood, of course.'

'No blood.'

That was established. The stage was ready. Blood dripping. X-88 would see it, feel it, unable to explain it away. Unable to explain his soft vulnerability. X-88 would leave; Charles Becker would come back, bleeding.

It had greater significance, too. Something which allowed Grady to pin his confidence on it strongly. Man was born of woman, in blood. In that flow of blood, Charles Becker would be born again. A strong fundamental memory association, vibrating in every fibre of every man since life began.

Grady slowly raised the knife. He poised for a moment. He plunged the knife at Becker, who stood stolid, waiting. It must be a deep wound, short of fatal, letting blood gush. An artery. No half measures; easy enough to doctor him for that later.

Grady used the full power of his muscular arm. Grady pulled back the knife after the third hard thrust at three different parts of the body. Grady stared at the knife.

Grady slowly walked to his desk. He crossed off the last item. He dropped the pencil. He thought ahead to the report he would make to the psychiatric people, jolting them. Jolting all their pleasant smiles from their calm faces.

How skin and flesh could turn to iron. Biologic iron, as strong as steel. Stronger than steel. He dropped the knife with its dulled point and twisted blade. Shiny. Unbloody. Intravenous injection of food? The last road was blocked.

Dr Grady held onto his smile, for Lora. But he wondered how he could tell her.

Not that she would be a widow soon; that she had been a widow for three days already.

THE END

THE MONSTER AT THE MOVIES

A Checklist of Frankenstein Films

1910 FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. J. Searle Dawley)
Produced by Thomas Edison, the first recorded Frankenstein movie, with Charles Ogle as the Monster.

1915 LIFE WITHOUT SOUL
(U.S.A., d. Joseph W. Smiley)
With Percy Darrel Standing as the Monster.

1920 IL MOSTRO DI FRANKESTEIN (*sic*)
(Italy, d. Eugenio Testa)
With Luciano Albertini and Umberto Guarracino (as the Monster).

1931 FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. James Whale)
With Colin Clive, Valerie Hobson, Edward Van Sloane, Boris Karloff puts on the big boots for the first time.

1935 THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. James Whale)
With Boris Karloff, Colin Clive, Ernest Thesiger and Elsa Lanchester (as the monstrous Bride). Considered by many to be the best of them all.

1939 THE SON OF FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Rowland V. Lee)
With Boris Karloff, Lionel Atwill and Bela Lugosi (as Ygor).

1942 THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Erle C. Kenton)
With Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Bela Lugosi and Lionel Atwill. Lon Chaney Jnr. as the Monster.

1942 FRANKENSTEIN'S CAT
(U.S.A., d. Mannie Davis)
A cartoon. Mighty Mouse versus a Frankenstein Cat Monster.

1943 FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN
(U.S.A., d. Roy W. Neill)
With Lon Chaney as the Wolfman and Bela Lugosi as the Monster.

1945 THE HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Erle C. Kenton)
With Boris Karloff, John Carradine (as Dracula), Lon Chaney (as the Wolfman), J. Carroll Naish and Glenn Strange (as the Monster).

1946 HOUSE OF DRACULA
(U.S.A., d. Erle C. Kenton)
With Lon Chaney, John Carradine, Lionel Atwill; Glenn Strange returns as the Monster.

1948 ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Charles Barton)
With Lon Chaney, Bela Lugosi, and Glenn Strange as the Monster who meets a fate worse than Life.

1952 TORTICOLA CONTRE FRANKENSBERG
(France, d. Paul Paviot)
With Michel Piccoli as spoof monster.

1957 THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN
(G.B., d. Terence Fisher)
With Peter Cushing, Hazel Court and Christopher Lee (as the Creature). Hammer Films inject gallons of new blood into the myth in the first of their colour versions of the myth.

1957 EL CASTILLO DE LOS MONSTRUOS
(Mexico)
With comedian Clavillazo and German Robles (as Dracula) in horror spoof.

1958 I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Herbert L. Strock)
With Whit Bissell, Gary Conway (as the Monster). The Monster gets acne.

1958 THE REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN
(G.B., d. Terence Fisher)
With Peter Cushing, Michael Gwynn as the Monster in one of Hammer's best.

1958 FRANKENSTEIN 1970
(U.S.A., d. Howard W. Koch)
With Boris Karloff, Tom Dugan. Mike Lane as the Monster who's twelve years ahead of his time.

1958 FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER
(US.A., d. Richard Cunha)
With John Ashley and Sandra Knight. Female Monster with a face only a mad scientist could love.

1958 HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER
(U.S.A., d Herbert L. Strock)
With Gary Clarke and Gary Conway. The Teenage Werewolf and the Teenage Frankenstein rumble.

1960 MAGOO MEETS FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Gil Turner)
A cartoon. Professor Frankenstein tries to snatch Mr. Magoo's brain.

1961 FRANKEN-STYMIED
(U.S.A.)
A Woody Woodpecker cartoon.

1961 FRANKENSTEIN (*sic*), THE VAMPIRE AND CO.
(Mexico, d. Benito Alasraki)
With Manuel 'Loco' Valdes and Martha Elena Cervantes. A comedy – so they claim.

1962 THE HOUSE ON BARE MOUNTAIN
(U.S.A., d. R. L. Frost)
With Warren Ames, Jeffrey Smithers. Frankenstein meets the nudists for the first, but unfortunately not the last, time.

1962 ORLAK, EL INFIERNO DE FRANKENSTEIN
(Mexico, d. Rafael Baledon)

1963 KISS ME QUICK
(U.S.A., d. Russ Meyer)
Frank Coe as Frankie Stein in SF Skinflick. A.k.a. DR. BREEDLOVE

1964 EL TESTAMENTO DEL FRANKENSTEIN
(Spain, d. Jose Luis Madrid)
With Gerard Landry, George Vallis.

1964 THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN
(G.B., d. Freddie Francis)
With Peter Cushing, Katy Wild, Peter Woodthorpe. Wrestler Kiwi Kingston as the new Hammer monster.

1964 ANGELIC FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Bob Mizer)
The first homosexual Frankenstein – with a 14-year-old monster.

1965 FANNY HILL MEETS DR. EROTICO
(U.S.A., d. Barry Mahon)
The Monster falls for Fanny Hill in Lady Chatterley's castle.

1965 FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE SPACE MONSTER
(U.S.A., d. Robert Gaffney)
Frank Saunders as an android monster. Also known as DUEL OF THE SPACE MONSTERS and MARS INVADES PUERTO RICO.

1966 FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD
(Japan, d. Inoshiro Honda)
With Nick Adams, Tadao Takashima. An expensive Japanese imitation.

1966 JESSE JAMES MEETS FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER
(U.S.A., d. William Beaudine)
Cal Bolder as the Monster who went thataway . . .

1966 FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN
(G.B. d. Terence Fisher)
Peter Cushing experiments with sugar and spice and comes up with Susan Denberg.

1966 MUNSTER GO HOME
(U.S.A., d. Earl Bellamy)
Fred Gwynne, Yvonne de Carlo and Al Lewis in feature spin-off from *The Munsters* TV show.

1966 MONSTER OF CEREMONIES
(U.S.A.)
A cartoon. Woody Woodpecker is made into a monster.

1967 FEARLESS FRANK
(U.S.A., d. Philip Kaufman)
A.k.a. FRANK'S GREATEST ADVENTURE. Midnight Cowboy Jon Voight in dual role of Superhero and Monster.

1968 FRANKENSTEIN'S BLOODY TERROR
(Spain, d. Enrique Equiliz)
With Paul Naschy, Dianki Zurakowska. This is the U.S. release title of a werewolf picture, LA MARCA DEL HOMBRE LOBO and has nothing to do with Frankenstein.

1969 FRANKENSTEIN DE SADE (U.S.A.)
A homosexual Frankenstein. A.k.a.
HOLLOW-MY-WEANIE, DR. FRANKENSTEIN.

1969 SANTO Y BLUE DEMON CONTRA LOS MONSTRUOS
(Mexico, d. Gilberto Martinez Solares)
Manuel Leon as the Monster (with beard and moustache!).

1969 FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED
(G.B., d. Terence Fisher)
With Peter Cushing, Simon Ward and Freddie Jones (as the Monster).

1970 FRANKENSTEIN ON CAMPUS
(Canada, d. Gil Taylor)
With Robin Ward, Kathleen Sawyer. A.k.a. FLICK.

1970 THE HORROR OF FRANKENSTEIN
G.B., d. Jimmy Sangster)
With Ralph Bates, Kate O'Mara. Tongue-in-cheek remake of THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

1970 THE SEXUAL LIFE OF FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Harry Novack)
He was better off dead.

1970 SANTO Y BLUE DEMON CONTRA EL DR. FRANKENSTEIN
(Mexico. d. Miguel M. Delgado.)
With Susha Montenegro, Ivonne Govea.

1970 EL HOMBRE QUE VINO DE UMMO
(Spain)
With Michael Rennie, Craig Hill and Paul Naschy (as the Monster). This film is also known as FRANKENSTEIN HUNTS DRACULA and DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN – not to be confused with the next two items.

1971 DRACULA VERSUS FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Al Adamson)
With J. Carroll Naish, Lon Chaney, Anthony Eisely and John Bloom (as the Monster). Also known as THE BLOOD SEEKERS and THE BLOOD OF FRANKENSTEIN.

1971 DRACULA CONTRA EL DR. FRANKENSTEIN
(Spain, d. Jesus Franco)
With Dennis Price, Howard Vernon and Fernando Bilbao (as the Monster). Not to be confused with previous item.

1971 SANTO CONTRA LA HIJA DE FRANKENSTEIN
(Mexico, d. Miguel M. Delgado)
Mexican wrestlers tangle with the Monster.

1971 FRANKENSTEIN OF SUNNYBROOK FARM
(U.S.A., d. William Rotsler)
Another nudie rip-off.

1972 BYRON'S EVIL
(G.B., d. Andrew Sinclair)
Oliver Reed as Lord Byron *and* the Frankenstein Monster. Film was abandoned during shooting and never completed.

1972 LADY FRANKENSTEIN
(Italy, d. Mel Wells)
With Joseph Cotten, Sarah Bay, Mickey Hargitay. First of a spate of sex-crazed monsters.

1972 FRANKENSTEIN 1980
(Italy, d. Mario Mancini)
With John Richardson, Renato Roman, Tiro Papas. Nude Monster runs amuck.

1972 FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL
(G.B., d. Terence Fisher)
With Peter Cushing and Dave Prowse (as the Monster).

1973 FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Glenn Jordan)
With John Foxworth, Susan Strasberg, Bo Svenson (as the Monster). Long, serious adaptation of the novel for U.S. TV.

1973 SON OF DRACULA
(G.B. d. Freddie Francis)
Harry Nilsson, Ringo Starr and Freddie Jones (as Professor Frankenstein). A.k.a. COUNT DOWNE.

1973 HOUSE OF FREAKS
(Italy, d. Robert Oliver)
With Rossano Brazzi (as Count Frankenstein) and J. Carroll Naish.

1974 ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A./Italy, d. Paul Morrissey)
With Joe Dalessandro and Udo Kier. A.k.a. FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN. 3-D sex and gore.

1974 FRANKENSTEIN – THE TRUE STORY
(G.B., d. Jack Smight)
With David McCullum, James Mason and Michael Sarazzin (as the Monster). Long serious adaptation, scripted by Christopher Isherwood.

1974 BLACKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. William A. Levey)
With John Hart. An off-colour Frankenstein.

1975 YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN
(U.S.A., d. Mel Brooks)
Gene Wilder, Marty Feldman and Peter Boyle (the Monster) in parody/homage of the Karloff pictures.

1976 FRANKENSTEIN ITALIAN-STYLE
(Italy, d. Armando Crispino)
With Aldo Maccione.

MONSTERS!

Following faithfully, frighteningly, in the footsteps of Frankenstein's celebrated creation come a host of monsters to haunt the inner recesses of your mind . . . monsters of flesh and blood like the loathsome creature assembled from graveyard pickings and assorted organic matter . . . automatons of metal, chilling in their childlike impressionability and lack of self-control . . .

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