TALES FROM THE CRYPT

No. 24

REPRINT EDITION

FEATURED...

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

DANGER
QUICKSAND
KEEP AWAY!

FELDSTEIN
HEH, HEH! I see you got up enough nerve to buy Tales from the Crypt again! Well, I won't disappoint you. You'll get your fair share of shakes and shivers, believe me! Ready to begin? Good! Now lie back on the marble slab, pull the sheet up over your head, and I'll tell you the first story! It's Harry Gordon's story told in his own words! He calls it Bats in My Belfry!

I first found out that I was going deaf when I visited our family doctor. I had gone to him because of a painful earache.

I'm sorry, Harry! I know what this will do to your career! The symptoms are unmistakable! In a month or so you will be stone deaf.

Are you sure, doctor? Can't you do anything? Operate?
I went home to my wife Joan! I told her what the doctor had said...

You...you mean you won't be able to act anymore? How could it? I'd miss my cues! My voice expression would be lost!

There must be something they can do! Go see specialists! Make sure!

I must be... they can see... specialists...

No! Nothing can be done... thank you! There! For everything!... no operation.

I will, dear! I will...

But every doctor I went to told me the same story! It was useless! When I started to miss cues on stage...

Sorry, Harry! We'll have to get another star!

Huh? What did you say?

And then it came! The thick, heavy silence! I was stone deaf! I walked in a world of stillness! The traffic, the crowds, the orchestras in night clubs... all silent. I had to learn to lip-read to understand what Joan said to me...

I said our money's practically gone! Understand? We're almost broke... broke... cleaned out!

Things got worse! I tried to find work, but I couldn't do anything! Acting was all I knew! Then I thought of an old friend, John Bayne! John and I had played summer stock together! Then John had gone blind! I went to see him.

Well, well, Harry Gordon! It's good to see you!

DID... did you say my name, John? I'm deaf! I can't hear you! Did you say my name?

Of course! I recognized you immediately?

I will, dear! I will...

You can see? Then why do you wear dark glasses?
John's eyes gleamed yellow in the dim light of his room. They were the eyes of a cat...

I had difficulty reading John's lips, but I managed to understand enough of what he said to get the whole story. I found out about him through another ex-blind man. He's a genius. He operated on me! Grafted these cat's eyes! And now I can see...

I went in a little bell tinkled behind a curtained door at the rear of the shop. The odor of stale-ness and decay hung heavily on the air. He came from behind the curtain. He was tall and dark. Sinister looking...

You were recommended... by a friend! You... helped him to see again? I wondered if...

The rear of the shop looked like an alchemist's nightmare! There were bottles and jars of various colored liquids and powders! But in the center of the room was a modern-looking operating table with up-to-date equipment! He examined me briefly...

Your auditory nerves are paralyzed! I will have to replace your whole hearing system with something different...

The shop was in a dark and winding back street in the shabbiest part of the city. There were stuffed animals in the dusty window...

John said he wasn't a doctor... But... This. This looks like a taxidermist's shop!

DO YOU THINK HE CAN HELP ME, JOHN? RESTORE MY HEARING THE SAME WAY?

WHY DON'T YOU GO SEE HIM? I'LL GIVE YOU HIS ADDRESS.

I see by the way... You watch my lips... that you are deaf! Come into the back! I will examine you!

The odor of stale-ness and decay hung heavily on the air. He came from behind the curtain. He was tall and dark. Sinister looking...

You... you were recommended... by a friend! You... helped him to see again? I wondered if...
A BAT's auditory system is unique! It is extra-sensory! If the operation is a success, you will be able to hear better than you did before you lost your hearing...

I agreed to the operation! After all... what did I have to lose?

Breathe deep, Mr. Gordon!

When I came out of the anesthesia, I looked about! He was standing over me! He started to speak...

How do you feel? My head! Don't talk!

Can you imagine the sensation? Have you ever turned a radio up full blast? That's what everything sounded like to me as I made my way home! When I opened the door I heard Joan's voice! She was upstairs on the phone...

I think he just came in! I'll have to hang up now, darling! Goodbye, dearest! Yes... of course I love you!

I couldn't believe it! Joan... and another man! I decided not to tell Joan about my good fortune... about my hearing being restored! I wanted to wait... to find out more! That night, I couldn't sleep! I got dressed and went for a walk...

Funny! I have the strangest feeling... like I want to scream...
I was in a closet. I had fallen asleep hanging upside down from the clothes pole.

I guess I walked all night. When I returned, Joan was gone! She had gotten a job since I lost my hearing and must have left early that morning.

I was frightened. I shaved carefully, clearing my face of the growth! Then I stepped into the shower as I raised my arm to soap under it.

I slipped to the floor! I was in a closet! I had fallen asleep hanging upside down from the clothes pole.

I was frightened! I shaved carefully, clearing my face of the growth! Then I stepped into the shower as I raised my arm to soap under it.

I staggered into the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror! I needed a shave badly, but there was something else...

Hair! Hair growing on my forehead...my nose! Fine grey hairs...

I dressed quickly and rushed to my friend John's house...John, who had first recommended the strange shop with its still stranger proprietor! It was getting dark outside! I burst in his door without knocking.

John! Get out...quickly!

What the...? A membrane! A membrane growing across my armpit.

What...what's happening to me?

His room was dimly lit! His feline eyes glowed with an eerie yellow light! He lay in a corner...white, picked-clean bones about him! His face was covered with a silk-black fur...

Get away from me, before it's too late! I...I'm an animal!

What's happened? Tell me! Tell me!
John snapped on a light.

IT'S TOO LATE, JOHN! IT'S TOO LATE?

IT'S THAT HORRIBLE FIEND! HE... HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO ME! THESE AREN'T CAT'S EYES HE'S GIVEN ME! THEY'RE THE EYES OF A PANTHER! AND... I... CAN'T HELP MYSELF! I... I HAVE AN INCESSANT URGE TO... KILL!

Lord help us!

AND THAT NIGHT, AS I WALKED THROUGH THE BLACKNESS, I BEGAN TO UTTER SHORT SHRILL SHRIEKS AND I LISTENED FOR THE SHRIEKS TO ECHO BACK! I WAS USING THE BAT'S RADAR-LIKE DEVICE FOR TRAVELING THROUGH THE DARKNESS! WHEN DAWN CAME, I MADE MY WAY HOME...

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL NIGHT? CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME? WHY DID YOU STAY OUT ALL NIGHT?

...I... I GOT A JOB, JOAN 'NIGHT WORK'!

She went out and I lay exhausted on the bed. Again, I don't remember falling asleep, but when I awoke, I was hanging upside down in the closet. I heard voices—Joan's voice... and a man's... He carried a large insurance policy—$15,000! He took it out while he was acting and making good money!

Is it still in effect?

Good then I'll quit mine... today!

If you like, Joan! I... I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

I... I have an incessant urge to... kill!...
RUSHED DOWN THE STAIRS AND UT THE DOOR BEFORE THEY COULD STOP ME...

I LISTENED! FROM MY LAIR IN THE CLOSET, I LISTENED...

YES! THE PREMIUM IS DUE NEXT MONTH! WE'LL BE RICH! AFTER WE KILL HIM...

I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EARS! THEY WERE PLANNING TO MURDER ME! I GOT DOWN FROM THE CLOTHES POLE AND SLOWLY OPENED THE DOOR...

I RUSHED DOWN THE STAIRS AND OUT THE DOOR BEFORE THEY COULD STOP ME...

IT WAS HARRY! HE MUST HAVE HEARD US! HE'LL GO TO THE POLICE!

I'LL STOP HIM... IF I HAVE TO...

Joan's lover came after me! The sidewalks were dark and deserted! I ran... uttering little shrill high-pitched shrieks! They warned me of fences, dead-end alleys, and blind streets...

As I ran, I looked down! Claws sprang from my fingers where nails had grown...

And when I do... HARRY...

HARRY! IT'S NO USE! I'LL GET YOU...

I passed my clawed hand over my face! It was hairy... and over my lower lip hung...

Fangs! I've grown fangs!

When I get you, HARRY I'LL KILL YOU!

I STOPPED RUNNING! THERE WAS NO NEED TO RUN ANY LONGER! I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO! JOAN'S LOVER CAME UP TO ME, LEERING! THEN, HIS EYES WIDENED IN HORROR! I SPRANG AT HIM...

No... no! Keep away!
I lay sprawled grotesquely on the cobbles stones. White as chalk! Two punctures trickled claret on his neck! He was dead! I had drained his blood...

I'm a vampire BAT!

I fairly flew back through the streets to my house. Back to Joan...

Did you get him, cha... Harry! What... what's happened to you?

I killed him, Joan!

He lay sprawled grotesquely on the cobbles stones... white as chalk! Two punctures trickled claret on his neck! He was dead! I had drained his blood...

...I'm not... just an ordinary bat...

...I'm not... just an ordinary bat...

I killed him, as you had planned to kill me! And now I must kill you... too...

No, Harry? No!

Her throat was white and soft... not like his! When I had finished...

Now, I've got to go away... and hide...

I found a place... a nice quiet place to hide! It's in this coffin, in this mausoleum! What did I do with the body that occupied it before I came? Oh, I brought it to John... my friend! He made short work of it!

Oooh, ooh! Well, that's Harry's story, kiddies! Personally, I think he was a little batty, don't you? Oh, by the way! If you haven't already received my 5 by 7 picture, not a drawing but an actual photographic reproduction as I appear in the flesh, read my column, 'The Crypt-Keeper's Corner' in this issue! And now I'll turn you over to that bag, the old witch!
Lester Jerome and Arnold Manning had been close friends all through the years at medical school. They had studied together, and graduated together. They had even interned together at the same hospital. They had done everything together! And, together, they had fallen in love with the same girl...

Yes! Lester and Arnold had begun their medical careers together! But soon, they began to drift apart. They began to differ on theories of medicine... I say that the majority of illnesses are nothing but products of the mind! They are psychologically incurred!

Sah! Lester, you're mad! An illness is an illness and should be treated as such!

C'Mon Laurie! Make up your mind! Lester or me?

Why not both of you?

Say, that's not a bad idea! We'll both take her to the movies, Arnld!
AND SO, LESTER JEROME AND ARNOLD MANNING CAME TO A CROSSROAD AND EACH WENT IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION! LESTER TOOK THE PATH OF PSYCHOSOMATIC MEDICINE... THE TREATMENT OF ILLNESSES THROUGH THE MIND, WHILE ARNOLD TOOK THE PATH OF SURGERY... THE TREATMENT OF ILLNESSES BY SCALPEL, NEEDLE, AND PILLS! AND LAURIE... THE GIRL THEY BOTH LOVED... STOOD BETWEEN THEM, TRYING TO MAKE UP HER MIND!

LAURIE AND LESTER BECAME ENGAGED! THE MONTHS WENT BY AND THE WEDDING DAY DREW NEAR! ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE EVENTFUL DAY, LAURIE BECAME VERY SICK! SHE WAS RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL... HERE, LESTER! HERE ARE THE X-RAYS! LOOK FOR YOURSELF! SHE HAS A TUMOROUS GROWTH ON HER HEART! AN OPERATION MIGHT SAVE HER LIFE!

I... I CAN'T TELL, LESTER! THEN I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO PERFORM IT! MAYBE ONE CHANCE IN TEN! IT'S A VERY DELICATE OPERATION!

I'M IN CHARGE HERE, DOCTOR JEROME! THERE'S NO TIME FOR YOUR PSYCHOSOMATIC HOG-WASH! LAURIE'S LIFE IS AT STAKE.

BUT YOU ADMITTED THAT SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH OF A CHANCE!

YES! BUT THERE'S STILL THAT CHANCE! I'M ORDERING THE OPERATION! I SHALL PERFORM IT MYSELF!

NO! GIVE ME A TRY! PLEASE!
But Lester didn't get his chance. The hospital board voted him down, and Doctor Arnold Manning performed the operation! He did his best, but she died. Lester.

I could have saved her! I could have saved her if you had given me the chance! You killed her, Manning! You and your surgery!

...I did all I could, Lester!

No! You could have listened to me! But no, you're a surgeon! Operate! Cut! That's all you know!

Well, I'll show you, Doctor Manning! Someday, I'll convince you that I was right!

Perhaps, Doctor Jerome? Perhaps... but I doubt it!

And so the years passed! Doctor Arnold Manning became a world famous surgeon, while Doctor Lester Jerome remained an obscure psychosomatic physician.

Doc Jerome? I wouldn't go to him on a bet! He doesn't give you pills or nothing! Just hypnotizes you... psychoanalyzes you...

The guy ought to be psychoanalyzed himself! He's nuts!

One day, while Doctor Arnold Manning was performing a routine operation...

Doctor Manning! What is it?

I gasp... can't see everything... is blurred! Take over... doctor...

Doctor Manning slumped to the floor, unconscious. His assistant took over while they carried Doctor Manning out of the operating room to a hospital bed.

No pain reaction! Get him to X-ray... at once!

Doctor? You mean...
Hee, hee! That'd be some trick, eh, dear reader? Yep, Arnold certainly was in a hopeless predicament! Doctor Manning? What about Doctor Jerome? He claims that a tumor growth can be controlled by...

Yes, Doctor Manning! Those are your X-rays! But... with a tumor like this, an immediate operation is imperative or else...

Death in two months at the most, Doctor Manning! And... one chance in ten that the operation will save my life! And I... I'm the only man that can successfully perform it!

Hee, hee! O'ya get him, dear reader? He'd rather die? Pretty stubborn wasn't he? Well, he changed his mind. Doctor Manning thought it over real hard...

Well, well! The famous surgeon, Doctor Arnold Manning! And to what do I owe the extreme pleasure?

Here, Doctor Manning! Look at these X-rays! Cerebral Tumor! Frontal lobe pressure! This man is... is... no?
Doctor Lester Jerome stepped aside and Doctor Arnold Manning entered the neat white office! Once inside, he explained to Doctor Jerome the reason for his visit. Doctor Lester Jerome listened quietly, and then... When Doctor Manning had finished... burst out laughing!

"So! The skeptical Doctor Manning turns to psychosomatic medicine as a last resort, eh? Now, do you reluctantly agree to give me a chance, Lester?"

"Why shouldn't I laugh, Arnold? When Laurie stood between life and death, I was a quack... A charlatan! But now, when your life is at stake... you come running? Well... I cannot refuse you! In fact, it will give me great pleasure to prove that I am correct...."

Doctor Arnold Manning burst into the dimly lit room. He seated him in a comfortable chair and trained a spotlight on his eyes...

"What if I should die, Arnold? I'll see to that!"

"What if I should die while under your hypnotic trance, Lester?"

"You will not die, Arnold! I'll see to that!"

"You will not die... Remember! You will not die..."

"I... will... not... die..."

"Now open your eyes! You will speak and act normally while your subconscious mind remains hypnotized! You are free to go! Come back in two days!"

"Thank you, Doctor Jerome!"
Doctor Arnold Manning left Doctor Jerome's office and walked thoughtfully toward his home. As he crossed a busy intersection:

Look out! That car! Oh, my God...

They pulled Arnold from beneath the car! The front wheels had passed over him! He was in a coma...

Somebody get an ambulance! Is he dead? If he ain't... he will be!

He was in an office and walked thoughtfully toward his home. As he crossed a busy intersection...

If he ain't... he will be. Somebody get an ambulance! That car...

The wail of the ambulance siren screamed through the city as Arnold Manning was rushed to the hospital...

It's... Manning!

Good Lord! He's been run over!

A hasty examination followed.

He... he's dead? His heart has stopped beating!

Wheel him into the hospital morgue...

Ooohh! What the...? He moaned!

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But that's impossible! This man is dead!

Look, Doctor! His hand just twitched!

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But his heart has stopped... how can a man be alive... moan... move... when his heart has stopped?

Ooooooh! There it is again! A distinct moan!

Other doctors were called in to witness the strange phenomenon...

But this is a corpse!

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When Doctor Manning did not return to Doctor Jerome's office in two days, Lester inquired at the hospital and learned about the accident.

And although he is dead, he moves... groans! He does not decay!

Gentlemen! I can explain...

Ridiculous? Oh! You doubt me? Then you figure it out, Gentlemen! Good day!

Doctor Manning came to me! He asked me to cure a tumor by hypnotism! I put him in a trance and assumed him that he would not die while in this hypnotic state! So, he cannot die until I release him! Nor will he decay on take any of death's characteristics!

Poppycock! Foolishness!

A month went by! Then two months! Doctor Arnold Manning remained in the same condition! Then, one day, the hospital summoned Doctor Lester Jerome.

Yesterday, Doctor Manning remained consciousness! We X-rayed and found that his cerebral tumor has almost entirely disappeared! His heart still does not beat! He asked for you! He is in terrific pain!

Good! Take me to him!

Doctor Lester Jerome smiled at the writhing Arnold Manning.

Yes, Arnold! You've been dead for almost three months! I've kept you from decaying through hypnosis! Your tumor is gone, too! You see, I could have saved Laurie... I...

What... the...

Doctor Lester Jerome had uttered the word 'Laurie'... the word that would release Arnold Manning from his hypnotic trance! As the gathered doctors watched, horrified, Arnold fell back limply on the bed! His skin shriveled, and turned from pink to blue to a sickening brown! His eyes sunk deep into his head! Then they became hollow black sockets! The flesh... rotted and stinking, fell from his bones! Soon, the bed was covered with nothing but a seething, oozing mass of putrid and decayed flesh...

Nee, hee! So Arnold finally caught up with himself! What was left of himself, anyway? Well... how long can a dead man fight off decay, eh? It's bound to wear you down sooner or later! Of course with Arnold it had to make up for lost time! Too bad Arnold didn't listen to Lester, anyway! Maybe he wouldn't have made such a mass of himself! Bye, now! I'll turn you over to that purveyor of fairy tales... the vault-keeper!

Oh, by the way! If you want a photo of me in the flesh, read the crypt-keeper's corner!
He patted the gun-holster at his side; it reassured him and he pressed on through the matted undergrowth of the jungle. It couldn't be much further, he reflected; according to the map the site was a mile east of the River of Doom.

Imagine those idiots back in Port Au Prince, he chuckled, as he hacked his way forward. Isn't it just like these Haitians... lailing for every VooDoo story they hear? They're positive that a fortune in jewels is hidden in this crumbling dump, yet no one has the guts to trek through the jungle after it, just because there's supposed to be a deadly curse on the house where the stuff is hidden! He patted the heavy revolver at his side once again. His gun would take care of any curse careless enough to try to keep him from getting his hands on that treasure! Let the Haitians beware of the curse they dreaded—the gun at his hip made him safe from this outlandish VooDoo superstition!

The clearing opened with unexpected suddenness in front of him, and under the dripping centuries-old trees he saw the dilapidated house they had described to him. It was ghastly, with that vapor seeming to rise from its sides, it thought, moving cautiously toward the sagging front door and into the dank building. He froze in his tracks immediately. Someone was seated in a chair in the center of the floor, staring off into the murkiness of the room. Quietly, taking great pains not to make a sound, he drew the revolver from its holster, took aim and fired, at point-blank range.

Three shots rang out, and he smiled grimly as he moved toward the crumbling cabinets along one of the walls. He wasn't considered a dead-shot for nothing! He hadn't expected to find anybody sitting here and guarding that fortune in jewels... but he had taken care of whoever it was, anyway! The curse be damned!

The cabinets were full of sparkling jewels... there was a king's ransom tucked away in this hovel, his for the taking! Suddenly the floor creaked behind him and he whirled, his hand gripping the revolver. The chair in which he had left his victim... it was empty! And by the glimmering light of the gems he could see that there was no pool of blood where there should have been one! His head moved slightly as he slipped the safety catch on his revolver and he saw approaching... slowly, ominously, as if there was all eternity to accomplish its task... a being with the bloodless look of something long dead! Twice he fired the gun, almost convulsively... and still the creature kept advancing, never wavering, never altering its funereal pace!

In the next instant the truth burst in upon him in a wave of panic. This curse he had heard whispered about at Port Au Prince... it was one of the Walking Dead! THAT was why no one would accompany him on his trek... they knew that bullets were pathetically useless against one of the dreaded creatures!

And now the curse was reaching out and touching him, and a chill such as he had never before felt was moving down his body. It was all over, he knew, in his last moment of consciousness! He had been claimed, body and soul, by a ZOMBIE!
HELLO, AGAIN, YOU LITTLE MONSTERS! I GUESS YOU'VE BEEN EXPECTANTLY WAITING FOR THIS LATEST TALE FROM MY PRIVATE COLLECTION OF HORROR STORIES! WELL, HEH, HEH. I WON'T DISAPPOINT YOU! THIS TIME I'LL TELL YOU A TRULY REVOLTING YARN, SO GET A STRONG HOLD ON YOUR STOMACH! HEH! I CALL IT MIDNIGHT SNACK!

SCENE: THE HOME OF DUNCAN REYNOLDS! TIME: MIDNIGHT!
Midnight! Brrr! These horror stories (yawn-n) certainly give a person goose-pimples!

...Ought to go to bed! (yawn-n) Feel tired? But maybe I better have a snack first? Didn't realize I was so hungry! (yawn?)

Hey! What the? How the devil did I get here? Last thing I remember, I... oh, what's the difference? I want to be here! Something tells me I should be here!

Boy! I'm so hungry. My stomach hurts! I better get some food!

Heh, heh! Duncan surveys the deserted street, and on the corner he sees...

A restaurant? I'm in luck! I hope it's still open for business!

Ah! It is open!
YES, SIR! WHAT’LL IT BE?

...LET’S SEE! I’LL HAVE ER... I’LL...

SNIFF! SHIFF!

UGH! WHAT A SICKENING ODOR!

SIZZLING HAMBURGERS
THAT... THAT BACON FRYING
I’M... I’M SO HUNGRY... SO
HUNGRY, AND YET... THE SMELL
OF FOOD COOKING MAKES
ME ILL!

WELL, MISTER, WHAT’LL
IT BE?

...CAN’T UNDERSTAND
IT? THAT COOKED
MEAT IS... MAKING
ME HAUSEOUS.

HEH, HEH! POOR DUNCAN! HE WANTS SO
MUCH TO EAT SOMETHING... ONLY HE
DOESN’T KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT HE
WANTS! ANYWAY, HE STUMBLES OUT
INTO THE STREET AND SPENDS SEVERAL
MINUTES THERE, REGAINING HIS
COMPOSURE...

...EVERYTHING SEEMS SO
GOGGLEYED TONIGHT! I... I
OUGHT TO Go HOME, BUT
SOMETHING... SOMETHING
WON’T LET ME! I...
CANT CONTROL MYSELF...

(GLA-ACK) JUST THE THOUGHT OF THAT
COOKED FOOD SICKENS ME! UGH!...
NEVER HAPPENED TO ME BEFORE!
HMPF! LAST TIME I’LL EVER Go
INTO THAT RESTAURANT...

GEE! I... I FEEL
...DIZZY... AWFULLY
DIZZY! FEEL
LIKE I’M... GOING
TO PASS OUT...
Blackness clouds his eyes and mind; he feels himself floating in a whirling void... and then, suddenly, it is over...

Against his will, he enters the cemetery and goes from one grave to another...

What am I doing? What am I looking for? Have I gone crazy? Wait! This grave! A recent one!

What...? A cemetery! How did I get here...? Where's the restaurant? And this shovel! How did I get this shovel?

Now I know why I have this shovel! Because I have to dig up this... this grave! This brand new grave!

Bewildered, and driven by a fury he cannot resist, Duncan again and again digs deeper into the earth...

Finally, the coffin is bared; the lid raised...

Ah! Here it is! Here is what I've been searching for all evening!

Suddenly, a spark of realization seeps into his consciousness... a realization of what he is about to do!

Good Lord! I... I must be insane! Wanting to... to... no! No! Don't let me do it!

Oh, please! Please! Don't make me do it! But... but I have to... something's forcing me to... oh-h-h I... I feel dizzy again...

Suddenly, a realization of what he is about to do!

Oh, please! Please! Don't make me do it! But... but I have to... something's forcing me to... oh-h-h I... I feel dizzy again...
Heh, heh! Again the empty terrifying blackness surrounds him, and when he regains consciousness... what? What? Must have passed out again! I... I feel so strange! I... Good Lord! The corpse! What have I done?!

He stares, horrified, at the mutilated, partially devoured body before him...

I... I tried not to do it! I tried! But the craving was too strong! I... What's that noise?

People! A crowd of people... with torches! They're after me... coming this way!

They want to take away my food! But I won't let them! I'll run away with it!

They've seen me!... Have to run faster! I'll hide my food! Mustn't let them catch me!

A eternity seems to pass, but finally his arm quivers, his eyes flicker and open...

An eternity seems to pass, but finally his arm quivers, his eyes flicker and open...

Why, I'm back home! Where... where's the graveyard... the corpse? Oh... I get it now! Huh! I've been here all the time! I must have fallen asleep! I've only been dreaming!
THAT'S STRANGE! WHAT ARE ALL THE SHELVES AND FOOD FROM THE REFRIGERATOR DOING ON THE TABLE? I DON'T REMEMBER PUTTING THEM THERE!

PERPLEXED, DUNCAN OPENS THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR... AND OUT TUMBLIES A PARTIALLY EATEN CORPSE!

STUNNED BY HIS DISCOVERY, HE STARES AT THE GRUESOME SIGHT AND SUDDENLY HE REALIZES... THIS CORPSE! IT'S THE ONE IN MY DREAM! ONLY, ONLY NOW I KNOW IT... IT WASN'T A DREAM! IT WAS TRUE? I ACTUALLY DID WHAT I THOUGHT I DREAMED? I... I'M... I'M A GHOUL!


THE END
It was a diabolical plot! Ralph was sure Cora would be... SCARED TO DEATH!

Cora clutched her shawl tightly around her throat and stared horrified into the darkness of the hallway outside her room! Ralph, her husband, grasped the arm of her wheelchair, studying her...

He, he's coming, Cora! Your uncle's coming for us!

No! No, Ralph! I won't believe it!

Cora's face was wet with perspiration, her hand trembled... the knuckles whitened... as she drew her shawl protectively about her! Ralph smiled slightly as he watched her reaction... it was going to work? it had to?

Listen, Cora! Listen! His footsteps... on the stairs! He's coming to avenge his murder!

Stop it, Ralph! STOP IT...
Tears filled Cora's eyes. They spilled over the rim of her eyelids and ran crazily down her cheeks. She began to sob. Weaving sobs that wracked her body and shifted her wheelchair.

**REMEMBER, CORA?**

**REMEMBER THE NIGHT WE... KILLED HIM?**

Cora gasped. Ralph chuckled to himself. Poor Cora! One more heart attack will surely kill her. The doctor had told Ralph... P... please, Ralph. sob... sob. Please don't...

As Ralph watched Cora, his thoughts went back... back over the long months to the beginning. It had all started at a cocktail party given by her uncle in Cora's honor...

**REALLY, FRANK? I FEEL TERRIBLE ABOUT THIS! COMING TO A PARTY WITHOUT AN INVITATION!**

**FORGET IT, RALPH! CORA'S UNCLE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE VISITING ME!**

**YES, BUT... SHHHH! HERE WE COMES NOW!**

**AH! FRANK! GLAD YOU CAME! WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?**

**OH, THIS IS RALPH KEARNS! HE'S FROM NEW YORK! I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF BRINGING HIM ALONG TO YOUR NIECE'S PARTY! I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND!**

**NONSENSE! HOW DO YOU DO, RALPH? I'M CORA'S UNCLE, ALEX WEATHERBY! BLAD TO HAVE YOU!**

Ralph smiled to himself as he watched Cora squirm in her wheelchair. Yes! That was when he had first met her.

**HEY, FRANK! WHO'S THE PRETTY ONE...**

**THAT'S YOUR HOSTESS, CORA WEATHERBY! SHE GETS ALL THIS WHEN THE OLD GEEZER CROAKS! SOLE HEIR.**

**SOLE HEIR! ALL OF ALEX WEATHERBY'S WEALTH WOULD BE CORA'S SOME DAY! SUDDENLY IT HAD COME TO RALPH... THE WHOLE PLAN...**

**WELL, FRANK! YOU'RE SOME PAL! AREN'T YOU GOING TO INTRODUCE ME?**

**OH, YEAH! SURE, RALPH O'MON! CORA...**
There was a noise below! Cora jumped...gasping for breath! Ralph eyed her, her chalk-white skin, her wrinkled forehead! She wasn't pretty...not anymore! Not as she had been when he had first asked.

Will you marry me, Cora? I know we've only known each other a short time, yet...

Ralph? Do you really want me?

Then you...you'll say yes?

Of course, darling! Of course I'll marry you!

Not that Cora had been so bad to look at back then! Yet, to Ralph...experience, worldly, suave...the money had seemed so much more attractive...

Oh, Cora. Ralph? I'm so nappy...

What was that, Cora? No...gasp. Another gasp! Ralph watched her closely. She was breathing heavier now...painfully...

What was that, Cora? No...gasp. Another gasp! Ralph watched her closely. She was breathing heavier now...painfully...

And then the wedding! Ralph especially remembered the wedding! Now he had slipped the ring on her finger...saying the words...but thinking...

And then those rotten months at the plant! Working like any other laborer, in the old man's plant...

Ah, the honeymoon! The cruise to Europe...on the old man's money...

What a beautiful moon tonight? Love me, darling?

With all my heart, Cora!

And then those rotten months at the plant! Working like any other laborer, in the old man's plant...

Of course, Uncle Alex! I understand! I want to learn...
WANTED IT! RALPH HAD HATED IT! HATED EVERYTHING ABOUT IT! AND THEN IT HAD COME TO HIM THE PERFECT SOLUTION... OF COURSE! WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN! WHY, WHY WAIT TILL THE OLD GEEZER DIES? WHY NOT... HELP HIM?

YES! THE NEXT FEW MONTHS HAD BEEN TOUGH ON RALPH! HE HAD HAD TO BE ON HIS TOES! CONVINCING CORA WASN'T EASY AND THEN, IN FRONT OF THE MEN, HE INSULTED ME... CALLED ME INCOMPETENT... A NUMSKULL!

DH, RALPH, DARLING! I'M SO SORRY! I'LL... I'LL SPEAK TO HIM... OF COURSE? WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN! WHY... WHY WAIT TILL THE OLD GEEZER DIES? WHY NOT... HELP HIM?

CURRENT SOLUTION... PROcrastination IS THE THIEF IN TIME.

NO SMOKING

IT HAD TAKEN PATIENCE... AND INGENUITY.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HIS ACTIONS! I REALLY CAN'T!

NO, CORA! I'LL FIGHT MY OWN BATTLES!

HE HAD HAD TO USE CAREFUL TIMING... PSYCHOLOGY...

_CALLED ME A GOLDFIGGER... ACCUSED ME OF MARRYING YOU FOR YOUR INHERITANCE!

ND! THE HATEFUL OLD.

YES! AND THEN HE SAID THAT HE'D CUT YOU OUT OF HIS WILL!

HE ACCUSED YOU OF THE SAME THING... THAT ALL YOU CARED ABOUT WAS HIS MONEY!

LET HIM! HE'S NOTHING BUT A BITTER CROUCHETY OLD SKINFLINT!

A PUSHOVER... THAT'S WHAT CORA HAD ALWAYS BEEN! AT FIRST SHE HAD VIOLENTLY OBJECTIONED, BUT SOON... SHE HAD RELUCTANTLY AGREED...

WHY NOT? IT'S YOUR MONEY, RIGHTFULLY! HE'S OLD! HE'S LIVED HIS LIFE! IT'LL BE EASY...

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! WE'LL KILL HIM!

AND SO, ONE NIGHT, AS OLD UNCLE ALEX WEATHERBY HAD BEEN STROLLING NEAR THE POND ON HIS VAST ESTATE...
Later that night they had called the police

It'll look like he fell, struck his head, and drowned!

Yes, he went out about three hours ago, and hasn't come back?

Poor old Bink slipped and fell, I guess.

Well, let's get him inside.

They had put him, unconscious, face down in the pond.

Oh, Ralph! I'm afraid.

The police had come, had searched the ground, and found him.

No, you're joking. Sob, with me!

...I thought I saw his face. Uncle Alex's face... staring at us through the window!

Good Lord?

What? What is it, Ralph?

I'm afraid. She's a sick woman, Ralph. Another attack will surely kill her! She must take it very easy...

I understand, doctor?

She had grown nervous... frightened! She'd jump at every sound! Then she'd had her heart attack...

She's a sick woman, Ralph. Another attack will surely kill her! She must take it very easy...

...she's inherited the money, but something had happened to her. Perhaps it was her conscience bothering her? Anyway, she'd begun to brood, lose weight, age rapidly.

Yes, they'd gotten away with it! Cora inherited the money but something had happened to her. Perhaps it was her conscience bothering her? Anyway, she'd begun to brood, lose weight, age rapidly.

Cora! You've been looking terrible, lately! You've got to forget about it, do you hear?

I can't, Ralph! Sob! I can't!

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I can't, Ralph! Sob! I can't!

Cora! You've been looking terrible, lately! You've got to forget about it, do you hear?

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She had grown nervous... frightened! She'd jump at every sound! Then she'd had her heart attack...

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She's a sick woman, Ralph. Another attack will surely kill her! She must take it very easy...

I understand, doctor?
Suddenly her eyes seemed to pop out of her head! Ralph waited. "This is it, sure", he thought. She heaved a final wretching gasp and doubled up...

The wind slammed a shutter downstairs and Ralph snapped out of his reverie! Cora, still trembling, was staring into the darkened hallway.

What... was that? Another footstep??

"No! N-n-no!" He..."

He's coming, Cora! Don't you hear him?

"Yes... I..."

The wind... Everything had been perfect! He should have been an actor; he thought! Any moment now... any moment her pounding heart would fail...

... Cora!

Ralph bent over her! She was dead...

Poor Cora! Poor... poor Cora!

Ralph smiled. This night... the wind... everything had been perfect! He should have been an actor; he thought! Any moment now... any moment her pounding heart would fail...

Suddenly there was a sound in the darkened hallway...

What was that?

It came through the door. It was bent over... like an old man...

A-Alex!

The stench of grave-mold filled the room.

Keep away! Keep away from me!
It stepped out its rotted arms for Ralph... moving toward him...

The cloth hung in shreds from its snarled-covered limbs! Ralph clawed at its face and pieces of dead, foul-smelling flesh came off in his hands...

Oh Lord... help me...

It lifted him in a vice-like grip and carried him down the stairs! The odor of decay burned Ralph’s nostrils as he struggled for air...

Let... gasp... me... oo... gasp...

The thing was strong! It held him fast! It stumbled out across the well-kept lawns and down the glade to the pond! Ralph began to scream...

It stepped into the pond... wading out to the middle! The pond bottom was soft out there... like quicksand! Ralph’s screaming was wild... almost animal-like...

The thing stood rigid... there in the center of the pond... clutching the struggling Ralph! Slowly, they began to sink... deeper and deeper into the soft mud...

Down... down... until only Ralph’s upstretched hand remained above the surface...

And then, even that disappeared into the mud!