GOOD LORD! THE CASKET IS OPEN... HER BODY IS GONE! EDGAR... DO YOU HEAR ME? WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO IT?
So... we meet again, dear reader! Welcome! Welcome once more to The Vault of Horror! For the benefit of any newcomers, I am the Keeper of The Vault of Horror! Each issue, I tell you tales from my vast collection of chilling, hair-raising, spine-tingling stories... tales that I guarantee will make your blood freeze in your veins, and the hair on the back of your neck bristle with terror! This tale, I call...

THE DEAD WILL RETURN!

All right, Flo, this is far enough! Push him overboard... Yes Bert...
I KNOW HE KEPT IT WELL HIDDEN!

IN A COUPLE OF DAYS, HE'LL WASH ASHORE DOWN THE COAST AWAY...

LET'S GO BACK, BERT! I FEEL CHILLED!

THE MAN CALLED BERT TURNED THE BOAT AROUND AND MADE FOR THE BEACH BELOW THE TOWERING LIGHTHOUSE...

...AND WHEN THEY COME AND ASK YOU ABOUT HIM, YOU'LL TELL THEM HE'S AWAY ON A FISHING TRIP!

YES, BERT... I UNDERSTAND!

THE WOMAN, FLORENCE, STEPPED QUICKLY FROM THE DINGHY AS IT SCRAPED THE SAND OF THE SHORE...

AND... WHEN THEY FIND HIS BODY... THEY'LL THINK THAT HE DROWNED AT SEA... AND THEN... THEN YOU'LL BE FREE TO MARRY ME!

YES, BERT! AND HIS MONEY... WE'LL HAVE HIS MONEY... OVER $10,000! A FORTUNE!

THE TWO PEOPLE CLIMBED THE STEPS OF THE LIGHTHOUSE AND ENTERED...

...TALKING ABOUT THAT MONEY, WHERE DID YOUR HUSBAND KEEP IT?

I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE... BUT IT'S AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE...

I KNOW HE KEPT IT WELL HIDDEN!

WELL, WE MIGHT AS WELL START LOOKIN' FOR IT, SO AS WE CAN LAM OUTTA HERE JUS' AS SOON AS THEY FIND HIS BODY!

CAN'T IT WAIT TILL MORNING, BERT? WHY, SURE, MONEY!

DARLING? I'M RID OF HIM AT LAST! IT'S GONNA BE SMOOTH SAILING FROM NOW ON, BABY!
But the next day, things did not go as smoothly as they had planned! Bent and Flo could not find a trace of the money...

You say he kept it here in the lighthouse!

And look they did! For almost two weeks they searched! They covered the lighthouse with a fine-toothed comb... every inch... but no money!

It's got to be here... It's got to!

Maybe... maybe if he didn't keep it here... maybe he hid it outside... the storehouse... on the boat shed...

But the next day, things did not go as smoothly as they had planned! Bent and Flo could not find a trace of the money...

Yes! Yes! He kept it somewhere in this place! Keep looking...

It's got to be here... It's got to!

Maybe... maybe he hid it in this place?

Cautiously, Flo made her way down the steps to the beach...

I don't think Hank would have kept his money down here! It wouldn't have been safe...

Slowly she rounded the rocks near the shed...

A high sea could take this shed... and... and...

I'll go down to the beach to the shed, Bent! You try the storehouse! Don't worry! We'll find it!

Don't worry! We'll find it!... I don't think Hank would have kept his money down here! It wouldn't have been safe...

Eeeeaaaahh!

FLO! FLO... What is it?

It... it's Hank! My husband! He's... he's come back! He's come back from the sea...
Bert Bushed to the side of the horrified Florence.

What will we do, Bert? We can't report that his body washed ashore here...

It's too much of a coincidence.

Oh, Bert...

It's horrible.

Don't look at him, Flo'... He's hardly recognizable... After two weeks in the water...

In the black of the night, they drove to a spot high over the roaring sea, Mariner's Point, and flung the remains of the murdered Hank off the cliff...

We'll drive over to Mariner's Point and throw it off there. That's far enough away from the current... Bound to carry him up the coast from there.

People lifted the corpse and carried it to the two bodies, then put it back into the sea. Bert, we got to put someone here! It's too much of a coincidence. Anyone recognizing anyone?

Bert, we don't look at him, Bert! Remember the story of the Horrified Plague...
FLO! COME QUICKLY!

WHAT IS IT, BERT? WHAT... WAAA... OH... NO! IT CAN'T BE!

IT'S HIM, FLO! COME BACK AGAIN! WE CAN'T GET RID OF HIM!

IT'S GHASTLY! HE... HE'S ALL... ROTTED!

DON'T LOOK AT HIM, FLO! THE FISH AND CRABS HAVE MADE HIM HORRIBLE!

WHAT WILL WE DO WITH HIM THIS TIME, BERT? WHY DON'T WE PHONE THE POLICE AND...

NO... WE CAN'T! IF HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE OUT ON A FISHING TRIP, IT'D BE A STRANGE COINCIDENCE THAT HIS BODY WASHED UP HERE... BACK HOME!

WELL, IT'S STRANGE! YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE SOMEONE FINDS HIM THIS TIME!

I KNOW! I'LL DRIVE UP-COAST TO FALMOUTH AND INSTEAD OF THROWING HIS BODY INTO THE SEA...

...I'LL LEAVE IT RIGHT ON THE BEACH... AS IF IT WAS WASHED UP THERE! THEN SOMEONE'S SURE TO FIND IT!

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, BERT!

AND SO, THAT NIGHT, BERT DROVE TO FALMOUTH, TWENTY MILES NORTH OF THEIR DESERTED LIGHT HOUSE... AND LEFT THE BODY ON THE BEACH!

THERE! SOMEONE'LL FIND IT, COME MORNING!
I knew, then, that nothing good would come of him an’ me! And yet— I couldn’t help myself! I was crazy with loneliness! Hank an’ me, alone here for two years! Seein’ no one! Never takin’ me anywhere! I couldn’t help myself! When Bert came— I fell in love with him.

And now we’ve murdered Hank! And we threw him to the sea. But the sea keeps givin’ him back. To gasp! What’s that? Looks like seawater. Comin’ in from under the door!

It’s Hank! He’s outside that door! Come to get me!

Sure! Sure it bothers me! What can I do about it?

Drive up to Falmouth again! See if his body’s still on that beach!

Okay! If you want me to! I’ll go now! I’ll make it by midnight and I can be back by two A.M.!

I’ll wait up for you!

Bert left the frightened Florence and started out for Falmouth! The minutes dragged by. And the clock chimed eleven! Outside, in the black night, the sound of the roaring sea pounding the rocks shattered the darkness!

I knew, when Bert first came to the light... to work for Hank...

What’s happened to him, Bert? Why haven’t they found him... yet?

I can’t understand it, Flo! I left him right on the Falmouth beach! Folks must pass there...

They’ll find him, soon! O’mon! Let’s look for the money again!

That’s all you think of? Doesn’t it bother you that Hank’s body kept comin’ back from the sea? Doesn’t it bother you that they still haven’t found him?
The terrified Florence backed away from the door... back... back to the spiral staircase that led to the top of the light-house!

He's rattlin' the knob! He's going to come in and...

Suddenly, Florence found herself at the top of the light-house... no place to go... caught... like a rat in a trap...

I'm cornered! I can't... gasp... hide! The light! I'll... turn it off! Maybe he won't see me!

He's comin' closer! He's reachin' the top of the stairs! He'll be here... soon... he... He's... comin'... comin'... I... I...

A few minutes later, a car drove up! It was Bert! H-m-m-m! That's strange! The light is out.
FLO! THE LIGHT'S OUT! YOU...YOU... SHE ISN'T HERE! WHAT'S THIS ON THE FLOOR? LOOKS LIKE SEA WATER!

LEADS UP TO THE LIGHT! FLO MUST BE TRYIN' TO FIX IT! I'LL GO UP AND HELP HER...

SHE'S GOING TO BE ANGRY WHEN I TELL HER ABOUT HANK'S BODY BEIN' GONE FROM FALMOUTH BEACH! THAT IT MUSTA BEEN LOW TIDE WHEN I PUT IT THERE... AND IT PROBABLY GOT WASHED OUT TO SEA AGAIN...


AND THE NEXT MORNING... WHEN THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTORS CAME TO INVESTIGATE WHY THE LIGHT HAD GONE OUT... NOT A MARK ON 'EM! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT! WHAT'S THAT STUFF ALL AROUND? LOOKS LIKE SEAWEED!

SAY, FRED! WHAT'S THAT DOWN ON THE BEACH!

LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER STIFF! LET'S GO DOWN AND HAVE A LOOK.

AND THAT'S THE STORY, DEAR READER! WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED UP THERE AT THE TOP OF THAT LIGHTHOUSE? DID HANK REALLY COME BACK OR WAS IT JUST Bert AND FLO'S IMAGINATION? CERTAINLY, HIS CORPSE WAS PERSISTANT. WASN'T IT? BUT THEN... HEH, HEH, HEH... I ALWAYS TELL ABOUT CADAVERS THAT REFUSE TO STAY BURIED WHETHER IN SOIL OR SEA... BY THE WAY! IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THAT $15,000, THEY FOUND IT... IN A MONEY-BELT ON HANK'S BODY! IT WAS ALL WATER-SOAKED AND ROTTED... HEH, HEH, HEH... JUST LIKE PDDR HANK!

AND DON'T FORGET. WRITE TO ME IF YOU LIKE MY TALES! ADDRESS YOUR LETTER TO THE VAULT-KEEPER.
WHAT IS THE TERROR SURROUNDING THIS ONCE SPLENDID HOME?
WHY DO THE VERY WALLS SHAKE AS IF FROM SOME IMPENDING DISASTER?
WHO ARE THE SHADOWY DWELLERS LIVING HERE UNDER THE SPELL OF

The curse of HARKLEY HEATH

"JUNE, 1820... I, CLAYTON HARKLEY, DYING FROM THE MORTAL WOUND INFLICTED BY MY VILLAINOUS BROTHER, CAN DO NOTHING TO PREVENT MY WEALTH FROM FALLING INTO HIS POSSESSION."

THIS IS "HARKLEY HEATH"! ONCE A PROUD MANSION, NOW CRUMBLING AND DECAYED, ROTTING ON THE ENGLISH MOOR... AND THE DISINTEGRATION WHICH REPOULS THIS ACCURSED DWELLING OF DOOM IS SHARED BY THE LAST MEMBERS OF THE HARKLEY CLAN!

"BUT THIS FORTUNE PASSES FROM MY DOOMED HANDS WITH A MOST HIDEOUS CURSE UPON IT! MAY THIS WEALTH CORRUPT AND INFEST EACH SUCCEEDING GENERATION UNTIL THIS HERITAGE OF HATE AND MURDER SHALL BLOT OUT THIS FAMILY AND THE WORLD SHALL KNOW NO MORE OF THE VILE HARKLEY BLOOD! REQUIESCAT IN PACEM?"

"BAAH! ALL LIES? FOOLISH!"
HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT STUFF? OLD FAMILY CURSES.
BAH! THE MONEY IS OURS, NOW, AND NO ONE CAN TAKE IT AWAY! WE ARE THE LAST OF THE HARKLEYS!

BUT, COUSIN CHARLES, SUPPOSE SOMEONE FINDS OUT THAT WE MURDERED UNCLE ROGER?

NEVER SAY THAT AGAIN, COUSIN EDGAR! FORGET IT EVER HAPPENED! AND STOP THAT WHINING! I TELL YOU WE'RE RICH AND NOTHING CAN...

GOOD EVENING. SNIFF. I'M ER. MR. HAGERS, YOUR DEAR DEPARTED UNCLE'S LAWYER. ER. MAY I. SNIFF. COME IN?

IT'S MISS SYBIL HARKLEY. I WANTED TO SEE, IF YOU DON'T MIND.

YES, YES, RIGHT HERE!

I KNOW THAT THIS IS AN HOUR OF MUCH SORROW FOR YOU, BUT IT'S MY DUTY TO INFORM YOU OF YOUR UNCLE'S WILL!

YES, YOUR UNCLE HAS SPECIFIED THAT ALL OF HIS WEALTH SHALL GO TO... MISS SYBIL!

I'M SO SURPRISED, MR. HAGERS! I... THE SHOCK!

I UNDERSTAND, MY DEAR! I'LL LEAVE YOU THEN, AND I WILL SEE YOU IN MY OFFICE'S SOME TIME NEXT WEEK?
DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY! I DIDN'T KNOW...I SWEAR I DIDN'T KNOW HE HAD A WILL! BUT...NOTHING HAS CHANGED! I'LL SHARE THE MONEY WITH YOU! YOU MUST BELIEVE ME!

OF COURSE, COUSIN SYBIL! OF COURSE! NOW YOU'LL BETTER GO RIGHT TO BED AND REST!

THE CANDLE TREMBLING IN SYBIL'S HAND THREW UNDULATING SHAPES OF HORROR ON THE CRACKED WALLS! SHE FEARFULLY MOUNTED THE STAIRS KNOWING THAT THIS MIGHT BE HER LAST NIGHT ALIVE.

THEY DON'T BELIEVE ME! I CAN SEE IT IN THEIR EYES! THEY'LL MURDER ME!

BUT...BUT CAN WE RISK IT?

WE MUST! COME NOW, COUSIN EDGAR, YOU'VE MURDERED ONCE ALREADY! THERE'S NO TURNING BACK, NOW!

WITH SOME OF THIS MORPHINE UNCLE ROGER USED IN THE LAST DAYS OF HIS EN...ILLNESS, WE CAN...

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, COUSIN CHARLES, AS USUAL! BUT WE MUST DO IT QUICKLY! TONIGHT...WHILE SHE'S ASLEEP!

AND WHILE THE VILLAINOUS COUSINS PLANNED THEIR MURDEROUS DEED, SYBIL LAY WAITING...WAITING FOR THE FATAL FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE HER DOOR...

I KNOW THEY'RE COMING TO GET ME! BUT THEY DON'T KNOW I HAVE THIS...

I'LL GO IN FIRST! WHEN I GRAB HER, YOU GET THAT NEEDLE READY.

I HATE TO DO THIS TO DEAR COUSIN SYBIL, BUT...

SHE'S...SHE'S GONE! WHERE...WHAT...
HERE I AM, COUSIN CHARLES! DID YOU THINK YOU COULD TRAP ME SO EASILY? YOU'RE A FOOL, CHARLES...A MURDEROUS FOOL!

LET GO! LET G-GO! AAAAANHH!

CHARLES, HELP ME! I'VE GOT HER!

BANG!

Now the needle, Edgar! QUICKLY! AHH! THIS WILL KEEP YOU QUIET, MY DEAR COUSIN PERMANENTLY QUIET! THAT MONEY WILL BE MINE!

YOU SWINE. YOU DIRTY SWINE! YOU COUGH MAY KILL ME BUT YOU CAN'T KILL THE HARKLEY CURSE! I'LL I'LL COME BACK FROM THE GRAVE! COUGH YOU SHAN'T GET THAT MONEY! I-UGG-GGH!

IS SHE... IS SHE DEAD, COUSIN CHARLES?

OF COURSE SHE'S DEAD, YOU IDIOT! NO ONE COULD LIVE WITH THAT MORPHINE IN THEM! IT WAS SO EASY, WASN'T IT, COUSIN EDGAR? HAW, HAW, HAW!

Now the needle, Edgar! QUICKLY! AHH! THIS WILL KEEP YOU QUIET, MY DEAR COUSIN PERMANENTLY QUIET! THAT MONEY WILL BE MINE!

You swine. You dirty swine! You cough may kill me but you can't kill the Harkley curse! I'll I'll come back from the grave! Cough you shan't get that money! I-ugg-ggh!

Is she... is she dead, cousin Charles?

Of course she's dead, you idiot! No one could live with that morphine in them! It was so easy, wasn't it, cousin Edgar? Haw, haw, haw!

Down, down through the echoing, musty halls! Down to the subterranean vaults, where the Harkley family buried their dead.

TOMORROW WE'LL CARRY HER OUT TO THE MOORS!

AND THEN THE MONEY... IT'S ALL OURS! MINE AND YOURS!

AND why are you looking at me... NO! CHARLES! DON'T THINK THAT!

Yes, poor Sybil! When she's found everyone will believe she went mad after uncle Roger's death!
For one horrible moment the cousins stared at each other. The murderous glint in Charles' eye told Edgar the terrible truth. It was the same look Sybil had seen before her death.

Heavens! Cousin Charles would stop at nothing for that money! He'd even kill me for it!

The cowardly fool! He's the only one in my way, but I'll fix that!

STOP TREMBLING, EDGAR! SHE'S DEAD... AND BURIED! GHOSTS... HA!

AUGH... I CAN HEAR HER! SHE'S COMING TO GET US! THAT NOISE... DON'T YOU HEAR IT?

STOP BABBLING, YOU WRETCH! THE WIND IS BANGING THE SHUTTERS! IT'S JUST THE STORM!

IT'S NOT THE WIND! THIS HOUSE... I CAN FEEL HER EVERYWHERE! SHE'S... SHE'S HAUNTING US! WE'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH IT, CHARLES!

STOP TERRORIZING, EDGAR! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! SHE'LL GET YOU, TOO!

IT'S NOT TRUE! I'M THE ONE WHO'S HAUNTING Us!

BUT, CHARLES! IT MAY BE THE CURSE!

HA, HA, HA! YOU'RE AFRAID OF A DEAD WOMAN? YOU FOOL! IT'S ME YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID OF! ME!

YOU SNIVELING COWARD! YOU DON'T DESERVE THAT MONEY!

YOU GAS... YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! SHE'LL GET YOU, TOO!

YOU WON'T GET AWAY FROM ME!

I DON'T LIKE IT, COUSIN CHARLES! I DON'T WANT HER IN THIS HOUSE!

YOU'RE NOT REALLY AFRAID OF HER, ARE YOU, EDGAR?
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY OUT OF THIS ROOM YOU'RE FINISHED, EDGAR.

NO! NO! NO!

HA HA

TRAPPED! I'VE GOT YOU NOW!

AAHHH...

CRUNCH

NO, PLEASE! YOU'RE MAD! MAD!

I WANT THAT MONEY!

CR-RACK! CHARLES! CHARLES THE OH, NO!

OOOMPH!

CRASH!
THE CHANDELIER. IT'S HORRIBLE. IT'S SYBIL! SHE DID IT! SHE'S TRYING TO KILL US BOTH! THE KEY GOT TO GET THE KEY!

I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE SHE GETS ME, TOO!

I CAN HEAR HER! SHE'S AFTER ME! SYBIL! LEAVE ME ALONE!

YOU'RE DEAD! DEAD! YOU MUST GET AWAY FROM ME!

I'M NOT DEAD! I WASN'T DEAD WHEN YOU BURIED ME! MY ILLNESS... I'VE BEEN TAKING MORPHINE FOR YEARS! I WAS JUST UNCONSCIOUS! AND NOW... I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

NO! YOU'RE DEAD! BACK TO THE GRAVE... WHATEVER EVIL THING YOU ARE!

CRASH!

THE HOUSE, EDGAR! IT'S ON FIRE! IT'S BURNING...

LIKE A LIVING BEAST, THE FIRE RAN THROUGH THE ANCIENT TIMBERS, CONSUMING... DESTROYING! THE BLACKENED RUINS HISSED QUIETLY IN THE LIGHT RAIN, NOTHING MOVED ON THE DREARY MOON! THE ANCIENT CURSE OF HARKLEY HEATH HAD REACHED ITS DESTINY! HOUSE AND FAMILY HAD RETURNED TO THE EARTH FROM WHENCE THEY CAME...
The glitter of the huge diamond in Crandall's upturned palm almost blinded him. Even in the darkened room, its brilliance was enough to illuminate the sharp contours of his crafty face. His eyes were wide with a joy he had never felt before... his thin lips quivered with anticipation and triumph! He had found it--after years as Butler here in the house of Silas Morgan, he had at last uncovered the secret hiding place of the fabulous Diamond of Death!

Suddenly the door behind him swung open and Crandall whirled in surprise. The old man himself--Silas Morgan leaning on his cane--came slowly into the room, his eyes focused on the glistening gem still held in Crandall's palm.

"You've found it," Morgan stammered, his own eyes growing wide as they contemplated the priceless diamond. "Put it back--it will never bring anything but tragedy to you, you fool! Put it back before it casts its spell over YOU, as it has over everyone who has possessed it!"

Crandall's hand closed tighter over the sharp-edged stone, and he strained to remember the legend that had grown around the gem he had found at last. What were the stone's peculiar almost supernatural powers supposed to be? Oh, yes--that nonsensical about it causing its owner to vanish from the Earth without a trace! Pure BUNK!

The old man lunged at him in that instant and Crandall stepped aside quickly, his foot shooting out in time to send Morgan crashing headlong to the floor. So the owner of the Diamond of Death was supposed to disappear without a trace, he thought to himself, raising Morgan's cane and smashing it against the old man's skull! Well, he would make certain that Morgan, its last owner DID vanish forever!

Crandall slammed the furnace door shut and left the cellar, his giggle turning to a roar of laughter. Old Morgan was gone--no trace of the man who collected valuable gems and tropical plants would EVER be found after the flames had done their work! With satisfaction he felt the huge diamond in his palm as he entered the plant room to look around for the last time. His gaze darted from one color-splattered leaf to another... never again would he have to tend these monsters of the jungle!

Something rubbery grazed the back of his neck and he whirled with surprise. The thing that Morgan had called the "Man-Eater" was reaching its long green tentacles toward him! Desperately he tried to step away from its snapping leaf... but a sinuous arm enveloped him and dragged him inexorably toward the plant's gaping mouth! Crandall struggled a scream shrilled from his lips... but he was held fast and drawn closer and closer to that yawning mouth! He tried to squirm free, to scratch and bite his way free... but his head was being enveloped in that stinging foliage that wouldn't permit him to fight back...

The movement inside the swollen bud of the "Man-Eater" stopped--all was quiet in the room. And then something appeared on the lips of the plant... trembled there for an instant... fell quickly to the floor. The room was once again swathed in quiet and darkness except for the Diamond of Death gleaming at the foot of the Man-Eater plant.
In the Seventeenth Century when Alfred Lemonet was Anatomy Instructor at the Surgeons School of Hampshire, it was the Strange but Universally-Accepted Custom for Professors to Provide the Cadavers Used by their Pupils for Experimentation out of this Fact, and a Mad Desire to Keep His Job at All Costs... Came Lemonet's Gruesome Reputation As

Doctor of Horror

You're about to find out, Doctor!

Another Suspense Story - The Vault of Horror!

You know perfectly well how, Lemonet... More Corpses for your Pupils to Experiment with! It's been the custom for Professors to provide the Cadavers used in their Class Rooms for Centuries... You'll have to get them SOMEHOW!

Y-Yes... I w-will...

In the Office of the Dean - Hampshire's Surgeon School. A curious conversation took place one day...

...And Attendance at your Classes is falling off, Lemonet? If you want to stay here as a Teacher in Anatomy... You've got to get more pupils.

But now, Doctor Finch?
Driven by the fear of losing his position, meek doctor Alfred Lemonet wracked his brains for a plan to supply his pupils with cadavers. Suddenly, he realized: what a fool I've been! While I've searched about wildly for dead men to give to my pupils, there's been a magnificent supply right under my very nose! This column of burials, it's the answer!

This is the one! Just fresh enough to experiment on... and no one need ever know how I got it! Let the other instructors bid against one another for the bodies of criminals... I'll get my own supply!

Alfred Lemonet, frail and meek as he was, nevertheless was capable of hidden and curious talents when it came to protecting the job he cherished so much! And so, through the long hours of the night, his shovel flew incessantly.

I've struck the coffin! Not much longer...

Aah! Perfect, not a bruise, not a mark! It should be good for at least ten pupils! Finch will have to let me continue for a little while, anyway!

My classes are the largest in the whole school, and all because I've been clever enough to get more bodies than any other teacher! At last I can breathe easy about holding this position...
Lemonet’s job was secure, but after a time his ambition began to assert itself as he heard the other teachers refer to him as a leading professor of anatomy.

—but I must spend my whole life cooped up here in the surgeons’ school? There must be a more important job for a man of my talents! If I could only find...

W—What? Oh... Doctor Finch! What brings you to my humble room?

Urgent business, Lemonet... and perhaps a great opportunity for you! I want you to listen carefully to me... you’re obviously a man who has to be told something only once!

But you still have a chance. If you can convince the inspectors that you’re a better man than Cranshaw, I suggest you prepare a class in cadaver dissection for tomorrow... and make it the best lesson of your career... if you want that job!

Cranshaw is ahead of me for that job! It’s what I’ve always wanted... Dean of Hampshire Surgeons’ School! I’d do anything to get him out of the way...

Several members of the Royal Medical College are coming here tomorrow... the reason for their visit is to select a successor for me! I have been chosen governor of the entire medical school here... and the position of Dean will be open! The choice lies between you and Dr. Cranshaw... and at the present time, Cranshaw is first in line for the job!

You’ve got the rest of the teachers talking about your success in getting bodies for your lectures... what’s your carefully guarded secret, Lemonet... where do you get them all?

Amazing how your popularity has grown, Lemonet... and the number of cadavers you’re able to provide.

W—Who?

Cranshaw! You took me by surprise!

Y—You’re about to find out, or Cranshaw?
YOU'RE MAD, LEMONET! N-NO... NOT MAD OR CRANSHAW JUST INTENT ON GETTING THAT JOB! AND NOTHING NO ONE'S GOING TO STAND IN MY WAY!

That lesson for the inspectors of the Royal Medical College will be the finest of my career, just as Finch suggested and Cranshaw is going to help me get the job of Dean by serving as the cadaver my pupils will experiment on.

Through the long hours of that night Alfred Lomonet toiled at his gruesome task, disfiguring the face of Dr. Cranshaw so that it was unrecognizable! And his lesson was a success...

Let me be the first to congratulate you, Lomonet. Effective on the first of the month you are the new Dean! Cranshaw's sudden disappearance was an unfortunate incident... but it served only to clear the way for your appointment.

The months went by uneventfully, and at last secure as the Dean of the Surgeons' School, Alfred Lomonet's ambitions once again came to life...

Finch... met echoing because of ill-health from the post they gave him! They'll be looking for a successor as Governor of the Medical School. I must get the job! It means as much as life itself to me.

I must furnish cadavers for every class in school by tomorrow night! Nice, fresh corpses! And grave-digging is out of the question this time! It's an emergency that calls for more drastic measures! Aah... just the sort of place I want!

Throwing his customary caution and meekness to the winds, Alfred Lomonet journeyed to the office of the Royal Surgeon in order to plead his case for appointment to the post relinquished by Dean Finch. Finally he emerged, a curious glitter in his eyes.

He will consider me if I can prove that the school has progressed since I became Dean! An inspection will be made of classes tomorrow. I must hurry!
I heard tell that I can find a handful of hardy men here who are anxious to earn a gold sovereign for a day's work! The sort of work that would frighten less courageous men! Is there anyone interested?

For a gold sovereign? Speak your piece, guv'nor. We're all ears!

For the first fifteen bodies delivered to the Hampshire Surgeon School tomorrow... I pay a sovereign apiece! But the corpses must be of... ah... recently deceased gentlemen... and they must be procured only from this very waterfront neighborhood! Agreed?

I must make some preparations for the inspection by the Royal Surgeon this evening, Hawkins! You stand by here...

A number of cadavers will arrive in the course of the evening. I want you to prepare them for dissection classes! I have to oversee the authorities to make certain that nothing goes wrong with the plans for delivery of the bodies! I'll be back at six o'clock!

Ah... here come several of the cut-throats intent on their bloody mission! I'll just hide and watch them carry out my instructions on their success tonight... Hangs my own future?

No! No, you fools! This weather... it's keeping everyone indoors! You'll have to go into the houses and drag the victims out.
A few minutes later, in the office of the Dean of the Hampshire Surgeons' School a pair of anxious eyes peered through the window to the street below...

Doctor Lemonet will be furious, with me! Those bodies that were to be delivered here by six o'clock for his evening's classes... there's been no sign of them!

And the Doctor himself... he's late too! This is a terrible predicament with the Royal Surgeon coming here himself to make the inspection... and nothing is ready!

That's it... put it right there and get those other bodies here as quickly as possible! There's not a moment to lose... it's almost six o'clock already!

We were told to bring corpses here to the school... thank heavens you've gotten here at last! Follow me right to the Anatomy Room... and you'd better hurry with the rest of the cadavers! If the Royal Surgeon arrives and there aren't enough corpses... Doctor Lemonet will die of humiliation!

Stop talking... and hurry! The bodies must be prepared... and I have to locate Doctor Lemonet somehow in this weather... he may be lost... or may have met up with some unforeseeable accident?

Hurry... we can't fail now! Everything Doctor Lemonet has done in the past has been just a preparation for tonight! We must help him achieve the reward he so richly deserves!

And on that stormy night in the seventeenth century, Doctor Alfred Lemonet did receive the reward he so richly deserved!
DID YOU NOTICE THAT LITTLE ISLAND DOWN THERE, STEVE? I CAN'T FIND IT ON THE CHARTS!

ON YOUR TOES, ALEC! THE MOTOR DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT!

THE FUEL PUMP SEEMS TO BE JAMMED! THE MOTOR'S CONKING OUT!

STEVE! STEVE! WE'RE LOSING ALTITUDE!

SPUT! SPUT!

ANOTHER SUSPENSTORY FROM THE VAULT OF HORROR!
In a moment it was over. The plane was crumpled on the coral and I found myself alone—struggling in the water with great waves rushing over me, hurling themselves against the reef. How I managed to stay alive in that turmoil, I'll never know. In any event, I was swept to shore... where I fell exhausted.

Alec! Where are you, Alec?

... (gasp) ... must find help! (gasp) ... must find Alec!

Skirting the island, I followed the beach. And as I climbed around one narrow peninsula of rock, it came into view, perched on the highest, blackest crag. It was then that I got the first sensation of the horror that was yet to come...

I pounded on the heavy oaken door like a madman. But the shock of the past hour was catching up with me. I passed out just before the door swung open.
I don't know how long I remained unconscious, but when I came to, I found my host had provided me with a dry, clean set of clothes and a hot bath was waiting for me! I refreshed myself and went to meet my benefactor.

The count had a lavish meal prepared! The food was excellent. The count was the perfect host, but somehow I could not enjoy it. There was an evil overtone to this whole castle and its two lonely occupants, Count Alvar Cabeza and his silent servant, Mulor.

I trust everything was to your liking, Mr. Crane! Come, let us now retire to my trophy room! There we shall talk, and I will tell you about myself.

The count had a fantastic trophy room. There was a trophy of every conceivable type of wild animal... either hanging on the wall or standing about the room!

As you can observe, I am quite the hunter!

I've hunted in the farthest corners of the world. I've climbed mountains to shoot cougar, bighorn! I've ranged the seas for sailfish, tuna, killer whales! I've faced the charging rhino in India, the pain-crazed Cape buffalo, the man-eating Bengal tiger.

My nerves are like tempered steel... my hand is steady... my aim deadly! I have pitted my strength against the nightiest of beasts!

I've matched wits with the craftiest of animals, that is... all but one! There is one animal I have still to hunt...
He was insane... Completely insane! I had no choice. I stumbled out of that mad house and plunged into the forest! It was too incredible to believe! I was going to be hunted... like a rabbit! As the jungle closed about me, I calmed down and took my bearings. I would have to be calm... every moment counted!

I gathered an armful of stout branches, and lay them in a heap! I then fashioned a crude scoop from an aluminum section. With my clasp-knife, I carved each branch into a sharp lethal stake!

What do I have in my pockets? Cigarette lighter, handkerchief, and... what luck... my clasp-knife!

By sun-up, my pit was dug! My hands were bleeding and my whole body ached from the exertion! I erected the stakes in the floor of the pit, and then I started camouflaging my pitfall!

What's that? Hounds! He's following my trail with hounds!
Quickly I doubled back up the trail. I took out the cable I had found on the beach. I then stretched a fine strand I had unravelled from the cable, across the trail, throat high!

I then ran back along the trail... carefully avoiding my pitfall.

Wait! Wait, Mulok, you fool!

My wire had done its work! The Count left Mulok hanging by his throat. Mulok's death inflamed Cabeza's lust for the kill... he was Satan!

My last trick was my pitfall, hidden on the trail ahead of the Count.

Come on, boys! Pick up the trail!
THE HOUNDS CHARGED RIGHT ON INTO THE PIT! BUT THE COUNT WAS THE DEVIL INCARNATE! HIS EYES WERE LIKE AN EAGLE'S! HE SPOTTED MY TRAP... JUST AS HE HAD SEEN MY STEEL WIRE... BUT TOO LATE TO STOP THE DOGS...

MY QUARRY IS CLEVERER THAN I EXPECTED! GOOD! IT MAKES THIS CHASE MUCH MORE EXCITING!

THE FOOL HAS BLUNDERED THROUGH THE FOREST! HE HAS LEFT A TRAIL OF BROKEN BLADES OF GRASS AND TWIGS!

I WATCHED FASCINATED, AND TERROR STRICKEN AT THE SAME TIME, AS THE COUNT, WITH UNCANNY PRECISION, FOLLOWED MY TRAIL DIRECTLY TOWARD MY HIDING PLACE.

HA! I HAVE FLUSHED MY PREY! HE CHARGES ME. I SIGHT BETWEEN HIS EYES...

I'M CHARGED!!!

STRAIGHT AT ME HE CAME! I THINK HE SENSED HE WAS CLOSE TO THE KILL! HIS EYES WERE BRIGHT, AND HE STALKED ME LIKE A COBRA ABOUT TO STRIKE! I COULDN'T JUST LIE THERE! I WAS BURSTING TO BREAK AND RUN...
The next few moments were full of confusion! Someone fired a pistol off to my right! The Count never did get a chance to trigger his crossbow! He clutched his shoulder and stumbled off into the jungle.

BLAM

Someone fired a pistol off to the right! A PISTOL OFF TO MY RIGHT?

The Count never did get a chance to trigger his crossbow? He clutched his shoulder and stumbled off into the jungle.

Alec, you're alive? You escaped from the plane! I was washed up, 45 and all, on the other side of the island! Who is that guy? Why did he want to kill you?

My shoulder! I have been hit! Where did that other one come from! Now I am the hunted and they are the hunters!

Mother of heaven! I have stumbled into a jungle wasps' nest! I must get away! Aaargh! The pain!

Yaaah! Eeyaa! Yaaah!

We heard him crashing around in the brush... and then there was silence! When we came upon the body, the features were swollen beyond recognition. He had been literally stung to death by the huge wasps!

Ugh! What a mess! Look out for those wasps!

Come on! There must be a boat at his castle! We can make it to the mainland by sundown!

Funny thing, Alec... he hunted the fiercest animals, but it took a lowly insect to polish him off! Can't we get any more speed out of this tub? I wanna get home!

We did find a boat and we sailed from that island of horror! The last thing we saw, as it passed out of view, was the menacing black castle of the late Count Alvar Gadeza... perched high on the cliff.
THE VAULT KEEPER