THE VAULT OF HORROR

Introducing a new trend in magazines.
ILLUSTRATED SUSPENSE STORIES
WE DARE YOU TO READ!

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!

Ll night, Flo...this is far enough. Push him overboard...

Yes, Bert...
The man called and 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!

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 sailin' from now on, baby!
But the next day things did not go as smoothly as they had planned. Bert and Flo could not find a trace of the money.

You say he kept it here in the lighthouse?

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

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... or the boat shed...

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

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...

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

Eeaaah! Flo! Flo... what is it?

It... it's Hank! My husband! He's... he's come back! He's... he's come back from the sea!
BEAT RUSHED TO THE SIDE OF THE HORRIFIED FLORENCE...

OH, BERT! IT... IT'S HORRIBLE!

DON'T LOOK AT HIM, FLO! HE'S HARDLY RECOGNIZABLE... AFTER TWO WEEKS IN THE WATER.

WHAT WILL WE DO, BERT? WE CAN'T REPORT THAT HIS BODY WAS WASHED ASHORE HERE! IT... IT'S TOO MUCH OF A COINCIDENCE!

WE'VE GOT TO PUT HIM BACK, FLO... BACK INTO THE BEA

FIGHTING THE NAUSEA THAT SWEPT OVER THEM, THE TWO PEOPLE LIFTED THE CORPSE AND CARRIED IT TO THE CAR...

WE'LL DRIVE OVER TO MARINER'S POINT AND THROW IT OFF! THAT'S FAR ENOUGH AWAY! THE CURRENT'S BOUND TO CARRY HIM UP THE COAST FROM THERE....

YES... BERT...

ONE... TWO... IH-H-H-E-E-E! THERE! THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM...

BUT HANK'S BODY DIDN'T TURN UP,... AND THEN, ONE DAY...

I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! THIS WAITING IS DRIVING ME NUTS!

BUT HANK, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THE NIGHT OFF AND DO A LITTLE FISHING... IT'll CALM YOUR NERVES!

BETT MADE HIS WAY DOWN THE STEPS FROM THE LIGHT-HOUSE TO THE BEACH... FISHING SOUNDED LIKE A GOOD IDEA...

I'LL DIG ME SOME CLAMS FOR BAIT! I OUGHTA GET A BAG OF PORGIES THIS TIME OF... NO!

NO! NO!
FLO! COME QUICKLY!

WHAT IS IT, BERT? WHAT... WHA...
OH... NO! IT CAN'T BE!
IT'S HIM! FLO! COME BACK AGAIN! WE CAN'T GET RID OF HIM!

IT'S GHASTLY! HELL...
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'LL 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 LIGHTHOUSE... AND LEFT THE BODY ON THE BEACH!

THERE! SOMEONE WILL FIND IT, SOME MORNING!
HANK. I KNEW, THAT HANK'S BODY KEPT COMING BACK FROM THE SEA. DIDN'T IT? I WOULDN'T THINK OF NOT HAVING HELPED MYSELF IF I WAS WITH HANK AN' ME, ALONE HERE FOR TWO YEARS! SEEIN' NO ONE NEVER TAKIN' ME ANYWHERE! I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF! BUT THE SEA HELD HIM BACK TO THE LAND. I GAZED, WHAT'S THAT? LOOKS LIKE SEA-WATER. COMIN' IN FROM UNDER THE DOOR!

AND NOW WE'VE MURDERED HANK! AND WE THREW HIM TO THE SEA, BUT THE SEA HELD HIM BACK TO THE LAND. I GAZED, WHAT'S THAT? LOOKS LIKE SEA-WATER. COMIN' IN FROM UNDER THE DOOR!
The terrified Florence backed away from the door, back, back to the spiral staircase that led to the top of the lighthouse.

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

Slowly she backs up the staircase, to the stairwell. He's opened the door! I can hear him... Comin' across the bittin' room... Comin' to the stairs...

He's on the stairs now! I can hear his footsteps... Comin' up... Comin' up after me...

Suddenly, Florence found herself at the top of the lighthouse, 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-h-h-h... 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 being gone
from falmouth beach. that it
musta been low tide when i put
it there... and it probably got
washed out to sea again.

a-a-a-g-h-h!

and the next morning... when the government inspec-
tors 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! or
what do you think happened up there at
the top of that light house? did hank
really come back... or was it just bert
and flo's imagination? certainly, his corpse
was persistent... wasn't it? but then... hen,
hen... i always tell about causers that
refuse to stay buried whether in soil or
sea! uh... by the way? if you're interested in
that $10,000, they found it... in a money-belt on
hank's body! it was all water-soaked and rot-
ted... hen, hen... just
like poor hank!

And don't forget... write to me if you like
my tales! address your letter to:
the vault-keeper
320 s. montezuma st.
prescott, arizona 86303
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 befools 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 infect 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 pace"

"Bah! All lies! Foolish!"

Another Suspense Story
The Vault Of Horror!
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! IT'S A SHOCK!

I UNDERSTAND, MY DEAR! I'LL LEAVE YOU THEN, AND I WILL SEE YOU IN MY OFFICES SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.

HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT STUFF? OLD FAMILY CURSES... SIGH! 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...
Heere I am, Cousin Charles! Did you think you could trap me so easily? You're a fool, Charles. A murderous fool!

Let go! Let go! Aaaaahhh!

Charles, help me! I've got her!

Bang!

Now the needle, Edgar! Quickly! Aah! 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 yet. You can't kill the Harkley curse! I'll! I'll come back from the grave! Cousin, you can't get that money! Eeeep-eeep!

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 owed their dead.

Tomorrow we'll carry her out to the moors.

Yes, poor Sybil. When she's found, everyone will believe she went mad after Uncle Roger's death.

And then the money... It's all ours! Mine and yours!

Why, why are you looking at me... No! Cousin Charles! Don't think that!
For one horrible moment the cousins stared at each other! The murderous glint in Charles's eye told Edgar the terrible truth! It was the same look Sysl had seen before her death.

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

You're not really afraid of... Her, are you, Edgar?

I don't like it, Cousin Charles! I don't want her in this house!

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

This house... I can feel her everywhere! She's... She's haunting us! We'll never get away with it, Charles!

Stop trembling, Edgar! She's dead and buried! Ghosts... HA!

But... I can hear her! She's coming to get us! That house doesn't you hear it?

Stop babbling, you wretch! The wind is banging the shutters! It's just the storm!

But, Charles! It may be the ghost!

Ha, ha, ha! You're afraid of a dead woman! You fool! It's me you should be afraid of! Me!

Charles NO!

You swindling coward! You don't deserve that money!

You... Basr... you can't do this to me! She'll get you, too!

You won't get away from me!
TARRED! I’VE GOT YOU NOW!

AHHH...

THERE’S NO OTHER WAY OUT OF THIS ROOM! YOU’RE FINISHED, EDGAR!

NO! SYL! SYL! HELP ME!

CRUNCH!

NO PLEASE, YOU’RE WASTING...

AAHAAAAAAA!

I WANT THAT MONEY!

CR-RACK!

CHARLES! CHARLES, THE THEH... NO!

OHHHH!

CRASH!
THE CHANDELIER: IT'S HORRIBLE! IT'S SPYING ON US! 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! STOP LEAVE ME ALONE!

YOU'RE DEAD, MAMA! YOU MUST BE!

I'M NOT DEAD! I WASN'T DEAD WHEN YOU KILLED ME!

MY ILLNESS, I'VE BEEN TAKING MORPHINE FOR YEARS! I WAS JUST UNCONSCIOUS!

AND NOW I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

YOU'RE DEAD!

BACK TO THE GRAVE, WHATEVER EVIL THING YOU ARE!

THE HOUSE, OH MY! IT'S ON FIRE! IT'S BURNING!

LIKE A LIVING BEAST, THE FIRE RAN THROUGH THE ANCIENT TREASERS, CONSUMING, DESTROYING! THE BLAZED, RUINED RUINS HISSED QUIETLY IN THE LIGHT RAIN. NOTHIN' MOVES ON THE EARLY MORNING. THE ANCIENT CURSE OF HARLEY NEATH HAD REACHED IT'S DESTINY! NOUS AND MARILY HAD RETURNED TO THE CEMETARY WHERE THEY BELONG...
THE DIAMOND OF DEATH!

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 of Butler here in the house of Silas Morgan, he had at last discovered 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.

"Y-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! But it back before it casts its spell over you, as it has over everyone who has possessed it.

Crandall's fist 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 eee-sense 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 giggles 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 left 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 groping 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 stifling 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 supposition as

DOCTOR OF HORROR

These bodies make you the most sought after instructor in the whole anatomy section—Lemonet! Where do you get them all?

In the office of the dean of Hampshire's Surgeons 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 how, Doctor Lemonet?
I can't lose this position here at Surgeon's School... I've got to hold onto it at all costs! I'll get books for my classes, no matter what I have to do to get them!

Driven on by the fear of losing his position, meek Doctor Alfred Lemoine wracked his brain to come up with a plan to supply his pupils with cadavers! And suddenly...

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 man... John Farrow died yesterday, and was buried just this morning on Spanish Hill. There's no one about to see me take the body... if I work quickly and silently...

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 Lemoine, frail and weak 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 long hours of the night, his shovel flew incessantly...

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

Alfred Lemoine, did continue in his job and no time went on and his supply of cadavers failed to diminish. He began to attract pupils from all parts of Hampshire.

A-aah! Perfect... not a bruise, not a mark! It should be good for at least ten pupils! Pinch will have to let me continue for a little while, anyway!

By gosh, I'm 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.

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.

Must I 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...

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 inspection for tomorrow... and make it the best lesson of your career... if you want that job.

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.

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

W--who...? Cranshaw! Y--you took me by surprise!

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?

T--you're about to find out, Dr. Cranshaw!
THROUGH JFINOH.

RETIRING GCCAU 3 E OF 'IU.-HtM.TR

FROM THt ROSE THtV

•AVI

LOOKING FOR A SOOISSOR A GOVERNOR OF THE MEICAL SCHOOL

MUST SET THE JOB. IT MEANS "AS MUCH AS LIFE ITSELF TO ME"

THROWN HIS CUSTOMARY CAUTION AND WISDOM TO THE WINDS. ALFRED LEMONET JOURNEYED TO THE OFFICE OF THE ROYAL SURGEON IN ORDER TO PLEASE His CARE 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 PROGRESS SINCE I BECAME DEAN. AN INSPECTION WILL BE MADE OF CLASSES TOMORROW. I MUST HURRY!

I MUST PURSUE SADAVERS FOR EVERY CLASS IN SCHOOL BY TOMORROW NIGHT. HOP, FINISH SORPSE! AND BRAVE SMITH IS OUT OF THE QUESTION THIS TIME. IT'S AN EMERGENCY THAT CALLS FOR MORE DRAMATIC MEASURES. AAH... JUST THE SORT OF PLACE I WANT!
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?

Y-yup... you've got a deal, mister!

Alfred Lemonet was delighted with the scheme which would result in his promotion to the governorship of the entire Hampshire Medical School... and if innocent people were hurt by his mad ambition... that was the course of history, he told himself. 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 glasses! I have to oversee the examiner 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!

The minutes plodded by as Alfred Lemonet skulked behind his hired assassins and as they covered street after street without meeting a single prospective victim. Lemonet grew frantic.

N-no, you fools! This weather... it's keeping everyone indoors! You'll have to go into the houses... 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 Lemoine 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...

S—should I go out to search for the doctor and tell him that the bodies haven't or... what's that? T—the door... startles me.

We were told to bring corpses here to the school... T—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 Lemoine will be humiliated!

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.

If we're doing the best we can, Mister... and if someone hadn't helped us out, we wouldn't even be getting this one!

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

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

And on that stormy night in the seventeenth century, Doctor Alfred Lemoine may receive the reward he so richly deserves!
High in the empty sky we flew, Alec and I, in a small silver monoplane streaking west across the broad Pacific. The Pacific, a vast glittering expanse, spreading in all directions to the horizons.

Little did we realize, looking down on a tiny, small, lying beneath us on the surface of the ocean that this little jungle island... this lonely speck... would, in the following moments, bring us as close to madness as mortal man might come.

And so, let us proceed further into my tale: the weird tale of the

**ISLAND OF DEATH**

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**STEVE**

**WE'RE LOSING ALTITUDE**

---

**ALEC**

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

---

**STEVE**

**STEVE! STEVE! WE'RE LOSING ALTITUDE!**

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**SPUT! SPUT!**

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**ANOTHER SUSPENStory THE VAULT OF HORROR!**
I'm going to try and pancake as close to that island as possible. Brace yourself, Alec... here goes nothing!

Steve! There's nothing but coral reefs and cliffs ringing that island! Steve! We won't make it!

SPANG!

Splash CA-RUMP

Alec! Where are you, Alec?

In a moment it was over! The plane was crumpled on the coral, and 2 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 2 fell exhausted!

... (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, bluest grass. It was then that I got the first sensation of the horror that was yet to come...

A-A castle?

I pounded on the heavy oak 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!

Carry him in, Muldoe!
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.

Yes, Mr. Stephen Crane! I found your name among your effects! Permit me to introduce myself! I am Count Alvar Cabeza. We found you unconscious in front of the door! You have been asleep a long time; come, first we will eat, then we will talk.

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 it’s two lonely occupants, Count Alvar Cabeza and his silent servant, Mulok...

I trust everything was to your liking, Mr. Crane! Some, 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 cougars, bighorns! I’ve rangled the seas for salphish, tuna, kellen whales! I’ve faced the Charging Rhinos 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 mightiest 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.

Kraku!
...YES, MR. CRANE. I HAVE STILL TO MATCH WITS WITH THE CRAFTIEST OF ANIMALS... HOMO SAPIENS... MAN!

YEAH, AND SOON I WILL HAVE THAT PLEASURE.

YOU HAVE TWELVE HOURS, MR. CRANE... ALL NIGHT, TO RUN AND HIDE IN THE JUNGLE... TO PREPARE YOURSELF! I AM A SPORTSMAN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU A SPORTING CHANCE!

TOMORROW, WHEN THE SUN RISES, I WILL HUNT YOU DOWN IN THE JUNGLE WITH A CROSS BOW THAT WILL GIVE YOU A SPORTING CHANCE! IT WILL BE YOUR WITS AGAINST MINE!

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.

WHAT DO I HAVE IN MY POCKETS? CIGARETTE LIGHTER, HANKIE, NIFE, AND... WHAT LUCK... MY CLASP-KNIFE!

It was getting dark! I had to work fast! I raced down to the beach to see if there was anything I could salvage from the plane?

EVERYTHING WAS WASHED AWAY! THERE ARE SOME BITS OF THE ALUMINUM FUSELAGE, AND A PIECE OF CABLE!

I gathered an armful of stout branches, and laid 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.

I'll dig the pit right in the center of this jungle trail!

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

BAY-UP! BAY-UP!
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...

My wine had done its work! The count left Mulok hanging by his throat. Mulok’s death inflamed Barza’a’s lust for the kill... He was Satan!

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

Wait! Wait, Mulok, you fool!

Mulok came running full-tilt down the trail with the body dragging him along! He never saw the tiniest glint of my deadly steel wire waiting for his throat!
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 been my steel wire! But too late to stop the dogs...

A pitfall... with sharp stakes! Ha! Very good! I will travel easier without these stumbling braying hounds!

YI-KI! YIPE!

My quarry is cleverer than I expected! Lucky! 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 thorns!

I watched fascinated, and terror struck me at the same time, as the Count, with uncanny precision followed my trail directly toward my hiding place.

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...

--I CHARGED!!

Ha! I have flushed my prey! He charges me... I sight between his eyes...
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 cross-bow! He clutched his shoulder and stumbled off into the jungle.

Blam!

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 wasp's nest! Must get away! Aaargh! The pain!

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.

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 Cabeza perched high on the cliff.

Funny thing, Alec. He hunted the fiercest animals, but it took a lowly insect to polish him off!

Did you get any more speed out of this tub? I wanna get home!

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?