

Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW—NO REPRINTS

MAY, 1945

Cover by Pete Kuhlhoff

NOVELETTES

- THE MAN WHO CRIED "WOLF!"** Robert Bloch 6
*Who can mistake those called by the moon, shaggy shadows
in the night running on all fours*
- THE SHINING LAND** Edmond Hamilton 30
*Through the glowing, unearthly haze was an island below them—
in an ocean that had no islands!*

SHORT STORIES

- THE WATCHERS** Ray Bradbury 21
*Men have spent lifetimes trying to discover who are the "watchers"
and who the "watched"*
- THE LEGEND OF 228** Harold Lawlor 42
*There was someone living on the 4th floor of the old deserted
frame house—someone or something*
- THE LOST DAY** August Derleth 52
*What nagged him was a consuming curiosity about yesterday,
that therein lay something he should know*
- THE ULTIMATE PARADOX** Thorp McClusky 58
*Universal force obeys certain laws—credible to us—
but laws nonetheless*
- THE MUSIC-BOX FROM HELL** Emil Petaja 68
*By an evil rearrangement of his vibratory pattern the listener is swept
irresistibly into the Black Limbo of unspeakable consequences*
- BLOOD FROM A STONE** Manly Wade Wellman 73
*Somewhere a gray gowned figure is at work—deadly work, you can
be sure, for the figure is a Shonokin!*
- WELCOME HOME!** Charles King 81
*The last place a fanatic witch-breaker would look for
mystic nonsense would be his own home*

VERSE

- THE WITCH** William DeLisle 67
- SUPERSTITIONS AND TABOOS** Irwin J Weill 51
- THE EYRIE AND WEIRD TALES CLUB** 91

*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use
of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.*

Published bi-monthly by Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y. Reentered as second-class matter January 26, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 15 cents. Subscription rates: One year in the United States and possessions, 90¢. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. English Office: Charles Lavell, Limited, 4 Clements Inn, Strand, London, W.C.2, England. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. Copyright, 1945, by Weird Tales. Copyrighted in Great Britain. 173

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Title registered in U. S. Patent Office.

Vol. 38, No. 5

D. McILWRAITH, Editor.

LAMONT BUCHANAN, Associate Editor.

Blood From a Stone

By MANLY WADE WELLMAN



*Only one sort of illness comes and goes thusly, and evils
other than germs bring it on*

THE doctor told John Thunstone that nothing was wrong with him, and for the time they were together in the examining room it was appar-

ently true; but Thunstone had felt dizzy and faint as he entered, and as he left he had to call on the final ounce of power in his big body to keep from falling on the sidewalk.

Heading by A. R. TILBURNE

"This tells me what I had to know," he assured himself. "Only one sort of illness comes and goes so conveniently for those who hate me. And evils other than germs bring it on."

A taxi returned him to his hotel, and during the ride he mastered his weakness of limb enough to enter the lobby and ride up in the elevator without being noticed by any guests or attendants, whose impulse to help would have been useless and embarrassing. His key weighed a ton as he unlocked the door of his suite. Once inside, he leaned against the jamb as though he had been shot through the body. Then, walking leadenly to his desk, he fumbled out a worn, dingy little book entitled *Egyptian Secrets* and bearing, perhaps inaccurately the name of Albertus Magnus and author.

Inside the back cover his own hand had jotted down a sort of index. Under the heading *Persons bewitched and punishment of sorcerers* were listed some twenty page numbers. He sought the first, but it included an invocation to something called "bedgoblin," which he did not feel like performing just then. Instead he leafed through to the fifty-fourth page, where the third paragraph was headed *To cite a witch*.

"Take an unglazed earthen pot," began the instructions, and John Thunstone reached for a cylindrical clay vessel with a tight-fitting cover and an Indian pattern. From various containers in his desk drawers he measured in the substances called for in the formula. Finally he plugged in the connection of an electric grill, clamped the lid tightly on the clay cylinder, and set it upside down on the glowing wires. "Summon the sorcerer," he muttered, reading from the book.

Every audible word seemed to drain away one more drop of his strength. "Summon the sorcerer before me."

He turned to page 16:

*When a Man or Beast is Plagued
by Goblins or Ill-Disposed People*

Go on Friday or Golden Sunday, ere the sun rise in the East, to a hazelnut bush. Cut a stick therefrom with a sympathetic weapon, by making

three cuts above the hand toward the rise of the sun, in the name of . . .

Thunstone numbly congratulated himself in following these instructions some years before. His head swam, his eyes seemed oppressed by alternate flashes of light and blotches of gloom, but he staggered to the closet and groped in it for a package. Tearing away the wrapping of stout paper, he produced a rough-trimmed piece of hazel wood, the length and thickness of a walking stick. As his hand grasped its thicker end, he felt better, and turned toward the grill.

Vapor of some sort rose around his clay jar. In it he saw, or thought he saw, movement. As he walked toward that part of the room, his feet steadier and stronger, the moving object grew large and plain.

SOMEWHERE a man in a gray gown or robe was busy at a rough table. Thunstone saw him, like a dimly-cast image on a motion picture screen, bending over his work, his hands shifting here and there in nimble manipulation. On the table had been outlined a little figure at full length, a man of powerful proportions that might be copied after Thunstone's own. The gray-robed one held a sheaf of sharp metal slivers, thrusting their points, one by one, into the pictured arms, throat, body.

"A Shonokin," said Thunstone. "I thought that. And I thought he would be doing just what he is doing. Now—"

His big hand took a firmer grip of the hazel cane, and he stepped forward and swung it.

The wood swept into the cloud of vapor and the image there cast. It swished through, without seeming to disturb the misty cloud, and the figure in the gown sprang convulsively back from the table. A face came into view at the top of the gown, a face framed in longish black hair, with sharp fine features. The mouth opened as if to cry out, a hand lifted, and Thunstone struck through the vapor again.

The figure cowered. Its arms crossed in front of the face, trying to ward off an attack that must have seemed incomprehensible. The hands were frail and lean, and the third fingers longer than the middle fingers.

With increasing strength and precision, Thunstone lashed and smote. He saw the gowned body going down now, and poked it once, as with a sword-point. Finally he swept his stick at the reflected table-top and saw the slivers flying from their lodgments in the outlined body there. Stepping back, he turned off his electric grill. The vapor vanished instantly, and with it the images. Thunstone drew a deep, grateful breath of air. He was no longer weak, unsteady or blurred in his mind.

His first act was to open his pen-knife, cut a tally notch in the hazel stick. Carefully he rewrapped it, and carefully he stowed it away. A weapon that has defeated enchantment once is doubly effective in defeating it again—that is a commonplace of sorcery. He sat at the desk and from the top drawer drew the sheets of paper on which he was writing, as he found it out, all that could be said about the strange things called Shonokins.

"Their insistence upon an ancestry far more ancient and baleful than anything human may have a solid foundation of fact," wrote Thunstone. "Whenever paleontologists have probed the graves of the past on this continent as thoroughly as they have probed in Europe, perhaps remains of a species resembling man, though interestingly not man, may be turned up to support the Shonokin claims. More and more do I incline to believe that here in America once lived such things, developing their own culture and behavior—just as in Europe fifty thousand years ago lived the Neanderthal race, also non-human as we know humans (not that the first Shonokins were Neanderthaloid or like any other ancient manlike creature yet discovered in fossil).

"And, just as the Neanderthals were wiped out in some unthinkable desperate warfare with the first invading *homo sapiens*, so the ancestors of the Red Indian race must have swept away the fathers of the Shonokins—though not all of them. It would have been a war horrible beyond thought, with no sparing of vanquished enemies at the end. Somehow, a few survivors escaped, and our evidence is the existence of Shonokins today. How those beaten people lived, and where, cannot be even guessed until we learn from what

place their modern children venture forth among us, in their avowed attempts to recover rule of their old domain.

"The Shonokin enchantments, or attempts at enchantments, I shall discuss at another place. What remains is to cite certain definite racial traits that set these interesting creatures apart from us as human beings. True, they resemble men at first glance. This may be deliberate imitation of some sort, and more may be said on this part of the subject when an unclad Shonokin is examined. Their heads, though habitually covered with long hair, perhaps in disguise, betray strange skull formations that betoken a brain not inferior to the human but of a much different shape. Here may be the basic reason for differences in Shonokin ethics and reactions to all things, physical and spiritual. Again, the third finger of the Shonokin hand is the longest, instead of the middle finger as with true men. To what remote ancestry this may trace is impossible to say, as even the lower beasts as we know them have in the forepaw a longer middle toe than—"

His telephone rang. It was the clerk at the desk. A gentleman wanted to see Mr. Thunstone. Might he come up?

"I'll come down," said Thunstone, rose and put away his unfinished manuscript. He left the suite, locked it carefully, and rode down in the elevator, whistling under his breath.

His visitor was lean, just shorter than Thunstone's own lofty self, and wore a long light coat and a pulled down hat. He bowed and held out a hand with a very long third finger. Thunstone failed, or pretended to fail, to see the hand.

"Come and sit in the lobby," he invited, and led the stranger to a brace of comfortable chairs in a far corner. They sat down. At once the Shonokin took off his hat and leaned his gaunt, fine face close to Thunstone.

"How much?" he demanded.

THUNSTONE leaned back, and from his pocket drew pipe and tobacco-pouch. He filled the pipe and lighted it. The Shonokin ducked his head sidewise in disgust.

"That filthy habit, learned from Amer-

ican savages!" he growled; and Thunstone remembered that tobacco mixed with herbs had been considered in old Indian days an incense to the Great Spirit and a near-fatal fumigation to evil beings. Had not Kalas-pup—or Kwasind or Hiawatha, whatever his real name was—sat in enjoyment of the thick tobacco-fumes in the lodge, while his attackers, the water-goblins, turned sick and vomiting? Such evidence as he, Thunstone, uncovered tended more and more to prove that all monsters and devils of Indian legend were identifiable with the Shonokins.

"How much?" said his visitor again. "We know you well enough, Thunstone, to know that you are not a slave to money. But there are other things you value. Name them."

"You want to buy me off," replied Thunstone. "Is this an admission of defeat?"

"An admission of irritation," was the reply. "Being tormented by a stinging insect, which it is irksome to brush away, one spills honey in another place to attract it."

"My sting is not drawn as easily as that," Thunstone assured him. "Your journey is for nothing. Go back and tell that to the other Shonokins. Just now I am more than irritating. Haven't I seen two of you die?"

"No more of that!" The Shonokin lifted his left hand, its long third finger extended in what Thunstone judged to be a gesture averting ill omen. No Shonokin cares even to speak of the death of his own kind.

"You used magic against me," went on Thunstone, "magic so old as to be trite—poking and piercing my likeness. Men were successfully averting that sort of sympathetic hokus-pocus as long ago as Salem witchcraft days."

"It is not the extent of our power," was the harsh reply. "But you have not answered my question. Again, how much?"

"Again, you are wasting your time. Even a Shonokin's time must be worth something to himself. Good day."

THE strange-shaped left hand dipped into a pocket of the long coat.

"I make a last attempt, Thunstone. Here is something you will find interesting."

The hand reappeared. Between its fingertips was a great glitter of light.

"Jewels? I do not even wear them," said

Thunstone, but then his eyes were fixed on the thing.

He saw it was no jewel he knew. For an instant he fancied it was a bit of phosphorescence, or some sort of lamp—but no lamp, no phosphorus, gleamed like that. Its glare possessed his whole vision, seemed to beat through his eyes and pierce his skull behind them. Like a Brahmin looking into the sun, he was blinded; like a Brahmin looking into the sun, he could not look away.

"Rise," the Shonokin said, "and come with me."

Thunstone leaned in the direction of the voice, and blew out all the tobacco smoke in his lungs.

A cry, terrible and strangled, rang in his very ears, and the light seemed to flash off. There was an abrupt clink on the floor, as though a half-dollar had dropped, and he sat up, alone. The tobacco smoke hung in the air around him, a little blue misty swaddling through which he saw two figures—the scurrying long-coated Shonokin, the approaching hotel manager.

Thunstone put the pipe back in his mouth, shutting his eyes a moment to cleanse them of their blur. He would have smiled, but decided not to. The manager was questioning him.

"What happened to that man, Mr. Thunstone?"

"He was taken suddenly ill," replied Thunstone. "It's really nothing for us to worry about."

"You're all right?"

"I'm all right," nodded Thunstone.

The manager's eyes dropped floorward. "Careful! You dropped a coal from your pipe—step on it."

Thunstone, too, glanced down to a little crumb of radiance paler and brighter than any tobacco fire. "No, don't. That's a piece of cut-glass jewelry—rather skillful cutting and polishing—I'll take care of it."

He whipped the handkerchief from his breast pocket, dropped it over the glaring object and gathered it up in his big hand.

"You've cut your finger," said the manager. "There's a spot of blood on your handkerchief."

"Not my blood," Thunstone told him, "but this thing needs careful handling." With the cambric-swaddled lump still in

his hand, he levered his bulk out of the chair. "I think I'll have dinner in my suite this evening. What's good?"

A GAIN in his sitting room, Thunstone laid a china plate on his desk. Then he chose a drinking glass from the tray beside his carafe, and struck match after match, painstakingly smudging its interior. Finally he flipped the gleaming thing upon the plate and quickly covered it with the dulled glass. He was able to look at it then without agony to his eyes.

The object was the size of an almond, smoothly curved on its entire surface. Not a single facet could he detect. But its light, even though impeded by the soot on the glass, was steady and strong. He drew his shades and turned out the electric lights in the room. Still it shone, illuminating objects to the farthest walls. Inside the object was some source of radiance, steady and insistent and intense.

Muffling it still more by dropping his handkerchief over the upturned glass, Thunstone sat back, smoked and thought. After some minutes, he took up his telephone and called a number which he did not have to look up.

The woman who answered was tremendously interested in the questions Thunstone asked, and had many questions of her own. Thunstone evaded the necessity of direct replies, and finally when she recommended another informant thanked her and hung up. His second call was long distance to Boston, where a retired professor of American folklore greeted him warmly as an old friend and gave him further, more specific information, finally naming a book.

"I have that book right here," said Thunstone. "And I should have thought of the reference without bothering you. Thanks and let's see each other soon. I may have about half of a story to tell you."

He hung up again, and went to his shelf. The book he chose was slim and green, like a cheap textbook. It was John M. Taylor's *Witchcraft Delusion in Colonial Connecticut*, published in 1908 as an item of the Grafton Historical Series.

Almost idly Thunstone leafed through the restrained but fascinating account of a multiple charge of diabolism and its evi-

dence and trial, almost forgotten today though it made grim history full thirty years before the more familiar Salem incidents. Chapter 10 began with notes on the trial of Goodwife Knapp in New Haven during May of 1654, a trial that included evidence by a dozen neighbors and ended with the defendant's death on the gallows. But it was not the adventures of Goodwife Knapp so much as those of a witness, Mary Staple, Staplyes, or Staplies, that drew Thunstone's attention:

. . . she, ye said Knapp, voluntarily, without any occasion given her, said that goodwife Staplyes told her, the said Knapp, than an Indian brought vnto her, the said Staplyes, two little things brighter then the light of the day, and told the said goodwife Staplyes they were Indian gods, as the Indian called ym; and the Indian withall told her, the said Staplyes, if she would keep them, she would be so big rich, all one god, and that the said Staplyes told the said Knapp, she gaue them again to the said Indian, but she could not tell whether she did so or no.

Thunstone savored the quaint spelling and syntax as he read. ". . . so big rich, all one god . . ." What did that mean? He turned two more pages, the evidence of one Goodwife Sherwood, and a story set down at fourth hand—the same story as before:

. . . goodwife Baldwin whispered her in the eare and said to her that goodwife Knapp told her that a woman in ye towne was a witch and would be hanged within a twelue moneth, and would confess herselfe a witch and cleere her that she was none, and that she asked her how she knew she was a witch, and she told her she had received Indian gods of an Indian, wch are shining things, wch shine lighter then the day. Then this depont asked goodwife Knapp if she had said so, and she denied it; goodwife Baldwin affirmed that she did, but Knapps wife againe denied it and said she knowes no woman in the towne that is a witch, nor any woman that hath received Indian gods, but she said there was an Indian

at a womans house and offered her a couple of shining things, but the woman neuer told her she took them, but was afraide and ran away . . .

There was more beyond of Mary Staples. The book called her a "light woman," shrewd and shrewish, who spoke in Good-wife Knapp's defense. Later she too was on trial and released, and her husband sued her accusers. She did not sound timid, by all accounts, yet on her own showing she had run fearfully from the "Indian" who offered her something shining brighter than daylight.

"Shonokins look like Indians," muttered Thunstone, "if you do not notice their third fingers."

He took time to feel sorry for the Puritan elders, not versed in demonology and not even well versed in grammar or law, who were faced with whatever faced them three hundred years ago.

Well, then: The wife of a New England colonist had fled refusing from a bright talisman that would make her "big rich." He, Thunstone, was in possession of such a thing. The Shonokin had fled this time, losing his charm—or had he? Was this, perhaps, a device to make Thunstone accept a bribe or wage?

Thunstone laid down the book and raised the handkerchief. There was a fleck of blood on it, as the manager had said; and on the dish, too, seeping from under the imprisoning glass. Within, the shining object seemed to float, like a gleaming bit of ice on a dark sea.

Thunstone took from a cabinet some chemical vessels, tubes and flasks of liquid. Carefully he secured a portion of the blood, diluted it, made frowning tests. He wound up shaking his head over the precipitation in his solution.

Blood, yes. Mammalian, surely. Human, no. What creature could be matched with that blood he could not say. Perhaps no scientist could say. He felt his eyes drawn again to the thing under the glass.

It was no longer a jewel, or anything like a jewel. In the little wallow of blood lay a skull the size of his thumb, pallid instead of glaring, its cranium shaped strangely, bulging here and pinched in there. Its

black eye-sockets seemed to meet his gaze and challenge it. Its wee, perfect jawbone stirred on its hinge, and two rows of perfect, pointed little teeth parted, then snicked together as if in hunger or menace.

THUNSTONE watched, as closely as when the Shonokin had first dipped the mystery from his pocket, but with all his defenses, mental and spiritual, up. Skulls of any size and shape must not frighten him, he decided. And—his memory flashed back to the Indian tales of Kalaspup—magical skulls had been employed before this by Shonokins against mankind, and had been defeated.

It was only the size of a thumb, anyway. No, a trifle larger, the size of an egg. A big egg. And the glass that covered it was smaller than Thunstone had thought, the skull-appearance crowded it.

As Thunstone gazed, the jawbone moved, the teeth gnashed, a second time. The movement stirred the glass, tilted and upset it. The glass rolled to the floor, broke with a muffled clash of fragments. The egg-sized skull was suddenly orange size. Its sockets were no longer dark but glowed greenly, as with some sort of phosphorescent rot. With a waggle of its jawbone it hunched itself from the plate, a little nearer to Thunstone. Yet again its teeth, big enough to show their pointed formation, snapped hungrily.

Thunstone argued with himself that worse things than this had come to him in the past, that a skull so small would be easily crushed—but already it was bigger, bigger still. It flipped over, rolled from the table, swam through the air at him. As it snapped its jaws, he batted it away, palm outward, as if playing handball. The thing was as cold as a flying snowball, and as he deflected it, it almost sank its sharp teeth into his finger. It struck a wall, bounced and caromed back, so that he ducked only just in time. The wall where it had touched so briefly bore a spatter of blood. On its new course the skull flew into the bedroom, and Thunstone pulled the door shut.

At once something was bumping, shoving, demanding entrance to the parlor. The panels of the door creaked, but held. The blows grew heavier, more insistent. Was

the thing growing still more—would it grow and grow, to the size of a boulder, a table, a house? Thunstone, eyes on the closed door, mustered his wits for something new in defense. He thought quickly of the Connecticut visitation of terror, of witnesses at the witch-trials who had spoken of enchantments that smacked of hypnotism or hallucination and of grimmer things—"firy eies" with no head to contain them, and a brief glimpse of something "with a great head and wings and noe boddy and all black." Well, if Shonokins had not triumphed there, they would not triumph here.

The knockings had ceased, and there was a queeting flash of light at the lower chink of the door, then something began slowly to pour out.

Thunstone thought at first it was some slow, pale-grey liquid, but it held its shape. The forepart of a flat, ugly skate or ray sometimes steals into view like that from hiding in shallow water—a blunt point like a nose, a triangle of pale tissue as flat as though hammered down. This trembled a bit, as if exploring the air by smell or feel. It came out more, and more.

IT WAS not a flattened skull, for bone would have splintered; but had a skull been modeled in softness, then pressed as thin as paper, it might be like that. It still had a jointed jaw, the semblance of needle teeth, and eye-sockets that looked up at Thunstone with a deep glow. The glow was more knowledgable than menacing. Thunstone saw no sign of the effort to terrify which characterizes most attacks by things natural or supernatural. It thought it had him, and that there would be little or no trouble about doing what it wanted to do with him. Those flattened jaws opened, and he could see the inner bare bones of them.

It slid out, out, thin and broad as a bath-mat. Thunstone's great hand fell on the back of a chair, and he brought this forward, as a trainer offers a chair to a truculent lion in a cage. The teeth closed on a hardwood leg and bit off the tip of it like a bit of celery. A little waggie of the flat muzzle cleared away the splinters. With a sort of protozoic surge, it began to clear of the chink under the floor. Its forepart swelled

as if to regain its skull-shape, a shape that would be larger than a bushel.

There was a door behind Thunstone, a door to the outer corridor; but Thunstone does not run from evil. He knows that others have turned their backs, and what has happened to those others. He tossed the whole chair for the teeth to catch and mangle, dropped back as far as the closet and made a quick snatching motion inside for an ebony cane. With this he thrust, swordsmanslike, at the enemy, and thought it checked—perhaps because the ferrule of the stick was of silver, abhorrent to black magic. He gained a moment to grab with his other hands at the bookshelf and throw books like stones at the thing.

THOSE were valuable books, some of them irreplaceable, others old friends that had nourished his mind and stood his allies in moments almost as unlucky as this. Thunstone felt like cursing as the skull, now lifting itself three-dimensional against the bedroom door, caught in its mouth and ripped to shreds a first edition of Thompson's *Mysteries and Secrets of Magic*. Spence's heavy *Encyclopedia of Occultism*, enough to smash a skull, bounced impotently from the misshapen brain-case. The thing was lifting now, lifting into the air in a slow, languid flight, like a filling balloon, to drift toward him. Its jaw dropped, exposing a mouth that could take his head at one gulp.

"Not this time!" Thunstone defied it, in a voice he wished was not so hysterical, and threw yet another book. This came open as it flew through the air, smiting the noseless face and dropping on its back, wide-spread, just in front.

The skull, too, dropped back and down. Thunstone could have sworn that its facebones writhed, like frightened flesh. It seemed to turn away.

He stood there, breathing as if from labors that had exhausted even his giant body, and saw it sag, spread, flatten. It wanted to creep back the way it had come.

"No!" he yelled at it again, and, stooping, caught the edge of the carpet. Frantically he bundled the skull and the book together.

It took both his brawny hands to hold

that package together, for what was inside thrashed and churned as convulsively as a great cat in a bag. Thunstone hung on, it was all he could do, and brought his thick knee into play, bearing down. That skull had grown so large and abhorrent—but not quite to bushel size. It was more pumpkin size now—or did he imagine it was like a football, the size of an ordinary human head? It still strove and wallowed, straining for freedom. A human head of those dimensions would be dwarfed, really; perhaps a child's; perhaps a monkey's.

"It's shrinking," he growled exultantly. "Trying to get out that way."

Now it did not struggle at all, or it was too small to make its struggles felt. Thunstone clung to his improvised trap, counting to thirty, and dared to let the fabric fall open.

The skull was gone. The blinding bright jewel was there, in a fold of the rug as far removed as possible from the still open book.

Thunstone smiled. Deliberately and with all his strength, he set his heel upon the glow and ground down. He felt disintegration, as of very old fire-weakened brick. A whiff of bad odor came up, and was gone. The glow departed, and when he took away his foot, there was a blood-stain and nothing more.

Breathing deeply once again, Thunstone picked up the book. It was his *Egyptian Secrets* that, earlier in the day, had shown him a way to another victory. By some chance it had fallen open to the sixty-second page:

A Most Excellent Protection

Write the following letters upon a scrap of paper:

Thunstone read them, a passage so sea-

soned with holy names that it might have been a prayer instead of a spell. And, finally:

Only carry the paper with you; and you will then perceive that no enchantment can remain in the room with you.

Thunstone closed the book, then reopened it to the quaint preface which promised that "to him who properly esteems and values this book, and never abuses its teachings, will not only be granted the usefulness of its contents, but he will also attain everlasting joy and blessing." The thought came that to some scholars such tomes of power were considered in themselves to be evil. But is not every weapon what the wielder makes it? He decided to disallow the element of chance in the falling open of *Egyptian Secrets* to the very passage that had won his late struggle.

Someone was knocking at the door. Thunstone started violently, then recovered himself.

"Yes?"

"Room service, Mr. Thunstone. You said you'd be dining in your suite?"

"Not for three-quarters of an hour," said Thunstone. "I'll telephone down."

"Right." The man outside was walking away.

Thunstone poured himself a drink from a bottle of brandy. It tingled in his throat. Then he stripped off his jacket, rolled the sleeves back from his broad forearms, and from the bathroom fetched a broom, towels and a pail of water.

Beginning the task of cleaning his own room, he whistled a tune to himself, a tune old and cheerful. And when he had finished whistling it, he whistled it all over again. He had never felt better in his life.

