

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 28

CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER, 1936

Number 4

Cover Design . . . . .	M. Brundage	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "Witch-House"</i>		
Witch-House . . . . .	Seabury Quinn	386
<i>A tale of Jules de Grandin, ghost-breaker, occultist, and master of the supernatural</i>		
Black Hound of Death . . . . .	Robert E. Howard	410
<i>The story of a blighting horror from Mongolia, and a direful retribution</i>		
The Crawling Horror . . . . .	Thorp McClusky	427
<i>A tale of the weird terror that wrought ghastly death and panic at Brubaker Farm</i>		
The Man in Black . . . . .	Paul Ernst	440
<i>A grim figure, clad in formal black, mingled with the maskers but did not dance</i>		
The Dark Demon . . . . .	Robert Bloch	449
<i>The strange tale of a man who communed too closely with things from beyond space</i>		
Midas . . . . .	Bassett Morgan	457
<i>A shuddery graveyard tale, through which blows an icy breath of horror</i>		
The Black Gang . . . . .	Edgar Daniel Kramer	467
<i>Verse</i>		
Mice . . . . .	Robert Barbour Johnson	468
<i>A ghastly fate pursued the dweller in that vermin-infested mansion</i>		
The Blue Room . . . . .	Gordon Philip England	480
<i>The story of a haunted chamber and a fatal hoax</i>		
The Wizard's Death . . . . .	Richard F. Searight	488
<i>Verse</i>		
Brother Lucifer . . . . .	Chandler H. Whipple	489
<i>Strange and spectacular was the doom that lurked in that weird book from the old monastery</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
Pickman's Model . . . . .	H. P. Lovecraft	495
<i>This much-admired story from an early issue is reprinted here by popular request</i>		
The Eyrie . . . . .		506
<i>Our readers exchange opinions</i>		

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. *Subscription rates:* One year in the United States and possessions, Cuba, Mexico, South America, Spain, \$2.50; Canada, \$2.75; elsewhere, \$3.00. English office: Otis A. Kline, c/o John Paradise, 86 Strand, W. C. 2, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 840 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright 1936, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company.

COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

# Brother Lucifer

By CHANDLER H. WHIPPLE

*Strange and spectacular was the doom that lurked in that weird  
book from the old, ruined monastery*

**I**N THE book-lined study of the little cottage which stood beside the ancient church, John Druten, Vicar of Wenley, sat peering at the illumined volume before him. The hour was late; in the quiet English village, no light showed save here in the study of the vicarage; yet still John Druten read on.

The black Latin figures, painfully inscribed seven centuries before by the monks of that Wenley Abbey which was now but a tumbled ruin beyond the nearby church, seemed to blur, to take on form and dance before the vicar's eyes. All unconscious that the lamp burned low, Druten shook his head, brushed one hand across his eyes to clear his vision. He could not pause now, though his eyes dimmed; here was a strange bit of monkish history which to his antiquarian's heart was as a green field to the husbandman. He had come upon many oddities in the years that he had pored over these ancient records; yet strangely, this intrigued him more than had all the rest.

"Brother Angelico——" he mumbled for the tenth time. "Yes, he was the last. And of Brother Lucifer there is no further mention. Up to this point, the book is full of his doings; after the Eve of Saint Walburga's Day, in the Year of Grace One Thousand, Two Hundred Eighteen, there is not a word said of him. And he was but twenty-eight then. Why, it is as if he had dropped dead in the prime of his youth. . . . Yet it could not have been death which took him, else it would have been recorded here. No, he

did not die—that much is certain. Why, then, he must be still alive—and seven hundred years old!"

He chuckled at his little joke, a jest at which no one save a true antiquarian would have smiled. "Lucifer." He rolled the word upon his tongue, as if it were a sip of rare old wine from the cellars of the ancient refectory, now long since crumbled to dust. "Lucifer. . . . What an odd name for a monk, anyhow! . . . Might as well have named him Beelzebub. . . . Of course, the name at that time signified bearer of light more often than it did the Devil. . . ."

Outside, a sudden wind howled weirdly around the corners of the ancient church. It was like a lost voice crying. Strange, that on this quiet spring evening a wind should so suddenly arise! It did not seem to blow elsewhere. . . .

Druten squinted, shook his head again, realized at last that the lamp was low. He turned the wick upward; but the oil was gone and little more light came. He shook his head sadly; realizing now how late was the hour, he strove for one last look at the printed page.

He shuddered from a sudden chill. It was as if that weird wind outside had entered here through the closed doors and windows, and was coursing down his back. Or—yes, it was as if someone were in the room with him, as if burning eyes were upon his back. He started at the thought, whirled quickly around.

No, there was nothing, no one there. The living-room beyond, too, seemed

empty. His mind was playing tricks upon him. Too concentrated study had put strange fancies in his head.

He turned about, closed the book regretfully. "Well, Brother Lucifer," he said sadly, "it looks as if I shall have to give up your case for the night. Shall I never find what happened to you? Must I call you back from the dead to answer this vexing question?" He smiled as he rose from his chair. "Come, Brother Lucifer," he added coaxingly, "come up from those musty vaults and tell me what happened to you in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand, Two Hundred Eighteen. . . ."

His voice trailed off. John Druten caught his breath. What were those sounds that came from the living-room beyond?

Yes, they were footsteps. . . . Light, whispering footsteps, all but soundless—yet he heard them. They were descending the stairs into the living-room, slowly—and there was a fearful thing about their sound which he could not put a name to.

**J**OHN DRUTEN was no coward, but now for a moment sudden panic caused him to turn as if to flee from the room and from the house.

Then he paused. Absurd of me! he thought. I must stay, else I may never know what caused the sound. Perhaps it is only my sister, come back unexpectedly from London. Or perhaps it is even some prowler who thought the place unoccupied. If so, why should I fear him? I am a good swordsman, and I shall stand him off with the rapier hanging on yonder wall. Yes, I must stay and stand the beggar off. . . .

The footsteps were near now, almost to the door of the living-room. It took eternities for John Druten to reach, silently, and grasp the rapier that hung on the

wall; yet at last he held it in his hand.

Even as he brought the point up and forward, the light dimmed and went out. Thick darkness blanketed the room.

Now, though, there was light again. It was a dim light, a strange unworldly luminance.

Druten saw then that it emanated, like a phosphorescent glow, from the gray figure advancing through the doorway. At first he would hardly have called it a figure, since it seemed almost without form; but before his eyes it took on shape, became a robed grayness descending upon him. He could not see the face for the gray cowl which covered it.

"Stop where you are," Druten cried, with the rapier at ready, "or I'll run you through!"

Still the gray figure came on. With a sharp intake of breath, Druten leapt forward and thrust the sword in.

He jumped back swiftly, his face as gray as the light in the room. The blade had gone through nothingness, and the point had bent against the wall! It fell from his stiffened fingers. Even as he thrust, the rapier had grown icy cold in his hand.

Now he stood, gasping for breath, in the farthest corner of the room. He neither moved nor spoke; but he knew that someone else was speaking, that in the room was a voice. It seemed to come from the grayness, which now had ceased its slow advance and stood, as if waiting, beside his desk where lay the closed volume of monkish chronicles.

"I have come," the voice said. "You called me and I have come."

The words were spoken quietly, but in the speaking there was a sinister quality which chilled John Druten's blood. For a long moment he could not even speak.

"What—what do you want?" he managed at last.

He fancied that the face he could not

see smiled greedily. "I have waited a long time," the figure answered, "yet at last you have called me. The sin which I committed on Saint Walburga's Night seven centuries ago was, in the eyes of the holy abbot of Wenley, a fiendish thing; hence though they buried my still living body in the dank vaults of the abbey, he refused to record my death, and forbade that my name ever again be spoken.

"Thus it was that though my body breathed in the thinning air of the vault until it expired in torment, I never truly died. I lived in the damp vault, an undead soul—waiting until someone should call my name to bring me forth."

A sigh exuded from the figure, as if it recalled its long torment.

"Now my waiting is ended," it said. "Now I have only to write the account of my sin in yonder book, and the manner and time of my death, and I shall be free. My soul shall be free to do as it wills—or as the Devil wills it. . . ."

The air in the room was grown very cold, and John Druten shivered.

"I am John Druten, Vicar of Wenley," he said in his mind, "and I am not mad. No, I am as sane as the day I was born. It is only that I have studied late and am tired. This thing I am half dreaming, half seeing in my tired mind. . . ."

Had he spoken aloud? For the voice from the grayness answered him. . . . "Trouble yourself not with such matters," it said, "for you must help me, and then I shall be off. You must open the book for me at the proper place, so that I may write. . . ."

Then John Druten was certain that madness was upon him; for as if his will were no longer his own, he walked stiffly forward to the desk. He opened the book he had been reading at the page which a horrible gray finger indicated.

He stepped back then, for the cold about him was gnawing at his bones, and

stood stiff and silent. And in the silence he could hear the scratching of a pen. He looked toward the desk; he saw there a blur of grayness which had human form; and through this he could see that words were appearing on the blank page of the book, words written in Latin, in an ink that was black as the farthestmost pit of Hell. With a curiosity that overcame his fear, he bent forward to read.

At the words that he read, the face of the man of God became a pasty white. "No!" he shouted, "you must not write it there! It is blasphemy!"

The pen wrote on. . . .

"God in Heaven!" John Druten cried. "You must blot out every word! In Christ's name, cease writing!" He traced with his hand the sign of the cross.

Abruptly, the writing ceased. The figure seemed to sway away from him, to tremble as from fear.

Encouraged by this sign of victory, forgetting that this whole thing must be but a mad dream, John Druten rushed forward to the desk.

"Begone, fiend!" he cried wildly. "Better that you stay as you are than such foul words be written! Better your soul remain imprisoned, than roam the world to perpetrate such hideous deeds again!"

When the gray shape made no move to go, he seized from the desk a richly carved box that lay there. He raised it high above his head, menacing the fiend.

"In this box," he said in a voice more nearly calm, "repose certain relics and a fragment of the thighbone of Saint George. If you do not leave at once, I shall fling this at you and destroy your soul. In the name of Saint George and Our Lord Jesus, go!"

To his astonishment, the gray shape shuddered and whirled about. Before his eyes, it seemed slowly to dissolve. And

as it vanished, the air in the room grew warmer.

But the head was last to go, and for the first time John Druten saw the face. It was more awful than the monster heads of a myriad nightmares. He thought that the lips moved, and that they said, "Against this threat I cannot stay; but I shall come back. Tomorrow I shall come back, more powerful, and finish this night's work. . . ."

Then all sign of the grayness was gone. Trembling, John Druten stood and listened. There was no sound of retreating footsteps; but outside, strangely, the wind had risen again. It howled about the walls of the ancient church with a sound like the crying of damned souls. . . .

**A**LL that night John Druten tossed fitfully in his bed, and dawn did not lessen his fears.

He fled from the house when the char-woman came to wash the breakfast dishes and tidy up. He did not dare to face her, fearing she might detect the madness in his eyes. He fled down into the streets of the village; there he met many of his acquaintances and sometimes he talked to them. But he did not talk to any long; for it seemed to him that they must hear the whisper of madness in his voice. It seemed to him that already they looked at him strangely, and he thought that when he walked on, sly smiles followed him.

At last the village he had always loved was grown intolerable to him, and he returned to his home and his study. The woman had gone; he could sit here in quiet peace, with no other eyes upon him.

With no eyes upon him? Why then was there that strange prickling sensation in his back? Had the thing grown so bold that it was come back to watch him in the broad light of day?

Absurdity! If he let such thoughts gain

hold of him, he would indeed go mad. As it was, he was sane. He was quite sane, and had only suffered from an unusually acute nightmare. . . .

But why, then, had the little carved box, passed down to him by countless generations of holy men, which contained the relics of Saint George, been moved from its usual resting-place? Why did the dust upon it seem to have been disturbed by a human hand? Why, it even looked as if the lock had been tampered with, the box broken into!

Absurd! He was seeing things!

Well, then, why did he not open the book, the chronicle of the monks of Wenley? He knew the page; and one look would settle the matter. He would find nothing written there, which would prove that he had been suffering from a nightmare.

He moved forward, then stopped; for in his mind was the thought that perhaps he *would* find something written there. And if he did, there could be but one answer.

He stood a long time irresolute, his hand half lifted to the book. In that one move lay the answer to his sanity; yet he dared not make the move. At last he turned away.

But this battle with himself was not finished. It had become the all-important thing in his life. All afternoon it raged, and John Druten paced the floor of his study, now walking toward the book, now turning away. Once he sat down at his desk and wrote in his diary an account of the events of the night before; for he felt that if insanity or death were about to overtake him, his friends must know this much of his story. Then he resumed his pacing.

**I**T WAS not till dusk had fallen that he at last decided. "Perhaps I am mad," he reasoned with himself; "perhaps I am

sane. If so, I shall go mad before the night is over if I do not know. . . ."

This time he walked steadily to the desk and picked up the book in his hands. With fingers that trembled, he turned the pages until he came to the one whereon the dread words must be written.

Not until he had turned a dozen pages on either side did he dare believe what his eyes told him. Then he sat down limply in the chair, and his face shone with joy. For the page was empty!

After a moment, the hysteria of relief seized him. He began to chuckle, first quietly, then more loudly, until at last the walls of the room rang with his laughter. Tears streamed down his cheeks, so great was his joy.

"Ho, ho!" he cried. "Well, Brother Lucifer! You surely gave me a fright. Indeed I have studied too much, and thought too long upon these ancient chronicles—till now I must needs be seeing the dead rise in my dreams! . . ."

His laughter slowly subsided; the room was still again. He stiffened, strained his ears. What was that sound he had heard which seemed to come from about the church and the spot where the abbey had once stood?

It was a sound as of a suddenly risen wind when no wind was blowing elsewhere—but there was in it more than the wind. . . .

Trembling and pale, John Druten tried to shut out from his ears that other sound that he knew must follow; yet, silent as it was, he could not keep it out. Now they were coming up the staircase—slow, whispering footsteps which held in them infinite menace.

With a powerful effort, the vicar rose from his chair, walked slowly around the desk and took his stand with one hand near the holy relic. It was too late now to attempt to light the lamp, for already the steps were crossing the living-room.

It was not too late, perhaps, to flee from this cursed place into the street, but he could not flee. So great was his fear that he had barely been able to make that one slight move. Now he could only stand rooted to the spot, waiting. . . .

The steps reached the doorway, paused, then came on. And John Druten, knowing though he did what it was that came, stepped back in horror when he saw it.

He knew then that death faced him, and something far more horrible than death—something that went beyond the grave, that clutched at his soul and would give him no peace through all eternity. Yet he stood waiting, unable to defend himself or to cry out.

**W**HEN it was half-way across the room, words came from the grayness.

"You spoke my name," it said, and there was in the voice something of the sound the wind had held. "You spoke my name; hence I was able to return, stronger, more alive than before.

"It is a pity," the gray shape added, "that the ink in which I wrote last night did not survive. I must write now in stronger ink."

It moved slowly forward, one hand upraised. Seeing that hand and its intent, John Druten at last found voice.

"Stop!" he screamed.

The shape came on, ignoring his command. So slowly it moved that it seemed it must take a century to cross the little room; yet its movement was certain and sure. . . .

"But that alone," it said, "will not suffice. I am not one to forgive, John Druten. Last night you might have given me a new life in death; instead, you sent me back to the dank tomb. For that, you shall have a fate more fearful than was mine. You shall die horribly; and beyond death, horribly you shall live. . . ."

It was almost upon Druten now in its deathly slow advance. Summoning all the force of his ebbing will-power, the vicar forced his hand down to seize the box which sat near it. Again he raised it high.

"Stop!" he cried. "In the name of Saint——"

Laughter drowned his words. "There are things I am able to learn that you cannot," said the shape, "and one such is that your box is useless. Some one of your predecessors was but prey to a scheming venter. There are no true relics in the box. Throw it if you will. . . ."

With all the power he possessed, Druten threw the box full into the awful face. But he knew even as he threw it that the voice spoke truth. The box seemed to thud against the face; yet the shape came on.

Its slow advance was ended. . . .

John Druten screamed. He called upon God and Christ and all the saints to aid him. But he felt the walls of Hell sweeping in upon him. And he knew that he slipped down into blackness beyond which lay awful and eternal torment.

He heard Brother Lucifer laugh. . . .

**W**HEN all sound in the room had quieted, a figure came up from the floor, seeming almost to flow from the

writhing mass that lay there. It might have been John Druten, for the clothes it wore were his and the hands were his; but the face was not. The evil glittering in its eyes, as it moved soundlessly from the room, could never have shone in the eyes of John Druten.

Yet Druten was gone, and on the floor at the spot where he had stood lay but a mound of moldering cloths: the gray robes and cowl of a cenobite, so attired and old that they should have been under ground these seven centuries and more. Inside them no body lay, but only a thick and moldering dust, and a nail, and a strand of hair, and something that might have been a crumbling bone. . . .

Only these things in the room, and on the desk an opened book with pages that gleamed redly now, and a dusty, waiting silence. No sight or thought was there of John Druten's body or of his soul; but outside where ruined masonry encompassed a moonlit space, there where once had Wenley Abbey stood, a new wind moaned. Its sound held the note of a lost soul crying, and it rose higher with each moment, as if with each moment more aware of its awful fate.

Thus must the wind at Wenley Abbey moan for evermore. . . .

