

WEIRD TALES



NOVEMBER

1940

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It Happened to Me

WEIRD TALES will pay ten dollars apiece for true psychic experiences. Have you ever slept in a haunted house, or been chased by a ghost? Have you ever dreamed a dream that came true? Has your life been saved by a vision? Let the other readers of WEIRD TALES know about your weird experience. Your story must be briefly told, in not more than a thousand words; the shorter the better. It must be true, interesting, and must deal with the supernatural. Write it down today and send it to WEIRD TALES, "It Happened to Me" department, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. We will pay ten dollars for every one used.

GHOST FARM

By DULCIE BROWNE

MY FATHER'S farm was situated in the San Joaquin Valley near Tulare Lake—which had receded until it was no more than a dank mud-hole. It was said, however, that the lake had, at one time, covered a large area in the center of the valley and that the place where we lived was a portion of that old lake bed.

Be that as it may, the land was fertile and father had done quite well so far. He had working for him an Indian from the reservation some miles away. Old Skip was a good worker but silent and of a reserved disposition, showing no emotion at any time.

The only time I ever saw Skip display any feeling was the time when my father voiced his intention of plowing up a high spot in the center of the ranch which had hitherto been uncultivated on account of not being accessible to irrigation water. Old Skip showed a great deal of excitement and displeasure at my father's suggestion and departed to the reservation in high dudgeon. Nothing daunted, father hitched up a team and began to play the knoll. I was with him when we discovered the human skulls planted so close to the top of the ground that the plowshare threw them up in the furrow.

It was easy to see that the skulls were those of Indians and that they had been buried many years ago. Putting the team in the barn father took a shovel and began to dig in the spot where most of the bones were turned up. He found many of them of all sizes, indicating that men, women and children had all been buried together in all kinds of shapes. There were also many stone implements buried with them.

When Skip heard of the find, as all the countryside did before long, he came back to the ranch and advised father to stop digging the bones up. His voice contained a warning as he said:

"You make lots of money. You will lose money if you not stop digging. Skip know."

But father only laughed at what he considered an old Indian superstition and kept right on digging. Of course, people came from far and near to examine and exclaim over the weird find, while the hole in the ground grew bigger every day and the pile of bones higher.

It was at this time that we children began to hear strange noises about the house, and there were times when one could actually see in a strange sort of way, as though the thing were a vision; that a human form

was near. Sitting below stairs one could not help hearing the distinct sound of foot-falls in the rooms upstairs. Then, too, there was that sound of striking flint that could be heard in any room in the house. My parents ignored these sounds and forbade us to speak of them in their hearing. But so noticeable did they become that we referred to that company of shadowy occupants as "They," and to us they became like members of our own household.

Father had now dug a pit so deep that it was over his head and water was seeping in. And then he came to a large flat rock. The rock could easily have been six by eight feet, had it been entirely square instead of roughly so. When he had completely uncovered it it took about a dozen of the neighbors to help him get it up out of the ground. I understood that father expected to discover hidden treasure, and his hopes were higher still as he dug in the mud and slush where the rock had been. But there were only more bones. Only one skeleton and that of a huge man over seven feet tall.

Here my father's quest was at an end. There had been no treasure, and father was keenly disappointed. He began refilling the huge hole, throwing the bones back in wild disarray. As he filled in the last spadeful of earth he seemed glad to be rid of the whole business.

When father ceased his operations it would have seemed that the phenomena in the house would be ended. But it was not so. Things were as they had been. And there was a noticeable difference seen in the whole ranch. The fowl and animals began to perish with strange diseases, the crops were not coming up to expectations. There was a dull gray tinge settling over the very buildings and even the shade trees that had flourished so greenly in the yard were wilting and yellowing.

The next year there was no green thing growing on the whole ranch, in spite of father's careful planning and culture. Experts came. They shook their heads and went away perplexed. My father's place became a blighted area among all the green fields of our neighbors. Father was losing money in every transaction he made. Two years later we left the farm, abandoned it to the gray horde.

Today the farm is just the same. Other folk have moved there from time to time and left when they found they could grow no crops. The house stares vacantly out of its paneless windows. I often wonder if that Indian horde still inhabits it and what secrets they whisper to each other as they pass through the deserted rooms, the soft padding of their feet resounding as I heard them many times.

