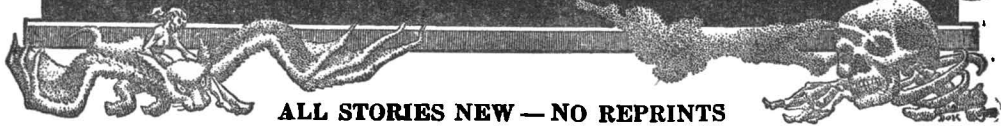


# Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW — NO REPRINTS

November, 1943

Cover by A. R. Tilburne

## LONG NOVELETTE

<b>THE VALLEY OF THE ASSASSINS</b> . . . . .	Edmond Hamilton	8
<i>A valley of dreadful doom, this . . . where time is as nothing to the fiend whose first murderous crimes were committed centuries ago</i>		


## SHORT STORIES

<b>DEATH WENT THAT WAY</b> . . . . .	Allison V. Harding	20
<i>It's nice to be able to call some strange happening "coincidence" . . . it's much more reassuring than the truth!</i>		
<b>SPEED THE PARTING GHOST</b> . . . . .	Helen W. Kasson	28
<i>So you don't like to have your relatives around! Suppose they were dead . . . and still around!</i>		
<b>THE THIRD CRY TO LEGBA</b> . . . . .	Manly Wade Wellman	50
<i>When we tinker with black forces beyond our ken we must expect the unexpected</i>		
<b>THE DUCKER</b> . . . . .	Ray Bradbury	68
<i>If you shoot those guys over there, he wondered, then they got to play right and fall down, don't they?</i>		
<b>GREAT PAN IS HERE</b> . . . . .	Grege La Spina	72
<i>Our doctrines had not warned us that on this night all hidden powers above and below are loosed</i>		
<b>A THIN GENTLEMAN WITH GLOVES</b> . . . . .	August Derleth	85
<i>A familiar is a companion summoned from outside somewhere to attend a wizard and obey his every command</i>		
<b>HAMMER OF CAIN</b> . . . . .	James Causey and Bill Blackbeard	92
<i>There is a strange curse on all brothers Cain . . . a curse that is terrible as it is compelling—the medium is a little flint hatchet!</i>		
<b>HERBERT WEST: REANIMATOR</b> . . . . .	H. P. Lovecraft	101
<i>Can hideous experiments in the reanimation of the dead be carried so far as to bring on demonic reprisals from those dead?</i>		

## VERSE

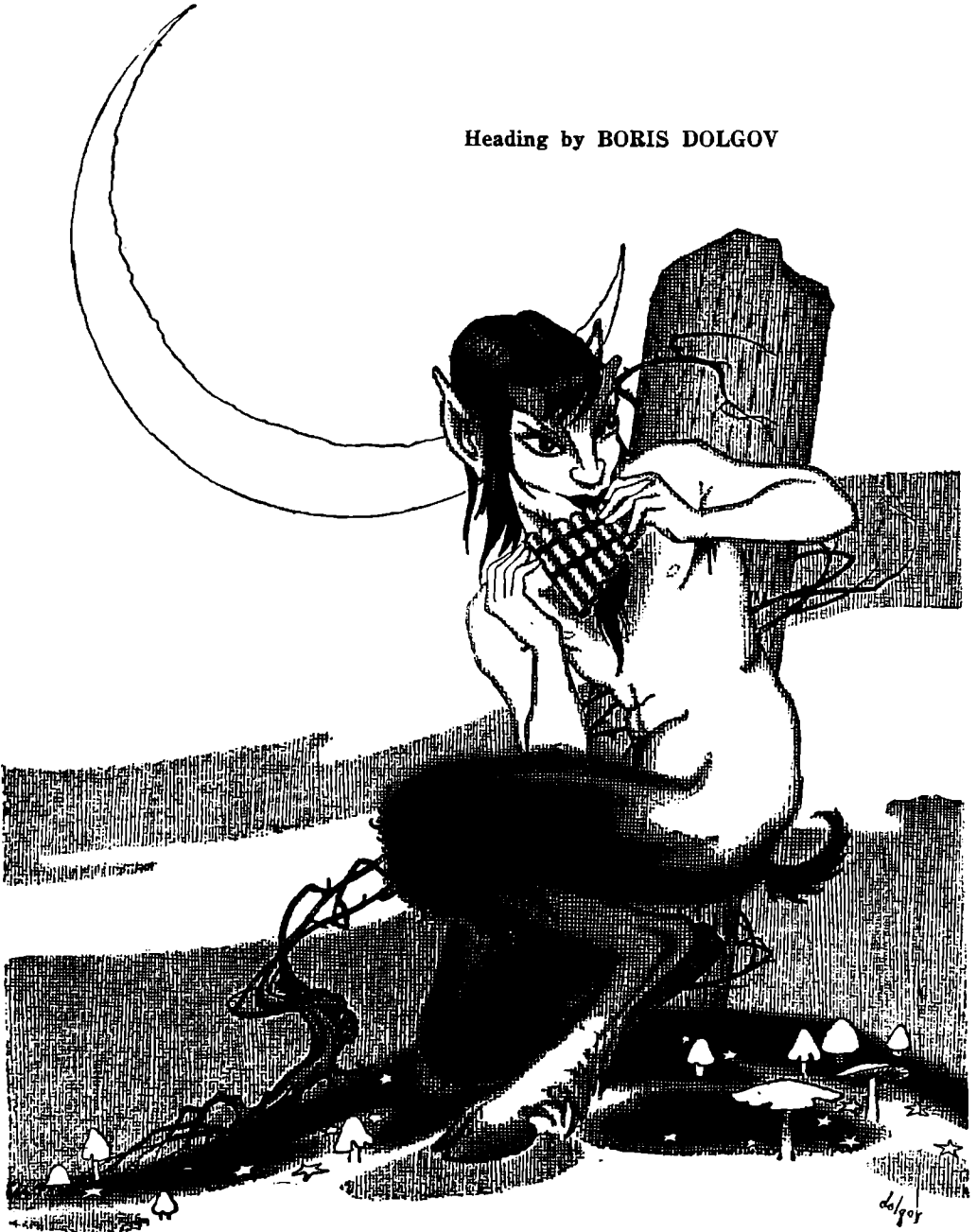
<b>THE SNAKE</b> . . . . .	Francis Flagg	6
<b>BECAUSE THE MOON IS FAR</b> . . . . .	Katherine Simons	40
<b>ON LAKE LAGORE</b> . . . . .	Dorothy Gold	91
<b>SUPERSTITIONS AND TABOOS</b> . . . . .	Irwin J. Weil	70
<b>THE EYRIE AND WEIRD TALES CLUB</b> . . . . .		108

*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, N. Y. Reentered as second-class matter January 28, 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, 1943, by Weird Tales. Copyrighted in Great Britain. Title registered in U. S. Patent Office.  178

# Great Pan Is Here

Heading by BORIS DOLGOV



By GREYE LA SPINA

L YING at the edge of the asphalt road just outside the gutter and far enough back so that passing car wheels could not crush it, lay a seven-reed pandean pipe. Incredible anachronism on a modern highway; I could hardly believe my eyes. It might have been dropped just before our car swung around the corner by my garden; I had an eerie feeling that the owner had dodged out of sight in the thicket of shrubbery a fraction of a minute before.

I said quickly to Cecily: "Did you see that syrinx?"

Cecily insinuated delicately that I had had one cocktail too many. Although it lay on her side of the road, she had seen nothing.

First time I'd known her to miss anything out of the ordinary.

Aunt Kate was muttering vexedly from the rear seat. I'd been of half a mind to go back and pick up that shepherd's flute just to prove to Cecily that five cocktails were well within my limit, but although I couldn't distinguish a word I knew what Aunt Kate was saying. She doesn't approve of late arrival at symphony concerts. I did hint loudly that I'd like to pick up the unusual object but she promptly blew the man down with a loud snort, adding that she didn't intend to lose the first movement of the symphony just because I'd imagined something that, having no business to be

there, couldn't have been there, consequently wasn't there.

Cecily said she thought this was fairly conclusive reasoning, so between them I was dissuaded from returning. What I didn't realize then was that neither Aunt Kate, who usually drove from the back seat directing our course for every bump or puddle in the road, hadn't seen that glaring anachronism. Nor had Cecily—Cecily, who rarely misses seeing the wariest pheasant or the smallest couchant cottontail. I only, of the three of us, had seen those pipes. So we drove on, leaving the syrinx lying by the roadside. The symphony concert was, as usual, magnificent. One of the encores held undue significance for me that night; it was the piping entrance of the little fauns. It carried me completely out of myself and back to that object I had seen lying on the gravel at the turn in the road. I promised myself to watch for it and salvage it on the way home. I had a burning curiosity to handle it and an overpowering desire to lay it against my lips and sound its shrill, sweet notes.

But either the headlights—on the opposite side of the road when we returned—did not pick it out or it had already been seen and appropriated by someone else. Cecily insisted that my imagination was working overtime but I was so positive of that Pan-pipe's reality that I even remembered a fine cord attached to it, as if it had

*"Here I have found tranquil peace under the same stars that light my old world,  
that world now closed by diabolic Man to the spirits of the woods  
and seas and gardens."*

but recently hung about some little faun's sun-browned neck. That last touch was too much for Cecily. She told me shortly that she thought it rather silly on my part to attempt embroidering a story that was obviously only a fabrication of my too-vivid imagination. We had what is euphemistically termed "words" and Cecily flounced into the house with Aunt Kate, disdaining to complete our tentative plans for a sail next morning in the *Sprite*.

I PUT up the car and followed Aunt Kate and my charming cousin into the house, hoping that Cecily had relented and that we would have a cigarette together before retiring for the night, but the house was as still as if a chatty old lady and a lively young girl had not preceded me five minutes before my own entrance. I went to the kitchen to see if they had gone there for sandwiches and drinks but it was deserted. Those "words" had cooked my goose as far as a half-hour alone with Cecily was concerned. I sometimes feared that my aunt's strict, old-fashioned ideas had made Cecily too reserved, too cold. I had long wished ardently that something would rouse her to understand that a man in love cannot be held forever at a chilling distance.

I took some ice cubes to the library, mixed a highball, lighted a cigarette and went to the screened bay-window overlooking my sunken garden. There was a tender crescent moon hanging low in the sky with no cloud to dim the broad expanse of twinkling, starry attendants. I longed to share that beauty with Cecily. There was just enough light to make the garden an enchanted spot, high-lighted here and there against the deep shadows of the pine grove at the rear, beyond which boomed the sea. The nymph fountain I had brought from Italy sprinkled sparkling pearly spray against a background of shrubbery and farther down the graveled path I could see the

sun-dial on its marble pedestal surrounded by the sheen of white flowers whose heavy fragrance hung on the night air. Aunt Kate dearly loves a white garden because it is so lovely at night and when she took over the management of my household after my parents' death, I had the white garden planted to please her.

I was just on the point of snuffing out my cigarette and going up to bed when I thought I detected a movement at the rear of the garden. I say a movement, because what I really saw I didn't actually see. I mean, what I glimpsed was an apparent disappearance of the sun-dial on its gleaming marble pedestal. It was as if some obscuring shadow had passed between it and me, blotting it momentarily from sight. I was startled because I knew neither Aunt Kate nor Cecily would be strolling out there alone. By midnight, too, the servants were abed snoring comfortably, as we rarely kept anyone up on symphony nights because it was far more fun to raid refrigerator and pantry than to call a sleepy butler or dopy-eyed maid to fetch sandwiches and drinks. Moreover, the intruder in the garden could not have been Aunt Kate or Cecily; their dresses would have shown up in the starlight. Aunt Kate had worn a light gray silk and Cecily had been in frilly dotted muslin, white as an October hoar frost, a charming cool frock for a hot summer night. Who the deuce, thought I, has taken the liberty of promenading in our garden at midnight without so much as a by-your-leave?

I took a last puff at my cigarette, crushed it out on an ash-tray, and went down the room to the French doors. Of course they were locked; Ashby would have seen to that on his nightly rounds. I unlocked them and went out on the bricked terrace and stood there quietly under the myriad stars. I sensed an inner suspense, as if something notable were about to happen. I listened, feeling that I must surely hear the sound of

feet on the shifting gravel of the path but while I watched, the sun-dial again performed its disappearing act, unaccompanied by the merest whisper of sound. It was uncanny. I wanted to call, "Who's there?" but knew that if I did I'd have my aunt out in the hall, Cecily at her window, Ashby prancing about in pajamas and quite probably cook and the maids uttering shrieks from the back stairs. So I held my peace.

A MOMENT later I was glad I had. There came a whispered stirring of shrubbery somewhere in the garden. I couldn't locate the sound but I heard it distinctly. It was an irregular rustle quite unlike the gentle urge of a night breeze. Then borne on the sweet night air sounded a series of distinct, if pianissimo, flute-like notes. As they fell upon my straining, grateful ears I stood stock-still, amazed and intrigued by what somehow seemed a mystical sequence to the syrinx lying by the roadside, the symphonic encore featuring the piping of the little fauns, the mysterious behavior of the sun-dial. The night silence pressed in upon me with a significance out of all proportion to its simple normality and in the midst of that heightened stillness, as if all Nature listened with me, I heard the notes again like drops of liquid gold and knew them for what they were. Someone had picked up that lost Pan-pipe and was trying the reeds one by one, under the magical young moon in my enchanted sunken garden.

My first sensation was one of outrage. I had wanted those pipes myself, as if they had been meant to fall into my hands. I felt that an unauthorized intruder had robbed me of something so much my own that he must have sensed it to be adding insult to injury by playing on those shepherd pipes in my garden. I was so angry that I threw aside my previous caution. I dashed down the steps from the terrace, my feet crunching over the gravel straight to the

pedestal where the dial stood. Of course, as I might have realized in my noisy advance, there would be no one there when I arrived. I did imagine for a moment that the shrubbery, in the spot where it was so thickly interlaced that it seemed a tangled wildwood, stirred ever so slightly as I approached. But when I rushed up, it had already stopped its swaying and I heard no sound save the rising murmur of a night breeze that might have caused that slight agitation of the leafy branches.

I stood perfectly still and listened intently. There was not an unfriendly sound drifting on the sweet fragrance of the air. There was only the faint incessant chirping of crickets and once a birdling uttered a small smothered twitter from its nest in the crotch of one of the pines bordering the garden. I told myself I must have imagined the whole thing, conjured it up out of the enchantment of the night. Yet returning slowly to the house I wheeled about twice and faced back, for I could have sworn that someone or something was following closely behind with noiseless, airy footsteps. I was uncomfortably conscious of faint, amused disdain impinging on my consciousness as if someone were sardonically aware of my unease and enjoyed my discomfort.

I closed and locked the French door so quickly upon my own wary entrance that not even an invisible entity could very well have followed me inside. Then I went out to the kitchen, got more ice cubes and back in the library I fixed a whopper of a highball. I needed a bracer. I felt strongly that I had happily escaped from something faintly, but none the less obviously, inimical. Also I could not persuade myself that I had imagined those flute-like, golden notes that had fallen out of the starlit night upon my astonished, ravished ears.

By next morning Cecily had apparently forgotten her vexation. She came to breakfast looking like a rather with-

drawn young goddess in that paucity of attire girls assume for sports wear. Of course she was as beautiful as the sun, moon and stars, and I told her so. She looked at me and smiled and I knew, as I always had when she smiled at me, that even if she wanted my heart to trample, it was hers for the asking. After breakfast we strolled down to the beach with a packed luncheon basket. I keep a rowboat with an outboard motor at our private wharf near the bathing pavilions.

Cecily protested, as I started the motor: "Don't be in such a rush, Craig. Isn't that Tommy Leatherman coming down the beach?"

I'd seen him. That was why I wanted to be off. I presume I must have looked sulky for Cecily pointed one finger at me derisively, wrinkling her nice straight nose.

"Etta's in New York for the week-end and Tommy's simply forlorn, Craig. Be humane and ask him along."

"But I don't want him along," I objected. "You act as if you didn't want to be alone with me, Cecily. I like to have you to myself once in a while. Your mother's such a strict duenna, and now you want Tommy to chaperone us."

Cecily tried to look offended but failed. Her lips drew into a smile. She looked at me from under curling lashes and I was lost and she knew it.

I hailed Tom none too pleasantly. Of course he wanted to go along. Men always wanted to go along with Cecily. So that was the end of my plan for a day alone with my cousin. We climbed aboard the *Sprite* and I tied the small boat to her stern. Cecily disposed herself picturesquely where she needn't move until it was time to open the luncheon hamper. Tom sat beside her. That left me to sail the boat. Ordinarily I wouldn't have cared, for I love the wild abandon of the *Sprite* when she takes the wind in her sails and fairly flies. Aunt Kate once said that if the

*Sprite* had been a girl, she would have been of the type considered "fast." I was busy with the boat and paid no attention to my passengers until I caught a few words that made me prick up my ears and almost stop what I was doing.

Tom said: "—so I went back and picked it up and it was a curious little reed instrument hanging on a brown string. It was the sort of thing nymphs and fauns used to play on, you know."

"Well!" I heard Cecily exclaim in an amazed undertone. She turned her face to me and said sweetly, "Sorry, Craig! My error."

Tom stared, brow puzzled into a scowl, but I knew she was apologizing for not having believed me when I'd told her about the Pan-pipe by the side of the road. Now she was hearing from Tom that it had been there and that he'd picked it up himself.

A strange resentment rose in me. The thing had little or no intrinsic value but it had impressed me as something closely associated with myself.

I said disgustedly: "So it was you piping in our garden last night. Rather a childish performance, Tom. You might have come in for a drink before slipping away as you did."

Tom said he didn't know what I was getting at.

"What I'm getting at is this," said I, growing a little angry at his evasion. "What possessed you to come piping in my garden on those ridiculous reeds at midnight? I heard you, Tom. Every time you paraded past the sun-dial I knew it, too."

"I was sound asleep in bed before midnight last night, Craig."

I said, "Oh, yeah?" and let it go at that. I didn't intend to get into an argument with him before Cecily; I had a feeling that she might side with him as she had with Aunt Kate the previous night.

Then she took the wind out of my sails by declaring: "But I heard the piping,

Tom. If it wasn't you, who could it have been? It was you who found the syrinx."

Tom stared at her, speechless. So did I.

"It was a very disturbing sound. It reached 'way inside me," said she in a troubled voice. "I thought it was you, Craig."

"It wasn't I. It was someone who had no business in my garden. Sure you're not a somnambulist?" I asked Tom drily.

He snapped rather disagreeably that he had already told me he was home, asleep in bed, before midnight. "I certainly wasn't making an ass of myself, prancing about your garden tootling on a silly, childish toy," he growled.

"Of course you wouldn't do anything like that," agreed Cecily warmly.

I thought, "Drat the gal," until I caught the sparkle of a sly twinkle in her eyes.

"I would like to know who was serenading," she went on, her gray eyes dark with secret thoughts. "There was something eerie about those fragile, flute-like notes. They allured and frightened me. I wanted to follow the player and yet I was so terrified that the blood ran cold in my veins. Those notes were strangely haunting."

I thought myself that they had seemed most unusual for a broken series of unlinked musical notes that carried no particular motif; they were at once plaintive and searching. It was as if someone had tried one reed after the other, moving the pipes slowly across his lips without actually playing the instrument. It was the golden quality of those notes that had made such a strong impression on me. There had been something almost magical about them as they fell with clarity on the night air. I had felt as if night and Nature had awaited those lovely sounds; that the silence had hushed to a deeper degree of summer stillness for their reception. It had sounded like the prelude to an enchanted musical rite. Magical. That was the proper word for those notes.

I ASKED Tom abruptly if he had any plans for the syrinx. He stared at me almost unpleasantly and then observed significantly that they weren't going out of his hands.

"They seem to be in demand, Craig. What with one Pan-pipe lost by the highway, and a midnight musician tuning up on another under Cecily's window at midnight, it—there's something distinctly off about the whole situation and I don't like it, if you ask me."

Cecily flicked me a warning look. She knew I was about to retort that nobody was going to ask him. I withheld my goading comment. But for the rest of the day there wasn't a moment I didn't think about that shepherd's flute and wish I'd gone back to pick it up. Cecily herself brought up the subject after we'd left Tom on the beach later that afternoon. We swung up through the back of the garden, the hamper in my right hand and Cecily's arm twined about my left arm. I got a faint impression that she was glad she was with me, and I dared to say so boldly in the absence of her usual aloofness and reserve.

Her fingers tightened on my arm. "I'm always happiest when I'm with you, Craig. Even if we're quarreling," she admitted impishly. "But I'm especially glad not to be alone today. In the garden," she explained oddly.

"Why the garden?" I quizzed, intrigued.

"Because something is here now that wasn't here yesterday, Craig. I can feel it and it terrifies me. I feel all panicky and I don't know why. Silly, isn't it?"

I didn't want her troubled, so gave a short dry laugh of incredulity.

"Oh, it isn't imagination, Craig. Truly it isn't. It is something very frightening. It came last night. After that piping. I feel it doesn't really mean to hurt—but if it has to, it won't even realize it's hurting. It will have its way at any cost to—well, to lesser creatures."

I said teasingly, "The hot sun must have affected you, darling."

She pinched my arm until I yelped at the sharp pain.

"Don't be horrid, Craig, or I'll never tell you my innermost thoughts again."

"That being a dire penalty," said I, "I'll not be horrid, for I felt something strange in the garden last night, myself. Although I must say I don't feel it in broad daylight."

And then we both stopped short where we stood at the opening of the shrubbery that gave upon the graveled path leading to the fountain; I with amazed resentment, Cecily with a sharp indrawing of breath and a pressure of her trembling body against me.

A strange, foreign looking man, who seemed at once like a seafaring person and a countryman from the back mountains, stood lean and angular between us and the sun-dial, his peaked brown face under the slouch hat complacently upon us as if he had known to the minute just when we would emerge to confront him. His jutting jaw bore a scanty, ragged beard like a he-goat's scraggly chin-whiskers. Strangely vivid eyes peered at us from under bushy brows as might canny wood creatures from their shrubby hiding-places, missing nothing—piercing my startled discomposure and Cecily's trembling apprehension as if their gaze penetrated flesh and entered unobstructedly the inner recesses of our minds. His widely curving, full-lipped mouth shaped a flickering, half-mocking smile. A kind of dark shawl draped in romantic fashion across his shoulders concealed his entire body; the fringes, trailing over the ground covered even his feet.

**C**ECILY shrank against me, clutching feverishly at my arm as she whispered in a shaky voice: "Craig, I'm afraid. I don't know why, but I'm awfully scared. Something's terribly wrong here. That man—" she shuddered.

I pressed her clinging hand against my side with my arm and turned so that she was partly behind me.

I said sharply, "What are you doing here? Don't you know you're trespassing?"

The stranger spoke to me but his eyes were on Cecily's slender body clad in shorts and bra. "The maiden is fair," he gloated.

I shook Cecily's hand from my arm, set down the luncheon hamper, doubled up my fists and advanced toward him.

"Get out of here!" I grated, feeling my face whiten with repressed fury at his impudence.

He responded with a question. "Is this garden yours, youth?"

"The garden is mine and I'll thank you to clear out of it."

His flickering, mocking smile deepened into a more ingratiating expression. "Has your garden no welcome for its lord and master, Pan?" he inquired.

A warning tingle quivered down my spinal column at that sublime self-confidence. I heard my voice weakly echoing, "Pan?"

"I have spoken, youth. I am seeking quiet gardens in this New World where perchance a few still survive who know my name and will not fear to harken to the pipes of Pan, to the lilting notes that burn away the dross of human convention and open joyous paths of natural impulse. My groves in the Old World have been destroyed.

"Dryads and nymphs fear to follow the sound of my pipes for there is no more night since you mad, deluded human creatures began to fling Jove's thunder-bolts and lightnings over the world. This garden you call yours has its good points; not every garden borders upon Neptune's domain. I need your garden, youth."

Sudden unreasoning, unwelcome panic seized upon me. I felt gooseflesh pricking my skin. Was the man mad? Or was I? His words seemed to mingle the vaporings



of a deluded lunatic and the reasonable expression of sanity.

The stranger continued after a brief pause, his piercing eyes still upon Cecily.

"Be not afraid, youth. You and this maiden have come part way to my worship, since you do not cover your bodies with the ugly garments I have seen in your cities. Give me, then, the freedom of this fair garden and the word of release for my dancing nymph."

One long hairy arm pushed out from under the clumsy drapery and a finger pointed.

Cecily and I exchanged a quick glance of wary puzzlement. That finger drew our eyes to the marble fountain we had had so much trouble bringing back with us from Italy on our last trip there before the global war.

We knew it had been dug up from the foundations of an ancient temple near Girgenti in Sicily. Had the Italian authorities known this, we could not have brought the marble to America, hence it had been billed to us by the finder as a copy only. Perhaps because it had cost us so much trouble, as well as because of its beauty, I valued my nymph fountain greatly.

It was a lovely thing in the trailing shadow of that late afternoon, but at night it was the center of my sunken garden's enchantment. The nymph's delicate figure was exposed where scant drapery did not swirl from one shoulder to dimpled knees. Above flying locks she held a large scallop-shell into which splashed sparkling jets of crystal clear spring water from an opening in the rugged marble rock behind her. The water splashed from the shell over her body so that at times the flowing radiance created an illusion of movement as if the laughing girl were alive.

Said the strange being confronting us: "More than once she had danced down from her pedestal when I piped in the temple grove at Girgenti. Too long has

she lain under the earth. It is time she danced again."

His vibrant voice was so akin to the sougning of early night breezes, twittering of sleepy birds, chuckles and squeaks of wee woodland creatures, that I was obliged to admit that I was in the presence of something alien to modern human experience, something about which my flying conjectures could tell me nothing as yet.

"Give me the freedom of your garden, good youth. You shall not regret it. Pan knows what your soul desires and will grant your wish."

"And if I refuse?" I muttered, unable to free myself from the spell of that potent personality.

"I have the power to summon this maid if I so choose. You would not like that," he said knowingly.

Cecily's hand clutched at my shirt from where she stood behind me. I sensed her panicky terror and apprehension, and summoned my courage and good-sense; or so I thought it for the moment.

"The maiden," I said boldly, "is mine. As is that nymph. Now will you kindly get off my property? I don't know who you are and I like neither your silly masquerade nor your words and attitude."

THE brown face with its wipsy beard lowered upon me. The narrowed eyes seemed to emit fiery sparks. In that moment *he* made me know. . . . There was indeed something in my garden and it was not a purely impersonal power. If I attempted to thwart that strange being's designs, he would crush me and my abortively launched obstacles ruthlessly. I knew deep within myself, suddenly, that he was tentatively, not actively, inimical, but that his power was far beyond my wildest imaginings.

"So the nymph is yours, youth, because to one who could never have owned her you gave your stupid gold? Have you paid

gold for this maiden you call yours?" His full-lipped smile deepened. "I can offer more than a mortal's gold, youth. A god can offer his worshipers far more than they can dream. Your maiden may prefer a god to a mortal. Ask *her*; she knows."

That long finger pointed again to the marble nymph. I cursed my too-vivid imagination that made me seem to see her laughing lips curl mockingly.

"In America we do not buy maids with gold," I cried angrily in an outburst of daring.

"With what did you buy your maid, that you can call her yours?"

"I—we exchanged our love," I muttered. "Then we belong to each other."

PAN regarded me with what I felt was a kindly expression, for the blaze left his eyes and a momentary tenderness lurked within them.

"That is well," he said. "I like that in the New World. It is indeed very well. So the maiden has given you her love?" he probed with sly interest.

I felt misgivings. As yet I had not dared tell Cecily of my love in so many words and I feared that the bold declaration I had just made might tempt her into feminine contradiction. There was silence for a moment; then Cecily's voice murmured from behind me.

"Yes," it said softly. "Oh, yes!"

I turned and whipped her into my arms. "Darling," I whispered.

Something very human flickered over my strange visitor's face and I knew that he understood perfectly that Cecily and I had never before plighted our troth but that he was permitting us to believe we had fooled him.

"Tonight is Midsummer Eve, youth," he said abruptly.

From Cecily's golden head that rested against my heart I turned my uncomprehending gaze although his words brought

vague recollections of childhood tales and superstitions.

"I marvel that your silly doctrines have not taught you that on this night all hidden powers above and below are loosened, youth. Alas, to be so ignorant and so blind!"

I remembered then that the morrow was Midsummer Day, the 23rd of June.

"Because I am in a strange new land where hitherto the gods have not foregathered because no worshippers called them, I must take advantage of every favorable circumstance, youth. Tonight I may best do this, in all the year. Here also have I found my playmate nymph in your sunken garden. I have found here wide spreads of grassy sward and a sheltered pine grove for my dryads. Here, too, I have found tranquil peace under the same stars that lighted my old world, that world now closed by diabolic Man to the spirits of the woods and seas and gardens."

I listened, amazed and understanding. Cecily clung to me and I knew that all I wanted was the knowledge of her security in my arms.

"You fear lest an olden god take your maid from you, youth? Give me your sunken garden and your green lawns and your pine grove, and my lonely nymph, and the maid remains yours if such is her choice."

Cecily's trembling body pressed closer to me. "Give him anything," she breathed. "but do not let him call me on his pipes for I fear him greatly. Nature can be relentlessly cruel, Craig, and Pan is the god of Nature."

"Although by now you must have admitted my identity, I offer yet further credentials than those in your own heart," offered the stranger and lifted the slouch hat from his straggling black locks, that tumbled over his forehead in wild confusion. His eyes never left mine as his hand brushed away that concealing hair from the small,

polished black horns they had hidden. The incredulous truth gripped me with power beyond my will to believe.

"Name me!" said the brown man, his lips parting in a smile that mocked elfishly.

He moved ever so slightly. The fringes trailing about his feet parted; I saw that which was not a human foot. One hand half drew from his bosom the very syrinx, I could have sworn, that I had seen and Tom Leatherman had salvaged; it hung suspended by a brown cord from his neck.

I said hoarsely, "So you found the syrinx. Pan! You are Pan!"

"You believe?"

"I believe," I groaned unwillingly for my head spun with the tremendous truth.

"Bid the maiden leave us," he commanded.

In obedience to my urgent whisper, Cecily left the refuge of my arms and fled up the garden path to the house. I watched her go in at one of the French doors.

I could no longer refuse to believe the evidence of my senses that an Immortal deigned to visit my garden, incredible though it might seem. I might be unwilling, but I knew I dared not refuse to an Immortal whatsoever he asked. Resentment gnawed at me as I humbly waited for Pan to state his demands.

"The garden will be yours under the sun, youth, but at night it must be mine alone until such time as I may find another better suited to my purpose. Tonight my brother gods will lend me their aid and I shall pipe to those dryads and nymphs in the Old World who loved me best and they shall come tonight to the New World to people the pine grove with little fauns and to worship Pan once more as in days ago. The nymph you have called yours shall live again under the stars tonight. And if perchance your newly-betrothed maiden dares share her rapturous moments with a god, she may enter my garden unafraid. As may you, youth, if you can worship Pan."

I said in a choked voice that henceforth the garden would be closed to everyone at night.

With a lift of busy eyebrows and a sly quirk of full red lips Pan said, "Save to the maid, if she regret her present choice."

**H**E THREW back his head, laughed, and nimbly stepped past me to the thick shrubbery and there in broad daylight he went out to it as it went out to him. He had gone into nothingness while I stared stupidly at the spot where he had melted before my eyes.

I ran up to the house, thankful to get away from my now haunted garden. Cecily met me as I reached the terrace.

"Craig, who and what is he? He is no common man. He is god-like and diabolical at once. He allures and terrifies me."

I was glad that the telephone interrupted at this moment and I went inside to answer it. Tom Leatherman's voice asked me brusquely if I'd been to his house; he'd missed the syrinx. I said the owner had seen it and taken it. Then I hung up on Tom's questionings.

"The owner?" asked Cecily pointedly.

I took her in my arms and told her what I had seen and heard and promised and believed in spite of myself.

"I knew it, Craig. It does sound incredible, but I knew he was not a real man. A god in our garden! Incredible."

"Cecily, our visitor *is* a god from the Old World. I have to believe it. I don't want to, and I don't like the situation, but I have to believe it or consider myself quite mad. Look, darling, he can do things. . . . Do you realize that I've been trying for months to get up courage to tell you I loved you? He made me say it."

I shook her gently and held her from me that I might search her face. Had she feigned her confession of love?

"Cecily, did you really mean that you love me?"

She came back into my arms with a naturalness that I had never quite hoped to see from her, in whom spontaneous impulse had been so carefully pruned away by her mother's prim ideas.

"Craig, Mother has always told me I mustn't act on impulse. I've always been afraid to let myself go," she admitted. "But I couldn't pretend before *him*."

I said to myself, Pan was indeed a potent god. In his presence Cecily's inherited and carefully nourished ideas of prudery had died and her heart wakened to simple, natural impulse. My heart cried "Evohe, Pan!" as intuition told me my recognition of Pan's power was worship and that I was helping establish himself in America by my very gratitude. I held Cecily so that her heart beat against mine. Let it be worship, I told myself joyfully.

We agreed that we would watch the garden in secret that very night. As in most psychic experience, we needed more convincing evidence than we had already received. Aunt Kate was to be told nothing; she would not have believed had we told her. She might even consider us deranged, and forbid the engagement we planned to announce that night at dinner. It was a bit of good fortune that Aunt Kate's room was in an opposite wing from the sunken garden, although whether or not her stodgy materialism would enable her to see, hear, or even sense, anything unusual was questionable.

Ashby opened champagne by my special order after dinner. Aunt Kate seemed well pleased at the announcement of Cecily's engagement to me and even gave Cecily permission to stroll in the garden in my company without chaperonage. We did not take advantage of this rare liberty but retired to a corner of the living room by ourselves after dinner. Aunt Kate played *solitaire* until almost midnight, when to our

vast relief she yawned widely, shuffled the cards into a neat pile and put them in the case.

She said as she rose, that even engaged young people should not be sitting around alone and bade Cecily say good night to me in ten minutes. Cecily looked at me archly and laughed softly, and the moment her mother disappeared from the room, the two of us hid behind the heavy velvet drapes at one of the library windows where we could observe what went on in the garden without ourselves being seen. We sat close together, hand in hand, and waited.

**T**HE night was still with that country quiet so full of sound. Crickets and sleepy birds and an owl's mournful hoo-hoo-hooing made a normal background that yet held something of strange magic on that mystic Midsummer Night's Eve. I was conscious of these small night sounds without actually hearing them. The luminous hands of the library clock marked midnight and the bells chimed the hour. As they ceased, Cecily and I were so aware suddenly that something had changed, that something more than simple nature—above it, beyond it, yet containing it in some mysterious way—had come into the garden, that our hands tightened involuntarily.

A low, sweet note swung out upon the waiting night, to be followed by others that dropped into a silence hollowed to receive them. Nature, become receptive, withheld those night sounds that had filled space, and drew into her yearning heart all the golden beauty that dropped generously from the pipes of Pan. Her patron god was abroad that night and well my garden knew it.

Cecily whispered, "Craig, I am not afraid any more. Pan calls tonight for love and laughter."

I clung to her hand then, for it was I who was afraid, not for myself but for her.

"Craig! The marble nymph! Look!"

The delicate notes followed each other like individual entities into the waiting silence like fays sporting from flowering spray to spray. Cecily stood up so that I must stand with her, since our fingers were tightly interlaced. She was listening with her head tilted to one side, exactly as the nymph had stood beneath the crystal spray of the fountain. I followed her gaze as she listened with almost painful intensity and I could not smother a low exclamation at what I saw.

The nymph no longer held the scalloped shell above her head; the shell lay on the base of the pedestal. The nymph was dancing down the garden like a wild woman in a Bacchic orgy. The gleaming snowy marble of her body moved with the freedom of living flesh. Her scanty drapery drifted in the air where she held it high above her head like a triumphal banner as she drifted, rather than danced, across the shadowy lawn under the stars.

A series of brief notes with strange intervals lilted upward to my ears. Cecily jerked her fingers from mine. I had felt the pull of that bold theme as well as she but I tried to restrain her, fearing as I did that Immortal who waited without.

"Let me go, Craig, my dearest. Do you hear that call? I am going to dance all night on the soft green grass. Are you coming? Come, come! If you do not, I must dance with *him*. Oh, dance with me, dearest!"

**E**CSTASY tingled in every passionate intonation of her joyous voice. I tried to seize her but she evaded me, laughing. As she ran, I followed, but she reached the French doors, which she flung wide before I could reach her side. I followed along a trail of draperies she discarded as she ran, and flung one way and the other carelessly. Before me, far lovelier than my wildest dreams could have imagined.

Cecily's gleaming arms and throat shone like silver under the soft rays of the moon.

"Evohe, Pan, great Pan!" her voice floated back to me as she flitted past the strange god who stood piping before the sun-dial, no more disguised as an ordinary mortal.

The brown torso rose from hairy hips and thighs. His narrow dark face with wisp-like beard never left off following the two white figures dancing with abandon under the moon. Once, after a long roudade of thrilling enchantment, he dropped the syrinx from his lips, threw back his head and rocked with silent laughter. For all his alert attention, he was never still for a moment. Those goat-feet tripped lightly to and fro in time to the underlying rhythm of his piping and the unruly black hair tossed above pointed ears and little polished horns.

I approached that strange god without fear, sensing no antagonism toward me. As I approached, he took the reed-pipe from his red lips and called in friendly fashion.

"You leave your maiden to dance alone, youth? Do you not see that for the first time in her poor mortal experience she has become her natural self, uninhibited by silly conventions and prudish teachings? Go, fool. Dance with her. Else must she dance with a god and be lost to you forever."

Thereupon the piping became eldritch and maddening. I found myself leaping across the greensward in great bounds, and I sprang to Cecily's side, seizing upon the hand she extended. "Evohe, Pan!" I shouted madly as we danced and played across the lawn, while the clear moon and twinkling stars poured their rays full of the vital laughter of life upon our bodies abandoned to the ecstasy of that mad dance.

The music of the Pan-pipes went on and on and on and it seemed that our dance need never come to an end. The garden

was full of piping sound, chanting voices, soft laughter. Mysterious Others joined us, as if the dryads and nymphs of the Old World were drifting into my sunken garden in joyous groups. We swung across the grass in long lines, hand in hand, to the melodious magic of Pan's weird music.

Then . . . a sudden, abrupt silence. The golden notes were still. Only the dark pine grove seemed alive as it never had been before, endued with a livingness akin to, but apart from, the trees. Across the lawn the marble nymph flitted. I saw her spring lightly to the pedestal of the fountain and lean over to pick up the scallop-shell. She flung her disheveled garment carelessly across her shoulder. No shaggy-thighed Immortal tripped nimbly to and fro on cloven hoofs before the sun-dial, piping unendurably alluring enchantments.

Cecily's grasp on my fingers relaxed. Her body slipped down at my feet. The faint, luminous dawn touched her skin with rosy highlights. With the amazed mortification overcoming me as one who in a nightmare finds himself unclothed on a busy city street, I had a sensation as if I stood naked under the retiring stars. I knelt beside the girl who had danced with me since midnight with such mad abandon; her heart beat steadily but lightly. I knew she should be inside the house and safe in bed.

I lifted her in my arms and carried her there, kissing her lips as I laid her down and drew the silken sheet over her beautiful body. Then I slipped away, lest her mother waken and find me in Cecily's room, and throw upon my sweetheart the vile suspicions of a so-called pure mind.

**I** WONDERED what conflict would arise in Cecily in the morning, between inherited and tutored tendencies, and the simplicity and naturalness of her behavior un-

der the influence of Pan's piping. I wondered how I could spare her blushes and, to speak truth, my own. But at breakfast that midsummer morn Cecily met my eyes across the table with an entire absence of self-consciousness. I felt almost regretful, because it seemed that she must have thought last night a dream known only to herself, and I—I cherished the memory.

Aunt Kate remarked, as she poured my coffee, that Ashby had reported a change in the posture of the marble nymph. "This being utterly absurd," said she, "I felt that he must have had something to drink. When I accused him, he was most resentful. He said the statue's scarf, or whatever it is she seems to wear so raffishly, is hanging half off her shoulder."

"Isn't half a scarf better than none?" Cecily asked demurely and her eyes met mine clear and sweet, although the loveliest of blushes tinged her cheeks.

"I am still of the opinion that it is ridiculous for Ashby to insist that a marble statue has changed in any way," Aunt Kate retorted. "I'll take a look myself after breakfast."

A tightness about her lips told me that Ashby would be in for a bawling-out if Aunt Kate noticed nothing different and scraped up the first excuse that occurred to me since I felt one must be made sooner or later.

"I sold the marble nymph," said I. "She cost too much and I got a fat profit on the deal. I had a plastic copy made. They tell me the plastic is affected by moonlight," I explained. "It will probably seem to change slightly from time to time. Interesting, isn't it?"

Aunt Kate looked a trifle blank but Cecily broke into a gale of laughter.

I thought I heard a delicate roulade of echoing laughter drift to my ears from the sunken garden.

