

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U. S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 34

CONTENTS FOR JUNE-JULY, 1939

Number 1

Cover Design	Virgil Finlay	5
Giants of Anarchy	Eando Binder	5
<i>An amazing glimpse into the future—a world without laws</i>		
Far Below	Robert Barbour Johnson	27
<i>Horror in the New York subway</i>		
They Run Again	Leah Bodine Drake	36
<i>Verse</i>		
Lens-Shy	W. M. Clayton	37
<i>An odd and curious tale about a photographer of the dead</i>		
The Sitter in the Mound	Bruce Bryan	40
<i>Fearful was the archeologist's discovery in an Indian mound</i>		
The Hills of Kandahar	Robert E. Howard	47
<i>Verse</i>		
The Man Who Came Back	Frederic Arnold Kummer, Jr.	48
<i>The genius of a great scientist resurrects fallen soldiers—to what end?</i>		
The Stroke of Twelve	Earl Peirce, Jr.	57
<i>A weird thread linked old Calvert's life with the antique clock</i>		
The Howler	H. P. Lovecraft	66
<i>Verse</i>		
Mansions in the Sky	Seabury Quinn	67
<i>A tale of Jules de Grandin, occult detective and ghost-breaker</i>		
Circe	Edgar Daniel Kramer	85
<i>Verse</i>		
The Phantom Werewolf		86
<i>An alleged true incident—a perfect weird tale</i>		
The Willow Landscape	Clark Ashton Smith	87
<i>An intriguing Chinese fantasy</i>		
Almuric (Part 2)	Robert E. Howard	91
<i>An amazing novel of the demon-haunted world Almuric</i>		
Headache	Paul Ernst	113
<i>An odd little tale about a strange power given to Augustus Taylor</i>		
The Death Watch	Hugh B. Cave	119
<i>What ghastly thing came clumping into the big house?</i>		
"We are no other than a moving row"	Virgil Finlay	128
<i>Pictorial interpretation of a quatrain by Omar Khayyam</i>		
Celephais	H. P. Lovecraft	129
<i>A posthumous weird fantasy by a late great master of eerie fiction</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
Imprisoned with the Pharaohs	Houdini	133
<i>The great magician tells an uncanny tale of immemorial Egypt</i>		
The Eyrie		151
<i>The readers interchange opinions</i>		

Published monthly by Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. Entered as second class matter September 24, 1938, at the post office at New York, N. Y. 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: 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. 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.

Copyright 1939, by Weird Tales
 COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.



Taylor uttered a sort of croak. "Stop that!" he belliowed.

Headache

By PAUL ERNST

*A brief tale about a strange power that was given to Augustus Taylor—
a power that he was glad to part with*

SUCH WORDS! From such a person! They almost knocked Augustus Taylor out of his chair.

They'd have been startling enough in the sanctity of his office even if there had been someone around from whom you might expect such language—a shop mechanic, say, instead of pale, demure Miss Plummer sitting beside his desk.

He hadn't been paying much attention to her. He had been staring at her, but abstractedly, not thinking of her at all. He had been thinking of the curious little ache in his head that had started a moment ago. A queer thing, as sudden as though a small switch had been snapped in the middle of his skull. Snap. Then the ache. Deep down inside his head. Nothing to

worry about; nothing to stop work for; nothing serious; but the most peculiar little ache he had ever experienced:

And then the words, incredibly, from prim Miss Plummer, waiting to take dictation.

"Fat old fool!"

Augustus Taylor's gaze focussed in incredulous attention on her face instead of merely in her general direction; on that long, horsy face which displayed about as much sex appeal and recklessness as an 1890 hymn-book.

"Miss Plummer!" he gasped. "What was that you said?"

"I beg your pardon?" She was positively gaping at him. Even her teeth looked prim and secretive, just peeping from the edges of prim, pale lips.

"I said, what was that you called me?"

"Why, I didn't call you anything, Mr. Taylor. I didn't say a thing."

And then Augustus Taylor realized that she *hadn't* said anything. He had been watching her, however inattentively, and he could remember that her lips had not moved. Yet he had distinctly heard those words. Fat old f——

"You're sure you didn't say anything?"

"Of course I'm sure, Mr. Taylor." She looked at him out of pale, correct eyes. Incredibly, even her eyes looked bony, plated with armored virtue.

Taylor cleared his throat. "I——" he began.

"You *are* a fat old fool, you know."

There! He'd heard it again. And from Miss Plummer. It had to be from her. There was no one else in the little private office.

"Miss Plummer!"

Miss Plummer got to her feet. There was annoyance inlaid with alarm on her long features.

"What *is* the matter, Mr. Taylor? Don't you feel well? Shall I get you an aspirin or something?"

Taylor touched his forehead with his handkerchief, for he was realizing again that Miss Plummer's lips hadn't moved when he'd thought to hear the repeated outrage against his dignity. Damn the woman! Was she a ventriloquist or something?

"No. I feel all right," he mumbled. "But I won't dictate for a little while. You can go. I'll ring when I want you."

She went out, looking perplexed and a little afraid, which was not unnatural. Taylor himself felt precisely the way she looked, with fear having the edge on perplexity. What the devil was the matter with him? Was he going nuts? But he had distinctly heard those words. And there had been no one else to speak them. . . .

HE WENT to the window and peered out. It was three floors down the straight side of his brick factory to the cement walk. No one could have been hanging out there to whisper the words. He went to the door of his little wash-room and opened it. Empty. Yet he had heard——

He went back to his desk and sat down, staring unseeingly at a stack of shop records of the conduct of the gray-metal gear and pulley-wheel business. The queer little ache was still with him, deep down in the center of his skull. Not very noticeable; not distracting enough to take his mind off the impossible thing that had just occurred.

His door opened and his partner, Alex Healy, came in. Healy was as thin and dour as Augustus was plump and, normally, breezy. Alex handled the finance and production. Augustus took care of sales and contact.

"'Morning, Augustus," said Healy. "Why don't you die and let somebody run this business that knows how to handle it?"

"*What?*" said Taylor.

Alex stopped halfway from the door to the desk.

"I said 'good morning,'" he said, lips parted a little, dark eyes puzzled. "What's there about that to make you jump?"

Taylor sank back into his chair with something like panic in his heart. "Good morning" was all his partner had said. His mind told him that. Alex's mouth had moved with those two words—and that was all.

But the rest of the words, about dying and letting somebody run the business who knew how—hang it, he'd heard that too.

"What's on your mind?" he asked, in a voice that wasn't quite his own.

"Just wanted to remind you of the meeting with Proctor this noon," Healy said. "Lunch, you know."

Taylor nodded. He had lain awake over that appointment. Proctor wanted the Taylor-Healy Gray-Metal Company to work exclusively on parts for the Proctor Motor Corporation. No more sales expense. Contact with only one giant customer. Machines set to make only the Proctor-type gears. Took a lot of grief out of business, but it was rather dangerous. One-customer companies took it on the chin if the one customer got picky.

"I'll be on tap," he said to Healy.

They talked the Proctor thing over for a few minutes, with Healy all for accepting the chance, and with Taylor doubtful. Then Healy went out.

AUGUSTUS left his private office also. He thought he'd go to the shop for a few minutes. Alex handled production, but Augustus liked to poke around the lines and keep his finger in production, too. He liked the machines, and the hard-handed lads putting them through their tricks. The men liked him, too, he thought.

He wandered to the cooler in the gen-

eral office first, and took an aspirin with a drink of water. That confounded little ache in his head! Had he better go to a doctor about it? He decided not. It really wasn't bad enough. It was just the oddity of the thing. It seemed to be just over the roof of his mouth, making him feel a little as you feel when you eat ice-cream too fast.

He walked toward the records clerk, whose desk was nearest the door. A nice kid. Benny Something. A good worker. He was bending studiously over ruled yellow cards on his desk now. Augustus stared at him—and for a moment didn't see Benny at all!

Instead, as clearly as though seeing it on a three-dimensional movie screen, he saw two figures. Benny, and a girl. And their activities were such as to halt Taylor in his tracks and turn his face a red that was somewhere between brick and purple.

The girl had reddish hair and was young and altogether lovely. At the moment she sat on Benny's lap and clung to Benny, and she looked lovingly into Benny's eyes while he stared back lovingly into hers. It was a picture that might have been appropriate on the shore of a moonlit lake, but here—in an office!

Taylor uttered a sort of croak and grasped at the wall for support.

"Stop that!" he bellowed.

The image swiftly dissolved, and he saw Benny, alone and perfectly decorous, staring up in alarm at him from his work-piled desk.

"Stop what?" said Benny, mouth open in amazement.

"Why——" said Taylor. "Why——"

He stopped there. He could find nothing more to say.

Benny got up and hurried to him. He put his hand under Taylor's arm.

"Mr. Taylor! Is anything the matter? Do you feel all right? Can I get you anything?"

Augustus stared over Benny's shoulder.

Two desks behind Benny's, looking at him anxiously as all the rest in the office were now looking, was a girl with reddish hair. She was the girl Taylor had seen with Benny; pretty, but not as downright beautiful as she had been in the tableau; and furthermore quite decent in posture.

"I'm all right," said Taylor. "Quite all right, now. Don't worry."

Benny stood a moment longer with his hand under Taylor's arm. "Okay," he said, and went back to his desk.

Augustus resumed his way toward the shop door, and the office force returned to their tasks.

"Good Lord!" Augustus muttered to himself.

An inkling of what this was all about had begun to penetrate. Maybe it should have penetrated before, but it hadn't. A practical man doesn't waste time dwelling on impossible things.

"Good Lord!"

He was reading people's minds. That was the explanation of the fantastic thing he'd just seen at Benny's desk, and of the incredible messages of Alex and Miss Plummer. Thoughts had come to him, not scenes or words. How the ability had been given him, he didn't know. But it had been, unless he had suddenly gone plain crazy and was imagining these things.

HE GOT to the shop, a bewildered, rather frightened man, and started down the double row of light stamping-machines set up on the third floor. The foreman came toward him, a stocky man with square hands and a smiling face in which shrewd eyes were set. They met beside a machine that was stamping out plate-gears as fast as three-eighths sheet steel could be fed into it.

"Hel-lo, Mr. Taylor." The foreman was a genial soul. "Out here to poke your fat nose in business you know nothing about?"

Augustus bit his lip. The last sentence

hadn't been spoken; the foreman's mouth hadn't moved.

"Hello," he said stiffly. "How's the rush order for Temple Wheel coming along?"

"Fine, Mr. Taylor. Fine." The man smiled at him, and Taylor suddenly saw a plump, pink-faced gentleman held under the adjacent stamping-machine while the pounding dies made cat's meat of him. The plump gentleman was himself, and the holder was the smiling foreman. Just a nice little picture lasting for perhaps half a second, and then dissolving.

"Just thought I'd ask," said Taylor, plump shoulders drooping. He turned, went back to his office, got his coat and hat, and left the building. He got in his car and drove downtown. There he entered a bar, the first time he'd ever seen one before two in the afternoon. He ordered a straight rye, and stood over it.

The rye soothed that queer little ache that had snapped on so suddenly in his head, and blanketed some of the chaos in his brain. He had two more, and then went out and stood on the crowded downtown street corner.

A lovely sense of well-being suddenly possessed him. He hadn't felt that way since his honeymoon, twenty-two years ago. He turned, smiling, and looked into the face of a woman who was approaching the corner. She was about fifty, dressed in black including peculiarly hideous black gloves, and walked with a slight limp. She wore woman's-club glasses, and she glared through them at Taylor's languorous smile.

Even as she glared, Taylor's dreamy but normal sense of well-being turned into something exotic in the extreme. He stared at the woman with saucer eyes.

"How dare you stare at me like that!" the woman snapped through frosty lips, and went on.

Taylor drew a long breath, and gave himself over to the thought-currents of

the passers-by, most of whom ignored him. The mechanics of this thing began to be resolved into some sort of clarity.

It seemed that he read people's minds in several different ways. Sometimes he got thoughts as words, sometimes as pictures, sometimes merely as half-defined, pure sensation. But then that was natural, he told the three straight ryes under his belt. That was the way everybody thought: in words, if it was about something you couldn't see in your mind's eye; in pictures if it was action that could be physically imagined; in abstract sensation if the idea could be neither pictured nor verbally expressed.

The business got kind of fascinating, for all Taylor was still more than a little scared by his new ability. One of the most interesting phases of it, he found, was the sheer obscenity emanating from the minds of the damndest proper-looking people. He'd thought a few things himself, he admitted, but nothing like the pictures and sensations he got from some of the pinched-lipped men and business-like women passing him in the crowd.

HE STAYED there till nearly one, and the ryes wore off and he realized he'd better be getting to that luncheon with Proctor and Alex.

It was a conservative club. Proctor, a kindly-looking elderly man, respected as dean of the automobile business, chatted with Healy and Taylor till eating and drinking was done. Then he broached his proposition of buying their output.

"It leaves you safe in spite of the fact that you're putting all the Taylor-Healy eggs in one basket," Proctor concluded benignly. "For I propose to sign a contract that binds me indefinitely to buy all my gears from you, at a cost-plus price. For my own protection I'd like to add a clause to the effect that I be temporarily released from that contract in case of emergency. If

your production bogged down, or for some other reason you couldn't deliver the goods, I'd have to get material from someone else, of course." His kindly eyes twinkled. "And we'll see to it, by God, that your production does bog down. Then you'll go bankrupt and Healy and I will take over, with Healy right under my fist."

Taylor turned his wine-glass, with thumb and forefinger manipulating the stem; turned it and turned it.

"The clause is meaningless, of course," Proctor said. This time his lips were moving. "Just a technicality. The main thing is that I would be assured of a steady supply, and you of a steady market——"

"No," said Augustus, looking at the glass.

"Eh?" Proctor blinked.

"We'll pass up your 'nice' proposition, you dirty crook."

"Young man," said Proctor, rising trembling to his feet.

"Augustus!" said Healy. "Are you crazy?" He turned to Proctor. "I don't know what ails him. Pay no attention. We'll think it over some more——"

"No, we won't," said Taylor. "I own controlling interest, and I say we won't. Like it or lump it, both of you. I think I'll go home for the rest of the day, Alex. I don't feel well."

Which was a mild way of putting it. Didn't feel well? He felt like the prince of pariahs slinking down the streets of hell. His secretary loathed him, his partner wanted to kill him off, his favorite foreman would like to throw him to the punch-presses, his office force engaged itself in mental seduction, and now one of the most venerated men in business had just tried to swindle him like a common crook. Decidedly he didn't feel well!

It wasn't till he got to his own threshold that a quite obvious thing struck him. No person with whom he'd come in contact since this mad ability to read minds had

been visited on him, had entertained a kindly thought for him—with the possible exception of the frost-faced matron in the black gloves. Now he was entering his own home to greet his wife. What would *her* thoughts be like?

IT WAS mid-May and sunny, but the redolent breeze felt cold on Taylor's forehead. He and Louise had lived together for twenty-two years in a contentment that was remarked on by all who knew them. They did have their spats once in a while, but really they adored each other and lived only for each other. They said so, frequently; and Augustus knew that, for his part, he was actually quite fond of Louise, and he'd always been sure that she was fond of him. But then, Alex had always acted the part of a perfect partner, and Miss Plummer had looked as if she couldn't say "Darn" without getting her tongue twisted over the improper word, and his third-floor foreman had seemed to have a positive affection for him, and Benny. . . .

Taylor dabbed at his forehead. What did Louise really think, under her smooth placidity and almost sluggish propriety? He didn't want to know, and in about a minute he was going to, unless he turned around and went away again.

However, that was a stupid longing. He had to face his wife sometime. He opened the door with his key and stepped in. He heard his wife's voice in the little side sitting-room. She was talking to someone on the phone.

He felt like yelling to her, "Louise, it's me. Come to me, but don't think. Talk to me but don't think. Don't think!" He felt like turning tail and running. He actually did start out the door again, but with a driven curse he turned back; so determinedly, indeed, that the hall rug slipped under his feet and he fell, banging his head against the wall, not hard, because

he'd gotten his hand up, but hard enough.

Louise appeared in the sitting-room doorway.

"Augustus!" she said. "When did you get in?"

"Just now," said Taylor.

"You mean—just now? You didn't come in a minute ago?"

"I came in this very minute," said Augustus, rubbing his head. He wasn't looking at her. Maybe if he didn't look at her he wouldn't be able to read her mind.

Louise came up to him, then, cooing sympathy. "Poor darling! Here, let me help you up. Give me the coat and hat. Sit down here. I'll finish my phone talk and mix a shaker of cocktails to celebrate your afternoon off and cure your head. I was talking to Ada Bronston when you came in. Did you ever meet her? Awfully nice, but a bore sometimes."

She was retreating to the sitting-room, from the library, as she talked. Augustus heard her at the phone again.

"Darling, it's off for this afternoon. Don't come over. My husband's playing truant from the office, so I'll be with him. Yes. *Husband*. Sorry, *Ada*."

Augustus rubbed his head. There was a little lump on it, but that was all. He was rubbing mechanically, not thinking about the bump, thinking about the odd headache instead. It was gone. He couldn't feel it at all, any more.

Louise came from the kitchen with a shaker of elaborately mixed cocktails in an incredibly short time, considering it was the servants' day off and she must have mixed them herself. But Augustus didn't pay much attention to the time element. He was busy with the fact that his curious deep headache was gone, and with the fact that all he got from Louise was what she said. He didn't seem able to read minds any more.

Perversely, now, he regretted it. But he decided that on the whole he was glad.