

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.



"In God's name!" I gasped; "what does it mean?"

Lens-Shy

By W. M. CLAYTON

An odd and curious tale about a photographer who was assigned to photograph the corpse of his uncle

I WAS just about to call it a day when the phone rang. It was Walter Beamish, suggesting we have dinner together at *Au Gai Penguin*, which, by the way, is one of New York's few authentic French restaurants. "I have a

rather unpleasant job on tonight, and I need your cheering company," was the way he put it.

Had I known what a startling denouement was to climaxx that "unpleasant job." —but I didn't, so I accepted the invitation.

Over our Dubonnet (Monsier Gai disapproves of cocktails), Walter opened up.

"That job I referred to is photographing a corpse," he began abruptly, "and to make it worse, it's an uncle of mine, or was, rather. Not that I ever had much to do with him," he added, "for we never got on together. Uncle Fred—he was my mother's brother—didn't like me, and strongly disapproved of my work."

"Why? Didn't he like to have his picture taken?" I asked idly. I may say that Beamish, with whom I roomed during my freshman and sophomore years at Columbia, is the highly paid first assistant in a smart Fifth Avenue studio, is recognized as one of the best portrait men in America, and is an ardent researcher in optics, refraction and such other sciences appertaining directly or indirectly to photography.

"Like to have his picture taken?" Walt literally snorted. "Why, darn him! That was one of the things we quarreled over. I begged him again and again to sit for me—the old boy would have made a wonderful subject—marvelous type—but it was an obsession with him. I once jokingly accused him of having some criminal reason to fear having a picture made, and he flew into a rage, his eyes actually seeming to glow with animal fire, and ordered me never to enter his home again. That was years ago, but he never forgave me and I never saw him again—didn't know he was dead until my aunt phoned me today. She always wanted a picture of him, but nothing doing. Guess she figured now was her chance. At any rate she asked me to come tonight and take a picture of him in his coffin."

"Creepy sort of business, I should think," I observed.

"Oh, it's not unusual," Walter replied. "I've done it several times in the way of business. It's really easier than a regular picture. No difficulty about the pose, for one thing. And we always charge extra,"

he grinned. "Of course there's nothing in tonight's job—cash, I mean. I'm only too glad to oblige my aunt, who is as decent as the dear departed was the reverse. Oh, well, funny how things work out; I'll get my picture after all—but unless I fake the setting, it won't be a study I can exhibit."

The conversation drifted to other matters, and the dinner progressed through its several excellent courses until, comfortably filled with a sense of well-being and the result of Monsieur Gai's culinary skill, we separated, Beamish to go on his gruesome errand, I to my room to dig into an abstract of title. I might mention that I am an attorney, employed by one of the big title companies.

TWO or three weeks passed with no further word from Beamish, and I had about forgotten our dinner and his engagement with a corpse when again the telephone brought both to my mind. It was Beamish, phoning me at my apartment.

"Hello! Jim? Walt speaking," he began. "Say, you remember that little job I had on hand the last time we had dinner together? Uncle Fred, you know?"

"Sure! Sure!" I replied, half jokingly. "The late lamented was to sit for his portrait in spite of himself. How did it turn out? Did mind triumph over matter and the corpse arise and smash the camera?" Perhaps my remarks might be considered in questionable taste, but, first, I knew Walter well enough to feel sure he would not take offense, and, second, I knew with what scientific matter-of-factness he always regarded his work. To Walter, I felt sure, photographing a dead man—uncle or a stranger—was merely part of the day's routine.

For a moment there was a dead silence, and I began to have qualms as to just how impersonally Walter had taken my jocularity. Then his voice came—and even over the wire it seemed oddly strained.

"Eh—no—not exactly," he said. "But it was a rather rum business at that. Can you come over to the studio?"

"Sure thing! What time?" I replied, thinking he referred to the following day, since it was now nearly ten o'clock. Thus I was the more surprised at his answer.

"Now," came over the phone. "I'm at the studio now. I've been away on an out-of-the-city assignment, and only got back this afternoon. Been cleaning up a lot of things here—among them my uncle's picture." Again a pause. "That's what I want to see you about. You'll come?" His voice shot up an octave on the question, and, startled and uneasy without knowing exactly why, I assented.

OF COURSE it was raining—a dismal, cold, penetrating downpour, and as I walked to the corner, alert for a taxi, I mentally anathematized Walter and his uncle for having brought me out. As a bachelor, I may lack some of the home comforts of my married friends, but an open fireplace in my living-room and a reasonably well-stocked wine cupboard atone for much.

The Fifth Avenue building in the fifties in which Walt's employer has his expensive studio was dark as the taxi drew up, but a light shone on the fifth floor and a push on the bell brought a surly watchman who admitted me.

Walter himself opened the studio door and I learned we two were the sole occupants of the premises.

"I've been doing some work on my own after Simmons left," he explained, naming the head of the developing-room. "Among other things, I developed my uncle's picture," he went on abruptly, and I fancied—was it only fancy?—a tremor in his voice. "Come and look at it!"

He led the way into the dark room, then turned. "The subject"—he became suddenly and I think unconsciously profes-

sional in his speech and manner—"was photographed as he lay in his coffin. The casket was on the usual trestles, and I pushed back some palms and flowers so as to be able to focus my camera directly on the face and upper part of the body. Of course I had the camera mounted on a tripod such as we use for such shots. The casket was partly closed, you understand, but the face, shoulders and chest of the subject were clearly exposed to the lens."

Walter's voice was jerky, his words clipped, as of a man under intense nervous strain who takes refuge in the common-places of his trade. He regarded me stiffly for a moment, then turned to a metal stand and picked up a print. Silently he handed it to me. Silently I took it.

This is what I saw.

The end of an elaborate casket. A few leaves obtruding around the margin. The vague outline of a head. The gleaming shirt front and black lapels that denoted evening clothes. But where the face should have been was only a glare of light.

I took this to be merely a spoiled exposure—probably an electric light bulb had fronted the camera's lens, causing the negative to be light-struck. But even as I gazed, it seemed as if I could discern in that nimbus of light a more deeply glowing pair of eyes. Mocking, triumphant, they seemed actually to shine with animal fire.

Then as I turned the print in my hands the semblance of eyes vanished, nor could I again capture the illusion—if illusion it was—no matter how I turned and re-turned the photograph.

The expression on my friend's face showed me he knew what I had seen.

"In God's name!" I gasped; "what does it mean?"

"What does it mean?" he echoed hollowly. "Why, it just means that Uncle Fred held to his resolution. Alive or dead, he wouldn't be photographed!"