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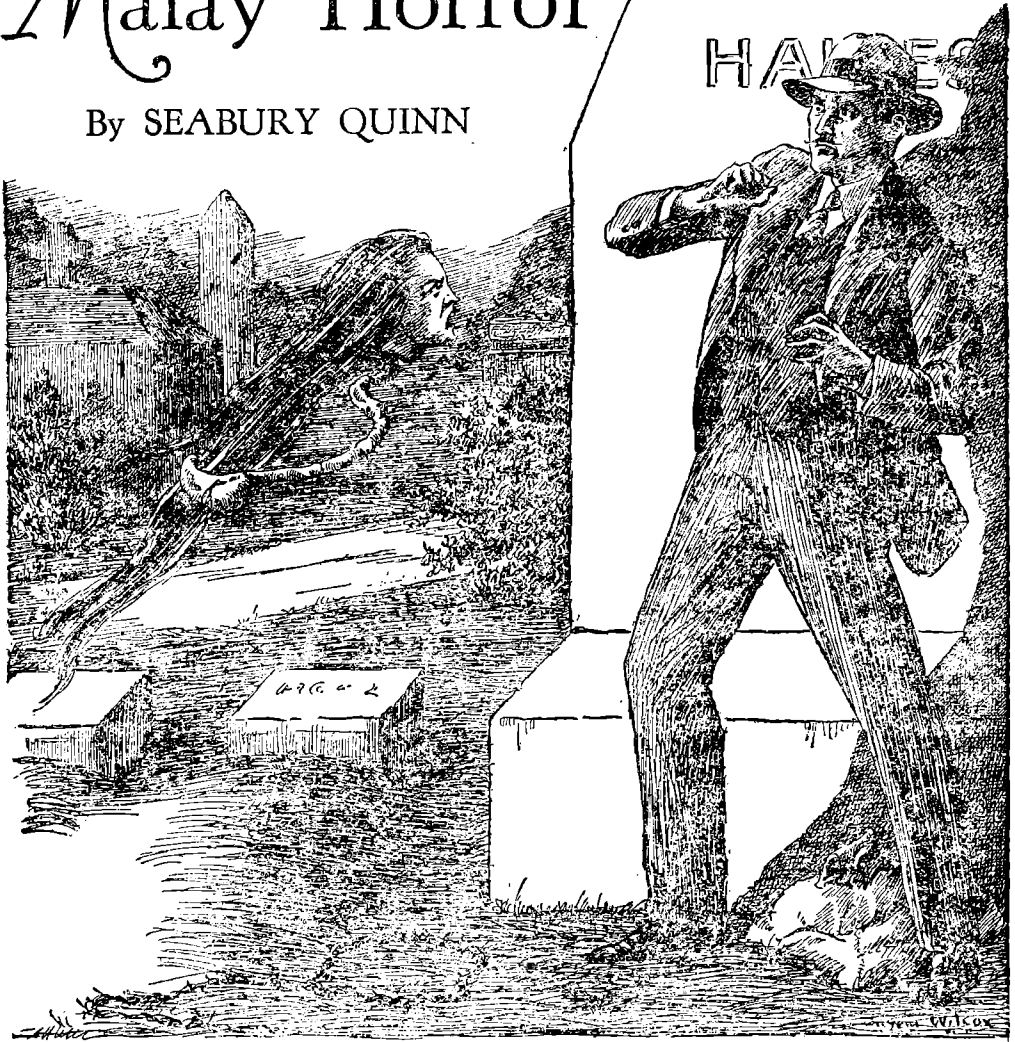


WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

Malay Horror

By SEABURY QUINN

"It launched its gaping mouth
directly at his throat."



A tale of stark terror, and the grisly thing that pursued a beautiful girl to America—a story of Jules de Grandin

THE storm which had been threatening since noon broke with tropic fury just as darkness dropped upon the northern Jersey hills. Hackensack, where we might have found asylum, was half an hour's steady drive behind us, Harrisonville almost as far ahead, and, as far as I could remember, nothing offering more effective shelter than a road-

side tree stood anywhere between, not even a hot-dog stand, a filling-station or a vegetable market.

"Looks as though we're in for it," I muttered grimly, drawing the storm curtains as tightly as I could and setting the automatic windshield-wiper clicking. "If we hadn't stopped for that last drink at the clubhouse——"

"We should have had a ducking, just the same, and should have missed the drink, *parbleu*," Jules de Grandin cut in with a laugh. "A little water is no tragedy, if applied to one's outside, my friend, and——"

The deafening detonation of a clap of thunder and the blinding flash of lightning searing through the dripping heavens interrupted him, and like an echo of the thunderbolt's concussion came the crashing of a tree across the road ahead. Another zigzag of forked lightning ripped the clouds apart and struck its target squarely, hurling a shattered oak athwart the highway just behind us.

Our position was untenable. The thunder had increased to drumfire quickness, and everywhere about us trees were crashing down. Our only safety lay in abandoning the car and taking to the open fields. Turning up our jacket collars, we scrambled from the shelter of the motor-car and dodged among the groaning, storm-racked trees.

The trip through the woods was like running the gauntlet of a barrage, for the lightning was almost incessant and the howling storm-wind bent the tree trunks and ripped off branches, which came hurtling down with smashing impact. More by luck than conscious effort, we struggled through the copse of oak and maple and padded ankle-deep in sodden grass across the open field.

"Yonder—shines—a—light!" de Grandin bellowed in my ear between cupped hands, then pointed to a shifting, fitful gleam which shone through the blinding storm three hundred yards or so away.

I sank my chin a little deeper in the collar of my sopping jacket and, bending my head against the driving storm, began to trot toward the promised shelter.

"Odd," I reflected as we struggled through the drenching rain, "there

shouldn't be a light up there. The only house within a mile is the old Haines mansion, and that hasn't been occupied since——"

Shaking the water from my eyes I brought my cogitations to a stop. Only a fool would pause for thoughts like these when shelter from the storm was offered.

"*Holà, à la maison!*" de Grandin shouted, hammering on the rain-polished panels of the mansion's heavy door. "Make open the door all quickly, *pour l'amour de Dieu!* We drown, we perish; we are very uncomfortable!"

His hail was twice repeated before we heard a shuffling step and the big door was moved back a scant six inches to permit an old and very wrinkled yellow man to inspect us critically with small, unwinking eyes which somehow reminded me of those of a monkey.

"I am Doctor——" began the Frenchman, and at the title the door swung fully open and the porter motioned us to enter.

"You docta feller?" he asked as we dodged gratefully into the proffered shelter. "You get here pretty quick. Me tefelone you ten-twenty minute, you say no can do for long time while God feller make big lain, then you come *chop-chop*, all same. Me think you dam' good feller for come like that through storm. Missy Lady all same pletty sick. You not chase devil feller out, me think maybe so she die pletty quick. You come now. She wait up stair." Peremptorily he motioned us to follow him.

My surmise had been right. It was the old Haines mansion where we were, though who our strange host and the mysterious "Missy Lady" who waited upstairs for us might be, and what they did in a house of evil memories which had been closed for twenty years, was more than I could guess.

Whoever they were, they had gone far

toward making the old ruin habitable. Broken windows had been reglazed, the rosewood wainscoting had been oiled and polished and the oaken floors freshly waxed and strewn with an abundance of warm-colored Indian rugs. Electric light had been in the experimental stage when the foundations of the old house were dug, but some one had evidently rehabilitated the carbide gas plant in the cellar, and flames burned brightly in the ruby-glass globes of the ceiling chandelier with a scarcely audible hiss. Cedar logs blazed comfortably on the newly polished brass fire-dogs beneath the high mantel; curtains of bright silk and lam-brequins of split bamboo, such as had been fashionable in the middle eighties, hung at the arched doorways leading from the hall.

We paused a moment by the cheerful fire, but: "You come," our guide admonished in a high, cracked voice, glancing back across his shoulder. "Bime-by dly clothes. Now you come chase devil-devil out Missy Lady's neck. You savvy?" He shuffled almost soundlessly toward the wide stairway above which our unexpected patient waited.

SURPRIZING as the rejuvenated mansion was, our guide was more so. Scarcely five feet tall, he was as thin as almost fleshless bones could make him, and his butter-colored skin was stretched drum-tight upon his skeleton everywhere except his face. There it was cut and etched and crisscrossed with innumerable deep-cleft wrinkles till his countenance resembled the rind of a frost-bitten pumpkin. A little green-silk cap was perched rakishly upon his hairless head; a tightly buttoned jacket of freshly washed and starched white drill encased his torso; in lieu of trousers his nether limbs were cased in a length of brightly batiked cotton wound

so tightly in a skirt-like drapery that it forced him to proceed with a hobbled, shuffling gait. Heelless shoes of woven straw, like the slippers Chinese laundrymen wear at their work, were on his feet, and their straw soles grated softly with a *whish-whish* at each sliding step he took across the polished floor.

The unmistakably sickly-sweet scent of burning joss-sticks assailed our nostrils as we followed up the stairs and down the upper corridor to a darkened bedroom where our conductor paused and called softly: "Missy Lady, docta fella come all quick for dlive off devil-devil. You see 'um now?"

An odd-sounding, half-articulate gurgle, like the cry of some one being slowly strangled, answered him, and he motioned us to enter. No light burned in the room, but here and there the gloom was dotted by the ruddy glow of smoldering punk sticks, and the air reeked with the cloying sweetness of the incense.

"*Morbleu*, it is intolerable!" de Grandin cried. "Lights, my ancient one, and quickly; then fling away these so abominable inventions of the devil. No wonder she is ill! This stink, it is enough to make a camel weep for envy!"

A match scratched, and a moment later a gas flame flared behind the etched glass shade of a wall fixture. By its light we saw a woman lying in a great sleigh bed, pillows heaped behind her till she seemed to sit more than to recline. A silken coverlet was drawn close about her chin. A bunch of bright red flowers, oddly reminiscent of a funeral wreath, lay on the comforter. There was something coppery, almost metallic, about her. Her hair, thick and very glossy, was the color of new-minted copper, and simply parted in the middle, drawn above her ears and knotted low upon her neck. Her eyes were almost bronze in shade, and shone

as if with unshed tears. Her features were small and straight and regular, chin pointed, lips rather thin, but exquisitely curved, her skin an even golden tan which told of long exposure to the sun.

"*Eh bien, Mademoiselle*, it seems we are arrived in time to save you from asphyxiation," de Grandin announced. "Your—the excellent old one who admitted us—informed us that you were indisposed. What seems to be——"

He paused beside the bed, and his thin, sensitive mouth drew sharply down at the corners. "*La diphthérie?*" his lips formed the words silently as he looked at me for confirmation of the diagnosis.

I looked sharply at the patient. Her face was slightly cyanotic, her lips were slightly parted and her breathing stertorous. Constantly her throat was working, as though she sought to swallow some obstruction, and, there was no doubt about it, her eyes were definitely protuberant, as from a pressure on the trachea, perhaps a consequence of Graves' disease. No swelling of lymphatics at the angle of the jaw appeared, however, and I withheld my opinion till I had an opportunity of examining the fauces and tonsils.

"Will you open your mouth?" I asked, leaning over her; then:

"I say, de Grandin, look at this!" I cried, incredulity in my voice as I pointed to the patient's throat. Around her neck, midway between the jaw and shoulders, was a plainly marked depression, smooth and circular, as from an invisible ligature which seemed to be drawing steadily tighter with garroting force, for even as we looked we saw the indentation grow white and whiter, saw the shrinking flesh sink further as the unseen tourniquet was tightened.

"*Mon Dieu,*" exclaimed the Frenchman, "she is strangling!" and even as he

spoke the girl sat up in bed, clawing at her throat with frenzied hands while her mouth gaped open horribly and her tongue protruded. A choking, gasping sob escaped her tortured lips; then she fell back limply on the pillows, eyes closed, chest heaving, little whimpering noises sounding in her throat.

But the spasm seemed definitely over. Her breath came naturally, though with considerable labor, and the white ring on her throat began to fade.

"*Attendez-vous,*" de Grandin hailed the little yellow man. "Ammonia, aromatic spirits of ammonia—*non*, ten thousand small blue devils, you can not understand!—where in Satan's name is the bathroom?"

"Bathroom?" the other echoed uncomprehendingly.

"*Précisément; la salle de bain*—the place where medicines are kept!"

"Oh, me savvy," said the other in a flat and uninflected voice. "You come; I show you."

They hurried down the hall and presently de Grandin returned with a glass of ammonia and water, which he administered to the patient. "I would we had some belladonna hand, he murmured as the girl drained the draft and settled back upon her pillows. "It would be of assistance. There is nothing but cosmetics to be had back there, and paint and powder are no use in such a case. If——"

"What do you make of it?" I interrupted, thinking wonderingly of the cincture we had seen form round the girl's slim throat, apparently for no earthly reason.

"*Parbleu*, I do not know," he told me earnestly. "If it were not for certain things I should have said it was the work of——"

A wild, high wail from the little yellow man cut short his words. "*Abee,*

abee — *penanggalan, penanggalan!*" he shrieked, falling to his knees and bowing forward like a closed-up jack-knife. "*Abee, awab!*"

"*Que diable?*" snapped de Grandin; then:

"*Ohé, mon Dieu, one sees! Behold, my friend, he speaks the truth!*" Seizing my shoulder he whirled me round to face the window, and pointed to the rain-glazed pane.

There, limned against the background of the tempest's blackness, hung a face.

I say "hung" advisedly, for it showed against the window in the very center of the pane, and from above and underneath there was nothing to support it. It was a handsome woman's face, beautiful with a sort of eery beauty, but deadly in its look of hatred and malignancy. The skin was an incredibly lovely shade of golden brown, smooth and faintly iridescent, the hair which framed it was a dull cloud of ebon splendor. The features were clear-cut, classic, but exotic; high, wide brow, straight, thin nose with faintly flaring nostrils, sharp, pointed chin and thin, black-penciled brows curving like circumflexes above a pair of wide, green eyes with pupils flecked with red, burning like live cinders, unwinking, mesmeric. The mouth was large, with thin, cruel, scarlet lips and white and gleaming teeth which showed their vicious sharpness as the lips curled back in a soundless snarl of leopardine fury.

Beneath the head there was no body, but a length of esophagus hung pendantly below the severed neck, and from this in turn hung a stomach sac. It was incredible, impossible, bizarre; but there it was: a living, grinning face with unsheathed stomach and esophagus was *floating in the air* outside the bedroom window.

"GOOD heavens," I exclaimed, "what *is* it?"

"The *penanggalan*, did not you hear him say so?" de Grandin answered, and, it seemed to me, he had grown calmer since the dreadful apparition showed outside the window. Whirling toward the bed he snatched up the wreath of scarlet flowers. As he did so I noticed for the first time that their stems were set with long, curved thorns.

"*Allez, Madame,*" he commanded, stepping toward the window. "*Allez-vous-en!* I have here that which will render you decidedly uncomfortable if——" he threw the window open and swept the thorn-set flowers in a wide half-circle. As he did so the half-dissected horror gave ground, hovered menacingly in the swirling rain a moment, then disappeared from view with a shrieking, cachinnating laugh which was half sardonic merriment, half despairing scream.

"So," he murmured as he closed the window and replaced the flowers on the bed. "At last one understands—in part, at least. One might have damn suspected something of the kind, yet it is strange, infernally strange that such an one should be here in New Jersey. If this were Borneo or Flores or the Peninsula, one might look for her; but here? *Non*, we must seek further information."

"*Docta Tuan* blave man!" the little yellow individual complimented with a low, ingratiating bow. "Him not 'flaid Missy Penanggalan; him dlive her off pletty dam' quick!"

De Grandin looked at him with interest. "How long has she been flying round the house, my friend?" he asked.

"Long time, three-four week," the other answered. "Missy Joan bling one piecee coffin here from Manula; bury 'um in glaveyard. Pletty soon Miss Penanggalan come fly all lound house."

"Missy Lady ketchum plenty sickness; get devil-devil in neck. All same maybe turn into *penanggalan* pletty soon if Doctor *Tuan* not come *chop-chop* for dlive devil-devil off.

"Ah Kee ketchum plenty thorn-flower for lay on bed. Maybe Missy *Penanggalan* not love that thorn-feller velly much. Ah Kee burn joss-stick all lound loom, too. No dam' good. Missy *Penanggalan* come all time, fly lound house, make bad face outside window. Ah Kee can do no more; he tefelone Docta *Tuan* for come all soon. You dlive devil-devil out Missy Lady's neck, maybe so?"

There was a look of child-like faith and pleading in his wrinkled visage as he spoke. Jules de Grandin beamed on him. "*Pardieu*, that we shall, *mon vieux*, or may I dine upon stewed turnips!" he replied. "And as we speak of dining I remind myself that I have not yet supped. Have you anything to eat about the place? We shall be here all night, it seems, and I would not care to fast till morning."

"All light, me ketchum food," the little man responded. "You stay for look at Missy Lady?"

"We shall most indubitably stay," returned de Grandin. "Bring the food to us when it has been prepared, and do not stint the quantity; this is a very devil of a devil-devil we must fight, and we fight poorly on an empty stomach, my little old one."

As the diminutive yellow man shuffled off, de Grandin turned to me, brows arched, lips pursed quizzically. "This is of interest, my friend," he assured me. "This creature, this *penanggalan* we saw tonight, she is a rare specimen; I have heard of her, but——"

"Ah Kee, Ah Kee, are you there?" a weak voice called. "Did it come again, Ah Kee? I'm afraid; terribly afraid it will come back and——"

"Compose yourself, *Mademoiselle*," de Grandin answered. "Ah Kee is gone, but we are here. I am Doctor Jules de Grandin, this is my good friend and colleague, Doctor Samuel Trowbridge. We were driving past your charming house when the storm broke and we knocked upon your door for shelter. It appeared your excellent intendant had summoned medical assistance, but the one he called had been unable to respond. Accordingly he requested that we help you, and we arrived in time to drive away a most unpleasant visitor. Now——"

"It came, then?" the woman interrupted.

"It came, *Mademoiselle*," agreed de Grandin, "but it also went. '*Allez*,' I told it, and *pouf!* like that it went. Me, I am very clever, *Mademoiselle*."

Despite her fear, the girl smiled wanly as he finished speaking. Women, animals and children took instinctively to Jules de Grandin, and our latest patient was no exception to the rule.

"How did you drive it off?" she asked.

"How? By telling it it was not welcome—and by threatening to lacerate its appendages with the thorns of these flowers," he answered with a grin. Then, sobering suddenly:

"*Mademoiselle*, I have said I am a doctor. That is true; I hold degrees from Vienna and the Sorbonne; but I am more than a physician. I am a practised occultist, and have spent as much time grappling with the foes of the spirit as with those of the flesh. Also I have traveled much, and have spent some time in the Malay Archipelago and Peninsula. When we heard your servant cry out in terror that the *penanggalan* was come, I realized the import of his words, and though I have never come to grips with a demon of this order, I welcome the

challenge which it brings. Will you permit that I assist you, *Mademoiselle*?"

"Oh, yes!" the girl responded. "I've been so terrified; if you will help me——"

"*Très bon*, it is a bargain, *Mademoiselle*," the Frenchman interrupted, possessing himself of one of the slim hands lying on the counterpane and lifting it to his lips. "Now—as you Americans so drolly say—to business. Begin at the commencement, if you please, and tell us everything leading to the advent of these most unwelcome visits. Your servant told us something of your bringing back a coffin to America and having it interred. How was it that you came to do so?"

"It was the body of my father," the girl replied. "I brought it back from Manura for burial in the family plot in Shadow Lawns, and——"

She paused a moment, and a shudder rippled through her frame; then, taking a firm hold upon her quaking nerves, she began anew:

"MY NAME is Joan Haines. I am twenty years old. I was born in this house, and my mother died when I was born. My father, Henry Haines, had spent several years on the island of Manura, and made a considerable fortune and restored the family home before his marriage. When Mother died he was almost beside himself with grief, declared he never wanted to see this place again, and left almost immediately for the Islands. I was taken by my father's cousin, Thomas Haines, who lived in Harrisonville, and reared as a member of his family. I lived with him until a year ago, and his son Philip and I fell desperately in love.

"During all the years when I was growing up my father never wrote me. He sent regular remittances to my uncle

—Cousin Tom was so much my senior that I always called him uncle—for my support and education, but though I wrote him frequent little-girl letters, trying desperately to make him love me, he never answered. Uncle Tom kept in correspondence with him, though, and every time I had a picture taken a print of it was sent my father; so he knew what I looked like, though I had no idea of his appearance.

"My cousin Philip and I had been inseparable as children, went to grammar and high school together, and matriculated at the same college and graduated together. Just after graduation I wrote Father that Phil and I wanted to be married, and then I got the first and only letter which I ever had from him.

"It was stilted and unfriendly, the kind of letter which a stranger might have written, and refused permission for our marriage. He accused Phil and Uncle Tom of wanting my money, and ordered me to come out to Manura at once, as, he said, he had other plans for me.

"I hardly knew which way to turn. Phil and Uncle Tom urged me to ignore Father's orders, but, somehow, I couldn't bring myself to do so. I don't know why it was; perhaps the fact that I'd grown up as a sort of orphan made a difference; possibly the strange, aloof attitude my father had always assumed regarding me piqued my curiosity as much as it excited my vague longings for a real father's affection. At any rate, I decided to go out to him and tell him everything about Phil and me. I was sure that I could win him over. So it was arranged.

"Manura is a little island—just a flyspeck on the map—which lies on the Celebes side of Flores. It took me nearly a month to get out there, and when I finally got there it was too late."

"Too late?" de Grandin echoed.

"Too late, yes," she answered. "My father was dead.

"Manura is nominally under Dutch rule, but it's so unimportant that they haven't a regularly resident administrator there, and the actual government is carried on by the native sultan, Ali Nogoro. When I arrived I discovered that my father had been married for some years to one of the sultan's sisters, a fine-looking native woman named Salanga, who had been given him as wife in return for his promise that he would give *me* to the sultan when I arrived at marriageable age."

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed de Grandin.

"Exactly," she assented with a bitter little smile. "That was the bargain they had made. As Ali Nogoro's brother-in-law, my father had everything his own way in Manura. Other traders were permitted on the island only by his sufferance, and as a consequence of this preference he had become enormously wealthy. But I was the price he had agreed to pay.

"At the last, though, he must have repented his revolting bargain, for I found a will, duly authenticated by the Dutch district commissioner, which left everything to me, and a note requesting me to bring his body back to Harrisonville for burial beside my mother. 'Go home, child,' the note told me; 'open the old house where I was so happy for a little while, and be happy there with the man you love.'

"Fortunately for me, Father had sent much of his fortune home for deposit in American banks, for when I refused to carry out the bargain and marry Sultan Ali Nogoro, he confiscated everything, and had it not been for Ah Kee, my father's half-caste number one man, I probably shouldn't have been able to escape Nogoro after all. You see, I had practically no money when I landed, and Nogoro absolutely refused to let me take

so much as a stick of furniture from my father's house or godown.

"But Ah Kee had some money of his own, and with it he paid the coolies for disinterring my father's coffin, bribed some fishermen to take us to Flores in their boat, then paid our passage to America.

"Bad as Nogoro was to deal with, his sister Salanga, who was, after all, my father's widow, proved far worse. She declared she had 'lost face' by my refusal to carry out the marriage bargain which had been made for me, and the will which virtually disinherited her infuriated her even more. I offered to share everything which Father left with her, half and half, and even had a Dutch notary draw up a quitclaim of half the inheritance, but she tore the paper into shreds, spit at me, and would have done me physical injury if they had not restrained her. The day before I left Manura she committed suicide."

"Suicide?" de Grandin asked. "You mean a sort of vengeance death, like the *hara-kari* of the Japanese?"

"I—I suppose so, sir. Her body was found in the bed she'd occupied in my father's house the day before Ah Kee and I left Manura. But——"

"*Tiens*, now I think that we approach the egg's good meat!" de Grandin cut in softly as she paused in her recital. "Yes, *Mademoiselle*? But——"

"But when the coolies went to the cemetery to disinter my father's coffin they found Salanga's decapitated body sprawled prostrate on the grave. The arms were opened, as though to embrace the mound, and the feet were spread apart, as though to hold down whatever lay beneath. Her neck had been severed close to the shoulders, and the head was nowhere to be found."

De Grandin twisted fiercely at the

needle points of his trimly waxed wheat-blond mustache. "Tell me, *Mademoiselle*," he asked irrelevantly, "who officiated at your father's interment in the grave beside your mother?"

"Why, Doctor Bentley, the rector of St. Chrysostom's; he had been——"

"*Non*, you do misapprehend. I do not mean the clergyman, but the mortician."

"Oh, the undertaker. Why, Mr. Martin, of Harrisonville, who made all the necessary arrangements."

"U'm? Thank you. What then, if you please?"

"Ah Kee and I came out here, and as soon as Mr. Van Ripper, our family lawyer, completes the probate of my father's will, I intend having the place completely modernized. My cousin Philip and I are to be married in the fall, if I——"

Once more she paused, and de Grandin leant forward with quick understanding as he patted her hand reassuringly. "Do not be alarmed, *ma chère*; you will assuredly live that long, and much longer, too," he comforted. "I, Jules de Grandin, guarantee it.

"Now," once more his cool, professional manner asserted itself, "when was it that you first observed these untoward occurrences, if you please?"

"I'VE been home one month tomorrow," she replied. "We'd just come out here, three weeks ago, when one night I wakened from a sound sleep hearing some one laughing at me.

"At first I thought I'd dreamed it, but the laughter persisted, even when I sat up in bed. I looked around; there was no one in the room. Then I rose to light the gas, and as I did so, chanced to look toward the window. *There was Salanga's head*. It hung in midair, with nothing to sustain it, just outside the window, and laughed at me.

"Suddenly I felt a stifling, choking sensation, as though a band were drawn about my throat. I put my hands up to my neck, but there was nothing there. But the throttling feeling grew, and as my fingers touched my throat I could feel the flesh sinking in, as though compressed by an invisible cord. My breath came shorter and shorter, I could hear the heart-beats pounding in my ears, and everything turned black; then bright lights flashed before my eyes. I tried to call Ah Kee, but only a sort of awful gurgle, like water rushing down a drain, sounded when I tried to scream. Somehow I managed to reach the bed and fell there, choking and gasping. Then I lost consciousness.

"When I came to, my throat was sore and bruised, and that awful, bodiless head still hung there just outside the window, mouthing and grimacing at me. Presently it gave a fiendish, screaming laugh and floated away, leaving me half dead with pain and fright.

"As soon as I was strong enough I called Ah Kee, and told him what had happened. He seemed terribly frightened and began mumbling prayers or incantations in Malayan and Chinese. Then he asked me to bolt the door and window, and ran out as though pursued by fiends. In a little while he came back with an armful of Japanese quince, which he twisted into two big wreaths, one of which he insisted on putting on the bed. The other he hung in the window, like a Christmas decoration.

"For the next two nights I rested easily, but the third night I woke up with a feeling of oppression, as though a great weight rested on my chest. I tried to sit up, and instantly the invisible cord tightened round my throat and I began to choke. As I turned my head in agony I

saw Salanga's head staring at me through the window.

"Every night it's been like that. I try to stay awake, drinking strong black coffee and tea so strong and bitter that it fairly rasps my throat, but sooner or later I drop off; indeed, it seems as though there is some curse of sleep upon me, for every evening, just at dusk, I find myself so drowsy that no matter how I fight it, I fall asleep, and sleep is the signal for that dreadful head to come again and that awful choking to begin.

"Sometimes I'm tormented by this sensation of strangulation as often as a dozen times a night; other times I suffer only once, then manage to hold myself awake by main strength of determination, but——"

"Can't you sleep in the day?" I interrupted. "The head doesn't appear in daylight, does it?"

"No, it doesn't; but no matter how exhausted I may be, I can't sleep in the light," the girl replied. "I've tried again and again, but just as I can't seem to keep from dozing as soon as it turns dark, I find myself unable to snatch even five minutes' rest by day. It's maddening, and when I say that I'm not speaking figuratively. I really feel that unless I find some way to escape this torment I'll go crazy."

Thoughtfully de Grandin extracted a cigarette from his case of engine-turned silver, set it alight and blew twin columns of gray smoke from his narrow, sensitive nostrils. At length:

"*Mademoiselle*," he announced, "I think I see an avenue of escape. Will you submit to hypnotism?"

"Hypnotism?"

"*Précisément*. Sleep, as you know, can be hypnotically induced; but that is only half the plan. The skilled hypnotist can, by very strength of will, command the

blood to flow from the subject's hand or leg, leaving the member totally anemic. It is possible that by exercising a similar command I can induce you to sleep naturally and to ignore the orders of this cursed apparition, thus saving you from torment. Are you willing to experiment?"

"Yes, of course," she answered.

"*Bien*. You will compose yourself, if you please, and gaze fixedly at this——" He drew a silver pencil from his pocket and waved it slowly, like a pendulum, before her eyes. "Sleep, *Mademoiselle*; sleep, sleep. Sleep soundly and naturally. Obey me only, heed no other's orders; experience no feeling of compression round your neck. Sleep, sleep; sleep——"

A shriek of wild, unearthly laughter sounded from the storm-swept night outside, and to our horror we descried the telltale band of white begin to form about Joan Haines' throat. The indentation deepened, the crimson of her lips took on a violet tinge and between her parted teeth her tongue protruded. Her eyes bulged forward in their sockets and on each cheek appeared small spots of ecchymoses.

With one accord we turned and faced the window. There, like a miniature balloon, hung the severed head of the *penanggalan*, its red lips parted in a mocking smile of hate, green, red-flecked eyes dancing with devilish merriment, sharp, white teeth flashing in the gaslight's rays.

"By damn, I am annoyed, I am angry and enraged!" de Grandin stormed, snatching up the wreath of scarlet flowers from the bed and rushing toward the window. "Be careful how you play your tricks on Jules de Grandin, *Madame*; he is a very dangerous customer!"

Flinging up the sash he lunged out

iciously with the thorn-spurred blossoms, and so quick and cat-like was his gesture that the laughing visitant was a thought too slow in darting backward.

A shrill, ear-splitting shriek resounded through the night as a sharp thorn came in contact with the floating horror's stomach sac, and a bloody weal appeared upon the serous coating of the greater curvature. Like a wind-extinguished light the dreadful head was gone, leaving but the echo of its anguished wail to tell us it had been there.

"*Ab-ba; ab-ba-ba*, I think that she will pause for self-debate before she interrupts our work again," announced de Grandin as he closed the window with a bang. "Now, *Mademoiselle*, if you please. . . ."

Once more he drew the pencil from his waistcoat pocket and began the process of hypnosis. In a few minutes Joan Haines' eyes closed sleepily; then her lips parted as she drew a deep and tranquil breath. Less than five minutes from his opening command she was sleeping naturally, like a tired child, and though we watched beside her till the eastern sky was streaked with gray, there was no sign of strangling marks upon her throat, nor any indication of a further visitation from the dreadful severed head.

THE storm passed with the night, and, fortified with several cups of strong coffee brewed by Ah Kee, we left Joan Haines sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion and set out for town. Highway patrols had cleared away the wreckage from the road, and we made excellent progress through the clear, rain-washed summer morning.

"Tell me," I demanded as we drove along, "what the deuce is a *penanggalan*, de Grandin?"

He twisted thoughtfully at the ends of his mustache a moment; then:

"She is a sort of nocturnal demon closely analogous to the vampire of eastern Europe," he replied, "but she differs from him in a number of respects. First of all, she is, or was, always a woman, whereas the vampire may be either male or female. Again, while the vampire appears with all his members complete, the *penanggalan* possesses only a head, esophagus and stomach sac, either leaving the remainder of her body at her dwelling-place, or—as often happens—permitting it to rot within the grave while only head and stomach retain their evil immortality.

"How one becomes a *penanggalan* is a matter of debate. Some say she was a woman of evil life who uses the magic arts of the devil who is her master to enable her to detach her head and assume volant powers; others declare she is one who died by self-destruction; still others maintain that she is a sorceress who by her magic contrives to remain alive in this fashion after death has overtaken the remainder of her body. However that may be, it is remarkable that the Malay Islands and Peninsula abound with both wizards and witches, and that they are able to perform tricks and work charms which would have turned the witches of Colonial New England and mediæval Europe green with professional envy. Those who have seen the *penanggalan* at her work invariably identify her as some well-known sorceress, either living or dead.

"Her technique differs from the vampire's, too. The vampire, you recall, recruits his grisly ranks by infecting those whose blood he sucks with vampirism, so that they in turn become as he is when he has drained them of their blood and killed them. The *penanggalan*, upon the contrary, can put her seal upon her victim without resorting to physical contact. True, those she drains of blood die, but

when they die they die dead. When she desires to make another woman even as she is, it is but necessary for her to infest the house where her victim dwells and gaze upon her prey. By a sort of vile hypnotic spell she works upon her victim, makes her neck to show the signs of thongs upon it; finally she strangles her to death. And when death comes——"

He paused to light a cigarette, and I could have thumped his head in my impatience.

"Yes, and when death comes?" I prompted.

"*Eh bien*, then life—of a kind—begins," he answered. "The strangled victim's head parts company with her body at the point the magic ligature has marked upon her flesh, and, dragging the esophagus and stomach after it, it flies screaming off to join its hideous fellows in the ranks of the *penanggalans*.

"You will recall how certain fathers of the early church enunciated the cheerful doctrine that the only melancholy pleasure which the damned in hell possessed was to rail at the other damned and shrieking with obscene delight when a new soul came to join them in their torment? In some such way the *penanggalan* seems to derive a certain satisfaction from exercising her spells on poor unfortunates, separating their heads from their bodies and making them even as she is.

"Like the true vampire, the *penanggalan* is a blood-sucker, though unlike him, she does not have to have the sanguinary diet to exist. Apparently she drinks warm blood for pleasure, as the drunkard imbibes liquor, not because she must. Also, as garlic, wild rose and wolf's bane are powerful vegetable antidotes to the vampire, so is the jerju thistle, or any bush with strong, sharp thorns, distasteful to the *penanggalan*, though

for a different reason. The vampire dare not approach the garlic or wild rose because they exercise a magic influence on him. The *penanggalan* fears a thorn-bush because its barbs are liable to become entangled in her dangling stomach sac, or even to pierce it. If the first contingency occurs she can not get away, for she is as highly sensitive to pain as any living person; if, by any chance, her stomach sac is perforated, it can not repair itself by healing, and she dies from the wound. It was for that reason that she fled from me when I menaced her with the thorny flowers last night—*ba*, I very nearly had her once, too, you will recall."

"Does she lie dormant by day, as the vampire does?" I asked.

"Yes. And like the vampire, she usually chooses a tomb, a cemetery or an old and long-deserted house as her lair. She need not necessarily do this, but apparently she does it as a matter of choice. Also, she is unable to exercise her powers of flight across bodies of water affected by the tides, as, by example, bays, estuaries and tide-water rivers. Does not the knowledge of that limitation give you an idea? Does not a possible explanation of the mystery of her presence leap to the eye?"

"Not to mine," I answered. "What's your theory?"

"That depends upon the information Monsieur Martin gives us."

"Martin? The funeral director?"

"But certainly. Who else? Will you drive past his place before we go home?"

"Of course," I agreed, wondering what connection any information John Martin might be able to give could possibly have with the presence of an Oriental demon in the quiet Jersey countryside.

JOHN MARTIN, leading mortician of Harrisonville, was seated in his private office when we stopped at his funeral home. "Good morning, gentlemen," he greeted. "What's the bad news today?"

"Hein?" replied de Grandin.

The big, gray-haired funeral director laughed. "Some one's always in process of getting in or out of trouble when you're around, Doctor de Grandin," he rejoined. "Can I help 'em out—or in?"

"Perhaps," the little Frenchman answered with a smile. "It is of Monsieur Haines that we inquire. You had charge of his interment, I believe?"

"Yes," replied the other. "I remember the case particularly, because his daughter refused to let me furnish a casket."

De Grandin smiled a thought sarcastically, and Mr. Martin put a quick and accurate interpretation on his grin.

"It isn't the loss of the sale that fixes the case in my mind," he hastened to explain, "but the trouble we had with the Oriental coffin which contained Mr. Haines' body. It was one of those Chinese affairs, heavy as a cast bronze sarcophagus, nearly eight feet long by three feet wide and almost four feet high. Grave space in Shadow Lawns is at a premium, and the Haines family plot is pretty well filled, so burying a coffin of that size was no easy task. We had to get special permission from the cemetery board to have a grave larger than their six foot six maximum dug, and we had to pay seventy per cent. above the usual cost of opening a grave for the extra labor. Then, too, our casket coach, which operates with an automatic electric table, wasn't equipped to handle such a large case, and the coffin was too big to fit our lowering-device. I'd almost rather have made the young lady a present of an American casket than go

through all the trouble that outlandish foreign coffin caused us."

"U'm? And did you, by any chance, open that outlandish coffin?" de Grandin asked.

"Lord, no! As I've told you, it was a Chinese coffin, apparently hewn out of a single giant log, heavy as cast iron, and almost as hard, judging by the feel of it. The top was high, like a gabled roof, and fastened to the lower section by invisible dowels. I don't know how we'd ever have managed to pry them apart, unless we'd used a buzz-saw, if Miss Haines had decided to let us furnish a new casket."

"And was it airtight and watertight?" de Grandin asked.

"Perfectly. The whole thing had been coated and recoated with red lacquer, smooth and hard as porcelain. Dam' clever people, these Chinese. From the standpoint of utility that coffin was as good as anything our best American factories can turn out."

"Thank you, you have helped us greatly, Monsieur Martin," de Grandin answered. "What you have told is precisely what we wished to know."

"Do you go home and see your silly patients," he directed as we left the Martin mortuary. "Me, I have important duties to perform. I shall return at dinner time or sooner, and I pray that you will be in readiness to accompany me to Mademoiselle Haines' this evening. We must watch with her until we can take steps to obviate the danger which is threatening."

IT WAS nearly six o'clock when he returned, and his temper was far from amiable. The unmentionable rules of that unnamable cemetery vexed him, he informed me. Because, *parbleu!* that seven-times-accursed Monsieur Haines

had taken it into his never-to-be-sufficiently-anathematized head to die in a miserable hole of a place like the Island of Manura with no physician in attendance, there had been no death certificate, and the cemetery people absolutely forbade disinterment of that Monsieur Haines' eternally accursed body.

"D'ye really think there's any danger of Joan's becoming a *penanggalan*?" I asked as we drove out the Andover Road toward the old Haines house. "The idea seems so incredibly bizarre that——"

"There is a very real and present danger of her transformation, my friend," he interrupted soberly. "I think the thing which was her stepmother fears me, and will not try to work her spells while I am present, but that makes our need of haste the more imperative. Come, my old one, tread upon the gas; already it grows dark, and darkness is a time of peril for Mademoiselle Jeanne."

Despite our haste, however, darkness had descended before we reached our destination, and the gaslights were flaring brightly in the hall when Ah Kee answered our summons.

"Missy Jo-an all betta," he informed us when we asked him how the patient did. "All day she sleep an' lest. Ah Kee go up to loom one, two, three time for givum breakfast, tiffin, dinner, she not wake no time. All time she sleep like little baby. Bimeby she call Ah Kee for ketchum food. I takee one piecee tlay up to loom ten-twenty minute 'fore you come. You like for see her now? Ah Kee think she all finish eat, maybe so."

De Grandin led the way up to the patient's room, talking volubly. "Behold," he boasted, "am I not the clever one? Did not my scheme for hypnotically induced rest work perfectly? But certainly. Shrewd this *sacré* demon from

the East may be, but Jules de Grandin is shrewder still. He does not——

"*Ab, mon Dieu!* Too late! Look, my friends, see the desolation she has wrought while we dallied on the road. *Ohé!*"

I looked across his shoulder, saw Joan Haines sprawled face downward on the bed, hands outspread, clutching the mattress with stiffening fingers as if for anchorage; then, as he moved aside, my breath seemed to form a hot and sulfurous bolus in my throat and my heart beat quick with horror. For it was not Joan Haines who lay upon that bed. It was her headless body.

"Missy Lady, Missy Lady; Missy Jo-an!" screamed Ah Kee despairingly, leaping forward to seize one of the stiff, white hands clutching at the bedding; but:

"Back, my little one!" de Grandin ordered sharply. "Touch her not; we must——"

A hideous screaming chorus of discordant laughter drowned his words, and as we turned to face the window we beheld two severed heads staring at us from the darkness.

The Malay woman's gold-bronze face was aflame with evil triumph, and her red lips writhed with devilish merriment as she sent forth peal on ringing peal of mocking cachinnation. Her red-flecked eyes of agate-green glowed brightly in her face, her white teeth flashed, her every feature was instinct with triumphant, hellish jubilation.

Beside the black-tressed head another floated, a little, heart-shaped face with cheeks of golden tan, crowned with long ringlets of copper-colored hair which swirled and floated in the evening breeze like the loosened locks of a drowned woman floating round her still, dead face. And though she joined the other in the

duet of derisive laughter, there was no quality of merriment in her tones. Rather, it was the despairing, hysterical shriek of one in whom all hope has died. And in her eyes there was the helpless, hopeless pleading of an animal in mortal pain, and down her cheeks there coursed twin trails of shining tear-drops, even as she laughed.

De Grandin suddenly went berserk. "*Dieu de Dieu de Dieu de Dieu!*" he shouted. "Am I to be mocked by this abomination?—made a monkey of by a head without a body?—ten million thousand damn times no!"

Snatching up a heavy vase he struck it on the bedpost, breaking it across the bottom so that it terminated in a jagged, saw-toothed edge, and hurling it with all his frenzied might straight through the window-pane.

The glass crashed outward with a deafening clash and the sharp-toothed missile flew straight to its mark, striking the dangling stomach sac beneath Salanga's head with smashing, devastating impact.

I saw the globular thing sway drunkenly as the broken crockery hit it, heard the anguished scream which cut short the discord of malicious laughter, then shuddered with physical sickness as a spilth of blood-stained liquid spurted from the ruptured sac.

In a second all was quiet—quiet as the tomb. The cord which dangled from the window-blind flapped idly against the sill as a little breath of breeze crept through the broken pane; the gaslight hissed softly in the etched-glass globe; the still, stark body of Joan Haines lay sprawled immovably upon the bed. De Grandin, Ah Kee and I held our breaths in a very æstrum of horror. Suddenly:

"Name of a name, why do we stand here gaping like three *sacré* fools?" the little Frenchman blazed. "Quick, Friend

Trowbridge, to your car. Prepare to drive us back to town at once. My little one, I would have your immediate assistance."

He seized Ah Kee by the shoulders and fairly dragged him from the room.

I had hardly had time to seat myself behind the steering-wheel when de Grandin and Ah Kee emerged from the house, each bearing a great armful of the red thorn-flowers and a burlap sack.

"Now, Friend Trowbridge, drive; drive like the devil; drive *comme un perdu* to that ninety-times-condemned Shadow Lawns cemetery. We must get there first!" he panted.

"First?" I queried, setting the motor going. "Before whom?"

"Oh, do not stop to talk or argue," he besought. "Go, drive; fly. We must reach that grave before them!"

I PUSHED my motor to its utmost. When I bought the car the salesman had assured me that it would be valuable in responding to emergencies, and that night I proved that he had spoken truly. Sixty, sixty-five, seventy miles the speedometer registered. As we came in sight of the long green fence enclosing Shadow Lawns the needle indicated seventy-five, and a little plume of grayish steam was streaming backward from my radiator cap.

"*Très bon*. It is enough," de Grandin tapped me on the shoulder. "Come."

We scaled the cemetery fence and, led by him, hastened on among the quiet graves till we reached a level plot where a tall, imposing granite shaft displayed the one word:

HAINES

"Now quiet, on your lives," de Grandin ordered as we sank to cover in the shadow of the monument and he and Ah

Kee fell feverishly to work plaiting long loops of the thorny flower-stalks.

I watched them in bewilderment, but so intent upon their work were they that neither took the slightest notice of my presence. At length:

"Is all prepared?" the Frenchman asked.

"Yup. All flinish; dam' good," Ah Kee returned.

We waited silently for what seemed like an hour, and at last de Grandin seized my shoulder. "Observe, behold; they come!" he told me tensely.

Skimming low above the mounded graves there came what looked like a pair of monstrous birds. They flew heavily, almost blindly, wavering from side to side, swooping near the ground one moment, then suddenly rising to a height of several feet with an awkward, bouncing motion. At last they approached near enough for me to recognize them.

They were two severed human heads, each with a round, balloon-like thing dependent from it. The nearer one flew hesitantly, like a wounded bird, lobbing crazily from side to side, its companion following its flight like a timid, awkward child playing follow-the-leader.

Waveringly they winged their way to a newly mounded grave, hovered in the air a moment, then swooped to earth, wriggling with a terrible, revolting snake-like movement down into the grass.

"*Pardonnez-moi*, I do not think you will go home tonight, *Mesdames*," announced de Grandin, stepping from the shadow of the monument. "I have other plans for you."

Deftly, like a skilled *vaquero* casting his lariat, he threw the loop of plaited thorn-bush over the nearer of the burrowing heads and began drawing in the

spike-spurred tether as a fisherman might draw in his line.

Inside the thorny bight the trapped thing bobbed about grotesquely, like a savage, wounded beast, gibbering and skirking in a high, thin voice horribly reminiscent of the whimperings of a child in pain, and once or twice, when its struggles brought it into contact with the thorny noose, uttering little gasping mewls.

It was pitiful to see the helpless thing's vain struggles, and I felt the same involuntary sympathy which I should have felt at witnessing a beast held fast in the steel jaws of a trap, but pity changed to horror as de Grandin anchored his noose beneath one foot and opened wide his burlap sack, and the captive head sprang at him like a striking serpent. A sharp thorn tore its dangling stomach, widening the rent already made by de Grandin's saw-toothed missile, but rage had made the thing insensible to pain, and, teeth flashing in the pale moonlight, it launched its gaping mouth directly at his throat.

"*Ça-ba, diablesse!*" de Grandin cried, throwing up his left hand defensively, and the champing teeth fastened in his sleeve, so that the head hung swaying from his cuff, its long hair flowing nearly to the ground, vicious, growling noises issuing from between the tight-clenched teeth.

With a fierce gesture the Frenchman swung his hand away from his face, reached quickly beneath his jacket and snatched out a hunting-knife.

"*E-e-e-ur-r-gh!*" a kind of screaming grunt issued from the severed head dependent from his sleeve, and the thing fought desperately to free itself, but the saber-sharp white teeth had pierced clear through the cloth and were entangled in the fabric.

De Grandin swung his knife as a woodsman might his ax. The keen blade sheared through the tough muscular tube of the esophagus pendent from the severed neck, and the dangling stomach sac fell to the graveyard grass.

A wild and anguished cry, half screech, half groan, issued from the head, but the little Frenchman's blade was merciless. Flashing in an arc, it swung again, striking heavily, ax-like, upon the vault of the *penanggalan's* skull, shearing through black, gleaming hair and scalp and bone, burying itself deep in the brain.

The scream of mortal terror died half uttered, like a cry that had been smothered at inception, but the teeth held firmly to his jacket, the jaws fast-locked in cadaveric spasm.

With a wrenching twist he freed his knife-blade from the skull and jammed its gleaming point right in the dead thing's mouth, prying the clenched jaws apart.

Sick at the sight, I turned away.

Ah Kee cast his loop of thorny flowers round the second head, but the savagery which Jules de Grandin had displayed was wholly absent as he gently coaxed the captive toward him. "No be 'flaid, Missy Lady," he crooned softly, twitching delicately at the lasso, lest a sharp thorn wound his catch. "Ah Kee not hurt you; no tly for lun away, you not get hurt!" Slowly, inch by careful inch, he drew the tether in.

"*Très bon*, good work, my little old one!" de Grandin complimented. "Careful—gently—so!" Leaping forward he drew the opened mouth of his sack over the copper-crowned head as it rose a few inches from the grass in a futile struggle to escape the circling loop of thorns.

Gently, as a lad might soothe a frightened kitten, he stroked the bulge in the bag which told where the head lay.

"Do not be afraid, *ma pauvre*, we shall not do you injury," he whispered; then, leaving the little half-caste to bear the burden, he paused a moment to stuff the knife-slashed remnants of the other head into the other sack.

"Now, my friend, we must make haste," he told me. "Drive first to your house, then to Mademoiselle Jeanne's, and do not dally on the road, I beg you; a life—*cordieu*, more than a life!—depends upon our speed this night."

I KEPT the motor running while he rushed into the house, reappearing in a little while with two emergency kits and a bulging bundle, then, at his whispered order, shoved the throttle forward and forgot there were such things as legal speed limits as we headed for the old Haines mansion.

"There is no time for proper preparation," he told me when we reached our destination; "we must use the things which are at hand."

To Ah Kee he ordered, "Fetch a shutter, quickly, if you please."

The little man departed, returning in a moment staggering under the burden of a tall window-blind, and the Frenchman threw a sheet across it, then seized one end, signing me to take the other. "It is our litter," he explained as we bore the blind upstairs. "Come, make haste, my friend."

We put Joan Haines' stiffened body on the blind and bore it down to the kitchen, where, beneath the glare of unshaded gaslights, we laid it on the sheet-spread table and de Grandin tore open his parcel, drawing forth two surgical robes.

Donning one, he motioned me to put the other on, and unlatched the satchels, laid out a set of knives, artery-clips, thread and needles, last of all a can of ether.

"*À moi*," he told Ah Kee, indicating the sack the other held.

"Do not be fearful, *Mademoiselle*," he soothed as he took the burlap bag between his hands; "this brings forgetfulness and peace—perchance recovery." Gently, caressingly, he stroked the sack, nodding to me to begin dropping ether from the can upon the coarse fabric.

A whimpering cry of fright came from the bag as I dropped the anesthetic on the loosely-woven meshes, but as the strong, sweet smell began to penetrate the room, the flutterings and whimpers lessened, finally subsided altogether.

De Grandin drew the bag's closed lips apart, peeked exploringly into the dark depths, then, with a nod of satisfaction, thrust his hand inside, rummaged about a moment, finally drew forth Joan Haines' head.

"We must be swift," he murmured as he laid the pathetic thing on a small table covered with a clean, fresh cloth. "I do not know how long the anesthesia will last. *Parbleu*," he drew on rubber gloves and took a knife up delicately between his thumb and forefinger, "I have operated many times, but never before have I seen ether applied to a patient with no lungs to breathe it!"

"Patient?" I echoed wonderingly. Could he be referring to the dead that way?

I watched him curiously as he set to work with that swiftness and dexterity which always characterized his surgery.

Daintily as a watchmaker working at his delicate mechanism, he commenced the median incision, and I gasped with incredulity as I saw the ruby blood follow the knife in a thin, red ribbon.

There was no time to lose. Snatching sponges and arterial clips, I stationed myself at his elbow. Swabbing, clipping, handing him the instruments, I watched

in fascination as he made the Y-shaped transverse cut, laid open the thorax and, as calmly as though he were a toymaker constructing a mechanical doll, proceeded to replace Joan Haines' stomach, connect the duodenum and pylorus, close the throat about the esophagus and matter-of-factly sew the wounds together as though the operation which he had performed were one of everyday occurrence.

"D'ye actually believe she's living?" I asked as he completed his last stitch. "Why, it's preposterous—*rigor mortis* has set in, and——"

"Did you observe the blood?" he interrupted, busy with his gloves.

"Why, yes, it did seem strangely liquid," I admitted. "You'd have thought coagulation would have started, but——"

"'But' be everlastingly consigned to hell!" he blazed; "see this!"

Leaning forward, he placed his lips against the dead girl's mouth, and, hands beneath her ribs, bore down upon her diaphragm, at the same time forcing a great lungful of breath down her throat.

Once, twice, three times the process was repeated, and as he raised his head to draw a fourth deep breath, I cried out sharply:

"Look; look, de Grandin—*she's alive!*"

She was. There was no doubt of it. Faintly, so faintly that we could hardly see its motion, her chest was fluttering, like the breast of one who breathes his last, but as he leant above her with redoubled efforts, her respiration strengthened visibly. In a moment she was breathing naturally, drinking in the sultry summer air with deep, thirsty gulps, as a desert-famished woman might have drained cool water from a cup.

We wrapped her inert form in blankets, placed it on our improvised stretcher and bore it to the bedroom where Ah Kee

waited with a dozen bottles of boiling water which we placed around her in the bed.

"I telephoned Mademoiselle Bradfield before we left the city," de Grandin told me. "She is an excellent *garde-malade* for surgical cases, and *le bon Dieu* knows we shall need such an one for Mademoiselle Jeanne."

He had hardly finished speaking when a taxicab wheeled up to the door and Miss Bradfield, stiff, starched and looking extremely sterile and competent in her hospital whites, alighted.

De Grandin prepared a hypodermic syringe and placed it on the bedside table. "Three-quarters of a grain of morphine in the arm the moment she shows signs of consciousness, if you please, *Mademoiselle*," he told the nurse. "She has been through a serious ordeal, and retching would indubitably prove fatal.

"Now," he signed to me to leave the room, "we have a further duty to perform, my friend; one which shall write *finis* to this chapter of unhappy incidents, I hope."

Downstairs in the cellar Ah Kee had built a roaring fire of oil-soaked wood and shavings in the big, old-fashioned hot-air furnace. Thither de Grandin led me, and paused a moment at the cellar door to take up a blood-soaked burlap sack.

Into the blazing firebox of the furnace he flung the bag, and as the hungry flames enveloped it we saw, for an instant, the beautiful, cruel face of Salanga, the Malay woman, look at us with fixed, staring eyes which, even in the still, set stare of death, were freighted with a gaze of deadly hatred.

"*Adieu, Madame Penanggalan; adieu pour l'éternité*," de Grandin raised hand to lips in a sardonic gesture of farewell as the lapping tongue of fire closed above

the severed head and blotted it from sight.

"And now, *pardieu*, I think that it is time we left," he told me as he turned upon his heel.

"**H**OW was it that you knew we'd find them in the cemetery?" I asked as we drove slowly toward the city.

He chuckled as he lit a cigarette before replying:

"You may recall that I asked Mademoiselle Jeanne, who officiated at her father's burial?"

"Yes."

"*Très bien*. And that I told you that my theory of the case depended on the information Monsieur Martin gave us?"

"Of course."

"Very well, then. As I have told you, these *penanggalans* are unable to fly across tide waters; but there is no reason why they can not be carried over. No, certainly.

"*Alors*, I said to me, 'Jules de Grandin, the body of this Malay stepmother of Mademoiselle Jeanne was found breast-down upon the grave of him who was her husband. Is it not so?'

"'It are indubitably so,' I answer me.

"'Very well, then,' I tell me, 'you should know that these Malay demons make their lairs in tombs and graves and old, deserted houses and similar unpleasant places. Are it not possible that she traveled to that grave to shed her head, leaving her body on the earth while the head burrowed downward and found a resting-place inside the coffin with the corpse?'

"'It are entirely feasible, Jules de Grandin,' I agree. 'And if she hid herself in that coffin she would have no inconvenience coming as a passenger across the ocean. No.'

"'Ah, but,' I object, 'that Monsieur

Martin, you know him. He is *un homme d'affaires*; surely he would not permit an opportunity for profit to pass by; undoubtedly he induced Mademoiselle Jeanne to purchase a new casket, and when he transferred Monsieur Haines' body to its new abode he must necessarily have opened that old coffin. Perhaps he saw the *penanggalan*? Perhaps he liberated it from its prison as Pandora let loose the troubles from her box? 'Who knows?'

"'Perhaps,' I answer, 'but all such speculation is the business of the little fish of April. Why not go see Monsieur Martin? He will tell you truly.'

"And so to Monsieur Martin we did go, and he told us that he had not opened that old coffin. *Par conséquent*, it followed that the *penanggalan* was in there yet, or at least it was highly probable that she still used it for home.

"Accordingly, I decided that I would exhume that coffin my own self and find the cause of all our troubles while she rested there by day and make an end of her. But those *sacré* fools of cemetery people, they would not hear of it. 'It are impossible,' they tell me, and I am balked.

"Then, tonight, when we find we are too late and the wicked *penanggalan* has worked her evil will on poor Mademoiselle Jeanne, I took the chance, played on the hunch, as you Americans say, and hastened to the graveyard to intercept them at Monsieur Haines' tomb. 'For if

she really makes that grave her den, then it is probable that she will lead her victim to it, also,' I tell myself. It would be the height of evil vengeance to make the daughter house herself in the coffin with the body of her father. And she is vengeful, that one; eh, but she is vengeful as the devil's self. Yes, of course.

"We were fortunate. The wound which I had given her in my anger made her slow of flight, and so we got there first. We arrived in time to intercept them ere they could burrow out of sight. The rest you know."

"But," I persisted as we turned into my driveway, "how was it possible for the *penanggalan* to force her—its—way down through the earth and into that airtight coffin? The laws of physics——"

"*Ah bah*," he interrupted with a laugh, "I know not whether the laws of physics or of metaphysics govern in such cases; one thing I truly know, however: that is that we saw what we beheld with our own eyes tonight, and no one can say otherwise. And one more thing I know, as well: that is that at present I am greatly conscious of the workings of the law of impenetrability."

"Impenetrability?"

"But certainly, my friend. The proposition is most simple. This monstrous thirst of mine can not continue so to plague my throat when I have poured a pint or so of brandy down it. No, of course not."

