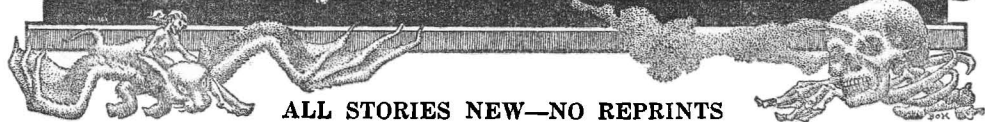


Weird Tales



MAY, 1942

Cover by Ray Quigley

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Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.

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D. McILWRAITH, Editor.

HENRY AVELINE PERKINS, Associate Editor.

A JULES DE GRANDIN NOVELETTE

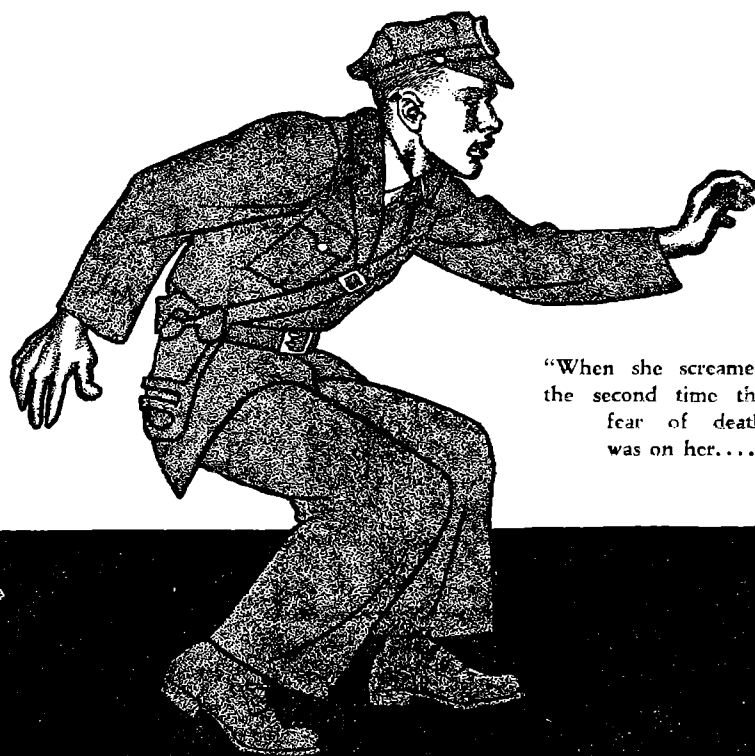
BY SEABURY QUINN

THE ADVENTURES OF THE FAMOUS LITTLE
GHOST BREAKER SINCE HIS LAST
ESCAPADE IN WEIRD TALES

In answer to numerous inquiries concerning the whereabouts and activities of Dr. Jules de Grandin and Capt. Sir Haddingway Ingraham Jameson Ingraham (less formally known as Hiji) during the past three years I am happy to be able to supply the following data:

De Grandin went to France immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 and was serving in Syria when the truce was made with Germany and the French Republic abolished. The fiery little patriot at once repudiated Vichy and all its works, made his way to Africa and joined the Free French forces of Gen. Charles de Gaulle and became a captain in the *corps de santé*. A severe case of enteritis, contracted during the unsuccess-

*Lust for cruelty, lust
for murder, the savage
urge to rend and slay
our fellow beings—
they are all there . . .
buried away in the
brains of every one
of us!*



“When she screamed
the second time the
fear of death
was on her...”

Stoneman's Memorial

In which once again the gluttonous, bibulous, boastful—but lovable—Jules de Grandin returns to fight the forces of darkness!

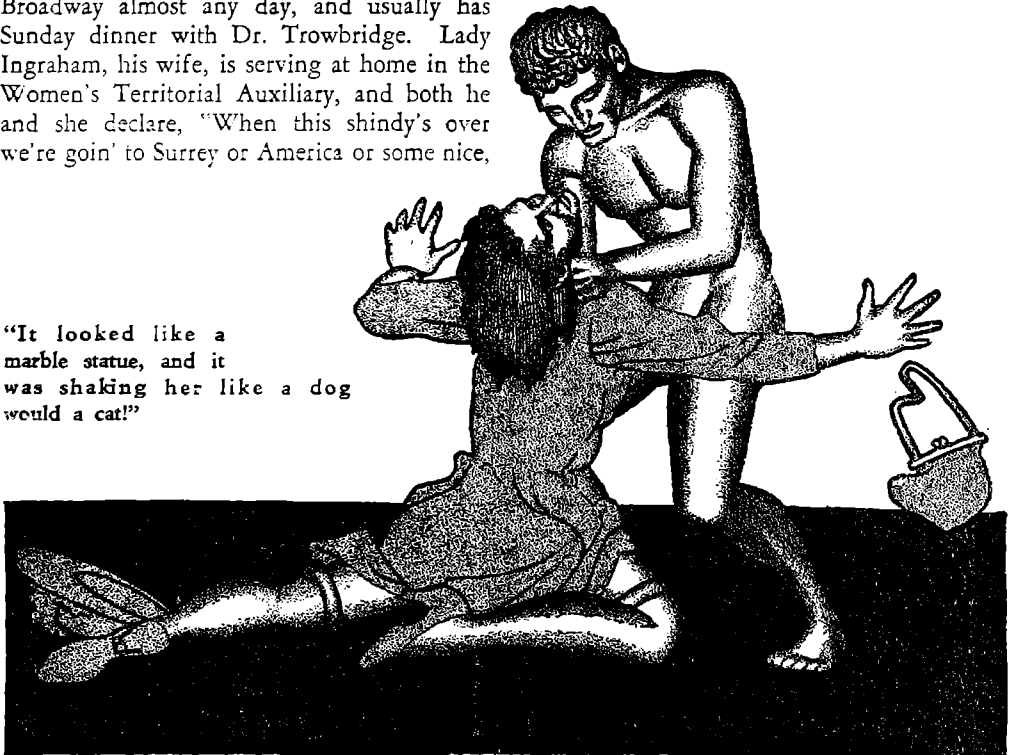
ful attack on Dakar, and the tardy realization of his superiors that he was far more valuable as an intelligence and liaison officer than as a military surgeon caused him to be sent to England and later to this country, where he at once went to see Dr. Samuel Trowbridge at Harrisonville, N. J.

Hiji, who was a captain of Houssa policemen in British West Central Africa (and enjoying it hugely) when Poland was invaded, resigned his commission and became a major of infantry in the B.E.F. In the retreat from Dunkerque his right femur was shattered by a shell fragment, and he was invalided out of service and sent as an attaché to the British Consulate General at New York. He can be seen limping down Fifth Avenue or lower Broadway almost any day, and usually has Sunday dinner with Dr. Trowbridge. Lady Ingraham, his wife, is serving at home in the Women's Territorial Auxiliary, and both he and she declare, "When this shindy's over we're goin' to Surrey or America or some nice,

quiet place and settle down to raisin' flowers and kids and bulldogs."—S. Q.

THE reunion had been a huge success. Norah McGinnis, delighted at de Grandin's return, had fairly outdone herself with dinner, and if she had not quite killed the fatted calf for him her oysters with champagne, turtle soup with dry sherry, filet of sole with graves and roast pheasant with burgundy was a more than merely satisfactory substitute. Now, with the firelight beating back the shadows with its rosy lashes and casting changing highlights on the drawn curtains, I looked

"It looked like a marble statue, and it was shaking her like a dog would a cat!"



about the study much as a proud father might regard his family at a Thanksgiving homecoming. The room was redolent with a mixture of cigar smoke, the scent of burning apple wood and the bouquet of old whiskey and older brandy.

Across the hearth from me sat Jules de Grandin, small-boned and delicately built, sensitive and neurotic as a woman, with a few more lines in his forehead, a few more tiny wrinkles round the corners of his eyes, a slightly tensed look in his gaze, but obviously happy as a schoolboy on a holiday. His little, round blue eyes were agleam with pleasure, his small wheat-blond mustache was fairly quivering with ecstatic joy as he passed the fragile, bubble-thin inhaler back and forth beneath his nose before he took a reverent sip of the pale cognac that was old when Andrew Jackson held New Orleans from the British. Hiji, a little thinner than I'd known him in the old days, and with several white hairs showing in the little black mustache that was in such sharp contrast to his pewter-colored hair, seemed to fill the sofa with his broad ruggedness. He had absorbed prodigious quantities of Scotch and water since we came from the table, and with each succeeding drink the tense lines in his face seemed softening. Detective Sergeant Costello, smooth-shaven, ruddy-faced, white-haired and even bigger than Hiji, filled his easy chair completely, and like Hiji took enormous quantities of Scotch, but took it without water. His smooth, pink face and blue, ingenuous Irish eyes were curiously misleading. He had the look, and often the precise manner of a suffragan bishop, plus an emergency vocabulary that would have been the envy of an army mule-skinner.

Ten minutes out of Newark Airport the night plane for the West roared overhead, its motors droning like a swarm of angry hornets. Hiji poured the last four ounces of his drink down in a single gulp and

looked up quizzically. "Not long since we'd been duckin' for the cellar when we heard one o' those blokes, eh, Frenchy?" he asked de Grandin.

"*Tu parles, mon vieux,*" the little Frenchman agreed with a smile. "Me, I am—how do you say him? muscle-tied?—from running into rabbit-holes when they appeared. *Parbleu,* but it was execrable, no less. When one has finished dinner, one desires to relax, to feel the pleasant combination of the process of digestion and slow poisoning by alcohol and nicotine. But did *les Boches* think of that? Damn no! They spoiled my after-dinner rest at least a thousand times. *Cochons!* If one were to come to me now and tell me, 'Jules de Grandin, here is fifty thousand francs. It is all yours if you will rise and move from where you sit'—*morbleu,* but I would tweak him by the nose and hurl the proffered bribe back in his face. I would let nothing interfere with the luxury of this hour—"

"Beg pardon, sor," Norah came to the study door apologetically, "but there's a young man askin' fer th' Sergeant, Dr. Trowbridge. He says as how—"

"Arrah, Norah darlin', hold yer whist!" broke in Costello reprovingly. "Did ye not hear Dr. de Grandin say we couldn't be disturbed th' now? Tell th' young felly to come round to Headquarters in th' mornin'. 'Tis meself's off duty now, an'—"

"But, Sergeant acushla, 'tis one of yer own lads as wants ter see ye," she persisted. "He says as how his name is Dennie Flannigan, an'—"

"Does he, now, 'bad cess to th' young omadhaun? Well—" he looked at us apologetically, then, to de Grandin:

"Would ye be afther listinin' to th' lãd, Dr. de Grandin, sor? He's in bad trouble, so he is, and likely to be in worse before all's said an' done. Ye see, his father, Dennie Flannigan—God rest 'is soul!—wuz

me buddy when I wuz first appointed to th' force, an' many a night we walked th' same beat together. Killed in th' line o' duty, he wuz, too, an' I'm responsible for young Dennie's appointment."

"There's been some trouble round about th' town these last few weeks, sor. A killer's on th' loose, and devil a hand can we lay on 'im, so th' newspapers is givin' us a goin' over. Well, sor, 'twas Dennie's hard luck to be walkin' down th' street th' other night when th' killer wuz out. He heard a woman scream an' ran to help her, an' caught th' murderer almost red-handed."

"Eh?" Jules de Grandin raised slim black brows. "Since when has it been a misfortune to catch a criminal at his crimes, *mon brave*?"

"That's just it, sor. I said he almost caught 'im. But not quite. Th' killer's on th' lam, ye see, an' Dennie orders 'im to halt, an' when he doesn't he lets fly wid everything he has. Pumps five shots into him, an' still he keeps on runnin'."

"Well, anyone can miss a shot or two sor, I've done it meself, but five shots in succession at almost point-blank range, that ain't so good. An' th' alibi he turned in didn't help his case much, either."

"*Qu'est-ce donc?* What was his excuse?"

COSTELLO'S eyes were wide and serious, not mocking or ironical, as he looked in de Grandin's face. "He said it wuz a stone man, sor."

"*Que diable?* My ears have played me false. I thought I heard you say he said it was a man of stone, my Sergeant."

"That's right, sor. He said it was a stone man—a statue that ran like it wuz livin'. He says his bullets had no more effect on it than they'd have had on a stone wall. He knows he didn't miss, an' I believe him, for he's a good shot, but—"

"Drunk, that's what he was," com-

mented Hiji, helping himself to a fresh drink. "Drunk as a goat, seein' livin' statues and pink elephants. That's what's the matter."

Costello nodded gloomily. "That's what th' assistant commissioner says, too, but I've got me doubts about it. Dennie's a member o' th' Cath'lic Total Abstinence Society, an' if he'd had a drink 'twas supmin new for 'im."

"Always has to be a first time, you know, old son."

"*Taisez-vous!* Be silent, species of a camel!" de Grandin ordered sharply. "Who art thou to point the finger of derision at a drunkard?" Then, to Costello:

"And you believe this, *mon Sergeant*?"

"Well, sor," Costello was embarrassed, but deadly serious, "I wouldn't go that far, but I don't think th' lad wuz lyin'. Not knowingly, anyhow."

"A Frenchman and an Irishman," commented Hiji sadly to his almost-empty glass, "tell either of 'em that the moon's made o' green cheese, and they'll believe you—"

"Attend me, if you please, my friend," de Grandin interrupted as he leaned toward Hiji, two little wrinkles deepening suddenly between his brows, "shake off your drunkenness a moment, if you will be so kind. To refuse to deny is not to affirm. Me, I have the open mind, so has the good sergeant. So have you up to a certain point, but no further. If I tell you that a listener to the radio can hear a speaker's words a thousand miles away before those in the same room hear it you say, 'Very likely, that is scientific.' But when you hear an honest policeman encountered what he thought was a stone statue running down the street you scoff and say that he was drunk. Yet fifty years ago one statement would have seemed as absurd as the other, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

Hiji grinned at him and smothered back a hiccough. "You've definitely got some-

thing there, Frenchy. I apologize. Have Costello bring his stone-man-seein' copper in and let's hear what he's got to say. I'll suspend judgment till his story's told, but it had better be good. I can't afford to take time from my drinkin' to listen to old wives' tales."

Patrolman Dennis Flannigan was a fine, honest-looking youngster. "Black Irish"—smooth, clear skin, black curly hair and eyes so dark a brown that they seemed black.

"Have a seat, Dennie lad," commanded Costello when introductions were completed, and:

"Have a drink?" asked Hiji as the young policeman settled in a chair.

"No, thank you, sir, I never use it," he refused, and Costello shot a glance of triumph at the Englishman.

De Grandin nodded affably. "Quite right, *mon enfant*. You have as much right not to drink as I have to do so." Then with one of his quick, elfin smiles, "The Sergeant tells us you had an unique experience the other night; that you met a miscreant in armor that defied your bullets as a tin roof turns the rain aside. It must have been a great surprise to you, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

A STUBBORN look came in the youngster's face. "It wasn't armor, sir," he contradicted. "The man—the thing—was solid stone, and turned my bullets as if they'd been made o' putty."

"Eh, how is it that you say? A man of stone? You seriously expect us to believe that?"

"No, sir, I don't. I don't expect anyone to believe me. If someone told me the same thing I'd say he was drunk or crazy or both, but it's the truth, sir, just the same.

"It was last Sat'day night, or Sunday morning, about ten minutes after twelve. I can fix the time pretty well, for the clock

in St. Dominic's tower had just finished striking midnight when I turned in my call from the box at Bay and Tunnell Streets. My next call was from Fox and Pettibone, and I'd covered almost half the distance to it when I heard a woman screaming bloody murder somewhere down the block where Blake Street crosses Tunnell.

"There's all sorts o' cries, sir, and pretty soon a cop gets so he knows 'em. At first I thought this woman had a case o' jim-jams—it's a rough neighborhood, with lots o' drinkin' and the like o' that goin' on all night—but when she screamed the second time I knew the fear o' death was on her, so I took out down the block as fast as I could leg it.

"Blake Street ain't so well lighted, and some of the tough kids in the neighborhood are almost always breaking the few lights they have, but there was a street light burnin' almost in the middle of the block, and I could see almost as well as if it had been daytime. Something white was bending down above what seemed to be a woman, shaking her like a bulldog would a cat, and I knew there was a murder being done, so I let out a yell and drew me gun."

"Just as I came up with 'em the white thing dropped the woman—no sir, that ain't quite right—it didn't drop her, it threw her half across the street, like a man could throw a bundle of old clothes, sir, and then, without even turning round went down Blake Street toward the waterfront. That's when I saw it plain, sir, for it passed right under the street light. It was a marble statue, sir; a marble statue, bone-white and just about a man's size, maybe a little smaller, but heavier. Lots heavier. I could hear its stone feet clumpin' on the sidewalk as it walked away, and when it broke into a run it sounded like a steam-hammer that's been stepped up to about a hundred an' eighty strokes a minute."

"U'M?" de Grandin tweaked the ends of his mustache. "One sees. And what transpired then, if you please?"

"Well, sir, I'd seen these here now livin' statues in the theatre—you know, the kind they have when actors put on white tights and smear white powder on their hands and hair and faces, then pose against a black background? I thought at first this guy was in some sort o' costume like that, with maybe metal bottoms on his shoes, so I shouted to him to halt, and when he kept on goin' I fired at him. My first shot must have missed, so I let him have four others, and while he had a good head-start o' me I don't think that I missed him all four times. In fact, I know I didn't."

"*Comment?* What makes you so positive?"

A flush washed up the young man's cheeks and brow as he thrust a hand inside his blouse and drew a twist of paper from an inner pocket. "This, sir," he answered as he tore the paper open and dropped its contents into Jules de Grandin's hand. "I saw that fly from it as it ran down the street. I know my bullet knocked it off when it struck and ricocheted."

De Grandin outlined his chin with the thumb and forefinger of one hand while he balanced the white marble splint in the hollow of the other. "U'm?" he commented, and again, "U'm?" Then, abruptly, "How was he dressed, this naughty stone person?"

"He wasn't, sir."

"Eh, how is it you say?"

"He was necked, sir. Stripped bare as your hand, and I could see the light shone on his back and shoulders as he ran, but—it's funny how you notice little things without even realizin' you're looking at 'em—there was no play of muscles underneath his skin as he ran. He was all smooth and white and shiny, just like any other

statue, and when I saw the chip fly off of him I reached down and picked it up whilst I was runnin' after him. He lost me, though, sir. Turned the corner of James and Blake about a dozen—maybe twenty—yards ahead of me, and when I got there he was gone. I hunted for him for awhile, then went back to the woman."

"She was dead, sir, and all broken up. It was as if she'd been a rag doll that some spoiled brat had torn up. Her face was all crushed in, her neck was limp as rope, and it seemed to me like both her shoulders had been broken."

"Yes? And then?"

"There wasn't anything to do but call the precinct, sir, so I put in a call and waited by her till the wagon came from the morgue. Then I filed my report, sayin' just what I've told you, and when the assistant commissioner read it he went wild. Told me I was crazy, or had been drinkin' while on duty, and gave me half an hour to draw a new report or stand charges. I wouldn't do it, sir. It *was* a stone thing, not a man, that killed that woman, whether anybody believes it or not. So now I'm relieved of duty and if I can't prove it was a livin' statue that committed that murder I guess I'll have to turn me badge in."

"Ah-ha. You showed this bit of stone to *Monsieur le Commissaire?*"

"Yes, sir," grimly, "I showed it to him."

"And what did he say to it?"

"Applesauce."

"*Comment?* He said sauce of the apple, no more? He made no move to investigate—"

"He was drunk, I'm tellin' you," asserted Hiji gravely. "Drunk as an owl. Too beastly intoxicated to take the proper steps. Blasted inefficiency, that's what it is. If one of my Houssas told me he'd seen a ju-ju runnin' through the forest and showed me where he'd chipped a piece of it away with his rifle, d'ye think I'd

talk about applesauce, or marmalade or jam? You know ol' Hiji better'n that! No, sir, drunk or sober, I'd investigate. That's what I'd do."

The shadow of a smile lurked underneath the tightly waxed ends of de Grandin's small blond mustache. "I am like Balaam's ass, all ears, my friend," he declared. "How, by example, would you investigate this case?"

Hiji looked at him with the long, earnest stare of one far gone in liquor. "Oh, so you think I wouldn't know what to do, eh? Think I'm too drunk to know my business? Listen, my small French friend, once a policeman always a policeman. The constable says the bloke was naked, doesn't he? That ain't particularly shockin', but it's interestin'. There's lots o' statuary around this town, but not much of it's nude, 'specially the male figures. Who the devil wants to look at a nude man? Think customers would go to burlesque houses to see some cove march up an' down the stage an' strip his shorts and singlet off? You know they wouldn't. All right, then, the hunt's considerably narrowed down. So I'd check up every statutory group containin' nude male figures, and look at 'em all closely to see if they showed bullet marks or had a piece chipped off 'em. Then, when I found one answerin' the prescription I'd know I had the murderer, and I'd hang him. Yes, sir, hang him higher than I hanged old Mebili the witch-doctor when he started monkey-shines up in the Luabala Country—"

"*Nom d'un porc d'un nom d'un porc!*" de Grandin interrupted in delight. "It may be that it is the whiskey and not you who speaks, my old, my priceless one, but whether it be you or alcohol that speaks, you talk the good, hard sense. But yes!

"Go home and have no further fear of discharge, *mon enfant*," he told Dennis Flannigan. "I, Jules de Grandin, will assist you, and though we have a case of ut-

most difficulty, we shall win, for Jules de Grandin is one devilish clever fellow. Assuredly."

When Flannigan had gone he turned once more to Hiji with the pleased expression of a cat that contemplates a bowl of cream. "Come, *brave compangnon*," he invited as he poured a fresh supply of liquor into their glasses, "it has been long since we were satisfactorily drunk together. For why are we waiting?"

DESPITE the often-quoted copybook axiom to the effect that wine is a mocker and strong drink an abomination they were both as fresh as the proverbial daisy when they came down to the dining room next morning and did more than ample justice to a breakfast of orange juice, cereal, pancakes and sausage and broiled mackerel. Hiji, who must report at the consulate at ten, limped off to catch the nine-fifteen train for New York and, his seventh cup of well-creamed coffee disposed of, de Grandin grinned at me across the empty table.

"What time are office hours today, *mon vieux*?" he asked, lighting a vile-smelling French cigarette.

"No office hours this morning," I answered. "I've a patient to look in on at Mercy Hospital and two more at the Consolidated. After that I'm free till five this afternoon."

"*Bien*," he nodded, "and you will kindly chauffeur me around the town, as in the good old days?"

"Be glad to. Where shall we go first?"

"U'm," he considered a moment. "To the police headquarters, if you will be so kind. I would have a word with *Monsieur l'Inférieur Commissaire*. *Ah bah*, a fool he must be, that one!"

WENDELL WINTERBOTHAM, first assistant police commissioner, sat behind his glass-topped wide desk decorated

with twin fountain pens, a telephone, a brass-bound desk blotter and an amber glass bud-vase in which stood a single crimson rose and smirked at Jules de Grandin with the deprecating, irritating smile of a man who was not born yesterday. "And you seriously expect me to put credence in this absurd story, Dr. de Grandin?" he asked.

"I seriously do, *Monsieur le Commissaire*. I do not say, or even think, it was a stone man who committed this murder, but I do believe the young policeman thinks it was, and the marble splinter which he shot from it—and which I hear he showed to you in support of his story—gives some weight to his belief. It may well be the miscreant wore some fantastic sort of disguise—"

"Bosh! Who'd go around in such a get-up to commit a murder? It just doesn't make sense—"

"Assuredly, *M'sieur*. Nor does it make sense that he beat his victim almost to a pulp when one blow would have killed her. When Sergeant Bertram disinterred the bodies of the dead from Paris cemeteries and hashed them with a grave-digger's spade, that made no sense, either; when Jack the Ripper killed his victims in the London slums and mutilated their corpses, that made no sense to normal men, but—" he gestured the ending with a wave of his hand—"there are strange things buried in the secret mausoleums of the mind, *Monsieur le Commissaire*. Lust for power, lust for cruelty, lust for murder—savage urges to deface and rend and tear and slay our fellow being, they are all there. And while we keep them under lock and key they are still there, lying like the vampires to arise and walk from their coffins when the opportunity arises. But certainly. This murderer, this killer, he may be eminently respectable by day, an honored lawyer or doctor, perhaps a businessman or even clergyman. That is when he

plays the rôle of Dr. Jekyll. But when the ghost of Mr. Hyde comes forth to prowl, what power of deepest hell may not be loosed?"

"H'm." The commissioner grew thoughtful. He was not a stupid man, only opinionated and "practical." Before becoming assistant commissioner he had been director of a mail order house, and prided himself on having brought hard-headed business efficiency to public service. "You think we may be dealing with a homicidal maniac?"

De Grandin raised his narrow shoulders in the sort of shrug that no one but a Frenchman can achieve. "*Comme qui dirait?*" The ear-marks of the killing point to it. If, as we may assume, this is a second Sergeant Bertram we deal with—he was a mellow-mannered, lovable young man when not gripped by his mania—it may well be that he puts on the disguise of a statue when he goes upon his killing-quests. It may be that he has devised a sort of armor that will defy bullets—"

"A crazy man?" scoffed Winterbotham.

"As you say, *M'sieur*, a crazy man. But a crazy man who is brilliant and talented in normal times and uses his great talents to assist him in the crimes he commits when his second, evil personality is uppermost. It could be so, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

"Why, yes, I suppose so. Wait a minute—" Winterbotham pressed a button underneath his desk, and, to the clerk who answered the summons, "Bring me the files in the Jukes, Mahoney and Ebbert cases, please."

He ruffled through the papers, then: "I hadn't thought of it, Doctor," he confessed, "but what you say puts a new light on this case. Here's Sally Jukes, a woman of no lawful occupation, arrested several times for vagrancy and half a dozen times for soliciting. She was killed in Deal Street shortly after midnight three weeks ago. Her—"

"One moment, if you please, *Monsieur le Commissaire*," de Grandin interrupted. "The other two, the Mahoney and Ebbert women, what were their occupations, if you know?"

The commissioner gave a slight start. "No known—or, rather, too well known means of support—"

De Grandin nodded. "There was no question, then, I take it, concerning their morals, which, *bélas*, were all on the wrong side of the question mark?"

"That's right, Doctor. All three were—"

"*Exactement*. And how, if you please, did *la Jukes* meet her end?"

"The coroner's report shows death was due to dislocation of the spinal column between the second and third cervical vertebrae. There was also a fracture of the right occiput, and the frontal bone, both shoulders—"

"*Précisément, M'sieur*. And were not the two other women similarly broken?"

"Ye-es," the commissioner thumbed through the records of the other cases. "You're right, Doctor. The coroner's physician's findings in all three cases are almost identical. We don't know that all three were killed by the same person, of course, but the technique of the murders—"

"Was the calling card of the assassin, by blue! Did not I say it?"

Winterbotham's somber eyes showed traces of amusement. "What do you want me to do, Doctor? Accept young Flannigan's report? Give out to the newspapers that an animated statue's running amok, that the police can't catch it, that their bullets can't hurt it, and that no man's life is safe?"

"By no means, *M'sieur*. Tell the press you have a clue, a dozen of them, if you wish, and that you're satisfied the killings have no connection with each other and were perpetrated by different persons. That

will pique the murderer's vanity, and will also lull him into feeling safe. Make no mistake, he reads the papers, this one. He gloats in secret at the thought that he has foiled the police, that he can murder with impunity. Yes, certainly. *Bien*. Let him gloat. Soon comes our turn. Meantime, I pray you, do not be too hard on the young Flannigan. He is an honest boy, else he would not stick to his story so stubbornly."

"All right, Doctor. I think your advice is sound, and I'll not press charges against Flannigan. May we count on your co-operation?"

"A hundred and forty-five percent, *M'sieur!*"

We shook hands all around at parting, and for a moment I was fearful that de Grandin would implant a kiss on Winterbotham's cheeks for promising to restore Dennis Flannigan to duty.

"*Non, merci*," he denied when I suggested that I drive him on his other errands. "I shall do very nicely afoot, my friend. I have important missions to perform, and you are due at the hospitals. Go call upon your patients, but bid Madame North to wait dinner for me. Unless I am more mistaken than I think, I shall have the appetite of the ostrich when I return."

HE WAS home in time to mix the cocktail, and as I sipped the pale gold fluid from the beaded glass I realized with a pang that not since he had left for France when war broke out had I tasted a perfect Martini. These were pluperfect, with the vermouth cutting the flavor of the gin just enough to leave the dryness intact, the Angostura blending faultlessly with both. "Was it a successful day?" I asked as I helped myself to a second portion from the frost-encrusted shaker.

"Eminently, my friend," he assured me. "I have found that which I sought; now I desire to hear that—"

"Dinner is served, if ye plaze, sor," announced Norah from the doorway, and de Grandin who would no more think of keeping dinner waiting than of whistling in church was silent till the soup was served. Then, as Norah put the plate of steaming mulligatawny before him, "Tell me, Friend Trowbridge, do you know the Spring of Temperance?"

"The Spring—" I countered, wondering if he were being facetious, then as recollection dawned, "you mean the fountain in Dunellan Park? Why, yes, I've seen it, but I don't believe I ever really noticed it. Why do you ask?"

He spread a dab of butter on his hot roll and gave me a quick, level glance. "Me, I saw her today. I examined her most carefully, and—"

"You mean—" the look in his eyes gave me the clue, but it seemed so utterly fantastic—"there were bullet marks on it?"

"Four," he replied sententiously. "The young Flannigan did not lie to us, or to the *commissaire de police*. But no. Also, I matched the little marble splinter which he left with me into a little, so small notch knocked from the arm of the standing male figure."

Norah set the joint before me, a rolled beef-roast, brown and crisp on the outside with glacéd potatoes turned in its juice, and for a moment there was silence as I carved, then, when she'd left us to ourselves once more: "You will recall the group of statuary, perhaps? A child and young woman bend above the basin of the fountain, back of them, and leaning toward the spring, is a male figure, nude as are the other two, and slightly less than full life-size."

"Yes, I remember now. It caused considerable scandal when it was unveiled. Some of our ladies' organizations thought its undraped figures might corrupt youth. That's why they put it in Dunellan Park instead of—"

"One comprehends," he cut in. "The female mind, especially in America, is something which no one can understand—or perhaps which one understands entirely too well if he is versed in psychology. But it is of the statues that I speak, not of their esthetic qualities. I searched the city with the comb of the fine teeth, and was all but despairing when at last I came upon that group. 'Jules de Grandin,' I then said to me, 'it is here your quest ends, either in success or failure.' 'You are entirely correct, as usual, Jules de Grandin,' I reply to me, and forthwith I examined every square inch of those *sacré* statues' marble hide.

"And what did I discover? *Morbleu*, upon the back of the male standing figure I found three small, shallow, flattened pits with gray discolorations which indubitably were the marks of soft-nosed leaden bullets. But certainly. And on the triceps of the figure's left arm was a little notch, also discolored as from a lead missile, and into it I set the marble splinter left with me by the young Flannigan. *Parbleu*, it fitted perfectly, like the slipper on the little, dainty foot of *Cendrillon*. Yes. Certainly. Of course."

"You're certain they were bullet marks? Children, especially boys, are everlastingly committing acts of vandalism—"

"*Ah bab!* You ask me if I know the tell-tale mark of the bullet on stone? Me, Jules de Grandin, the soldier? My friend, I know him as I know the lines of my own hand. Have I not seen him on the walls where military executions have been carried out? Of course. I tell you, good Friend Trowbridge, there is no doubt about it. Fantastic and incredible as it may seem, it was that statue which repelled the bullets of young Flannigan, that very marble image that killed Lucy Ebbert, and by almost inescapable inference Sally Jukes and Mae Mahoney also."

"Well," I forced a smile that did not go much below the surface, for despite the ab-

surdity of his statement his deadly earnest manner made me feel uncomfortable, "if that's the case we're in a bad fix. As Winterbotham said this morning, a marble statue is running amok and the police are powerless against it. If a marble image can come to life and go on a rampage, what is to prevent those bronze colossi in Military Park from taking the warpath?"

"Jules de Grandin," he returned smiling. He did not make the statement boastfully, but simply, as an existing fact. "I shall take measures to insure their tranquillity, my friend."

"What measures?"

He drew his shoulders upward in a shrug of complete eloquence. "How should I know? The time is not yet ripe, my friend. When it has come, *pardieu*, Jules de Grandin will be there also!"

"You certainly think highly of yourself," I admitted, "but it seems to me you've taken on a job that's worthy of your best this time. If bullets won't stop this stone murderer, the only thing left to do is smash it with a sledge hammer, and you'd find yourself involved with the police if you tried that. I doubt if even your persuasiveness could convince the Park Department that one of their prize groups of statuary has developed homicidal tendencies. Besides, if one statue has come alive to commit murder, what's to stop the rest? You can't tear down or break up every piece of sculpture in the city. Why, counting the monuments in the cemeteries, there must be at least—"

"You are informing me?" he broke in with a slightly worried frown. "No, my friend, as you say, we cannot embark on a course of wholesale image-smashing. Besides, this business of the monkey, if I interpret it correctly, is more a symptom than a disease. One does not treat a case of ache, by example, by local applications, one treats the gastro-intestinal disturbance which is the etological factor. So it must

be in this case. We must reach the underlying cause of all this nonsense, and remove it—or him."

I NODDED and, irrelevantly, it seemed to me, he asked abruptly: "This Monsieur Joseph Stoneman, who was he, if you please? A plaque set in the fountain's base informs the beholder that he bestowed it on the city as a memorial to his son who was, one takes it, killed in the war."

"No, he wasn't killed in battle," I rejoined. "He met his death in a speakeasy brawl. Joe Stoneman was a manufacturer of carbonated beverages and made a fortune out of them. His Jingerade and Kolatonik were famous at one time, but since repeal of prohibition they've lost popularity."

"Ah? The public ceased insulting its collective stomach with his nostrums when once more it had a chance to drink light wines and beer?"

"Not quite. Stoneman was almost fanatically opposed to alcohol in every and any form. He was one of our foremost dry crusaders, and almost succeeded in getting a bill through the legislature prohibiting the use of alcohol as a solvent in medicines. It took the combined efforts of the Medical Society and Pharmacists' Association to defeat it. He was credited with donating almost fantastic sums to finance the dry cause, too."

"One sees completely. It was an excellent advertisement for his own non-intoxicating beverages."

"No one believed that. He seemed so utterly sincere, but when repeal became operative one of the first things he did was to set up a huge brewery and advertise his beer almost as extensively as he had his soft drinks. His advertising campaign announced that as long as people were to be allowed to drink intoxicants anyway he felt it his duty to make a good beer which they would drink in preference to hard liquor.

Nobody believed him. His former associates in the dry cause turned against him as a traitor and saloon proprietors and tavern keepers, remembering how he'd led the prosecutions for infraction of the prohibition laws refused to handle his beer, so both his soft drink and beer businesses fell flat and he sold his brewery and factories and retired."

He frowned thoughtfully. "One sees. And what of his son's death? You said it occurred in a speakeasy? Strange the son of such a father should die so."

I nodded. "It was something of a scandal. The youngster was a harum-scarum sort of lad, and while his father sought to dry up liquor at the source, he worked industriously to cut down the supply from the consumer's angle. One evening there was a brawl in a speakeasy, and when the police came they found young Stoneman lying in the street outside the place with his head staved in and his neck broken—"

"*Morbleu*, can such things be?" he almost shouted.

"Eh?" I jerked back. "What d'ye mean?"

"His injuries, my friend. He had his head staved in; he had his neck broken—so did the three women killed by the statue. Do not you see some connection?"

"I don't quite see what you're driving at," I confessed.

The smile he flashed at me was infectious as a yawn. "I am not sure that I do, either," he admitted. "It is a puzzle picture that we work on, my friend. As yet we have but a few pieces, and the pattern is obscure, but presently we shall have more, and then we shall see order emerging from this apparent chaos. Meantime, why distress ourselves unduly? Shall not we go to the study for coffee?"

HE CAME bustling in next afternoon and thrust a copy of the *Journal* into my hand. "We must surely go to this, my

friend," he informed me, indicating an item on the third page with the tip of a well manicured finger. "It will be of the interest."

The paragraph announced that Dr. Bradley-Stoker of the Universities of Edinburgh and Dublin would lecture on the secret writings of Cornelius Agrippa that night at Sawyer Hall.

"I don't think I'd be interested," I told him. "Why don't you go alone? I've had a rather trying day and—what's the matter with you?" He was grinning like a small boy who observes a portly gentleman in a high hat coming toward him on a snowy day.

"Me, I promise you will not be bored," he assured me. "It may be possible the learned doctor will not show up for his lecture, but I am certain that another will."

"Who?"

"Wait and see, my friend. If all goes as I think that all will go I shall explain to you completely. I have been busy as a hive of bees today. I have made investigation of the death of young Monsieur Stoneman, and some of the things I found out gave me furiously to think. The speakeasy where he was done to death was in Tunnell Street, that most unsavory thoroughfare where Sally Jukes came to her end, and near which both the Ebbert and Mahoney women were murdered. Moreover, all three of them had been among those present when he was killed. There was another there also, one Nellie Cook, and this afternoon I saw and talked with her."

"Yes?" I asked, puzzled. "And what is the connection—"

"She is, according to the popular phrase, down on her luck at present, having been but recently released from jail. Once she was a singer, a night club entertainer, and specifically a *chantreuse* in the Hard-Boiled Owl, the speakeasy where the young Stoneman met his finish. *Tiens*, he was the

devil of a fellow, that young man. He thought that he could best professional gamblers at their own craft, and on the night that he was killed had been engaged in a crap game with three young gangsters, boy friends of the girls, who had, in every probability, inveigled him into playing. *Tenez*, a blind man could foresee the outcome. He lost and lost again, then finally decided he had been cheated and made demand for his money, threatening to expose the dive and have his father prosecute it and all its inmates.

"Thereupon the three young gentlemen who rejoiced in the names of Handsome Harry, Gentleman Jim and Lefty Louis set upon him with brass knuckles and black-jacks. When they were finished with him he was entirely wrecked."

"Did the girl tell you this? I never heard anyone was prosecuted for his murder."

"But no. The gentlemen involved made themselves scarce, and either through loyalty or fear of reprisal the girls refused to implicate them. Their story was that they and the young Stoneman had been innocently drinking when three strange hoodlums rushed in and assaulted him, apparently for no reason."

"I should think she'd be afraid to tell you this, even now," I objected. "Gangland has a way of dealing with informers."

"Quite yes, but in this instance there is little fear. Gentleman Jim and Handsome Harry met their several deaths some years ago in a gang battle; Lefty Louis recently went to his reward in the tuberculosis ward of a state prison. So of all those witnessing or taking part in *l'affaire* Stoneman only this Cook woman remains. You will see her tonight at the lecture."

I laughed outright. "A discourse on the secret charms and spells of Cornelius Agrippa seems the least likely place to meet a superannuated trull."

"Nevertheless, she will be there. I have

made sure of it. Today I took her to the shops and bought her everything that she needed, including several drinks, a manicure and a fresh hair-bleach. She was pathetically grateful, and will be more grateful still for the fee I have promised her if she acts and speaks exactly as I have instructed her."

A NEAT placard announced the lecture when we arrived at Sawyer Hall, but it appeared that Dr. Bradley-Stoker would not have a large house. The ticket seller yawned in his booth and the doorman had no duties to perform. When we went in we found we had the little auditorium to ourselves except for a fat man and a woman muffled to the ears in a fur-collared coat. For half an hour we sat there, then an usher stepped out on the stage and announced Dr. Bradley-Stoker had been called out of town on urgent business. Accordingly there would be no lecture, and our money would be refunded to us at the box office.

The fat man was before us at the window, and what little of him I could see I disliked instinctively. When he turned his face it seemed to me his puffy red cheeks threatened to engulf his little eyes completely. It was a face like that of some sleek, sleepy cat, more animal than human.

The woman crowded on our heels, and indignation fairly exuded from her. "It's an imposition," she told no one in particular in a sharp, strident voice, "bringing us out on a night like this for nothing!"

As she voiced her protest Jules de Grandin gave a start of surprise and then turned toward her. "Why, Mademoiselle Nellie!" he exclaimed. "This is indeed a pleasure. May I present my friend Dr. Trowbridge? Friend Trowbridge, this is Mademoiselle Nellie Cook."

With the quick suspicion of a wink at me he continued, keeping his voice up, "I did not know that you were interested

in Cornelius Agrippa, *Mademoiselle*." The quick flick of his eyes bade me take notice of the fat man at the ticket seller's window.

I turned my head a little and was aware of a sharp feeling of revulsion. The man was regarding us with a cold, steady look, the sort of look a cat might have before a mouse-hole, and at the woman's reply I could see a sudden gleam in his dull eyes, as if their lead had been scratched to malicious brightness.

"I surely am interested," she was assuring de Grandin, and she, too, spoke much louder than seemed necessary. "Why, they say he had some sort of charm by which he could make stone images come to life and do whatever he commanded them. That's what I wanted to hear about particularly tonight. You know—" there was a sharp catch in her voice, as though her breath had halted momentarily—"I can't get it out of my head that poor Sally and Mae and Crystal were not killed by some fiend as the papers seem to think, but—" her voice sank to a sharp whisper that could have been heard in a boiler shop—"but by an animated statue, Doctor!"

WE DROVE a block or two in silence, then: "Well, did I put it over all right, sir?" she asked de Grandin. "I gave the act all I had."

"You did it excellently, *Mademoiselle*," he replied. "Here is your promised reward." A bill changed hands, and, "Where can we put you down?" he asked.

"Any place where I can get a drink. Ugh! When I think of how that little fat guy looked at me I feel cold right down to my toes and need a good, stiff snifter."

The little Frenchman nodded sympathetically. "I quite agree, *Mademoiselle*. And I suggest that you stay indoors till the new moon appears, also."

"I'll think about it," she returned with a laugh as she climbed down from the

car, "but after a girl's just finished a college course she wants to get out under the bright lights, you know. G'night, sir, and thanks."

"Now what the deuce is all this nonsense?" I demanded as we turned toward home. "I don't believe there was a lecture scheduled for tonight at all, and—"

"My perspicacious, good Friend Trowbridge," he broke in with a chuckle. "Of course there was not! The learned Dr. Bradley-Stoker exists in my mind, and nowhere else. I hired the hall, I put the notice in *le Journal*, I hired the usher to make the announcement—"

"Of all the silly, childish charades!" I exclaimed. "Whatever were you thinking of to play a prank like that?"

"It was no prank, my friend," he answered soberly. "It was a stratagem of war, and it was most successful. We know now who our foeman is, and we can make plans for his defeat."

"I'm hanged if I understand."

"Very well. Consider: The things which *Mademoiselle* Nellie told me today gave me the clue. Perhaps it was not likely, but it was entirely possible that these women's deaths had some connection with the killing of the young Stoneman. The fountain was unveiled a year ago, I understand. At that time the Jukes girl and her three companions were 'in college' as they call it. That is to say, they were in jail for vagrancy, shoplifting and similar petty crimes. Very well. A month ago the Jukes woman was released. True to the customs of her kind, she went at once to her old neighborhood and—*volia*, she was killed. By all accounts she did not die pleasantly."

"Then the Mahoney baggage comes from the jail. She, too, went back to her old haunts and—you have read the coroner's report in her case."

"The Ebbert girl was discharged from prison two weeks ago. Like the other two

she goes back to her old associates, like the other two she dies, but this time someone sees the killer at his work. You comprehend?"

"I certainly do not."

He breathed a sigh of exasperation, then, patiently: "Four women are suspected of complicity in the killing of a young man. The young man's father has a statuary group erected as a memorial—in a low, unfashionable part of town, by the way—and as the women, then incarcerated, are released they meet a death much like that of the young man.

"Our young Policeman Flannigan swears he saw a marble statue kill the Ebbert girl.

"Now, arranging for the lecture by the mythical Dr. Bradley-Stoker was not all I did this afternoon. By no means. I read and reread certain of Cornelius Agrippa's charms and spells. By the use of certain magic formulae the magnus claimed to be able to vivify marble statues, and make them do his will for good or ill, but only at the dark or in the waning of the moon, and only at the midnight hour between Saturday—the old Sabbath—and Sunday, the new day of worship.

"So I arrange this wholly false lecture, and arrange to have the Cook woman come to it, and to say certain things in the hearing of one I am convinced will also be there. It all transpired as I planned, my friend."

"See here," I demanded as we turned in my driveway, "was that evil-looking little fat man just ahead of us at the box office—"

"Of course," he anticipated my question. "Who else could it be but Monsieur Joseph Stoneman, father of the killed young man and donor of that statuary group to this fair city?"

THE night was cold with a cruel, penetrating chill that gnawed at our bones like a starved wolf. A gray rain slashed

against the flat fronts of the grimy tenements in Tunnell Street, as halfway down the slattern row of shabby houses a door opened for a moment on the storm, showed a fuzzy square of faint light, then closed with a bang.

Muffled to the ears in a raincoat, Nellie Cook slipped from the house, paused a moment on the worn doorstep, then stepped out into the flooding street. For a moment she pressed close against the house front, seeming to hold her breath and listen. She cast a quick glance up and down the street and, keeping to the shadows, crept down the sidewalk. Frightened though she obviously was, I noticed that she walked with shortened, gliding steps and provocatively swaying hips.

For several days de Grandin had been coaching her, schooling her in her entrance, directing where she was to walk, regulating the speed of her movements. Now she was letter-perfect in the rôle, and, the dress rehearsals having been concluded, we were ready for the performance. Since we had met her in the lobby of the lecture hall the new moon had gone through its phases, and we had reached another dark period. The storm had kept the usual crowd of Saturday night revelers indoors, and as the girl emerged from the house the gong in the clock tower of St. Dominic's Church, six blocks away, boomed the first deep, resounding stroke of midnight.

Beside me in the doorway huddled Jules de Grandin. His face seemed pinched with cold, but the twitching of his little blond mustache and the intermittent quiver of his lips was purely the result of nervous tension, I knew.

He and Hiji had been deep in consultation all afternoon, and shortly before dinner the Englishman had made a hurried trip to New York, returning somewhere about nine with a small paper parcel which he handled with extreme tenderness. Now

he and Costello were ensconced in a doorway at the far end of the block, and all of us watched Nellie as she walked slowly through the pelting rain.

A street light's haze revealed the pale blur of her face as she passed under it. I knew that it was sharp and unintelligent, with hard, malicious eyes and only feeble traces of the common prettiness it once had, but in the distance, softened by the rain-filtered lamp rays, it looked fragile and appealing, and clearly terror-ridden.

She paused a moment underneath the light, looked backward fearfully, then went on toward the farther corner.

"This is so utterly inane!" I grumbled as a drop of water from the doorway's lintel fell like an icicle down the upturned collar of my raincoat. "We'll get nothing but pneumonia for our pains, and—"

"Zut! Quiet, my friend," warned de Grandin in a sharp whisper. "We are not here for pleasure, I assure you, and—*ah, barbe d'un bouc veri*, behold him!"

Something sounded on the flagstone walk almost beside us, dully, heavily, like stone striking stone. *Clump—thump, thump—clump!* and walking like a robot, yet with speed almost equal to a run, a white shape passed us.

A COLD as hard and dull as death itself seemed added to the chill of the rain-drenched night air, and I felt the breath catch in my throat like a hard, solid ball.

Agleam with rain, and moving with a stride as purposeful as Fate, yet with no play of flexing muscles showing under its white surface, a graven image—a white marble statue—passed us in the wake of the retreating girl.

"*Hola!*" shouted de Grandin, leaping out into the rain and struggling with some object in his trench coat pocket. "*Hola, M'sieur le Statuaire! Halte la!*"

The moving marble horror gave no sign of hearing, but heavily, yet swiftly, with

the surety of inexorable Nemesis, made toward the woman.

Now we saw it fully revealed in the fuzzy glow of the street lamp. There was no expression in its carved features. Calm and composed and utterly oblivious of everything around them, its marble eyes stared straight ahead.

The woman heard the pounding of the marble feet and turned for a swift glance across her shoulder. Her scream was something horrible to hear. A bubbling, frothing, mounting geyser of sheer terror, winding upward, growing shrill and shriller till it seemed to pierce our eardrums like a probing needle.

She reeled blindly in midstep, clutching at the rain-flogged empty air with fingers gone as stiff as rigor mortis, then, seeming to realize that if she fainted she was lost, she gathered skirts and raincoat up above her knees and darted like an arrow from a bow toward the cross street.

The stone pursuer broke into a run. Not the heavy, clumsy jog-trot that might have been expected from an automaton, but the lithe, swift racing of a trained athlete, every step instinct with grace and only the hard thudding of its stone feet on the stone sidewalk to make us know it was an animated rock, not flesh and blood, that rushed through the downpouring tempest.

There was no doubt of the result. Before she'd traversed fifty steps the terror-stricken woman stumbled and fell to her knees, and for a moment as she turned toward her pursuer we saw her face like one of those old Grecian horror masks, mouth squared in agony of terror, eyes almost forcing from their sockets, cheeks gone a sort of dreadful, deathly gray despite the daubs of paint on them.

Costello's burly form came cannoning from the doorway where he hid. "Stand back, ye murderin' haythin!" he roared, raised his service pistol and let fly a stream of bullets at the charging marble horror.

The thing paid no more heed to them than it did to the pelting rain drops. We heard the *spat* of lead on stone, the screaming whine of a bullet as it ricocheted, but on the statue ran, its carved feet drumming on the flagstones of the walk.

"Duck, Sergeant!" we heard Hiji shout as he leaped past Costello, shoved him aside and faced the onrushing stone monster.

WE SAW him balance on his sound foot, raise his maimed leg almost waist-high, press something hard against his thigh, then bend forward as he hurled a missile, putting every ounce of weight and strength behind it.

The roar was utterly deafening, and the burst of sudden fire that came with it was blinding as the dazzling blaze of a flash-bulb. I could feel the force of detonation beating on me like a dozen fists as it was echoed back from the house fronts.

For a long moment everything was dark, then as my eyes regained their vision, I saw a heap of marble debris on the sidewalk forty feet or so away, smashed white stone that seemed strangely like a corpse dismembered by some hideous force, here a marble hand, and there a bit of what had been an arm or leg or torso. Almost at my feet a calm, serene white marble face stared up into the pelting rain, and I had a quick qualm of wonder that it did not close its lids against the battering drops.

"Bingo!" I heard Hiji call. "Got him square amidships with the first throw, Frenchy. Jolly lucky that I did, too, or you and Trowbridge would be in the happy huntin' grounds by now."

"*Mon brave, mon superb*, my infinitely splendid Hiji!" de Grandin cried delightedly. "You are, as you have said, a marvel!"

"Who said that? Not I. You do all the boastin' around here, you little devil!"

"No matter, there is glory enough for

all," the little Frenchman returned. "What though it was the agile brain of Jules de Grandin that conceived the plan of shattering him to pieces with a hand grenade because he could not be stopped with bullets? It was the fine, strong arm and fine, true, accurate aim of Hiji that gave him the *coup de grâce*. But certainly!

"Now," practically, he added, "let us see to these ones."

Costello had been knocked unconscious by the detonation of the bomb, but his loss of consciousness was short-lived, for even as we bent above him he shook himself like a dog emerging from the water. "Howly Mither!" he exclaimed. "What wuz it? Wuz I kilt entirely?"

"*Mais non, mon Sergeant*, you are very much alive," denied de Grandin with a laugh. "You were struck senseless for a little so short time, but now you are all right. Of course. Give him to drink from your flask, Hiji," he added as he ran to help me with the swooning woman.

As far as I could find she had no injury of any kind. No broken bones, no cuts, no wounds. Apparently unconsciousness had been induced by fright alone.

I took her head in the bend of my elbow and held my flask beneath her nose, letting the fumes of the brandy act as a restorative. In the weak light from the street lamp, with the rain upon her face, she looked almost pretty. The long, dark, heavily mascaraed lashes lay in half moons on her cheeks, the wilful, childish mouth was relaxed and robbed of its petulance and cynicism. The tendrils of bright hair that slipped beneath the brim of her storm hat seemed really golden, not the result of a skillful bleaching.

"Gimme!" she roused as the scent of the brandy reached through her unconsciousness, grasped the flask in both hands and drank greedily. "Gosh!" she let her breath out with a gulping sigh and drank again, then drew her hand across her mouth, leav-

ing a bright stain of carmine lipstick on it. "That was sumpin, wasn't it?"

"It was, indeed, *ma belle*," de Grandin agreed as he rose from his knees beside her. "It was indubitably something."

He looked at her a long minute, then: "What is it you would want, my little one? If you will say the word I shall be glad to find employment for you, or defray expenses of your schooling while you prepare yourself for a position. You have courage and resourcefulness, and could go far—"

"Yeah, far as the nearest gin-mill," she interrupted. "It's no dice, Doc. You can comb an' brush her all you want, an' tie a ribbon round her neck an' call her all the pet names that you know, but an alley cat is still an alley cat, an' sooner or later she'll go back to her alley. I'm no good an' never was. I know it an' you know it. Me take a job? That's a big laugh! You know I couldn't hold one twenty minutes."

THE look he gave her was direct and level, but not at all censorious. "*Tu parles, ma petite*," he agreed with a quick smile. "Here is something for your services to Jules de Grandin," he pressed a roll of bills into her hand, "and here is something for yourself alone." Taking her cheeks between his palms he bent her face back and kissed her upon the mouth.

"Gosh, Doc," she gave him a look in which surprise and pleasure were mingled, "you ain't such a cold number yourself. Why don't—" she slurred her voice in imitation of Mae West—"why don't you come up an' see me some time?"

"Should I require the service of a brave and loyal woman again you may be sure that I shall call on you, *Mademoiselle*," he answered with a friendly smile.

"Okay, Doc, be seein' you in the pictures." She gave him a nod of farewell and turned toward her house.

"Too bad," I murmured as I watched

her walk off slowly through the rain. "She has the makings of something fine—"

"*Ab bah*, my friend, you sentimentalize!" he chuckled. "Did not you hear her? She understands herself perfectly, and was most just in her estimate. None but a fool would try to make a silk purse of a sow's ear, or force a different way of life on women such as that. It is her destiny to be a waster, so she will go through life a petty criminal, harried by the police, picked up on trifling charges, serving short terms in jail, then, as she put it so concisely, 'returning to her alley.' The pity is not that she is what she is, but that she was born in our time. In ancient Greece, or the Alexandria of the Ptolemies, or even in medieval Europe, there was a niche and place for such as she, a sort of honorable dishonor. *Eh bien*, they had more religion and less morals in those days, I damn think."

He shrugged as only a Frenchman can when he wishes to disclaim responsibility. The fault was Fate's, not his. And: "Hiji, thou species of an elephant," he added, "have you forgotten we have other duties to perform? Come, let us be upon our errand. *Allez vous promener!*"

"Right you are, my diminutive frog-eatin' friend," agreed the Englishman. "Carry on."

THE big old house in Albemarle Road looked gaunt and lonely. Built of gray stone with a wide porch across the front and sides, it had the jigsaw ornaments of the Victorian period set in the angles of its gables, and iron urns on high stone pedestals on its front lawn. Now, huddled in the fringe of evergreens planted almost at its foundations, it had the look of an old man who wraps his cloak about him and withdraws from life. Rain lashed against its windows, flattening on the panes, rain sluiced down its gutters, wind-driven rain washed across its porch floor

like waves that sweep across the decks of a ship in a storm.

De Grandin seized the heavy iron knocker hanging on the solid Flemish oak front door and beat a devil's tattoo with its ring. No answer came to his first summons, but at the third insistent drumming a glow showed in the fanlight above the door, and the heavy panel swung back a few inches. "Who is it?" came the challenge in a rather high-pitched voice.

The little Frenchman put his foot in the crack of the door before he replied: "Those who wish to talk with you about the memorial you erected to your son in the park, *M'sieur*."

The exclamation answering him was almost like a squeak. The door swung nearly shut, then, wedged against his foot, came to a halt, and: "Hiji, my friend, I think I need your shoulder's weight," he told the big Englishman.

The door crashed back before the mighty push that Hiji gave it, and we were in the hallway of the old house. I looked around me with amazement. The place was a litter of bad taste. Heavy furniture of the kind fashionable in the "awful eighties" stood about the walls, bronze statuary worthy of the worst the cemeteries have to offer loomed on onyx pedestals, the pictures in their heavy gilt frames showed impossible landscapes. The only light in the room came from an old gas chandelier which, dripping colored prisms, hung from the center of the ceiling. There was a musty smell about the house, a taint of dried leather, of dust and mildewed fabrics. "*Tudieu*, my friends," de Grandin remarked, "I damn think we have come into the Castle of Despair."

He looked at the short, fat man in the flowered silk dressing gown, and: "You wish to tell us of that memorial, *M'sieur*?" he asked. "Or shall we tell you?"

"I—I don't know what you mean!" the other stammered, and the little, thin,

high-piping voice that came from that great mass of fat struck me as being nothing less than shocking.

Joseph Stoneman was not an impressive figure, but he was sinister. Despite his moon face and pot belly there was none of the traditional jollity of the fat man about him, and the little eyes that looked out from the folds of fat that framed them were absolutely terrible.

"*Monsieur*," de Grandin's voice was flat and level, and he kept his sharp gaze on the fat face of the other, "since you will not tell us, let me tell you of that memorial. Six weeks ago it left its pedestal and walked by night through Tunnell Street. There it encountered Sally Jukes, and what it did to her was most unpleasant.

"A week later it waylaid Mae Mahoney, and when its work was done there was another case for the coroner. Then Crystal Ebbert met him as she walked the street, and—"

A QUICK and dreadful change came over Stoneman's face. Gone was the childish, sullen, stupid look, gone the dullness from his eyes. His fat jaws quivered like the dewlaps of a hound that works its teeth, his little, puffy mouth began to twist convulsively. "Yes, yes!" he squeaked. "I know it; I sent him—I tracked them down like rats, the sluts that lured my poor boy to his ruin. One by one I tracked them down, and had them killed the way their gangster lovers killed him. All, all are gone, now — Jukes, Mahoney, Ebbert, Cook!"

"There you make the mistake, *M'sieur*. Mademoiselle Cook is very much alive, as we can testify, and your statue he is—pouf!—eliminated."

"You lie," the other told him. "You can't hurt him. He's proof against your bullets—"

"But not against my dynamite, *M'sieur*." "Dynamite?" the other echoed unbeliev-

ingly. "You dared to dynamite my lovely statue—my executioner?"

"Quite yes, *M'sieur*. Your statue is a heap of rubble, nothing more, and we are here to make you answer for your crimes."

A sly, triumphant look came into Stoneman's little eyes. "You can't" he jeered. "Who'd believe the truth when you told it? What sober-minded jury would convict me on your testimony—or fail to send you to a madhouse?"

"They'll put you safely away, and I shall be free to impose my will on the world. I'll recite the magic spell not once, but fifty or a hundred times. Think of it, I'll have a company—a regiment—of marble executioners to do my bidding, and all who offend me shall meet death. I'll wipe out alcohol and vice and sin, and I shall be the sole judge of what's right and what is wrong. I shall be like God. I shall—"

"You shall be nothing at all, *M'sieur*," de Grandin interrupted in a low, hard voice. "You are the only man alive who knows the secret spell of the *magnus* to

bring the dead, cold stone to life, and knowing that, you know too much for the good of mankind.

"Trowbridge, Costello," he turned to us, "will you accommodate me by retiring to the porch for a moment? I shall not keep you waiting longer than our work requires."

The Sergeant cast a meaning look at me, and, "Yis, sor," he agreed. "It'll be a pleasure, so it will."

We closed the door behind us and turned up our collars to the storm. Costello drew me to an angle of the wall, "We don't know nothin', do we, Dr. Trow-bridge, sor?" he asked softly.

* * * * *

It was not long before they joined us, locking the door carefully after them. "*Hélas*, I bring you the sad news, as the papers in the morning will report. Monsieur Joseph Stoneman, the eminent philanthropist, committed suicide tonight. It appears that he hanged himself with the belt of his dressing gown."