

Weird Tales

FEBRUARY

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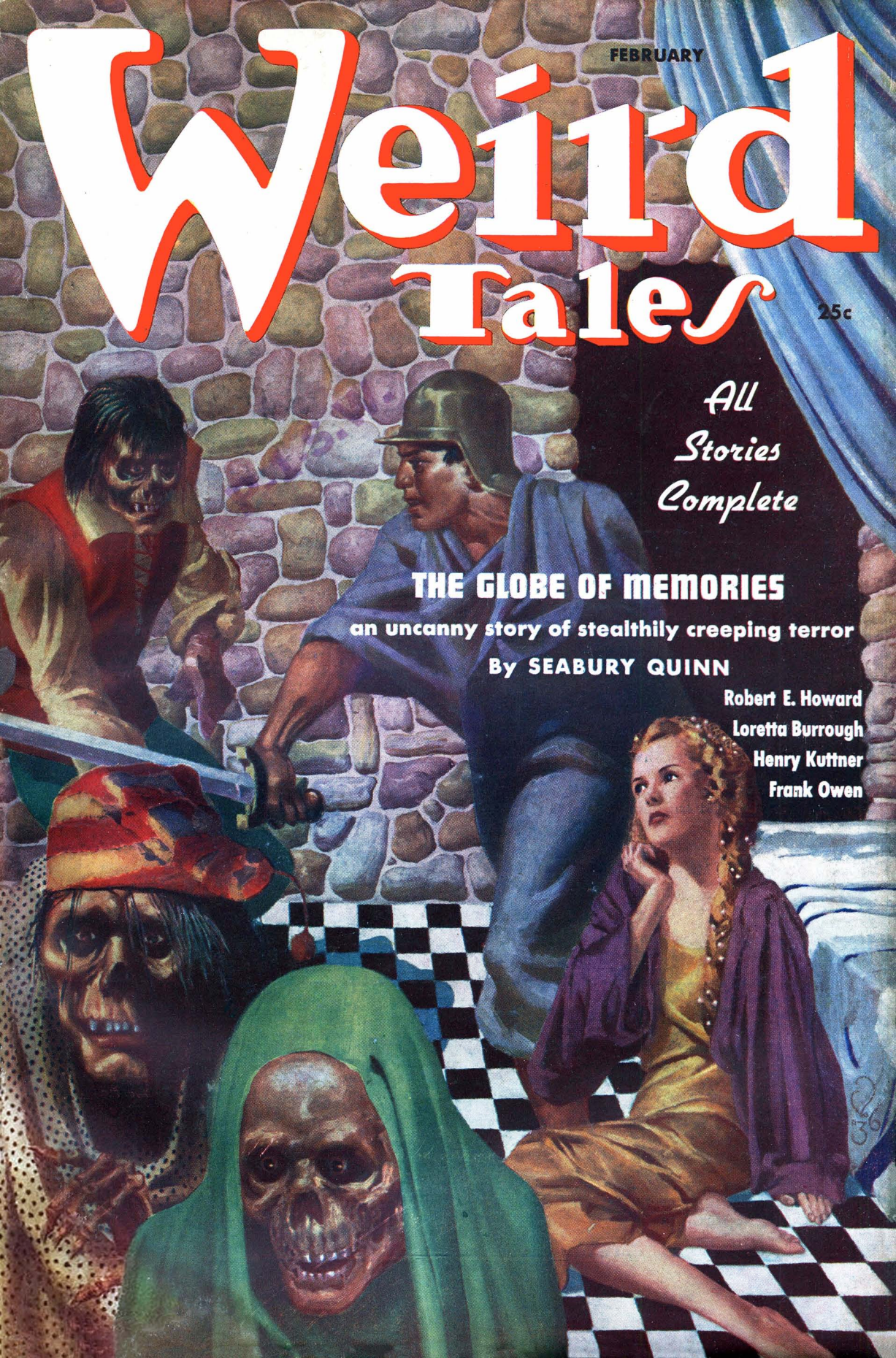
*All
Stories
Complete*

THE GLOBE OF MEMORIES

an uncanny story of stealthily creeping terror

By SEABURY QUINN

Robert E. Howard
Loretta Burrough
Henry Kuttner
Frank Owen





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Weird Tales

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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

The Globe of Memories

By SEABURY QUINN

*A story of stealthily creeping terror which rises by gradations
to a climax of sheer horror*

MONTAGU gazed affectionately on his latest acquisition. Poking through the maze of "antique shoppes" that line Third Avenue where it bounds Murray Hill upon the east, he had come upon the little sphere of crystal, and his heart warmed to it at first glance. There was a vacancy on the third shelf of his glass-window and the little, faintly iridescent globe would fill it admirably—fill it as though made to order.

He set the vitric orb upon his desk and gazed into its limpid depths. It was something like three inches in diameter, crystalline and faintly cloudy at once, and in its center stood a tiny house with grouping, battlemented towers and a castellated roof. From the barbicans there sloped a series of green terraces, all fashioned out of frail, bright glass, and in the background, almost microscopically small, showed the spires and roofs of a walled town.

"Clever people, these Chinese or French or Czechs or whoever made this thing," grinned Montagu as he raised the glass sphere level with his eyes and watched the play of sunlight through its lucid depths. "They must—I say!" he broke off wonderingly and blinked perplexedly. With the movement of his hand some sort of sediment in the liquid filling of the globe had been disturbed, and a vague obscurity began to shroud the tiny castle from his gaze. It was not quite like the limy white of stirred-up sediment, however; rather, it resembled slow-

ly drifting smoke or thickening whorls of gathering fog.

He shook his head to clear his eyes. That must be it. Gazing in the crystal held against the light had dazzled him. He closed his eyes against the baffling mist which swirled inside the ball, and secure in knowing every inch of the study floor, stepped toward the table to replace the little sphere. One, two steps he had taken when an unfamiliar sound beneath his feet forced both eyes open suddenly.

He was not treading on the well-worn Hamadan which carpeted his study floor; he was walking on a graveled path and his feet were stockingless and shod with sandals of rough rawhide.

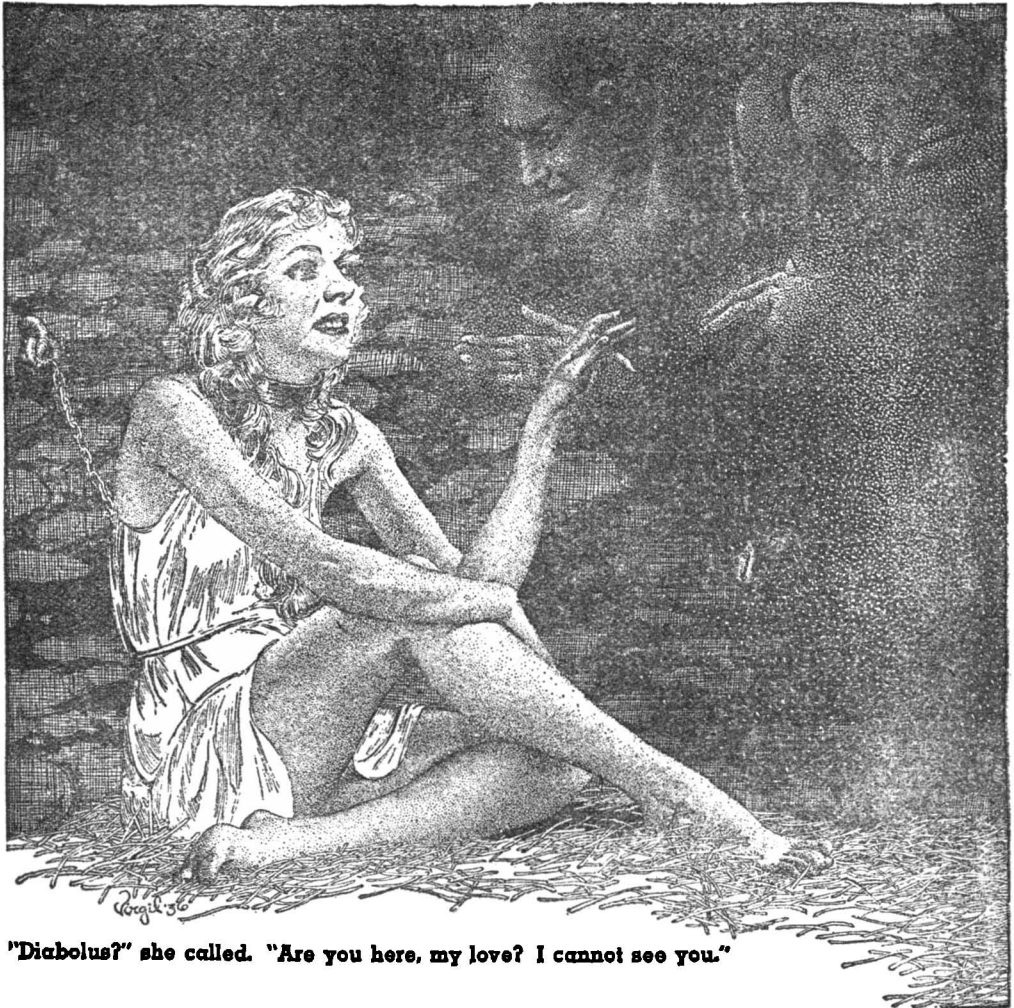
"This is amaz—great Scott!" he muttered. His gait was hampered by the folds of something like a heavy gown which flapped against his shins. It was rough, coarse stuff, an indeterminate, slate-gray in color, and enveloped him from neck to ankles. Hanging from his throat across his breast and nearly to his garment's hem was a sort of apron of rough serge, and under this about his waist was bound a girdle of coarse hempen cord with knotted ends that struck against his knees at every step. Dependent from the girdle was a strand of heavy skull-shaped beads strung on an iron chain and arranged in series, groups of ten beads, each about the size of a small marble, being separated from one another by knobs the size of a shelled hazelnut. At the end was a bead of walnut's size with a brass-and-wooden crucifix hung from it.

"Good Lord!" gasped Montagu, "this is a mediæval friar's costume! What——" Involuntarily, he raised his hand to brush his hair back—a gesture he was wont to make when puzzled—and the sharp cry of dismay he gave was tragic. His hair grew thickly down about his temples, and its natural curl had caused him some bad moments as a schoolboy. Now, as he passed his hand across his head, his fingers touched smooth scalp, a head from which the hair was shaven in a circle as though marked off by a skull-cap, then shaved before the ears and upward from

the nape of the neck till only a thin line of close-cropped hair was left to band his head, as though a wreath of stubble had been laid upon an utterly bald scalp.

"If this is a dream," he told himself, "it's a most unpleasant one. I must——"

Through the fog which filled the air a figure loomed before him, a figure clad in a long gown. He could not tell at first if it were man or woman, but as the shape advanced he saw it was a man who wore his hair cut in a bob that reached down to the bottoms of his ears, and was dressed in a loose robe of some woollen



"Diabolus?" she called. "Are you here, my love? I cannot see you."

stuff of somber bottle-green. Beneath the gown he wore red stockings which reached up his legs like tights; long, pointed shoes were on his feet; a peak-crowned cap trimmed with a heron's feather sat upon his straight black hair. His skin was very dark and his eyes so large and black and deep-set that they looked like oval pits of darkness set beneath his overhanging brows.

"*Dominus tecum, Fra Albertus,*" he greeted with a cold, unpleasant smile.

"*Pax tecum,*" answered Montagu, not realizing till the gesture was complete that he had raised his right hand and described a cross with it.

"What made me do that?" he demanded of himself as he stepped along the gravel path. "It was the proper thing to do, of course, but how did I know——" his voice trailed off in silent wonder as he looked before him.

THE mists had cleared, and he was coming to a castle, its walls and battlements in sharp relief against the fresh blue sky. He recognized it instantly. Point for point and line for line, it was the castle of the glass globe, enlarged a hundred thousand times, but faithful in its reproduction. Across a valley, clearly outlined in the sunlight, rose the walls and spires and red-tiled roofs of a small town.

Terraces of close-clipped grass stretched from the castle walls to a small river. Luminously green in the rays of the declining sun, the upper levels reached to the wide moat; the lower banks were mottled with deep shadow where the shade of ancient trees was cast. A company of young men in bright costumes played at quoits upon the green, and as he passed they ceased their sport and greeted him respectfully, though without a sign of cordiality. "*Dominus vobiscum,*" he murmured as he raised his hand in that

familiar-unfamiliar sign and continued straight across the drawbridge which gave entry to the castle gate.

A dozen halberdiers in brazen helmets and cuirasses and tall boots of Spanish leather lounged in the guardroom. Czechs these; light-eyed, yellow-bearded Dalmatian mercenaries faithful to their bread and salt, and to nothing else beneath the dome of heaven. Their leader greeted Montagu with neither friendship nor hostility.

"Thou'rt expected, Fra Alberto," he announced. "Go thou to the chapel; I'll send a varlet to inform the lady Fulvia of thy coming."

Montagu was aware the guardsman did not speak in English, yet what the language was he had no idea. At any rate, he had no difficulty in understanding.

"Wilt send one with me to the chapel?" he returned, and as he spoke he realized he used the same strange tongue the captain of the guard employed. "Mine eyes are dazzled from the sun."

The warder eyed him sharply, then turned to a subordinate who lounged upon a bench.

"Get thee to the chapel wi' Messer Cheat-the-Devil," he commanded. "His eyes are holden wi' the dark."

None too cheerfully the fellow rose, slipped his sword into his bawdric loop and led the way along the corridor.

It was cold as a sealed tomb inside the castle. Here and there the stone walls ran with clammy sweat where the moisture in the heated air had been congealed on them. At intervals, though not with any sort of regularity, the stones were hung with Flemish tapestries. Here and there stone lamps like little basins protruded from the walls, and in them floated burning wicks, but the principal illumination came from swinging lamps with shades of bright Venetian glass which

splashed down little pools of red or violet or green upon the gray floor-tiles.

The chapel was a sanctuary of cool twilight. A few stray sunbeams slanted through the intricately carved mullions of the narrow windows and wrought net-like figures on the floor, bringing into bright relief the glowing colors of the Isphahan carpets which were spread upon the stones. A tapestry depicting the Nativity hung across one wall; from the groined and carved ceiling hung a sanctus lamp of hammered silver and bright ruby glass which cast a ruddy glow upon the marble altar with its cloth of fair white linen and its cross of beaten brass. Opposite the altar was the entrance to the vesting-room, where stoles of crimson and bright yellow and a set of vestments for the acolytes were hung. Beside the door stood the confessional, carved of age-discolored oak. Instinctively Montagu swung back its gate and shut himself inside, and as he did so caught the rustle of a woman's garments.

He could see her indistinctly through the lattice, a tall and slender figure cloaked in somber black, a white veil bound about her head and gathered loosely round her face. This much he saw, but whether she were dark or fair, young, old or middle-aged, he could not tell.

"Bless me, father, for I have sinned," came a faint, soft voice, and as he leant his cheek against the grille he felt the stirring of soft breath against his ear and caught the faintly tantalizing aroma of the flower-essence that clung about her garments.

Mechanically, unwittingly, but perfectly, he made the proper responses, asked the proper searching questions, and marveled as he did so. Born and reared a Unitarian, son and grandson of devoted members of that informal faith, he knew by instinct every nuance of the Roman rubric!

The confession was a short one, and in less than fifteen minutes Montagu had murmured his *absolvo te*, and his penitent departed silently as she had come.

SLOWLY he rose from the padded cushion where he knelt, let himself out from the confessional and stood a moment by the chapel door. He had no idea what his next move was; perhaps he could retrace his steps and find the castle entrance——

"Ho, Messer Dodge-the-Evil-One," a loud voice greeted, "her ladyship commands thy presence in her bower. She'll have thee break thy fast with her. Fair gospel, eh, my friend? A monk hath never so much of prayer that he can forget his belly, meseemeth."

"Cease thy prating, varlet; lead me to her ladyship," Montagu's tone was sharp with quick resentment.

"'Varlet?' This to me, thou shave-pate?" cried the soldier. "By'r Lady, if 'twere not for that long robe o' thine——" Half jocosely, half angrily, he thrust his halberd-head at Montagu.

Next instant he was sprawling on the floor, for Montagu had snatched the pike-staff from his hand and dealt him such a blow that had not the fellow's skull been guarded by a morion he would have been knocked senseless.

"Now, by the seven thousand holy virgins of Cologne, monk or no monk, I'll have the gizzard out of thee for that!" the guardsman roared, springing to his feet and dragging at his sword.

It was Fra Albertus he attacked, but it was Albert Montagu, captain, O.R.C., expert with the bayonet and three times medal winner with the foil and saber, who opposed him. Steel of sword and steel of halberd struck together with a clash; the guardsman beat and hammered with his blade, while Montagu advanced against him steadily, never letting him

have peace, constantly menacing him with his halberd's point. Awkwardly the soldier parried a quick thrust, then lunged out madly. It was the opening Montagu had waited. With a quick riposte he drove his longer weapon underneath the guardsman's blade, then, checking his arm in mid-thrust, brought the wide head of his halberd up, driving its flat against his adversary's forearm with such force that the sword fell clattering from the fellow's nerveless fingers, leaving him unweaponed and defenseless while the pike-blade shone with deadly menace in his eyes.

A lightly-clapping sound, as though soft palms were struck together, broke the pregnant silence, and a cool, imperious voice commanded: "Give him absolute and the *coup de grâce*, Sir Monk. Meseems that he expects it. So do I."

Montagu whirled at the words, a hot flush mounting to his cheeks. There was more than gentle irony intended, he was sure. The speaker really wished to see him kill his unarmed adversary.

Framed in the roseate patch of light cast by a swinging lamp she stood before him like a portrait from some mediævel romance. Tall, willowy, aloof and proud as Lucifer's half-sister she appeared, but so beautiful that he was fairly breathless at the sight of her.

She wore a wide-sleeved overmantle of deep violet, trimmed about the edges with the regal ermine, and under it a narrow gown of cloth of gold. Her hair was smoothly parted in the middle, and its cloven tide flowed down across her shoulders in two heavy plaits which reached her knees and were laced with strands of pearls. Upon her head, less aureate than the smooth bright hair it covered, was a little cap of golden net sewn thick with seed-pearls. Upon her narrow feet were pointed shoes of creamy leather threaded

with gold bullion, appliqued with violet silk and tipped with incrustations of small sapphires. Her face was pale as Parian marble, save for the scarlet line of pomegranate-red lips, eyes of the clear blue of summer skies; serene and lovely, an arrogant, narrow chin, long, tapering brows and nostrils slim with hauteur. The youthfulness of her slight body shone resplendent through the golden tissue of her gown like a pale, hot flame that shines through polished ivory.

"Lay on, Sir Friar," she bade him while her narrow nostrils flared the faintest bit with pleased anticipation. "That was a shrewdly smitten blow. I wait the finish."

Albert shrugged his shoulders in annoyance. "Here, fellow, take thy tools, and be more cautious ere ye seek another quarrel," he admonished as he flung the halberd at the guardsman's feet.

"You wished converse with me, my lady?" he asked the girl with a cold, formal bow.

"Now, by'r Lady, it doth seem to me thou'rt grown in courtesy," she answered as her cool eyes swept appraisingly over his bare, sandaled feet, his gown of sack-cloth and his shaven head. "'Twill mend my mood to break my fast with thee today."

Silently she turned upon her soft-soled shoes and led the way along the corridor.

THE room to which she led him occupied a portion of the tower looking out across the valley. Almost circular in shape, it was a fairly large apartment having divans at the walls strewn with silk cushions of bright colors. The few articles of furniture, scant but of decided elegance, were oriental in design, as was the bronze lamp hanging from the ceiling.

She struck a silver gong and almost

instantly a serving-wench appeared with a wooden salver piled with food. In silver dishes there were pigeons stewed in wine, a loaf of white bread graced a platter, and from a silver pitcher curled the fragrant steam of hot, spiced wine. Two small goat-horns, framed in silver stands and exquisitely inlaid, served as goblets, and for dessert were comfits made of marchpane. There were neither forks nor spoons, but two small daggers, razor-sharp, lay on the tray, and with these they dismembered the stewed pigeons, thrusting the pieces into their mouths and pausing between mouthfuls to immerse their fingers in a ewer of warm, perfumed water and wipe them on the napkins of white linen.

As they ate she studied him with black-fringed, curious eyes.

"Methinks thou'rt somewhat different, Fra Alberto," she observed at length, and as Montagu looked up he caught the flicker of a dimple shadowed in her cheek.

In a polished silver mirror he beheld a picture, but it was not one he recognized. The face was like his own, but the gleaming white of hairless scalp, accentuated by the narrow fringe of close-cropped hair which circled round his skull, gave it a wholly alien appearance. The collar of a coarse gown came high about his neck, and at the back there showed the swelling of the cowl which hung between his shoulders.

"Aye, different," he repeated, turning from the vision of that shaven-pated head. "I am surely not the man I was this morning."

"Man?" she echoed with a touch of acid irony. "Are monks, then, men? Had thought that they were a third sex, neither male nor female, like those bees that make no honey."

Montagu could feel his cheeks grow

warm. This chit, this little mediæval savage, who could probably not write her name! An angry retort mounted to his lips, and:

"What thinkest thou concerning me, *ma donna?*" he heard himself replying. She studied him a moment, her virginally blue eyes taking inventory of him from his sandaled feet to tonsured head, and she seemed to find the survey faintly entertaining, for again there was a hint of smile upon her mobile lips, the merest hint of dimples deepening in her cheeks.

"Sith thou hast asked, methinks thou'rt more a man than monk," she answered. "I saw thy strife with Hursar by the chapel door, and for a moment I did pray that he would spit thee, but when I saw how manfully thou fought, my prayers were all for thee. By Agnes' eyes, that was a shrewdly given blow wherewith thou didst unsword the villain!"

"But why should you have prayed he'd run me through?" asked Montagu.

Defiance mixed with pride showed in her pale, patrician face. "Those *twenty aves* and two *paters* said whilst kneeling bare-kneed on the gravel of the pleasure walk did not engender Christian charity."

Montagu looked at her in amazement. "Twenty *aves* . . . kneeling bare-kneed on the gravel?" he repeated slowly. "When——"

His question died as he looked in her face. Half wonderingly, half fearfully, she gazed at him, her lips a little parted, something like a frightened recognition dawning in her eyes. One slim hand fluttered to her throat and he saw the signet cut in amethyst gleam on her forefinger.

"Thy eyes — thy voice — they are not——" she began, but stopped abruptly as a shadow fell athwart the threshold.

Smiling bleakly, the man whom he had met as he approached the castle stood at

gaze, and it seemed to Montagu there was a light of mocking mirth in his dark eyes.

"How now, my lord Antonio?" asked the lady Fulvia. "You come unbidden to my bower——"

"If thou canst entertain one man at meat, meseems thou hast scant right to take offense when thy affianced waits on thee," he answered with a bow.

"We are not yet affianced," she returned, "and I entertain no men within my bower. Knowest well that Fra Alberto is my ghostly counsellor; I must hold converse with him for my soul's good."

The man's deep eyes regarded her ironically, but he made no answer. Instead, he turned to Montagu and scrutinized him narrowly. "I hear thou hast distinction as a man of arms, as well as one of God, Fra 'berto," he said slowly. "A very paragon of manly strength, though somewhat lacking in the manly beauty that appeals to ladies' hearts." He fixed his speculative gaze upon the tonsure which disfigured Albert's head; then with another bitter smile: "Still, a young and stalwart monk is better than no man at all, I wis——"

"Antonio!" Flaming-cheeked, the lady Fulvia faced him, her small hands clenched until the nails bit deep into her palms.

"You swine!" Despite the handicap of clinging cassock, Albert crossed the room in two long strides and seized the fellow by the shoulders. "Apologize to Lady Fulvia, or——"

HER scream gave warning of his peril, and he glanced down just in time to see Antonio's hand drag at the poniard at his belt.

Quickly loosening the grip of his right hand, he pushed out with his left, spun the other half-way round, slipped his dis-

engaged hand underneath his arm, clasped his neck in a half-nelson and wrenched with all his might.

Beneath the unexpected pressure Antonio turned a somersault, pitched headlong to the floor and sprawled upon the carpet.

"*Santo Dio!*" He roused to his knees, eyes bright with fear. "No man art thou, but a dev——"

The smash of Albert's fist against his mouth broke off his words.

"Crave pardon of the lady Fulvia, or I'll beat thee to a posset!" he warned. "Hold up thy hands, thou dog; hold up thy hands in prayer and name thyself the foul liar that thou art!"

"Nay, nay, Fra 'berto, do not strike again!" the girl besought as Montagu drew back his fist. "Antonio is truly penitent; he spoke in thoughtlessness, and did not mean his words——"

"I spake in thoughtlessness, and am truly penitent," the man repeated through blenched lips. "Prithee, sweet cousin, bid him let me go in peace!"

"Begone in peace," she answered almost listlessly.

Antonio crept trembling toward the door, but at the sill he turned and bent his thumbs across his palms, encircling them with the second and third fingers, holding the first and little fingers straight. Thus clasped, he thrust his hands at Montagu.

"Aroint thee, Satanas!" he gasped. "Thou canst not harm me——"

Albert took a forward step, and the door slammed to between them.

Turning, he faced the girl, who stood up straight before him, hands clasped before her, as if in prayer.

"Art feared of me—Fulvia?" he asked softly, dropping the ceremonial title from her name.

She was afraid, terribly afraid, he saw,

Her face had gone chalk-white and her vivid lips were almost gray, but her eyes were wide and steady, a little pleading, a little questioning.

"I—in sooth, I know not whether thou art sprite or devil," she replied through lips she strove to keep from trembling. "Say, wilt thou do me harm?"

"Of course not," he returned. "Why should I harm you?"

"Are not all devils——"

"What makes you sure that I'm a devil?" he broke in. "Antonio is evil, you know that. He affronted thee, and I chastised him for it. Did not the good Saint George defend the innocent against the wicked; did not Michael hurl rebellious angels out of heaven?"

"Soothly," she nodded as a trace of color crept back in her cheeks, "and Saint Martin was a soldier and a mighty man of war——"

"Well, then," he laughed, "you see you have no need to fear. I never harmed a woman in my life. Indeed," he added, warming to the subject of his magnanimity, "if it did not bite me first, I never harmed a fly!"

"But—but you gave me twenty *aves* and two *paters*—said upon my bare knees on the pleasance gravel, too—because I did befriend a little dog mine uncle's pages plagued. You said that Christians may not show a kindness to a soulless animal."

"I *did*?"

"Nay, marry, thou didst not!" she answered positively. "Fra Alberto gave that penance, but *thou'rt — not — Fra — Alberto!*"

Once more her lips were trembling, and he could see small shivers shake her slender frame, but she made no move to flee from him, and the frightened look in her blue eyes was half a plea, half invitation.

"Who thinkest thou I am?"

"A devil, certes, but a good and kindly devil who never harmed a woman or a fly—unless belike the fly hight Hursar or Antonio."

Frank and trusting as a child, she laid her hand in his and led him to the narrow lancet-window which looked out across the valley toward the city.

"They make high carnival in town to-night," she smiled invitingly across her shoulder. "Surely, none could think amiss of it if the lady Fulvia were to travel to the city in company with Fra Alberto, her confessor. The prioress of the convent of Saint Agnes is my kinswoman. I fain would visit her the night, and—if I tarried at the fair awhile, or lost my way amid the booths of mountebanks and conjurers"—for a breath she hesitated, then—"if a gentlewoman is not safe accompanied by a holy friar, certes, virtue has gone out of Christendom. Wilt come with me, Fra—Fra Diavolo?"

THE carnival was in full flower. Night was turned to day by strings of colored lanterns stretched from house to house across the streets. A pandemonium of pleasure, an orgy of jollity reigned. Reed pipes skirled, drums beat, tambourines clashed musically. A hundred booths displayed a hundred marvels. Apes danced to elfin music in the torchlight, conjurers and prestidigitators showed a skill which seemed inspired by the Evil One. Musk, attar, cinnamon and myrrh, frankincense and aloes were offered by a hundred swart-faced hawkers. Jongleurs and fire-eaters, rope-dancers and tumblers showed the marvels of their callings. A barber-chirurgeon drew teeth to the accompaniment of his victims' howls and the mingled jeers and applause of the crowd.

His cowl drawn close about his head, a black eye-mask across his face, Albert shuffled through the laughing, jostling

throng. At his side, arm linked in his, walked the lady Fulvia with a violet domino cloaked about her shoulders. She wore her hood drawn forward, and a mascaron of gold-hued tissue hid her features from such revelers as dared impudently to peer beneath the shadow of her capuch. More than once, attracted by the offerings of the fakirs, Albert would have made a purchase, but each time was a forcible reminder that friars' cassocks have no pockets, nor friars wherewithal to fill them even if they had.

At the interesection of two streets a crowd was gathered where a young girl, white and supple as a fresh-peeled willow withe in sateen trunks and silver breastlets, performed contortionistic feats. "San Marco, she hath ne'er a bone within her corse!" an idler swore as the little maid set hands and elbows on the floor, then raised her feet above her head and brought them slowly forward. "God's wounds!" another answered as the girl crossed supple legs above her shoulders and swung her feet before her laughing face; "methinks she is the very daughter of the snake that tempted Mother Eve!"

An ancient hag in flaunting colored rags and tarnished metal ornaments came sidling through the crowd and crept to Fulvia's side. Beneath her bell-crowned hat and headkerchief of gaudy cotton cloth her face was deeply bitten with the sun and with an intricate crisscross of wrinkles, but her eyes were shrewd and bright and bird-like. "Ah, pretty mistress," she besought in a shrill piping tone, "let me read your palm, let the gipsy tell the fortune that awaits you. Love and joy and length of days are surely yours, for you tread among the great folk. Yes," she added, advancing till she clawed at Fulvia's cloak, "you tread among the great folk, mistress, and surely the poor man is servant to the rich, and the borrower servant to the lender."

He could see the smile that curved the girl's lips underneath her mask, and wondered at its wistfulness as she laid her hand within the hag's dry claws and answered softly: "Nay, old mother, has it not been written that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap?"

"Ah-hee!" the aged beldame wheezed, "thou speakest rightly, mistress, for the watchers of the dead e'en now are numbering the tale, and some there are that dwell in mighty places who eftsoons shall hear the tolling of the passing bell."

She dropped the girl's white hand and hobbled off into the crowd, and in a moment her quaint head-dress vanished in the tide of parti-colored dominos.

"Mad?" Albert asked. "Meseemeth that her words lacked sense——"

Fulvia was drawing him away, the insistent pressure of her arm in his leading him farther and farther from the close-packed, lighted street. "Nay," she returned, and he could feel her tremble with excitement, or, perhaps, with fear, "there was a might of meaning in her words for those who understand."

They had left the milling, laughing crowd, and were standing at the stairhead of a landing where the darkened river crept between the blank-walled houses, its surface shining and unruffled as a sheet of tautly-stretched black satin.

"I must leave thee for a time, Fra 'berto," she said softly. "There are those with whom I must hold converse, and they have small liking for thy cloth."

"My cloth?" he echoed questioningly; then, with sudden understanding: "See here, you know that I'm no friar. You said I was a devil—youself did name me Fra Diavolo. Why not take me with you?"

She considered him a moment, then impulsively put out her hands. "I had forgotten, Fra—Diavolo," she answered softly. "Thy cappuccio obscured thy face,

and I did not see thine eyes. Come, we have need of men of valor."

Turning toward the river she emitted a low, wailing call, and in a moment called twice more. Presently they heard a softly-splashing sound as a boat with muffled oars came toward them from the shadows. The rower glanced up challengingly at sight of Albert's hood and cassock, but a low word from the girl appeased him. "'Tis but a mask," she whispered. "He will serve us faithfully."

"Whither go we?" Albert asked as their little boat slipped silently between the ranks of houses.

FOR a moment she made no reply; then, irrelevantly, "Dost see my shoon?" she queried, stretching out her slender, high-arched feet for his inspection.

They were the same shoes she had worn when he first saw her, heelless, pointed, light-cream colored, sewn with golden threads and appliqued with violet silk, tipped with incrustations of small sapphires. Glove-tight, they clung to her small feet, bringing into charming definition delicately arched instep and the outline of the slender toes that lay uncrowded like the fingers of a shapely hand.

"They are made of human skin," she told him; then, as though in explanation: "My uncle gave them to me."

"Human skin? Good Lord——"

"Nay, not so; a foully evil one, I ween."

"What mean ye?" Albert asked. She had crossed her knees, rested an elbow on the uppermost, and leant her chin upon a small clenched fist, staring out upon the murky waters with troubled, thought-filled eyes. At length:

"Mine uncle's farmerers and villeins groan beneath a yoke of tyranny more sore than any which the wicked Pharaoh pressed upon the Hebrew children," she

said softly, almost musingly. "They reap the increment of little that they sow, the impost-gatherer despoils their barns, drives off their cattle, even takes the fowls from their door-step and the eggs from out the nest. Their daughters are made things of sport for men at arms, their children cry for bread, and if they ask for justice——" She raised her foot again, that he might better see the little shoe encasing it.

"'Twas at lambing-time that Salvatore dared to lead the peasants to the castle for petition of redress. Mine uncle's stewards had gone through the farms and garnered in the young of sheep and goat, taking the dams of those too young to graze, and when the peasants raised their protest they were answered with the lash.

"Salvatore talked not of revolt; he believed the word of Holy Writ that the servant should be subject to his master. He only asked that of their flocks' increase the farmerers retain a quarter-part, rendering to my uncle three in four. With him came his mother and his wife, his sons and daughters, and a babe still at the breast.

"Mine uncle met them at the draw-bridge head, surrounded by his guard. When Salvatore had completed his petition the Dalmatian butchers rushed upon him, and made captives of them all. His wife and mother and his little children—e'en the suckling babe—they drowned before him in the waters of the moat. His sons' heads they struck off and fixed upon their pikes. His daughters—*santis-sima, Maria!* 'twould have been far better had they shared their brothers' fate. The girls were four, mine uncle's guard hath half a hundred men. 'Twas very piteous to hear them scream with torment of lust-riven flesh.

"Next morning after matins they did sound the tocsin, and when the farmerers were come from all the country round,

mine uncle bade them watch and see what fate befell a rebel. Thereafter they dragged Salvatore forth, and in sight of all the people flayed him quick. 'Twas Hursar did the butcher's work, Hursar whom thou hast worsted in the fence to-day. Dost marvel that I bade thee slay him?

"Of Salvatore's skin they made a binding for the missal wherefrom thou readest—Fra Alberto reads the office of the Holy Mass in chapel. Moreover, they did fashion gloves thereof, to delight mine uncle when he rides amain upon the hunt. Also they made of it these shoon which mine uncle gave to me."

"But—the things are loathsome; I'd not wear them!" Albert blazed.

"Thou would'st, didst thou regard them as I do," she answered softly.

"Lord! You don't mean you *want* to wear 'em?"

"Yes. Soothly."

He gazed at her in horrified amazement, and her eyes were pleading, almost tender, as they met his look.

"Bethink thee," she leant forward and took up the crucifix that hung upon his rosary, "why do men revere this symbol of the gallows which our Lord was hanged upon?"

"As a memento of the sacrifice He made—I see! Forgive my lack of understanding! I had thought——"

"Many think as thou didst, Fra Diavolo. They say the lady Fulvia is cruel and pitiless; proud, cold and wanting in compassion."

The boat slipped silently along the darkened river; the whisper of its softly feathered oars and the muffled rhythm of the cloth-wrapped sweeps against their locks were all that broke the silence. Abruptly:

"Dost thou believe such things are right?" she asked. "Is it thy thought

that one man, however high his birth, should have such power over others?"

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," he quoted, and a thrill of pride of country mounted in him as he spoke.

Her blue eyes widened and a light like distant stars reflected in a quiet pool shone in them as she leant toward him.

"Say—say those words again!" she gasped. "Never have I heard their like. Not in all the writings of the fathers is such perfect gospel to be found! Teach me, dear devil, let me grave them on my heart: . . . all men are created equal . . . endowed by their Creator with the right to life and liberty! Whence come those tidings?"

"It is the profession of my people's faith," he answered. "Long years ago, when they threw off the yoke of tyranny, they took those words and others like them for the motto of their government."

"And in thy land do all men live by them?" she asked. "Hath none the right to say them nay? Thy king——"

"We have no king. In my land all the people rule. Except for crime, no man's inherent right to name his rulers can be taken from him, and every man is safe in goods and person. Each man's house is unto him a castle, however lowly it may be, and so strong a castle is it that though the rain and wind may enter, the greatest in the land durst not step unbidden through the door."

"O, sweet devil, dear Fra Diavolo, take me with thee to that happy land of thine!" she begged. "Maugre it be hell, there would I bide for ever. Say thou wilt take me with thee when thou dost return!"

"I cannot, child," he answered sadly. "Not only space, but time divides us."

"Then promise thou wilt stay and help remake this doleful world into a model of that country whence thou comest."

"That I cannot promise, either," he replied. "I am not the master of my fate."

"But thou would'st stay here with me, an 'twere given thee to choose?" She leant toward him, and the perfume of her hair was in his nostrils, the flutter of her breath upon his cheek.

"Stay?" Albert answered gaspingly, while his lungs seemed fighting for air like those of a spent swimmer almost worsted by the tide. "Stay, my dear? If I might have the choice, I'd hold time still for ever; I'd let heaven beg for me while I clung to earth by nothing stronger than a kiss!"

The violet hood had slipped back from her lustrous hair, and in the faintly glowing moonlight it shone like gilded silver. Her eyelids drooped until the heavy lashes made twin arcs of shadow on her cheeks, and her lips were slightly parted as she leaned toward him and turned her face up for his kiss. There was that in the utterness of her surrender, the total yielding up of self, that almost frightened him. But she was in his arms, her mouth was answering his with rapturous avidness, and her uncoiled perfumed hair a golden maze in which all hesitancy lost itself.

"My dear," he faltered, "my precious, my beloved . . ."

"Dear devil, sweetest devil; my adorèd Fra Diavolo!" she whispered crooningly as she laid her head against his sackcloth-covered breast.

THEIR boat had beached upon a little shingle, and the oarsman rose and pushed against the sloping gravel with his sweep, holding the craft stationary.

There was a little stretch of water between boat and sand, and Albert lifted Fulvia in his arms to bear her dry-shod to the strand. The tide was cool as though it gushed from mountain springs, and he shivered as he felt the coldness of the water wavering round his sandaled feet. The girl put up a hand and stroked his cheek.

"Art chilled, sweet devil?" she asked gently. "Then drink and be anwarmed," and with a little sigh she laid her lightly parted lips against his mouth.

Mist, faint as steam that simmers from a heating pot, was rising from the river, and as they made their way back from the beach they found themselves confronted by black darkness thickened with the drifting fog. More than once his feet were tangled in invisible obstructions, but the girl walked steadily ahead, her hand in his to guide him through the murk. Straining his eyes, Albert found that he could see a little way around him, but except by glimpses anything ten feet away was blotted out by swirling mists. At length they paused before a rustling iron grille which Fulvia opened with the surety of touch of an initiate, then led him swiftly down a flagstone path. To right and left he saw small huts of stone, some barred by gratings, some blank-faced in the gloom. Leafless poplars reached skeletons like stripped fishbones to the cloud-flecked sky; here and there a moldering granite shaft stood stark and lonely in a maze of briar-bushes.

"Where are we?" whispered Albert.

"The *campo santo*."

"The *campo santo*—cemetery?"

"Yea, 'tis here the watchers of the dead assemble."

They approached a mausoleum larger than the rest, and as they reached its steps a hoarse voice challenged through the fog-bound gloom, and Albert saw the glimmer of a pike-blade. "Is not the

poor man servant to the rich, and the borrower servant to the lender?" asked the unseen sentry.

"Nay," answered Fulvia, "has it not been written that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap?"

The menacing steel withdrew into the clump of laurel bushes and they mounted the sepulchral stairs, pushed back the grille, and let themselves into a vaulted tomb. At the far end of the mortuary chamber was a well, down which there curved a stairway to the crypt-room underneath. Fulvia's soft-soled shoes whispered gently on the stones, but Albert's rawhide sandals seemed to wake a thousand echoes as he stumbled down the stairs.

About a flat-topped stone sarcophagus there grouped a little crowd, monstrous and misshapen-seeming as a crew of gnomes from Niflheim in the torchlight's smoky glare. As Fulvia and Albert entered, the leader of the group drummed on the coffin-top with a blanched thigh-bone and called:

"Have any cause to ask redress of injury?"

"I have," a masked form answered, rising from its seat beside the coffin.

"Who speaks?"

"Nicolo the farmerer, brother to the shepherd Salvatore."

"What dost thou charge?"

"Murder. Murder of my kinsman and his wife, his sons and suckling babe; defloration of his daughters, then their murder; all without just cause."

"Whom accusest thou?"

"Count Cristoforo di San Cologero, lord of the lands whereon my brother toiled, lord of the lands beyond the river, lord of the lands beyond the hills. Him I indict of murder, of him I ask redress of kinsman's blood, of women's tears, of maidens' ravished innocence!"

"Does any speak for Count Cristoforo

di San Cologero?" asked the chairman of the junta.

Slowly, rhythmically, without hurry, without undue delay, he beat upon the coffin-lid with the thigh-bone. A deep, reverberant blow: "Matthew?" Another blow: "Mark?" A third drum-beat: "Luke?"

BEAT followed slow, deliberate beat, and after each the leader called the name of an Apostle. Finally, when twelve names, ending with Barnabas, had been called:

"Judas Iscariot?"

"Yea!" answered all the crowd in unison, and Albert heard the girl's clear treble mingle with the sullen voices of the men.

"Whence answers Judas for his client?"

"From hell, where they who shed the blood of innocents are prisoned."

A pause which lasted while a man might count a hundred followed; then:

"Have ye reached a judgment, Watchers of the Dead?"

"Aye!"

"What is your judgment?"

"Let him die the death!"

"How shall he die it?"

"By the draft."

"Who gives the potion?"

"I." Muffled in her domino, her face hidden by the golden mask, Fulvia stepped forward and put forth her hand.

"Thou'lt not falter?" asked the leader, while his eyes gleamed red in the torchlight through the peep-holes of his mask.

"He is of thy blood——"

"Abel's blood cried out for vengeance from the earth; Salvatore's and his wife's and children's asks for justice from the land, and none will answer it. Give me the phial. I will keep mine oath, and God do so to me, and more, if I should fail my promise!"

Light flashed upon a little flask as it changed hands, and Fulvia hid it in her draperies.

"Watchers of the Dead," began the leader, but a strident cry cut through his words.

"Fly, fly!" the hail resounded through the tomb. "They are upon us—*i signori di notte*—the night-watch!"

"Here, friend, thou'lt find it useful, an thou knowest how to use it!" rasped a rough voice as a sword was thrust into Albert's hand. "Guard well the lady Fulvia; we'll lure the varlets from the shore, and thou should'st reach thy boat without mishap."

The masked men swarmed out of the chamber, and in a moment they heard shouts and clash of metal mingled with oaths fierce as heavy blows.

Albert tucked his cassock-hem inside his hempen girdle, and, sword in hand, began to climb the stairs with Fulvia at his heels. The sounds of conflict had grown dim among the graves, and they raced toward the cemetery gate, dropping now and then behind a ruined tombstone when combatants drew near them.

At the river's rim their boat lay beached, the rower leaning forward in his seat as though asleep.

"Thanks be to San Giorgio, we have won through them!" breathed Fulvia as they hastened to the boat. "Come, Messer Devil, we shall soon be—*Santo Dio!*"

From behind the gunwales of the boat rose two armed men, while the oarsman leaped up from his seat, cast his cloak aside, and revealed himself an armored *bravo*.

Albert swung the girl behind him, and as the *bravi* charged he leaned down and seized a handful of fine gravel from the beach. Before the leading *bravo's* blade could clash with his, he flung the sandy grit with all his might straight in the fellow's face, and as he howled with pain,

drove at him with his sword. The point struck flesh, glanced upward on the man's cheek-bone, then sank in half a foot as, slipping past the bony ridge, it pierced the eye and lodged itself within the brain.

Cold air, chill as currents from the beating wings of death, fanned Albert's face as the second *bravo* struck at him, but with a quick turn he dodged the flailing blow, disengaged his blade and caught the other's sword upon its edge.

The very force of his opponent's charge bore Albert back, and he felt the breath go out of him as the brass cuirass collided with his chest. Bending backward, he struck out with all his force, bringing a left uppercut in contact with the soldier's hairy chin. There was a clicking as of castanets as the *bravo's* teeth snapped shut, and with a grunt he toppled back unconscious from the blow.

The third man was more wary. Refusing to accept the opening Albert seemed to offer as he raised his sword above his head, he advanced a gliding step or two, retreated quickly out of reach, then poised on guard, his sword held straight before him.

Albert made a feint, then a quick lunge, and as his adversary parried in quarte sank back upon his heel, executed a quick cut-over, and lunged straight at the *bravo's* throat. The brazen gorget topping the cuirass prevented his blade from running through the other's neck, but the force with which he struck unsteadied his opponent, and his point glanced upward, cut across the jugular, and left a red spate in its wake.

"Make haste!" he cried, seizing both of Fulvia's hands and swinging her across the little strip of water to the waiting boat. He picked up the oars and fitted them into the rowlocks.

The craft was clumsy, wide-beamed and flat-bottomed, but once he had it out

upon the stream it answered readily enough as he pulled at the sweeps.

"Which way lies town?" he asked. "I know not my directions. Thou must guide me."

HALF an hour later they were clamoring at the postern of the convent of Saint Agnes. When at last the sleepy portress answered their alarum she bestowed a single scornful glance on them and slammed the wicket.

"Get ye gone, ye vagabonds!" she shrilled. "San Antonio's curse upon ye rakes and trulls who play such knavish tricks o' nights!"

Her sandals clattered echoes of her righteous indignation as she shuffled down the passage, nor could all their ringing bring her back again.

"So that's the hospitality of Holy Church?" Albert asked sarcastically, but Fulvia laughed lightly.

"In good sadness, bold Sir Devil, me-seems the reverent sister wardress had some cause for her suspicions," she assured him. "Look thou at me, and at thyself."

Her domino was rent to tatters by the briary bushes of the graveyard, and wet with river water. From her hood her unbound hair hung about her face and on her shoulders like a golden cataract; mold and cobwebs from the tomb adorned her with a hundred dusty festoons.

Albert had an even more grotesque appearance. His cassock was tucked in his belt and kilted to his knees; through his hempen girdle was thrust a long, bare sword; upon his head, cocked at a rakish angle, sat a brazen morion he had appropriated from a fallen member of the watch.

Laughter kindled in their eyes and gurgled in their throats as they finished their inspection of each other, but the

seriousness of their plight stopped Albert's mirth.

"What shall we do?" he asked. "'Tis six leagues to the castle, and there is no conveyance. The city swarms with vagrants and cutpurses. We cannot linger in the streets."

"There is a house I know, an old deserted villa," Fulvia replied, "but 'tis said the spirits of the damnèd dead walk there. Durst enter it?"

"Why not?" he laughed. "'Twill be a roof above our heads, and the rabble will keep off for fear of ghosts. As for us, 'tis from the living, not the dead, we need protection."

Hand in hand they crept through the deserted street till they reached a wicket in a high, blank-faced stone wall. Fulvia pushed and pushed again, but the rusted gate refused to give, and it was not till Albert lent his strength to hers that they managed to bear back the grille.

The garden was a ghost of former glories. Rose bushes, overgrown and weedy, stretched out thorn-clawed arms to hold them back as they passed the broken trellises. The laurel arbor was an almost-submerged island in a rising tide of nettles; grass grew in the graveled paths; the marble statues toppled from their pedestals.

Stumbling through the weed-choked desert, they came at last to the house door, low and iron-studded. Albert put his shoulder to it, and with a groan as if in protest at the violence, the portal swung back slowly, and a long, dark corridor gaped at them.

Step by cautious step they felt their way along the passage till they reached a central hall. This was floored with black and white encaustic tiles, but here and there a slab was missing, and the orifices seemed to grin at them like tooth-holes gaping in the jawbones of a skull.

Through a window at the bend of the

grand stairway came a pallid shaft of moonlight which stained the dark with feeble luminance, giving half-seen articles of furniture a dim and ghastly outline more terribly suggestive than Cimmerian blackness.

The very house appeared resentful of their presence. Whispers seemed to follow and shadows flit behind them. Veiled eyes seemed on them constantly. Something evil seemed to stand beside their elbows, watching, invisible . . . waiting.

Albert drew his sword and folded his left arm around Fulvia's shoulders. "Don't let it get you down," he bade; then, as she turned questioning eyes on him: "Be not afraid. 'Tis nothing but the dark which daunts us."

Above the stairway were the chambers, and in one of these they found a place for her to rest. It was high-vaulted in the Lombard-Gothic style; the walls were hung with faded tapestries; medals, statuettes and amphoræ stood in dark-wood cabinets. Beneath a silken canopy, supported by gilt figures carved in olive-wood, loomed, dimly visible, a mighty bedstead.

With his folded sleeve he brushed the dust from silken counterpane and pillows; then, as Fulvia sat upon the high-piled mattress, he knelt before her and drew off her shoes. Her feet were just as he had visioned them, high-instepped, narrow-heeled, white as lilies and embroidered with a dainty tracery of violet veins. The nails were filbert-shaped and had the sheen of nacre. Yielding to temptation past endurance, he kissed the long straight toes that never had been bent by rigid shoes, and laid his cheek against the soft, pink soles.

"Could rest here till eternity is rolled up like a scroll and feast my heart upon thy worship, sweetest devil," the girl whispered, "but thou art languished, and the day holds much for thee." With a

sigh she drew her feet reluctantly within her robe and stowed her shoes inside the wide sleeves of her overmantle, then held her arms up to him. "One kiss, beloved devil, ere we say good-night," she murmured.

IN THE chamber next to Fulvia's, Albert fought for wakefulness. The empty house was charged with menace; he must stay awake to guard her . . . what was that little bottle she received in the tomb . . . wonder what the fellows in the trust department would say if they could see him in this get-up . . .

A wild, shrill scream, a cry that seemed more filled with madness than with fright, ripped through the gossamer of dream that shrouded him. *Fulvia!*

Sleep-dazed, he stumbled toward the doorway of her room and kicked the leather curtain from his path.

The chamber blazed with light. A dozen forms as hideous as the figments of a nightmare gathered round the girl, who crouched in panic on the floor. Several of them flourished torches, and in their flare he saw the sickening horror of them. Some were partly masked, but where the vizards slipped away he saw that they were skull-faced—fleshless. Some had lost a hand, and brandished rotting stumps of wrists aloft; one or two danced maniacally upon a single leg, and the air was filled with a foul stench that made his stomach retch.

"The pretty one has come to dwell with us!" they chanted with a skirl of hideous glee. "Clean flesh has come among us—sweet, clean woman-flesh!"

One of them reached out a putrefying stump of hand as if to stroke her cheek, and at the gesture Fulvia groveled on the floor as though she fain would press herself into the tiles, and her scream trailed off to soundlessness with very shrillness.

Here were the "spirits of the damned

dead" who walked the ancient villa. Lepers!

Albert charged in silence, lips closed against the nauseating fetor of the room. His sword sheared through the first skull which it struck as though it were a rotten pumpkin, and he wrenched it loose while blood and mangled brains gushed out upon the foul wrappings of the leper's head. Swift as forked lightning, his lunging blade stabbed down two others of the girl's tormenters, and as a fourth one clawed at him with unclean, scale-flecked hands, he dashed the pommel of his weapon straight into the festering face and felt the rotting flesh give way like putrid fruit.

With skirling squeaks, more like the squealing of a rat than any sound from human throat, the ghastly crew dashed from the room, and Albert bent and took the swooning girl into his arms.

Sword poised before him, he marched through the darkened halls until he came upon the entrance they had forced. Kicking the door open he bore her to the laurel arbor and set her gently on the grass.

"Nay, sweetest devil, dearest Fra Diavolo, put me not from out thine arms, I do beesech thee," Fulvia moaned. "Hold me close, my love; clasp me in thy bosom as the husk may hold the fruit till tonight becomes tomorrow. Am terribly afraid."

Dawn was blushing in the east before she slept, and the convent bells had rung for tierce before she woke.

"Good morrow, Fra Diavolo," she smiled up in his eyes; then, suddenly remembering the horror of the night: "Oh, let us go, sweet fiend," she begged. "Am terrified of this unhallowed place. E'en with thee standing by to guard, it likes me not."

Hand in hand they left the ruined garden of the living dead.

THE gnomon on the castle sun-dial shadowed III before they reached the drawbridge head. The way across the valley and the heights had been a weary one, and Albert had been forced to carry Fulvia for much of it; for her soft-soled shoes were no protection on the rock-strewn roads, and she wearied quickly in the day's fierce heat. A cotter gave them bread and goat's milk for their noonday meal, and the last three leagues they traveled on a franklin's stoneboat. Everywhere, he noticed, farmerer and peasant, boor and villein greeted Lady Fulvia as though she were a saint come down from Paradise to walk amongst them, and though they looked on him with surly questioning at first, the fact that she was with him seemed to quiet all suspicion.

"There is bed room in the vestry, an thou carest to rest," she told him as they parted by the chapel door. "Sleep well, my sweet *diabolus*. Will see thee at the board."

He found a corded cot hid in an alcove of the vesting-room, and a jug of water and a ewer on a bench. Cleansing himself as best he could with this, and wiping on a cotta for want of proper towel, he flung himself upon the bed and slept until a trembling page came tiptoeing to bid him to the banquet board.

A THOUSAND candles made the vaulted banquet hall almost as bright as day, and on the long and narrow tables gleamed horn lanterns and copper lamps and tapers. Laurel branches had been massed about the great high table on the dais where the puissant Count Cristoforo di San Cologero sate in state before the bright-hued Flemish tapestry depicting Lazarus at the gate of Dives, and on the board a fair white cloth was spread; but on the common tables there was room for no such frivolous trappings, for al-

ready they were overheaped with food and dishes.

As Count Cristoforo entered, musicians in the minstrels' gallery made harmony with flageolet and hautboy, viol and drum, and as he took his seat a stream of waiters entered from the kitchen. Platters and bowls of larks and lampreys, capons and pheasants, ducks, geese and peacocks, carp, salmon, ox-heads, pigs'-heads, calves'-brains, venison and pork, mutton and beef, came in endless order, and comfits, sweetmeats, marchpane, came between. Last of all came wines and possets, and in jugs of earthenware the stronger drinks that stole the wits away and loosed the tongues.

At the center of the table stood a great gilt dish of salt, and just above this they made room for Albert.

Men at arms and gentlemen, scribes and clerks, stewards and intendants with their womenfolk gathered at the common tables, and the noise of laughter, conversation and the gusty appetites they brought to their food was well-nigh deafening. Everyone, it seemed, clerk, guard, steward and lady, talked at the top of his ability. Listeners there were none.

At the table on the dais sat Count Cristoforo, Lady Fulvia, the lord Antonio and a sallow, dark-haired man whose somber fur-trimmed robe, no less than his demeanor of great gravity, labeled him a doctor learned in the law.

Cristoforo was a mountain of a man. Great-paunched, with three chins folding on his throat beneath his bristling beard, his vein-encrusted cheeks hung down like the dewlaps of a hound, and his pudgy hands, braceleted with rings of fat, were large enough to close around a capon as an ordinary hand might compass a roast pigeon. He laughed much and talked loudly, making up by boister-

ous gayety for the reticence of his companions.

Fulvia was proud, cold, silent and aloof, eating with a daintiness which showed small appetite for the rich food the servants brought. Not once did she vouchsafe a glance at her companions.

Antonio wolfed food greedily, but as he ate he never took his burning eyes from Fulvia's clear profile.

The lawman, as became his dignity, partook of food and drink in learned silence, but that he lacked in neither appetite nor thirst was proven by the nimbleness required of the page who served him.

When the feast had lasted some two hours, and the drinking, singing and unseemly jesting had become uproarious, Count Cristoforo rose and beat upon the table with his dagger-hilt.

"My friends," he roared as soon as something like a lull succeeded the wild hubbub, "we are gathered here tonight to drink success unto a union of two branches of our family. This night the lady Fulvia, my niece and ward, becomes affianced bride of Lord Antonio Giovanni di Verniatti, my well-beloved heir and kinsman. Drink—drink to their bridal, and a long line of descendants to perpetuate our race!"

Fulvia's eyes were on him, cold as inlaid eyes of stone in a face of carven ivory, as he raised the chalice of chased silver brimming with red wine, and drained it at a draft.

He wiped his thick lips on his sleeve and held his cup out for replenishment. "And now a toast to the fair bride-elect, the fairest flower of all Tuscany——" he shouted, but stopped upon a hiccup, and a look of consternation spread across his bloated face. "San Michele!" he cried in a voice gone thin with terror—an absurdly small voice to come from such a barrel of a throat—"I am envenomed!"

He leaned against the table, both hands clasped across his bulging paunch, eyes bulging from his livid face. Great beads of sweat stood out upon his forehead and rolled down his hairy cheeks, his eyes shone with a glassy luster, and his yellow teeth protruded from his writhing lips. A cry, half bellow, half despairing groan, came from his gaping mouth, and he slipped down to the floor, clutching at the air with distraught fingers.

"*Misericordia!*" he shrieked. "*Misericordia, domine!*"

His cries were muted to low muttering groans, and he sprawled face-downward on the rug-strewn floor, fingers twitching. "Fulvia!" he rolled upon one shoulder, and in his glazing eyes shone realization. "Thou said'st that God would give me blood to drink when I flayed Salvatore! Didst thou—didst thou give me——" With a final tremor he lay still, eyes gazing sightlessly up at the girl, jaw fallen, swollen, purpled tongue protruding from his mouth.

"Seize that woman!" Like a whip-crack Lord Antonio's words rang through the room.

Albert leaped up from his seat as a score of guardsmen sprang to do the new count's bidding.

Hursar, the Dalmatian he had worsted yesterday, stood in his path, and he struck out savagely, felt his fist collide with the man's jaw and saw him stumble back against the table. By the guard'sman's clutching hand there stood an earthen bowl of half-cooled mutton broth, and with an oath he seized the vessel and raised it overhead to hurl its scalding contents into Albert's face.

Steam was streaming from the bowl. It rose in ever-thickening clouds, spreading like a mist across the flickering points of candlelight, blotting out the objects in the room.

Albert spread his hands to sweep the

vapor from his eyes, clutched out blindly, and touched—the edge of his own pearwood kidney-desk.

Sunlight slanted through the windows with their hangings of Calcutta print, picking up the muted reds and blues and ochers of the antique Persian carpet, bringing out the highlights in his mother's portrait, framed above the mantel-piece. Five steps it took to cross between the window and his desk; he had started from the window when the mist had first seemed to obscure his eyes as he looked into the little globe. . . . The globe? He glanced down at his hand. There it was, a little sphere of crystal, three inches in diameter; in its center stood a tiny house with grouping, battlemented towers and a castellated roof. In the background, almost microscopically small, showed the spires and roofs of a walled town.

"Fulvia!" he called. "Where are you, dear? I'm coming . . . they shan't take you . . ."

The mocking, wailing laughter of fire-apparatus sirens bidding all and sundry clear the way, drifted through the opened windows from the street. Faint, but understandable, a newsboy's hail came through the summer afternoon: "Extry poiper! Read all about that big poison plot!"

He was home; home in New Rochelle. This was the Twentieth Century.

And Fulvia? Fulvia stood surrounded by her enemies, separated from him by three thousand miles of ocean and—*seven hundred years!*

"**N**ONSENSE, son, it was as plain a case of self-induced hypnosis as I've ever seen! Every favorable element was present—the bright, globular object to concentrate attention, the sun's rays focused by the crystal, the suggestion of a mediæval atmosphere by that castle in the ball—everything. Why, you need no fur-

ther proof than that the whole forty hours compassed by your dream were crowded into the little time it took you to walk five steps." Doctor Bainbridge, plump, florid and white-haired, drew the Russian leather case from the upper left-hand pocket of his white waistcoat, snapped his oxford glasses open, adjusted them with care, and began to scribble a prescription.

"Here we are," he announced; "just a little iron, quinine and strychnin. Take it regularly three times every day, and you'll soon be fit again."

"I don't see how it could have been hypnosis, self-induced or otherwise," objected Albert. "Lord knows I've tried to capture it again. I've held the globe exactly as I did that afternoon, even timed myself, so the sun would be precisely in the same position, and looked and looked in it, but—nothing's happened. I've got to get back to her, Doctor. I must, I tell you! The memory of her face as those soldiers closed on her, that terrible smile with which Antonio regarded her—they drive me crazy!"

"Easy on, son," soothed the doctor. "I'm not particularly surprized you've not been able to repeat the auto-hypnotism. Things like that are generally accidents. You were ripe for it that afternoon, that's all.

"See here, let's say you're normally not allergic to milk, beef, eggs or beer—most people aren't. But if a proper combination of physical circumstances develops, so that you have what laymen call a bilious condition, any one of 'em will make you sick as a tinker's dog. I've seen you finish four old-fashioneds in a row and never bat an eye; yet you know there are times when a single Scotch and soda seems to go to your head like a stratosphere balloon. It's all a case of physical condition, boy. That afternoon last week you were tired, nervously or physically ex-

hausted, or something you'd eaten for luncheon had failed to digest properly, thus keeping a greater supply of blood than normal in the region of the stomach and intestines and away from the brain—any one or all of a dozen different things might have contributed to put you into exactly the condition necessary for hypnosis to develop.

"Judging from your description, I'd say you suffered from a kind of nightmare under auto-hypnotic anesthesia."

"But, Doctor," Albert argued, "it can't have been a dream. Dreams, whether we have 'em in sleep or hypnosis, are predicated on our waking knowledge, aren't they? I'm assistant trust officer at the Consolidated; it wouldn't be possible for me, with my background, to dream out the complexities of a television outfit, would it?"

"H'm; hardly," Doctor Bainbridge answered.

"Then," Albert flashed triumphantly, "I couldn't have dreamed this! I've never been to Italy; I knew nothing of Thirteenth Century costumes or customs; I never attended service in a Catholic church, and I surely never saw a leper; yet you tell me everything I described was photographically accurate. How could I possibly have dreamt these things for which I had no apperceptive basis? No, Doctor, it won't do. I'm convinced I've had a vision of the past, perhaps a flash of ancestral memory.

"Psychologists tell us we never really forget anything, that every experience an individual has, from earliest infancy, leaves a complete, detailed and indelible record on his mnemonic apparatus. Something that has happened—some word, some scene—is apparently completely erased from memory; then, years later, maybe, associational paths previously blocked or covered over are suddenly and swiftly cleared, and in an instant that for-

gotten memory stands out in complete and clear detail. 'That's so, isn't it?'

"Of course," said Doctor Bainbridge, "but we're talking of the individual, now——"

"Quite so, but if these seemingly impossible flashes of buried memories are observable in individuals, why should it not be possible—certainly, it's no more strain on our credulity to believe it!—that the ancestral experiences of every individual are engraved in detail on his memory, and just as his own experiences can be brought up from the file-rooms of the subconscious, if the proper associational combination can be found, so in a proper case, his ancestral memories may be evoked?"

"Let's put it another way: Let's say we're in a rowboat, going down a high-banked, widening river. We're unfamiliar with the stream above the point where we started, the banks and windings shut it from our view. That's the situation of the average man; it was mine until the other day. Now, suppose an aviator comes along, and takes us on his plane. The moment we rise high enough, we have a view of all that portion of the stream we've traveled, and *all that went before*, as well. We're able to see over the barriers of banks and turns, we're in position to——"

"See that part we haven't traveled yet, as well," broke in the doctor with a laugh. "It's an ingenious theory, son, but it's too far-fetched. I know the arguments about ancestral memory, but I've yet to see a demonstration of 'em. Some of our super-physicists contend that since it's light that makes it possible for images to be recorded through the camera of the eye, every action that occurred since time began is photographed on the light-rays, just as if it were imprinted on a film. Then they go a step farther, and assert that once the light-rays bounce off our

planet they continue traveling through interstellar space eternally. According to their theory, then, if one possesses a powerful enough telescope, he only needs to train it off in space to witness the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum, or the Crucifixion. Ingenious, but nonsensical; utterly nonsensical. We've enough signs and wonders which are scientifically demonstrable without flying off on metaphysical tangents.

"What you need"—his manner dropped informal friendliness and became once more professional—"is more rest and exercise. That job of assistant trust officer in a bank as big as the Consolidated is too great a strain for any kid of thirty-two. 'Take six months' leave of absence. Get out in the air and think more about your golf and tennis scores and less about estates and wills and trusts. There'll be plenty of time for that when your liver begins to soften and your arteries get hard."

EVERY afternoon at three Albert stood before his study window with the little globe.

"Fulvia!" he would whisper hoarsely, "I'm trying to come back across the years to you. Help me, dear!"

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday he strove in desperation to pass the fast-shut gate to yesterday; Thursday, Friday, Saturday he strained in agony against unyielding panels of a door that had no key.

Sunday afternoon it happened.

He had been gazing in the crystal for some twenty minutes when he saw it slowly change in color. Its limpid depths shaded to a bottle-green, then to an intense, opaque blackness, like a lump of polished carbon. An icy wind seemed blowing on him. He had that eery, half-numbed feeling which a restless sleeper knows when the pre-dawn cold comes

through the opened windows and reaches for him through the blankets with chill fingers. Curiously, he felt light, intangible, imponderable, as though he were a wraith that drifted helpless in the shifting currents of the air.

All was dark about him, dark with the clammy dampness of a long-forgotten, fast-sealed tomb, or the blackness of an oubliette. When he put out his hands to right or left he touched cold, sweat-damped stone, his feet slid over dank, slick tiles; but, strangely, he did not appear to walk; rather, he seemed to float unhindered and unweighted through the gloom.

The clank of iron-shod feet came rattling down the corridor, and he saw the bloody stain of torchlight in the darkness as a squad of pikemen bearing flambeaux marched at quick-step through the gloom. By the luminance they brought he could see that the passageway lacked width to let them by, and he shrank against the wall to give them room, but they never slackened step as they approached, nor, though their torchlight must have shone upon him, did any of them vouchsafe any notice of his presence.

"Tramp — tramp — tramp; thump — thump — thump," their armored feet beat on the stones. They were close enough to touch him, they had come abreast of him—they had passed.

They had marched right through him with no greater realization of his presence than if he had been air. And he—he put his hands up to his brow to hold his reeling wits in place—had felt no sense of contact as their bodies passed through his!

Beyond the turn of the black passageway a little rivulet of light flowed out beneath an iron-studded door. He seized the ring-bolt at its lock in both his hands and pulled with all his strength, but he might as well have tugged at the masonry

in which the door was set. Three times he strove to draw the barrier back, then, exhausted, leaned against it with a sigh of weariness. It was as if the panels melted at his touch. Without resistance he walked through the four-inch, iron-strapped oak planks and found himself in a low chamber.

The room was hung with black; black carpet on the floor, black tapestries upon the walls. On a dais stood a long table with a covering of black. Behind the table sat a row of seven men, all gowned and hooded in black baize, their somber cloaks and masks seeming to melt into the black background of the room. The only spots of color were the shifting pools of bloody light which flickered from the red-glass lamps upon the table, and the violet and golden hues of Fulvia's gown and mantle.

ERECT and proud as Sophonisba before Scipio she faced the masked inquisitors while one read her accusation from a parchment scroll:

"That the Lady Fulvia Maria Calvia di Gradenigo did maliciously and wickedly, moved thereto by temptation of the Devil, administer to her kinsman and liege lord, the mighty and right worshipful Count Cristoforo di San Cologero, a poisoned draft distilled by witchery, whereof the mighty and right worshipful Count Cristoforo aforesaid did die in mortal agony.

"That the Lady Fulvia Maria Calvia di Gradenigo aforesaid, not having the fear of God before her eyes, did wickedly, sinfully and iniquitously consort, foregather and cohabit with a demon incubus who had sacrilegiously and most impiously assumed the form and habit of the good and holy Fra Albertus, her chaplain and confessor . . ."

"What say ye to the crimination, Lady Fulvia?" the clerk asked when the long

list of her evil deeds had been recited.

A door was lightly opened back of the black tapestry, and Antonio tiptoed softly to the central figure at the table and whispered earnestly into his ear.

The masked inquisitor listened silently, then nodded in assent.

"Lady Fulvia, my cousin and aforetime promised wife," Antonio turned from the hooded judge and smiled at her, "I have prayed this worshipful tribunal to have clemency, and am authorized to tell you that an thou wilt confess thy guilt and spare them the great pain of putting you to torture, thou shalt not suffer pain from either steel or iron, fire or hemp, neither shalt thou be imprisoned long, nor suffer banishment or immolation in a cloister. Dost consent?"

Fulvia raised a creamy shoulder in disdainful shrug. "Why, certes, sith I am condemned aforehand, what boots it if I make acknowledgment?" she answered.

"And when didst thou become aware this demon who assumed a holy form and habit was no man?" the president of the tribunal asked while the scratching of the clerk's quill pen was like the rasping of a file on iron as he wrote the deposition down.

"When I saw him overman the butcher Hursar at the chapel entry I was sure he was not Father Albertino," she replied; "then, when my cousin and affianced husband yonder did force himself into my bower and affront me with foul slanders, this seeming Fra Alberto bade him eat his words, and when he would not, overcame him with as little travail an he were an unbreeched lad."

"In sooth, he did what never natural man hath done," Antonio broke in sneeringly.

"Then, when we were beset by leprous outcasts, he fended me right worthily, and——"

"And thou didst spend the nighttime

in his company, alone?" the president asked. His voice was smooth and deep; kindly, reassuring in its tone.

"Yea——"

"And thou didst give him——"

"Naught but my lips and feet to kiss, I swear it."

"Thy feet?"

"Yea, he worshipped me——"

"Enough! Thou madest thyself a queen and goddess among devils! Hast added blasphemy to other crimes. Sign thy confession, harlot!"

The quill pen scratched as she laboriously spelt her name out on the sanded parchment.

"This is thy true and full confession, made of thy free will, without constraint or mental reservation?" asked the president.

"Thou sayest it."

A rustle of black draperies as the hooded arbiters arose and eyed her ominously through the peep-holes of their masks.

"Our sentence, then, is this," the deep voice of the president seemed to swell and fill the little, low-ceiled chamber till the very sable draperies fluttered with its force; "the judgment of this court is that the Lady Fulvia Maria Calvia di Gradenigo be exposed naked in the marketplace and stoned with stones until she dies. Thereafter her body shall be burnt to ashes and those cast in the river, that her sinful flesh may never find a resting-place where Christian dead are buried.

"Look to her, jailer!"

A sable tapestry was swept aside and a door creaked on its uncoiled hinges. Half a dozen men at arms marched in and lined themselves each side of Fulvia.

They led her into the adjoining room, where the executioner, arrayed in scarlet hose and doublet, with a scarlet mask across his face, stood with two masked helpers.

They stripped her sumptuous garments

off and clothed her in the short, coarse-linen shrift of the condemned. They fastened manacles upon her wrists and gyves upon her tender ankles; last of all they riveted an iron carcanet around her neck and latched an ell-long chain to it. Thus, chained and collared like a savage beast, she stood to wait their pleasure.

"By the belly of Saint Jude," swore Hursar, who was in command of the guards' squad, as Fulvia's creamy body shone with ivory luminance against the murky darkness of the dungeon, "there's a dainty morsel for a lusty man, albeit too frail for much endurance!"

"Hold thy peace, thou hell-born devil's spawn, or by the Mass thou'lt feel the nip of red-hot pincers!" cried the executioner; then, very gently as he took her collar-chain to lead her from the room: "Art ready, lady?"

TETHERED by her neck-chain to a ring-bolt in the floor, Fulvia crouched upon the molding, verminous straw which strewed her dungeon. Her shackle was too short to permit her to sit upright, and the heavy bracelets and leg-irons bruised her tender flesh with each attempt at movement. "Ah, Fra Diavolo, dear, dear demon, where art thou now?" she sobbed. "Hast thou, too, deserted me in this dark hour?"

With a strain that seemed to wrench his soul asunder, Albert forced an answer: "I am here, beloved."

His words were scarcely louder than the whisper of a breeze across a field of standing grain, but she heard them.

"Diabolus?" she called. "Art here, my love? I cannot see thee."

"I cannot see myself," he answered. "I seem discarnate."

"Art—art dead?" she asked. "Do devils die like mortals?"

"Nay, dearest, I am living," he replied, "but——" With an effort like the

struggle of a sleeper to shake off the incumbrance of a nightmare, Albert thrust himself toward her. The air seemed almost solid; he had to battle with it as he might have struggled through the breakers when the surf was running high, but by sheer determination he forced himself across the dungeon's filthy floor. And as he fought he felt his strength increasing; by the time he reached her side he had attained a sort of visibility. Faint as a figure on a screen projected by a dull and flickering light he was, but still there was a tiny substance to his shadow, and when he reached his hands to her she felt them on her cheeks.

"Ah—ah," her breath came quickly between fluttering lips. "I feel thy touch, dear devil! Draw closer, fold me in thine arms, hold my head against thy heart and let me dream away that little that is left of life encompassed by thy love!"

He crouched beside her on the stinking straw and took her in his spectral arms.

She held her mouth up for his kiss, and though it was no more than a mere breath of air upon her lips, she shuddered with delight at it.

"Ah, love, dear love," she whispered, "when first I brought thee to my bower and looked into thy gentle eyes, my very heart took flight to thine, like a little bird that to its nest returns at eventide." And she twined her arms about him, very gently, lest they break his shadow-shape, and kissed him on the mouth, the cheek, the throat, the tonsured head.

And "sweetness of the honeycomb, delight of eyes and fairest among women," he named her. "Rose of gold, and tower of ivory, most beautiful of all God's creatures," and other lover-like endearments he breathed into her ear while he fought against the impotency of his unsubstantialness and sought to strain her to his bosom.

"Hear the singing of my heart, sweet

'devil," she commanded, and held his head against the little breasts that lifted her coarse-linen shrift. "Hearest thou the tune it sings? Di-abo-lus, di-abo-lus; 'tis thy dear appellation which it beat since first I saw thee; 'tis thy sweet name 'twill call tomorrow, when — when ——" A shudder stopped her words, for she was young, and death was very dreadful.

And Albert kissed her hands, her brow, her neck, her feet, and last of all her eager, yearning mouth.

"Art thou in hell?" she asked at length, when they were surfeited with kisses. "Shall I join thee there tomorrow?"

"Nay, love, I do not bide in hell, at least not in the kind thou meanest."

"Where is thy dwelling, then?"

"In a land across the sea which takes its name from famed Atlantis, a land no one now living has yet dreamt of."

"Toward the sinking sun?"

"Yea, westward; separated from thee by three thousand miles of ocean and a septuple of centuries."

"O, heaven! Time and space alike are barriers between us!" wailed Fulvia. "But love is stronger; love will lead us to each other. Promise thou wilt wait for me, dear devil!"

"Through time and through eternity I'll seek thee," he returned, "and never will I give my love to any other."

So, clasping mouth to mouth and heart to heart, they crouched there on the dungeon's fetid straw till daylight marked a little square of cross-barréd luminance against the window.

A GREAT stake had been set up on the execution platform in the marketplace, and to this they conducted her.

As the double file of men at arms tramped from the fortress with the prisoner in their midst the city folk and countrymen fell to their knees and a

chant went up to heaven: "*Miserere mei, Domine*—have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness, according to the multitude of Thy mercies . . ."

The headsman, in red, sleeveless doublet, his face concealed by a red mask, struck the shackles from her hands and feet, but left the iron collar round her neck; for by the chain attached to this she must be tethered to the stake, like a bear chained to its post for baiting.

Kneeling on the stones as he removed the gyves, the fellow mumbled: "It is not I who does this thing to thee, my lady, but the orders of the great ones of the church and state. Prithee, forgive a humble man who does his bounden duty, and remember me when thou comest to thy happy place."

"Nay, dost not know that I am excommunicate?" she smiled upon him sadly. "What service could the prayers of such as I do thee?"

"Nathless, lady, I had rather have thy prayers than the orisons of fifty tonsured priests," he answered. "Sith Holy Mass may not be said for thy repose, the prayers of every humble home throughout the city and the countryside shall rise for thee tonight, and every night thereafter. Pray thou for us sinful men, my lady!"

"Why, then, good boor, I will," she promised. "If it so be that prayers are made in that place where I go, know that mine shall rise for thee."

He pressed the edge of her coarse shrift against his lips, then, since time crowded, took his iron shears and slit the cloth from hem to throat, and with a quick jerk freed her body of it.

She stood exposed before the people in her slender beauty, her slim and boyish thighs, her little breasts that hung like raindrops on a window-pane, and the virginally-low swelling rondure between.

"Take up the stones!" It was Antonio's voice that called the order, but from

somewhere in the crowd a counter-order rang:

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her!"

A murmur of assent, low, but ominous and menacing as the rumble of approaching thunder, swelled among the throng, and several of the hardier pushed against the leveled pikes that framed the hollow square about the execution platform.

"Make haste!" Antonio bade. "The louse-bit rabble murmurs. Have done with it!"

Hursar and two others laid their halberds by and swaggered toward the platform.

Now that Death grinned in her eyes, her valiant spirit quailed. "Help, Fra Diavolo, pity me!" she cried. "Succor me——"

The impact of a cobble on soft flesh smashed her plea half uttered. Possibly the fellow meant it for a mercy-stroke; more probably his pent-up spite propelled the missile as Hursar hurled a fist-size stone into her stomach-pit.

Her agony was dreadful to behold. Eyes glazed and starting from her face, mouth squared with ghastly pain, she doubled forward as the great stone struck her solar plexus, and her hands beat impotently against the air as she gasped and fought for breath.

The aim of Hursar's fellow was more merciful. Drawing back his hand he hurled a flint which caught her on the temple, cutting through the blue-veined flesh and smashing the thin bone. There was a rattle of the rusty chain that held her to the stake, her knees bent flaccidly, and she hung unconscious and inert against the iron collar.

Thud followed thud as stone on stone was hurled. The lovely arms lost shape as their fragile bones were broken by the battering cobblestones. The tapering legs

were twisted lengths of formless flesh. In half an hour all was finished, and the sweet white body which was Fulvia had been flailed into a bloody, shapeless mass that bobbed and twitched and bounced grotesquely on its chain as men at arms and some few heartless townsmen tried their aim on it.

Albert struggled like a maniac against the obstacle of formlessness. He tried to shield her body with his own. The stones passed through him without hindrance, nor could he feel their passage. He sought to seize a fallen stone and hurl it at the grinning Hursar or the cold malevolent Antonio. The rubbles might have weighed a ton, for all his puny efforts counted. Strive as he would, he could not budge one from the ground.

At last, by a supreme effort, he managed to grasp one in his clutching fingers. Slowly, while he fought down torturing weariness, he raised it, poised it for the throw, hurled it straight at Hursar.

The force that he expended overbalanced him. He fell face-downward as he flung the missile, struck the ground and lay there panting, sick with effort and exhaustion.

Slowly, lethargically, his eyes opened. He was lying on his study floor. Beside him, smashed to fragments, was the little crystal globe of memories. The gateway to the past was closed irrevocably.

A YEAR of lonely living had wrought a great change in Albert Montagu. His curling hair was flecked with gray, at the temples it was white. His face showed lines of suffering, and his eyes were the eyes of one who watches by the corpse of happiness.

Nothing but the fact that he had known the bridegroom since they sported their first knickerbockers had induced him to forsake his hermit-like existence and attend the Trotter-Dorsay wedding,

A hundred times he wished he had not come.

The ceremony had been held upon the lawn, and the bridesmaids had been coolly lovely in pale pastels.

Now he stood alone beside a garden hedge, wondering how soon he could depart in decency. The murmur of a girlish conversation did not tend to lessen his discomfort:

"That's Albert Montagu. Stunning, isn't he, with that thin, stern face and prematurely gray hair? They say he had a disappointment in love and——"

"I saw him get a disappointment when he came," the other girl broke in. "Just as he was getting from his car his hat blew off, and the car behind ran over it. I'll bet he was mad! There's nothing quite as funny as a high hat when it's mashed——"

"Oh, look, there's Anne Bartholomew! Talk about your proud, cold, haughty queens! That girl's Mary Stuart and Medea rolled into one."

Idly, Albert looked across the lawn and felt a sudden tightening in his throat.

Tall, willowy, aloof and proud as Lucifer's half-sister she appeared, but so beautiful that he was fairly breathless at the sight of her. She wore a violet tunic-coat of marquissette, and under it a daffodil-hued gown of airy organdy. Her hair was bright as new-strained honey, and her face as pale as Parian marble, save for the scarlet line of pomegranate-red mouth. Beneath long, tapering brows her eyes were clear and blue as August skies; the line of her narrow, arrogant chin was perfect as she turned her face aside a moment. The youthfulness of her slight body shone resplendent through her garments, like a pale, hot flame that shines through polished ivory.

"Fulvia!" he choked, and in ten strides had crossed the lawn and stood before the girl.

Anne Bartholomew looked with cool, inquiring eyes at this young man who called her a strange name. Obviously, he was not one of those who had made too many visits to the punch bowl; quite as obviously, he was a gentleman.

"I'm sorry, I don't seem to know you. Have we met before?"

"Seven hundred years ago——"

Her slim, patrician brows arched slightly. He had been drinking, after all.

"Fulvia! You must—you can't say you've forgotten Diabolus—Fra Diavolo . . ."

"Fra Diavolo?" A small frown furrowed her smooth forehead. She hesitated for a moment, and in her eyes there came the look of one who seeks to capture a lost chord of music or a snatch of half-remembered verse. "Diabolus . . . I seem . . . a chapel . . ."

"And Hursar . . . and Antonio!" he added breathlessly.

"A carnival?" Still doubtful, she seemed groping through a buried treasure-house of memory.

"The meeting in the tomb . . . the fight with the *signori di notte* . . ."

"Wasn't there an old house, a deserted mansion?" Something like fear stirred in her calm eyes.

"And that ancient bedroom . . . your little feet . . ."

"A—a stake set up in the town square?" Mounting terror, recollection of a dream so dreadful that it chilled the summer sunshine, swept across her face, but:

"Remember that night in the dungeon, dear," he pleaded. "You said, 'Promise thou wilt wait for me, dear devil,' and——"

"You said, 'Through time and through eternity I'll seek thee, and never will I give my love to any other!'"

"Fulvia!"

"Sweet devil—dearest Fra Diavolo!"

Hand clasped in hand they faced each other, and in their eyes there shone reflection of the breaking dawn in Paradise.

"I say, Montagu, I've found something that belongs to you, and had it mended!" Mr. Trotter, bulging with officiousness

and fairly fizzing with champagne, came up to them, a newly ironed silk hat extended in his pudgy, well-kept hand.

But Anne and Albert—Fulvia and Fra Diavolo—took no notice.

They had found something that belonged to them—and it was mended.