

Weird Tales

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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

The House of the Evil Eye

By HUGH DAVIDSON

A strange story of a family whose mere glance caused those upon whom it fell to sicken and die

DOCTOR DALE, I came to you because I was told that you were the one person who could help me."

"Just why do you need my help, Mr. Carlin?"

"I need it because I fear that my son is being killed by the evil eye!"

Our caller, who had given his name as Henry Carlin of Tauriston, Massachusetts, leaned tensely toward Doctor Dale. He was a man late in middle age, with thinning gray hair, expressive features, and intelligent blue eyes. Only the expensiveness of his quiet dress bespoke the rich man in Henry Carlin's appearance.

Doctor John Dale was something of a contrast to Carlin. Doctor Dale is over forty but his trim, well-knit figure, his close brown hair and short brown vandyke beard and his clean skin and clear hazel eyes make him seem but a few years older than myself. Doctor Dale sat at his desk while I, Harley Owen, his

assistant, occupied a chair in the corner.

Dale was looking keenly at Henry Carlin. "Your son being killed by the evil eye? That is a serious statement, Mr. Carlin."

"I know, but I fear that's what is going on!" Henry Carlin said. "And the physicians in my son's case to whom I told my fears said that in such a matter you could best help."

"They told you the nature of my work?" Doctor Dale asked.

"Yes," answered Henry Carlin. "They said that you were a specialist in combating forces of evil whose manifestations lie beyond ordinary medical science. They said that you were known among physicians, in fact, as Doctor Dale, specialist in evil."

Doctor Dale nodded. "That is correct, Mr. Carlin. But this matter of the evil eye—are you sure you know what the evil eye is?"

"It's the power of some persons to strike people with sickness or death by

"He walked past with deliberate strides."



the gaze of their eyes, is it not?" Henry Carlin countered.

"That is the core of it but not all of it," Doctor Dale told him. "The evil eye is, as you say, the name generally given to the power of certain men and women to injure and kill living things by gazing into their eyes. This power they hold because of potent forces of evil that possess them and work through their gaze just as hypnotism, mesmerism and similar forces work through the gaze.

"A man or woman can assume this power of the evil eye by making deliberate

compact with the forces of evil, which thereafter possess him and make his gaze deadly. Once assumed, this power of the evil eye becomes hereditary and his children will have it until he who assumed it revokes his compact. If he never revokes it, it will pass down from generation to generation inescapably; so that persons wholly innocent of evil intent will be born with the dread power of the evil eye.

"Unprotected people who meet the gaze of the evil eye sicken swiftly, for the forces in that malignant gaze strike in

through eyes and brain to damage in some way the vital life-centers of the nervous system. If exposed too often to that damaging gaze, they die. The only protection against the evil eye is certain symbols which evoke benign forces to oppose the malign ones of the evil eye. Such symbols are widely used, for the fear of the evil eye's dread power is great."

Henry Carlin had listened intently. "Then," he said quickly, "if some one were sickened by the evil eye but recovered, when exposed again to the evil eye he would sicken again?"

Doctor Dale nodded. "He would, undoubtedly. Those once stricken by the evil eye are thereafter vulnerable to it even though they wear the protective symbols I mentioned. The first striking has made them victims."

"That is as I thought," said Henry Carlin. "And that, Doctor Dale, is what I fear has happened to my son."

Doctor Dale sat back. "You'll save time, Mr. Carlin," he said quietly, "if you tell me about your son's case from the first."

His calmness steadied Henry Carlin, for he sat back a little less tensely in his chair. As he prepared to speak, Doctor Dale glanced at me, nodding at my pad in signal that I was to record the salient features of what Carlin told, as I did usually with Dale's clients.

"THE first of the thing," said Henry Carlin, "was about two months ago. That was when Donald—my son—met this Rose Mione and her family. I ought to say, perhaps, that Donald is only twenty-three and has just been out of school a year. He graduated a year ago from the Harvard School of Business Administration and came back up to Tauriston to take a position in the Tauris-

ton National Bank, of which I am vice-president.

"Tauriston is a fair-sized city, a textile center, you know, but it and his work at the bank were rather dull for Donald after Cambridge and Boston. My wife died a year after Donald's birth, and perhaps Donald found home with only myself and our housekeeper dull also. He didn't complain, but I could see that he was a little restless and dissatisfied in Tauriston. That is, until two months ago.

"Two months ago Donald came home one evening in high spirits and told me he had met that day the most wonderful girl he had ever encountered. Her name, he said, was Rose Mione, and she lived with her father and grandfather, Joseph and Peter Mione, in the western part of Tauriston, where there is quite an Italian-American population. Donald raved about this girl in the next few days and said he meant to marry her if she would have him.

"I began to see that Donald was really serious about this Rose Mione, and though I would perhaps have preferred a marriage more in his own set, I certainly had no intention of standing in his way, the more so as he described the girl as very fine and cultured. Donald said she was too shy to call with him on me as yet, and I would probably have gone over with him to meet her had not Donald's affairs, a week after his meeting with this Mione girl, undergone an abrupt change.

"Donald had become very pale and ill-looking during the latter part of that week and I had grown concerned over his health. Things seemed suddenly going badly with him and the Mione girl also, for he returned from his visits very soon and very dejected in appearance. I was about to speak to him on the matter when Donald suddenly suffered a complete collapse.

"The physicians I called said he was in serious condition, that though his body was healthy enough his vital nerve-centers or inmost life-forces seemed to have been injured in some manner. They said the cause of it puzzled them, but that he must have complete rest. That is not what Mrs. Grassia, my housekeeper, said about it.

"Mrs. Grassia, who is of Italian descent, and has been with me for a dozen years, averred that Donald had been stricken by the evil eye of some one. Of course, I told her that that couldn't be, but she was very much in earnest about it and said that when Donald recovered he should be kept away from whatever person whose evil eye had stricken him, the *jettatore*, as the Italians call an evil-eyed person.

"I gave little thought to her words, for I was engrossed in helping Donald back to health. It took four weeks of complete rest before he was able to be up and about again, before his injured life-centers could recuperate from whatever hurt they had sustained. During those weeks Rose Mione did not come once to see him nor did she even telephone or write, and I admit that her indifference toward Donald's condition made me rather resentful toward her.

"But it did not change Donald, for as soon as he was able to get out he was over on the other side of Tauriston to see her. For three or four days he went, and each time came back downcast in appearance. I asked him bluntly what the trouble was and he said that Rose Mione seemed to have changed entirely in her feelings toward him. Then, only four days after getting out, Donald collapsed again!

"Just as before, the physicians agreed, Donald's vital nervous centers had suffered a mysterious hurt. He must have rest again, they said. But now Mrs. Gras-

sia was much excited and told me that undoubtedly the evil eye of some one had stricken Donald again as she had feared. And this time I was not certain that she was wrong, for the doctors seemed wholly in the dark as to what force had so injured Donald's inmost life-centers.

"As Donald slowly recuperated again in the next few weeks I could see that his mind was on this Rose Mione constantly, and heard him utter her name once or twice in sleep. I determined at last to go over and ask her to come and see Donald, for I felt it would do him good. So two days ago I went over with that purpose in mind to the western section of Tauriston.

"**T**HERE in the Italian-American district I asked where I could find the house of Peter Mione, Rose's grandfather. To my surprize, those whom I asked warned me volubly not to go to that house, making an odd gesture with their hands. They told me that the house of the Miones was a house accursed. For all three of the Miones, they asserted—Peter, his son Joseph, and his granddaughter Rose—possessed the evil eye and had already stricken more than one person in that district!

"I was astounded. The excited assertions of Mrs. Grassia that Donald had suffered from the evil eye recurred instantly to me. I remembered that it was directly after meeting this Rose Mione that Donald had become ill and weak and then had collapsed. And after he had recovered slowly, he had seen her but three or four days when he had collapsed again.

"These people were firm in their assertions that the Miones all had the evil eye, were deadly *jettatori*. Instead of visiting them, therefore, I returned home determined first to find out if that were really so. I asked the physicians who had

worked with Donald whether the evil eye could really be responsible for his condition. They said that it might, but that such a direct manifestation of evil forces was outside their experience and skill.

"They told me that Doctor John Dale of New York, known as the specialist in evil, could best help me in such a case. So this morning I drove down from Tauriston to New York, Doctor Dale, and I want you to come back to Tauriston with me, today, now. I said nothing of my fears to Donald, but I want you to find out whether it is really the evil eye of these Miones that has stricken him and is killing him, and if it is that which is doing it I want you to find some way to save my son!"

Henry Carlin's face was white and working as he stopped, his hands outstretched in unconscious appeal.

Doctor Dale had listened intently, his hazel eyes on Carlin's face as he talked, while I had been busy noting down what he told.

Dale pulled his short beard thoughtfully. "You say that your son after recovering from his first collapse had seen this Rose Mione for only three or four days before collapsing again?" he asked.

"Yes," Henry Carlin answered, "and it was the suddenness of this second attack that appalled me."

Doctor Dale nodded. "Having been already once stricken by the evil eye, if that it was, he would be even more affected when it struck him a second time. What about the gesture you say they made in Tauriston's Italian section when you asked about the Miones? Was it like this?"

Dale closed his right hand, so that it took on a horn-like shape, index and little finger projecting outward.

"That was the gesture exactly," Carlin said quickly.

"The sign of those who fear the evil eye," Doctor Dale commented.

He thought silently for a moment.

"Mr. Carlin, I'm going to take the case, and Owen and I will go back up with you now to Tauriston as you ask. I must have time, though, to select the equipment we'll want to take with us."

"Of course," said Henry Carlin. "And Doctor Dale, any fee——"

"We can discuss fees later," Dale told him. "If your son has really been stricken by the evil eye of these Miones, the sooner we get up there the better. For those once stricken by the evil eye who escape death from it in the end are—few!"

Two hours later Doctor Dale and I were with Henry Carlin in his powerful coupé, driving northward from New York at a fast rate toward Tauriston.

2

TAURISTON, when we reached it just at the afternoon's end, proved the New England factory city I had expected. A century before, Tauriston had been a quiet little country town. But textile factories had sprung up beside the river west of the town, and there had been a mushroom growth there of tall-chimneyed mills, railroad sidings and warehouses.

The factories had brought to Tauriston an influx of foreign-born workers and their families who now inhabited the rows of dingy frame and brick houses in the city's western half. On the southeastern side of the city were neater residential streets with a few shaded and quiet avenues of pretentious houses. Into one of these avenues Henry Carlin drove.

He turned into the drive of a large Colonial-style mansion half hidden by the green elms set closely about it.

"My home," said Henry Carlin as Doctor Dale and I got out of the car with

him. "And here's Mrs. Grassia to meet us."

We went up the steps, Dale carrying his small black equipment-case and I our suitcase. A woman dressed in black awaited us at the door, her hair cloudy white but her face smooth and her black eyes quick and bright.

"Mr. Donald's all right?" Henry Carlin asked her anxiously as we entered, and she nodded.

"He is much better, he says. He told me he wanted to go out but I told him you would not like that."

"This is Doctor Dale and Mr. Owen, Mrs. Grassia," Carlin introduced. "Please have their things taken upstairs."

"We'll go in and see Donald now, if you don't mind," he added to us. "He's in the sun room—down this hall."

Doctor Dale and I followed him down the thickly carpeted hall, whose walls were of paneled wood, my companion retaining his equipment-case. As we went around a turn I glanced back and saw the housekeeper looking intently after us.

Henry Carlin opened a door and we preceded him into a room whose three sides were of glass through which poured the waning evening light. There were fine wicker chairs and potted plants, and in one of the chairs sat a young fellow in a loose lounge suit, leaning back as though dozing.

He sat up, though, as we entered. Donald Carlin hardly seemed his twenty-three years in appearance, a youngster with rusty light hair and blue eyes that were attractive despite their weariness. For there were weariness and weakness plain in his pale face, as though deep illness had caused an ebbing of his vital forces.

"Donald, this is Doctor John Dale, whom I told you I would try to bring up with me," Henry Carlin made introduc-

tion, "and Mr. Harley Owen, his assistant."

Donald Carlin put out his hand to us with a half-annoyed smile. "I told Dad I didn't need doctors any more," he said, "but I couldn't convince him. I understand you're a specialist of some sort?"

Doctor Dale nodded as he took the chair Henry Carlin proffered. "Yes, you may call me a psychological specialist. I'm told that your illness has rather puzzled your physicians."

Donald Carlin made an impatient gesture. "Those doctors have tried to make a mystery of it because I felt weak. All I needed was a little rest, and I feel almost as well as ever, now."

"You felt nothing but weakness?" Doctor Dale asked him. "I mean, you've suffered no pain at all?"

"None at all," young Carlin answered. "That's what puzzled them, I guess—my feeling a loss of strength without any pain."

"You can't describe what you felt more accurately?" Dale asked. "There are many different kinds of weakness, you know."

Donald Carlin hesitated. "Well, it was a feeling as though something inside me, some very important part of me, had been hurt painlessly. Does that sound silly? Yet that's what it felt like most, a hurt that didn't give pain but that made me very weak."

"When did you first experience this painless hurt?" Doctor Dale asked him. "Can you remember?"

Carlin nodded slowly. "Yes, it was a day about eight weeks ago. I remember because it was the day I met Rose Mione, a girl I—a girl I became acquainted with then. I couldn't sleep that night, partly from excitement and partly because I felt that painless hurt."

Henry Carlin's breath came in with a sharp hiss and Doctor Dale looked warn-

ingly at him. Then he turned back to Donald.

"You felt this weakness and hurt in the days that followed?"

"Yes, and a little worse each day," Donald declared. "I got so weak at last that I collapsed. For a few weeks I was pretty ill, I guess, but gradually my strength came back."

"You've had the feeling since, though?" Dale asked, and Donald Carlin nodded.

"Yes, the first time I went out. It got quickly worse again the next few days and on the fourth day I collapsed again. I'm just getting over that second attack now, as I suppose Dad told you."

"You had visited Miss Mione each of those three or four days?"

Donald Carlin looked surprised. "Yes, I had. What has that to do with it?"

"Nothing much," Dale smiled. "You had no other sensations than this painless hurt and weakness?"

Young Carlin hesitated again. "Yes, I did have another feeling, a sort of hallucination, I guess. It was a sensation during sleep of eyes fastened upon me, looking fixedly at me."

Henry Carlin whitened, and Doctor Dale bent tensely forward. "What kind of eyes?" he asked. "Eyes of some one you know?"

Donald Carlin was even more reluctant. "Well, they did seem like—this is pretty silly, perhaps—did seem like the eyes of Rose—the Rose Mione I mentioned. They were dark and beautiful and strange, like hers."

"The eyes of this Miss Mione are strange, then? In what way?"

"Why, I don't know exactly," Donald said. "They seem so dark and with such depths, and somehow when you meet them they seem to give you a tangible shock. It's an inherited oddity, I suppose—her grandfather's and father's eyes are the same."

Doctor Dale stood up. His face was as calm and unmoved as ever but I knew that he was inwardly excited. He turned to Henry Carlin.

"I think we'll not bother your son further today," he said. "There's plenty of time tomorrow to go into the case."

Donald Carlin smiled. "I hope you're not wasting your time," he said. "I'm a pretty healthy patient, fit to go out now again."

"But you mustn't go out yet, Donald," Henry Carlin told him anxiously. "We don't want you to have another relapse."

"I don't promise," said Donald, smiling. "You're trying to keep me a sick man even after I'm well."

ONCE Doctor Dale and Henry Carlin and I were in the hall with the sun room's door closed behind us, Carlin grasped Dale's arm.

"Doctor Dale, you heard? The eyes of this Rose Mione—then it must be really what I feared!"

"It certainly indicates that the evil eye of the Miones has stricken your son," Dale stated. "But to be sure I'll have to see them, especially the girl. Owen and I will go over now to see them."

"But if they actually have this terrible power you'll be risking yourselves in visiting them!" Henry Carlin objected.

Dale shook his head, took from his black case some small objects he slipped into his pocket. "These protective symbols will shield us from that power. You said these Miones live on the other side of the city?"

"Yes, almost straight across Tauriston from here," Henry Carlin said. "The street is Cardell Street and I suppose any one on it can tell you where the Miones live."

"We'll get going, then," Doctor Dale said. "We'll be back in a couple of hours."

We went out, Henry Carlin looking after us in dumb anxiety and then turning to go back to his son, I guessed. Mrs. Grassia too looked after us intently as though she knew our errand.

NIGHT's darkness had replaced the slow-dying evening light, as we struck across Tauriston. When we reached the business and amusement section at the city's center, shops and theaters were alight with their scrolls of colored light. We pushed on into the dingy foreign section westward. North-westward from it the silent factories brooded blackly beside the river, but the foreign section's ill-lit streets were noisy with life.

Swarthy men and women sauntered singly and in groups in search of distraction after the day's work. Crackling Italian and musical Spanish and Portuguese, with undertones of guttural Balkan tongues and occasional bursts of shrill laughter, came from them. There were piercing cries from the dusty, bare-legged youngsters who ran in games under the street-lights, while through the hubbub could be heard the twang of a guitar or the strident tones of a cornet.

We were directed, with much pointing and contradiction, to Cardell Street, and found it a short dark street running down a slope toward the bank of the river. It was of square, box-like frame houses, with street-lights only at its upper end. People sat on the porches of these houses and a few moved along the street, but there was much less noise and tumult here than in the streets behind us.

We stopped a little way down the street, looking about. "I'd prefer not to mention the Miones down here," Doctor Dale said, "but we'll have to find out where they live."

He walked up onto the porch of the house outside which we stood. Light

streaming out from the window of the house's front room showed a stout Italian woman of middle age sitting on the porch.

She regarded Doctor Dale with unfriendly black eyes. "Sorry to bother you," Dale said politely, "but we want to ask where some one lives."

"Who is it that you want to know about?" she asked.

"A family named Mione," Dale told her. "I believe the name of the head of it is Peter Mione."

The woman's eyes widened in astonished terror. She made a sign with her hand so swiftly I could hardly follow it, the sign against the evil eye Doctor Dale had demonstrated to Carlin, and darted into the house, from which her voice came in a babble of excited Italian.

There were other voices in the same tongue within, male and female; then they broke off and a man shouldered brusquely out onto the porch to confront us. He was stocky, clean-shaven, black-haired and with smoldering black eyes.

"What do you want with the Miones?" he demanded. "You are friends of theirs?"

"Not exactly friends—I've never met them," Doctor Dale said.

"Then do not meet them!" the other told us. "They are *jettatori*—they have what you call the evil eye! I, Domenic Millera, warn you of that!"

"Why do you think the Miones have the evil eye?" Dale asked.

"Think? I think not—I know!" Millera said passionately. "Come here and I will show you how I know!"

He grasped Doctor Dale's arm and pulled him through the door, I following closely. We found ourselves in a room lit by an unshaded gas jet. There was another man in it, and two women, one of them the one who had gone in from the porch, all three looking fixedly at us.

In the room's corner was a wooden bed, the only furniture save for a few chairs, and in it lay a girl of about seventeen. Her face was thin and weak, and from that pale countenance black eyes whose pupils were extraordinarily contracted looked incuriously at us.

Millera led Dale and me over to the bed, pointed down at the girl. "My daughter Julia," he told us, tragically. "*She is why I know the Miones are jettatori.*"

Doctor Dale's keen gaze lifted from the sick girl to her father. "You mean that this girl was sickened by——"

"By the evil eye of that cver to be accursed old Peter Mione, yes!" cried Domenic Millera. "Wizard and *jettatore* he is like all his house, evil-eyed like his son Joseph and his son's daughter Rose. And Peter Mione I angered when I said that he should be punished for killing the Safetta boy with his gaze as he did. Because he hated me for that, he struck my Julia with his evil gaze, she having no protection against it. Since then has she sickened here while the accursed Mione who made her so walks the streets still unpunished!"

Millera's hand made an imprecatory gesture, the others in the smoky-lit room nodding solemnly. The sick girl did not move.

"You say a boy was killed by Peter Mione's evil eye?" Dale questioned, and Millera nodded.

"Yes, the widow Safetta's son, Felix Safetta. The child's mother had angered Mione and that was his revenge. Should not such a family be blotted from the earth?"

Doctor Dale shook his head as he went out onto the porch again with Millera. "Such a thing would be terrible," he said. "But your daughter seems recovering."

"Yes, she recovers now that we keep

her in where the evil eye of the Miones can not fall on her," Domenic Millera said, "but so slowly."

"And you can tell us where the Mione house is on this street?"

"You should not go there, but I have warned you what they are," Millera told us. "Their home is down at this street's end above the river——"

He stopped suddenly, looking up the street. A hush had descended abruptly all along it, the people on porches who had been talking becoming suddenly silent and going inside. Women farther down the street were hastily calling in children who had been playing. Those who had sauntered along the sidewalk hastily turned in at houses.

A man was coming down the street from the illuminated upper end. He was a tall, straight black figure against that illumination, wearing a soft black hat and also a long black coat despite the evening's warmth, and carrying a stick. As he came closer, Millera drew us back into the shadows. Now the man was passing.

He was old, I saw, for his face, half visible in the darkness, was wrinkled, and the hair at his temples was iron-gray. His eyes were hidden by his hat's shadow but we could see that his features were sardonic, strongly cut, powerful. He walked past with deliberate strides, and as he went on down the street those who had retreated inside their houses emerged again onto their porches, looking after his dark form until it disappeared in the darkness at the street's lower end.

"Who was that?" Doctor Dale asked, and Domenic Millera shook his fist passionately at the darkness that had swallowed the dark figure.

"It was the *jettatore*, the evil-eyed one you asked about! Yes, Peter Mione himself, head of that accursed house of the evil eye!"

3

MILLERA went abruptly back into the house, and Doctor Dale and I started down the street. It was quite dark in its lower part but we could see that there were fewer houses there, and could make out the dull gleam of the river beyond and below.

"It seems the Miones are well enough known here," Dale commented.

"Dale, was that girl really a victim of the evil eye?" I asked.

"She had all the symptoms of the evil eye's victims, Owen," he answered. "Whether—but this house ahead must be the one we want."

The slope of Cardell Street ended abruptly ahead of us in a sheer drop of thirty feet that was the bank of the river below. A stone wall ran along the top of this bank, and the last house on the street was built directly against this wall.

This house, which we knew must be that of Peter Mione and his family, was a darker square bulk in the darkness, a porchless frame structure whose front door opened directly onto the sidewalk. Cracks of light showed from under its drawn blinds. The two or three houses next up the street from it and the similar ones across the street were dark and untenanted, attesting that none in the neighborhood would live so near the house of the Miones.

Doctor Dale and I had stopped in the darkness a little up the street from the house. Now Dale took from his pocket two objects, one of which he handed me. I inspected it by the faint street-light from up the street, and made it out to be a two-inch silver disk on which was graven a curious device.

The design was a representation of a staring human eye and around it were seven smaller designs of scorpion, dog, deer, arrows, serpent, lion and owl. On

the disk's back was a pin-like clasp. As I held the thing I was aware somehow of strange energies acting from it, as though it were the container of an alien force.

"Put it on your lapel, Owen," said Dale, affixing his own in that place. "It's the most effective of the symbols that oppose benign forces to the malign ones of the evil eye."

I fastened it to my lapel as he directed. "You're going to call directly on these Miones, Dale?" I asked, and he nodded.

"We've got to find out whether they really possess the evil eye's dread power before we can act."

Doctor Dale and I then walked on down to the door of the house and he knocked on it. There was no answer and Dale was about to knock again when the door opened, light flooding out upon us.

A girl's slender figure stood outlined in the door's opening against that light. She was over medium height and clad in a simple dark blue dress. Her hair was a dark cloud behind an oval face that was faintly olive-tinged, with delicately chiseled features and a sad mouth. Sadness was in all that fine face, indeed, but one scarcely saw it in the first galvanic meeting with her eyes.

Her eyes were of soft velvet black and their pupils were abnormally large. In the moment that I first looked into those eyes it was as though I perceived in their dark depths the movement of something darker, a black stirring of force there. And it was, in the same instant, as though there smote out from those eyes at mine a tangible shock of force!

But it was a shock that did not reach me. It seemed not to strike me but to strike the alien forces that clung about me from the symbol at my lapel. Only a moment did it endure, that outthrust of deadly force from those dark eyes and its shock against the invisible shield

about me. Then it was gone and the girl was looking half fearfully at Doctor Dale and myself, seeing the symbols at our lapels.

"What do you want?" she asked, her voice low and unsteady.

"You're Miss Rose Mione, are you not?" Doctor Dale asked, and she nodded dumbly.

"I've come in regard to Donald Carlin," Dale went on. "I'm his physician at present—Doctor John Dale, and this is my assistant, Mr. Owen—and would like to consult you about his illness."

The girl's hand went to her throat. "About Donald? But I can tell you nothing about his illness—I know nothing about it!"

"Then you do not even know," Doctor Dale said, "why Donald Carlin has sickened after each time he has been down here and has met the gaze of your eyes?"

Before the terrified Rose Mione could answer there was an exclamation from behind her in a man's voice. "What is this about Rose's eyes?"

Peter Mione stood behind the girl, gazing out at us. He was bareheaded now, and under his iron-gray hair his saturnine, wrinkled face was like the ancient mask of some evil god in its consciousness of evil power. He glanced first at the symbols at our lapels, then swiftly into the eyes of Doctor Dale and myself.

The eyes of Peter Mione were like those of the girl, black and abnormally large-pupiled, deeply astir with dark force. And as Doctor Dale and I met those eyes, I felt again and even more strongly the shock of tangible and deadly forces darting out from them against the invisible protecting shield about me.

Rose Mione turned and disappeared back into the house, leaving Peter Mione confronting us at the doorway.

"What is this about Rose's eyes?" he

repeated. "And who are you that come about Donald Carlin?"

"I'm Doctor John Dale and I came here because Donald Carlin got his sickness here when he was stricken by the evil eye of your granddaughter!" Doctor Dale told him calmly.

Peter Mione laughed coldly, considering Dale and me as though with amused contempt. "Another who thinks we poor Miones have the evil eye!" he mocked. "You have heard the superstitions of the people about here too much, Doctor Dale."

"Is it superstition that has stricken Domenic Millera's daughter, then?" asked Doctor Dale, and at that thrust Peter Mione's face became diabolical, his eyes terrifying in their black naked evil.

"What do you know of Millera's daughter?" he snarled.

Another man appeared at that moment beside him from within the house, less tall than Peter Mione and of middle age. His sensitive face bore more resemblance to the girl's than to the older man's. But his black eyes were like those of both the others, strange forces moving deep within them—forces that struck out as we met his gaze to hit with tangible shock against our protecting mantles of force!

"Father, what's going on?" he exclaimed to Peter Mione. "Rose said there were men here asking about young Carlin——"

"Be silent, Joseph," snapped Peter Mione. "They are but two fools more like those who live around here."

He turned back to us, his dark eyes demoniac in their fierceness. "Whoever you are that accuse us Miones of the evil eye," he rasped, "you would do well not to meddle here again. The evil eye's power might strike you when you were not wearing those things that you wear now."

"You do not frighten me, Peter Mi-

one," Doctor Dale told him steadily. "Not the evil eye of yourself nor of all your house. There are forces greater than the forces of evil from which you get your power, and they can be used, if need be, against you!"

Peter Mione's face became so dreadful that for a moment I thought he was about to attack us physically. His black eyes seemed projectors of a force that beat almost irresistibly against the shield of force our symbols flung about us. Then he pushed Joseph Mione swiftly back and closed the door with a slam in our faces.

DOCTOR DALE turned to me, his own hazel eyes alight, as we started back up the dark street. "It's as I feared, Owen!" he exclaimed. "Peter Mione and his son and granddaughter all possess the evil eye! You felt the shock of forces from their eyes? Owen, had it not been for the benign opposing forces gathered about us by the symbols we wore, those forces of the evil gaze of the three would have struck us down where we stood!"

"But, Dale, how are we to fight a thing like that?" I asked him. "Resisting the evil eye isn't overcoming it."

"Yet it can be overcome," Doctor Dale said. "It——"

He stopped suddenly and grasping my arm moved quickly off the sidewalk into the deeper darkness between two of the empty houses beside us. A car with bright headlights was coming down the dark street toward us, its brakes squealing as it slowed.

The car, a long roadster, passed us and came to a stop a little above the house of the Miones. A dark figure got out of the machine, a man who walked toward the Mione house and knocked on its front door. The door was opened a little, cautiously, and in its light-filled opening we saw the girl, Rose Mione. And as the light fell out on the face of the man out-

side we saw that it was young Donald Carlin!

Rose Mione uttered an exclamation, tried to close the door upon him, but Carlin held it open and seemed entreating her, his voice reaching us only as a low, pleading sound. The girl seemed undecided, not looking at all at Donald Carlin's face, and then as he made as though to push inside, she came out, closing the door behind her.

"Dale, it's young Carlin!" I whispered tensely. "Shall we rush him and get him away from her? If her eyes hit him again——"

"No, Owen, wait!" Doctor Dale murmured. "She's not looking at him at all. I think he's safe with her for the time being, though I don't understand——"

In the darkness the forms of Rose Mione and Donald Carlin were coming up the street as though the girl was leading him away from the house a little. I could see that she was keeping her face turned away from him, as Dale said, though he was talking earnestly to her.

They halted on the sidewalk just out from the deep shadows between houses in which Doctor Dale and I crouched. We could see them more distinctly there, in the faint light from up-street, and could hear their words. Donald Carlin had caught the girl's arm as they stopped.

"Rose, what's the matter with you?" he asked her anxiously. "You act so strangely—you aren't even listening to me!"

"I am listening, Donald," she told him, her voice low. "I've heard everything you've said."

"But you don't even look at me!" he said. "Surely you're not as angry as that with me for coming, are you?"

"I told you not to come," Rose Mione told him. "Had it not been that I didn't want you to come in the house where Father and Grandfather are, I would not have come out here with you."

"But why not?" Donald Carlin demanded. "Rose, I love you and I believe you still love me. What has changed you so?—what has come between us like this? I've felt it ever since a few days before my illness—until then we were so happy, but you changed suddenly and ever since have been putting me off and refusing to see me, without telling me why. What is all this mystery that has made you act so strangely?"

"I can't tell you!" Rose Mione said, a sob in her voice. "But you must go, Donald, and you mustn't come to see me again, ever."

"I won't do it!" declared Donald Carlin. "Rose, tell me, is it your grandfather and father who have objected to me? Is that it?"

"Yes—no—it's more than that!" the girl exclaimed. "I can't tell you, Donald, but you must do as I say."

Even then, as Doctor Dale and I could see from our concealment, Rose Mione did not turn her face toward young Carlin. She spoke wildly but looked past him always and not into his pleading face.

"Do as you say? Never see you again?" said Donald Carlin. "Why, I'd die first! Whatever is between us, I'm going to destroy it!"

"You can't!" cried the girl. "There's nothing you can do, Donald! You must go and not come back—I can never look into your face again!"

Donald Carlin looked amazedly at her. Rose Mione, still looking away from him, was sobbing. "Please go, Donald," she said; "go before something terrible happens."

"What could happen?" he protested. "Rose, you're so strange I think you must be ill. You don't even look at me. Look me in the face and tell me to go, at least!"

With the words Donald Carlin swung

the girl around to make her face him, but she broke free and kept her face away from him.

"Donald, don't!" Rose Mione's agonized cry stabbed the darkness. "You don't know what you're doing!"

"But I only wanted you to look at me," Donald Carlin was saying stupefiedly, when the door of the Mione house farther down the street opened, a man's figure emerging and looking up the street.

"Donald, you must go at once—please go!" Rose Mione pleaded, her voice utter in its urgency. "They heard me—it's Grandfather or Father coming out, and if you meet them——"

"But I don't see——" Carlin began, then stopped. "All right, Rose: I'll go, but I'm coming back. No matter what you or any one else says, I'm coming back."

He got into the roadster, its motor hummed, and in a moment he had turned the car and it was heading back up the street.

As it did so the man from the house reached Rose Mione and we saw now that it was her father, Joseph Mione.

"Rose, I heard you cry out and came out to find you! Who was that you were talking to?"

She did not answer, and his voice was stern when it sounded again. "It was Donald Carlin, then? Did you not say you would see him no more?"

"He came and insisted on talking to me!" she sobbed. "He would have come inside where you and Grandfather were; so I came out—but didn't meet his eyes——"

She clung to Joseph Mione, still sobbing, and in the faint light we could see that his face was strange as he held and soothed her. Then he walked back with her to the house and in a moment the door there closed,

DALE and I stood up from our crouching posture. I found that I was tense after what we had heard.

"Dale, what does it all mean?" I asked, as we stepped out again onto the sidewalk.

Doctor Dale's face was serious. "I wish I knew, Owen," he said. "It is certain that Rose Mione has the evil eye like her father and grandfather and that she struck Donald Carlin down with its power weeks ago. Yet tonight she seemed trying to save him from her deadly gaze."

"And according to what Joseph Mione said she had promised him not to see young Carlin again," I added. "It's too mysterious for me."

"Well, there's nothing more for us to do down here tonight," Dale told me. "We've ascertained beyond doubt that it is the evil eye of these Miones that has stricken young Carlin, and we'd best get back to the Carlin house."

We started up the street. It was well toward midnight by then and Cardell Street was mostly dark. The front window of Domenic Millera's house still glowed with light as we passed, though, and I wondered if Millera were sitting there with his stricken daughter.

WHEN we got back across Tauriston to the house of Henry Carlin we found that Donald Carlin had already returned and retired but that his father was awaiting us. Henry Carlin listened silently but with white face intent as Doctor Dale told him what we had learned.

"So it is those Miones' evil eye that struck Donald, even as I feared," he commented when Dale had finished. "Doctor Dale, what are we to do?"

"The main thing," Dale told him, "is to keep Donald away from them. He escaped tonight, but only because the Mione girl kept her gaze turned from him."

"But how can I keep him from this

Rose Mione when he's still in love with her?" Henry Carlin asked. "He slipped out tonight without letting Mrs. Grassia nor me know, and he will again. And if I tell Donald the truth about the girl he'll think it more reason to stick to her."

"Yet if he sees her again, if he meets the eyes of any of those three again, it may well be fatal," Doctor Dale warned. "I have in mind a way by which something may be done, but for the time being the all-important thing is to keep Donald away from the Miones."

Henry Carlin's pale face took on a certain resolution. "Then I will see that he does not go there again," he said, determination in his eyes. "I think I know a way to make sure of that."

"Well, we'll be seeing you in the morning then," Doctor Dale said, rising. "Owen and I could stand some sleep right now."

It was, in fact, after seven next morning when Doctor Dale and I rose. Before going downstairs Dale looked into Donald Carlin's room. Young Carlin was sleeping normally, so we went on down.

The housekeeper, Mrs. Grassia, met us in the hall below and before either of us could speak she had clutched Doctor Dale's arm excitedly, her eyes distended with fear.

"Doctor, he's gone—Mr. Carlin! I could not stop him!" she cried.

"Gone? Where did Mr. Carlin go?" Dale asked.

"To the house of the *jettatori*—to the Miones! He went but now, saying he would so threaten those Miones that they would never dare again to have Donald come there!"

Doctor Dale's face went white and he spun toward me. "Owen, we've got to head him off! Henry Carlin down there without protection facing the evil eye of those three! We've got to stop him!"

WE RACED out of the house to the garage behind it, and in a few moments I was driving Donald Carlin's long roadster rapidly across Tauriston. Traffic was not thick so early in the morning, and I did not need Doctor Dale's urging to make me unloose all the roadster's power. We shot through Tauriston's morning-lit streets into the western foreign section at a perilous velocity.

As I turned the car down Cardell Street, Doctor Dale uttered an exclamation. Down at the sloping street's end, where the square black house of the Miones perched above the sunlit river, a big coupé had stopped and a man who had got out of it was standing at the door of the Mione house. It was Henry Carlin and in the door which had just opened Peter Mione was confronting him.

As our car shot down the street we saw that Henry Carlin was speaking rapidly, angrily, and that Peter Mione's face was twisted with fury. I stopped our car and we sprang out and ran toward the two. But as we did so Peter Mione thrust his rage-contorted face forward a little, his eyes full on Carlin's for a moment. Then he disappeared back into the house, slamming the door. And Henry Carlin, struck suddenly silent, crumpled to the sidewalk unconscious as Doctor Dale and I reached him.

"Owen, we're too late!" cried Doctor Dale as we bent over Carlin. "Peter Mione has stricken him!"

A few bareheaded people were running down the street, Domenic Millera among them. "The Miones have stricken another?" he cried to us. "The *jettatori*!"

We bundled Henry Carlin into the roadster. There was no sound from the Mione house, but the excited people in front of it were increasing rapidly in

number. I could hear Millera's passionate voice among them.

I took the wheel again and with Doctor Dale holding Henry Carlin's unmoving form I drove at an even faster rate up the street and across the city to the Carlin house.

DONALD CARLIN sprang to meet us, Mrs. Grassia's fearful face behind him, as we carried his father in.

"What's happened to Dad?" he cried as we carried Henry Carlin into the library.

"The *jettatori*!" Mrs. Grassia was exclaiming. "They have killed him, then——"

"He's not killed!" Dale snapped. "Help us put him on that couch—that's right, straighten him out."

With Henry Carlin stretched on the couch, pale and unmoving, Doctor Dale sent the housekeeper for his equipment case. To Donald Carlin's excited questions he paid no heed for the moment, bending over his father.

Henry Carlin seemed in strange condition. His pulse had slowed alarmingly and his breathing was labored as though some force had strongly affected the respiratory nerve-centers. The pupils of his eyes were terrifyingly contracted to mere points of blue, just as those of the girl Julia Millera had been, but even more so.

Doctor Dale quickly took his case from Mrs. Grassia when she returned, selected a vial of clear liquid and made a hypodermic injection of it above Henry Carlin's heart. He broke two capsules also under his nostrils and Carlin stirred a little, his labored breathing seeming to ease somewhat. His heart action also began to accelerate.

Carlin's unconsciousness seemed to pass now into a more or less normal sleep.

The eye-pupils expanded a little. Doctor Dale stood up.

"He's out of danger for now," he said. "He'll probably sleep the rest of the day and is going to need a few weeks of complete rest."

"But what happened?" Donald Carlin repeated. "Did Dad have an attack of some sort?"

Dale looked at him and nodded. "A worse kind of attack than you think, Donald. But I'm going to tell you about it soon—I want you to stay here with your father now for Owen and I have work elsewhere."

We left Donald Carlin watching over his sleeping father. Once out in the car again Dale's face became grim.

"Back to Cardell Street, Owen," he said. "You're still wearing your protective symbol? Keep it on—we're going to visit the Miones again."

"Dale!" I exclaimed as I headed the roadster westward again, "you're going to——"

"Going to act in the way that will be most effective against Peter Mione!" Doctor Dale said.

WHEN we turned into the upper end of Cardell Street I stopped the car in surprize. Doctor Dale and I stared downward.

An angry crowd of several score men and women had gathered in front of the house of the Miones. There came up to us from them a babble of excited voices, and more of the Italian-American residents of the street were joining it each moment.

We stopped the car, and Doctor Dale and I started down the street on foot. We could see now that Domenic Millera was in the foremost of the crowd and was shouting to them, pointing to the Mione house, which remained silent with doors and windows closed.

"How long must we stand this family

of evil, this house of *jettatori*?" Millera was crying. "Must still more be stricken as one was but now before we root out these accursed ones of the evil eye?"

"Kill the *jettatori*!" went up a dozen fierce cries from the crowd. "Death to the evil-eyed!"

"Yes, kill them as Peter Mione killed my Felix with his evil eye!" screamed a wild-faced woman who was apparently the widow Safetta, whom Millera had mentioned to us.

The crowd was surging toward the house, Domenic Millera in its front rank, his face suffused with passion.

"Death to the *jettatori*!" went up the cry more strongly.

"Dale, there's going to be violence!" I exclaimed.

"No, look!" Doctor Dale said, and we stopped.

The uproar had abruptly broken off, the crowd's cries silenced as though by magic. The door of the Mione house was opening.

Peter Mione stood on its threshold. He wore his soft black hat and long coat, stick in his hand. He looked out on the crowd and on his face was a smile of sardonic amusement.

For perhaps a half-minute the men and women of the crowd stared open-mouthed at Peter Mione, standing there like some mocking incarnation of ancient evil. Then a woman shrieked "*Jettatore!*" and turned to flee.

Instantly her panic spread to the others and they too shrank back to avoid the eyes of Peter Mione, recoiled and then fled. Domenic Millera and the Safetta woman were among them, Millera's face hate-filled but fear triumphing over his hate.

Almost incredibly swiftly the crowd melted, Doctor Dale pulling me back behind an angle of the house beside us, as those in the street hastily sought their

own houses. Peter Mione watched from his door until the street seemed entirely deserted.

Then, calmly as though he had been watching only some concourse of animals that for a moment had blocked his way, Peter Mione closed the door behind him and moved coolly up the street. He passed the house behind an angle of which Doctor Dale and I shrank farther back, and disappeared when he turned at the street's top.

THE street remained silent and deserted as Doctor Dale and I went out again to the sidewalk.

"It turned out as I expected, Owen," Dale told me. "Their fear of the evil eye was greater than their fury."

"Dale, are you going on down to the house?" I asked. "Peter Mione won't be there."

"I let him pass without seeing us purposely," Doctor Dale said. "I want to see Joseph and Rose Mione when he is not there—I have an idea about them that I want to prove or disprove."

We went on down the street, therefore, and Doctor Dale knocked at the door. He was forced to knock for minutes before it opened.

Joseph Mione confronted us, pale and distraught. But again from his eyes as we met them struck the same shock of tangible and deadly forces against the forces shielding us.

"I've got to see you and your daughter, now!" Doctor Dale said.

"What do you want?" groaned Joseph Mione. "Has there not been trouble enough here today?"

"There has and that's why I'm here," Dale said incisively. "I think it will be much better for both of you if you see us."

Joseph Mione hesitated, then opened the door wider. As Doctor Dale and I entered he locked the door behind us.

Dale and I found ourselves in a comfortable room, with flowers, a few fine prints, an old piano. Rose Mione was in the room, even paler than her father. Once more I felt that impact of alien forces to which I was now almost accustomed, as I met her dark, deep eyes.

Joseph Mione put his arm across her shoulders, facing us.

"I am not going to waste words," said Doctor Dale. "Both of you know how Henry Carlin was stricken at your door this morning."

Joseph Mione nodded dully. "We saw—we were in here when he came. He threatened my father about young Carlin coming here, and Father——"

"Your father struck him with his evil eye!" Dale finished for him. "And because your father has that dread power of the evil eye, you and your daughter have it also, since the evil eye's power descends automatically from one generation to another once it is assumed.

"What I want to ask, though," Doctor Dale continued keenly, "and what I would not have thought to ask at all but for certain things I heard last night, is this: Would you and your daughter rather be without this power of the evil eye?"

"Can you ask such a question?" cried Joseph Mione passionately. "Do you think such a power pleases Rose and me? Do you think it pleases us that we can not look even at those we love without our gaze blasting them? We never could have desired this terrible power of the evil eye, but because my father had assumed it by compact with forces of evil, I and my daughter after me were born with it. And we can not now escape it."

"I thought it might be thus," Doctor Dale said. "But if it were possible to lift this power of the evil eye from you?"

Rose Mione answered swiftly. "To have it lifted I would give almost my life!"

"It can never be lifted," Joseph Mione said hopelessly. "Only my father, by revoking his black compact with the forces of evil, can lift the evil eye from himself and us, and that he will never do."

"Do not be too sure of that," Doctor Dale advised. "But before going further, I want you to tell me when and how your father first assumed this power of the evil eye."

Joseph Mione motioned dumbly to chairs and as Dale and I took them he seated himself in another, Rose standing behind him.

"My father, Peter Mione," he said, "was in his youth Pietro Mione of the region of Napoli—Naples. There are no small number of men and women with the terrible power of the evil eye in that part of the world, and they are greatly feared; so that my father conceived the idea of assuming the evil eye himself, of becoming *jettatore*, and being himself powerful and feared by all.

"Using the formulæ taught him by the evil *jettatori* he sought, Pietro Mione deliberately made compact with forces of evil that they possess him thenceforth and make his gaze deadly against all whom he turned it against. With that terrible power of the evil eye, Pietro Mione soon became known to all as a *jettatore*, and was feared and avoided by all, since those who offended him he turned his gaze upon.

"Finally those in the region got courage enough to rise against him and Pietro Mione would have been killed had he not fled hastily to America. Here he changed his name to Peter Mione, and living in Boston he met an Italian-American girl who married him without dreaming of his deadly power. In little more than a week she was stricken down by her husband's evil eye! Refusing to meet his eyes again, she lingered weakly until a son was born to her, then died.

"That son was me, Joseph Mione, and I had from birth the same power of the evil eye as my father, Peter Mione. My father was amused rather than horrified by this. He had acquired a certain amount of money by then, but every so often had to move to a different town, since sooner or later those about him discovered that Peter Mione had the evil eye and was striking down some of them with it.

"I grew up living only with my father. I never suspected that he, much less I, had the evil eye, since those who possess the power are of course not affected by it in another. In one town where I went to school I had a chum, a little boy named Antonio. We were close friends, and once when other boys shouted after me that I was an evil-eyed son of an evil-eyed father, Antonio fought them. But soon after Antonio sickened and died. I did not dream that it was I who had stricken him.

"Young people avoided me as I grew older, whispering of the evil eye of Peter Mione and his son. I thought all this talk of the evil eye of my father was mere slander. It seemed to spring up anew in every town we moved to. Then at last I found out the truth.

"We had moved to Providence and there I met a girl, beautiful, wonderful. I was twenty, and I courted and won her. We were married, and my father laughed as though at some great joke. My bride said she did not like him. She sickened swiftly. I thought it was because she expected a child, but no, her weakness grew. She died as the child, my daughter Rose, was born. And in dying she whispered to me that it was the evil eye of myself and of my father that killed her!

"I WAS stupefied. I remembered how my father had always been reputed to have the evil eye, and how it was sup-

posed to be hereditary. Had I, then, the evil eye also? Frantically I examined my eyes in a mirror. I seemed to see dark forces deep within them, forces not of me that yet possessed me and worked through my gaze.

"I remembered little Antonio, how he had fought for me and yet had died. I remembered others who had been intimate with me for a time and who had died, how my father had been charged with deaths, and how my wife had died, slain by me who loved her more than anything else on earth! Yes, and remembered how my father laughed when I married!

"I ran to my father, cried the question to him, and he answered yes! Yes, he said, he had the evil eye and so did I and my baby daughter and all who might come after her. Why not have it, he asked, when he with the evil eye was infinitely more powerful than other men? It was a great weapon, a great power, he boasted. One dared not offend the *jettatore* lest his deadly gaze avenge him. I should be glad I had it, he told me.

"But I shrieked my wife's name and took my father by the throat to kill him. He shook me off and reminded me that if I did kill him the evil eye could never be lifted from me and mine. Only he who had assumed it could lift it from himself and us by revoking his evil compact. I pleaded with him then, on my knees, that he revoke that compact and lift it from us, but he refused. And now I knew that like him I, Joseph Mione, was of the dread evil-eyed!

"Can you know what it means to have the evil eye? Can you know what it means to go forth into the streets and have all shun and avoid you in fear of your deadly gaze? To be afraid to meet the eyes of any person lest you kill them, to see even your loved ones dying from your own looks of love, and be unable to

save them? To be of the dread company of the evil-eyed, loathing the power that is yours?

"Such was my life thenceforth. My father gloated in his power of the evil eye—I loathed it. I lived with him and moved with him from town to town. I did so because I still hoped that some day he might relent and revoke his compact, lift this dark power that lay on me and my little daughter Rose as on himself.

"For from Rose's birth I had seen in her eyes the same dark forces that were in mine and my father's. The hereditary power had descended to her as to me! I cursed fate for making it so. I cared for Rose as she grew into childhood and youth, and did not tell her of the black power that was hers.

"I did not permit Rose to go to school, but taught her myself. I allowed her no playmates, though few children would have played with the offspring of *jettatori*. I was determined that though Rose must not know she had the evil eye, neither must there be any innocent victims to her power. My father watched my efforts with cynical amusement, heedless of my pleas to revoke his compact and lift this curse from us.

"So Rose grew up, knowing little outside her home. She heard us called *jettatori* sometimes, but I kept the truth from her. We came finally here to Tauriston, the last town in which we lived, Millport, having become too hot for us due to my father striking down several people with his evil power. And here that which I had feared for Rose happened.

"Rose met by accident young Donald Carlin. He fell in love with her and she loved him. For a few days he came to see her and I saw that already his vitality was diminishing as her deadly gaze worked on him. What was I to do? If I did not tell Rose, she would go through what I had, would see her husband die

from her gaze, would see her child or children born with the dread evil eye! If I did tell, she would know what I had striven so to keep from her, that she was the daughter of a house of the evil eye!

"Then I saw that I must tell, and I did. Rose heard me in horror—heard how her grandfather had brought this curse upon our house, how she as well as he and I had the dread evil eye. She implored him then as I had done to revoke the thing, but he silenced her as he had me. Rose was stunned by the horror of it.

"But she saw now that she must give up young Donald Carlin. She told him not to come again. She could not explain the terrible truth to him. He insisted in coming for a day or two more, then collapsed, stricken by her evil eye. He lay sick for weeks, and Rose dared not visit him, as she would only make him worse. Yet when he recovered somewhat he came again.

"He managed to see Rose for a few moments only; yet that was enough in two or three days more to cause him to collapse again, and lie again for weeks recovering. Yet last night Donald Carlin again came, and Rose went outside with him lest he come in and meet the gaze of my father and myself. Yet she kept her eyes from his to prevent him from being stricken down again.

"Then this morning Donald's father, Henry Carlin, came as you know; and as I told you, it was Peter Mione, my father, who struck him down with his eyes. He should recover, since he met my father's eyes but for a moment. But young Donald Carlin must not come again, for if he does the evil eye will surely kill him!"

5

JOSEPH MIONE'S voice ceased. His face was very white and his hands were trembling. Rose laid her hand upon his and he drew her closer.

Doctor Dale's voice was vibrant as he spoke. "It is as I had begun to think, then," he said. "You two, like many other innocent people, suffer from having the power of the evil eye without desiring it."

"We do, and while we do we can not mix and meet with other people," said Mione heavily. "It is a doom upon us."

"But one that can be lifted!" Dale said. "If your father revokes his compact this power will be lifted from both of you as well as from him."

Rose Mione spoke, her voice tragically calm. "He will never do that," she said. "I begged him, but he will stay so until he dies."

"And after he dies," her father added, "he can never revoke this curse and so it can never be lifted from our house. And that is why the house of Mione must end here—with Rose."

Doctor Dale's hazel eyes snapped. "No, Peter Mione must revoke this thing! Even if he refuses to, there are ways by which he may be made to do it."

"What ways?" demanded Joseph Mione. "My father would die under torture rather than lift this evil eye from himself and us."

"I don't mean physical ways," Dale told them. "You know that the power of the evil eye in yourselves and your father is due to evil forces, deliberately invited to possess you by your father's compact?"

They nodded dumbly. "Well," Dale continued, "there are benign forces in the universe as strong as the malign ones. They can be summoned and directed by use of various symbols and methods—such as the symbols Owen and I wear now to protect us.

"These benign forces I could use, I think, to overcome the evil ones that possess your father, and make him revoke his compact even against his own will;

just as hypnotism makes the subject do things against his own will."

"You mean these forces you summoned would work through your gaze," Joseph Mione asked, "as the evil ones do through his and our gaze?"

Doctor Dale nodded. "Yes, and with the forces in my gaze stronger than those in his, I could force him against his will to revoke this curse."

"But how would you do it? How go about it?"

"In this way," Dale answered. "We would take your father by surprise and bind him so that he could not escape or oppose us physically. Then, by the benign forces with which I can empower my gaze, I will undertake to overcome the dark forces that hold him and his own will, and make him revoke his compact with evil. Once he does so he will not be hurt physically, but the evil eye will pass from him and from you two."

Joseph Mione had listened tensely. "If you could do that!" he exclaimed. "Yet if you failed——"

"Father, it is a chance at least to escape this terrible thing," Rose Mione said. "No matter what the risk, let us try it."

"Remember," Doctor Dale put in, "that Peter Mione is an old man. He might die at any time from natural causes and then all hope of lifting this thing from you would be gone."

"You are right—we'll do it!" Joseph Mione declared. "When shall it be?—tonight?"

"Yes, the sooner the better," said Dale quickly. "Your father will go out this evening as last night?"

"Yes, each morning and evening he goes out for a few hours."

"Well, Owen and I will be here this evening before he returns. We'll be waiting here for him when he does."

He stood up, and so did the pale Joseph Mione and his daughter.

"We'll get back now to make preparation—you can expect us at eight tonight."

He took the girl's hand. "You must not expect it to be easy, you and your father. It will be a struggle, but it is for the best."

"I know," she whispered. "We will be waiting for you."

WE LEFT the Mione house at that and went up the street to our car. I saw faces watching us from windows all along the street.

As we passed Domenic Millera's house we saw Millera in its door, but before we could speak he made the swift gesture against the evil eye with his hand toward us, then closed the door.

"These people think us friends of the Miones," Doctor Dale said. "Well, if all goes well tonight they'll have nothing more to fear."

"And if all doesn't go well?" I asked. "Dale, what if Peter Mione and his forces are too strong for you?"

"In that case," said Doctor Dale slowly, "I would fall victim and be stricken myself by the power of his evil eye. But I think I can use forces that will be too much for him."

"I'm going to tell Donald Carlin the whole thing now," he added as we drove back across Tauriston. "He has a right to know."

When we reached the Carlin home we found that Henry Carlin was still sleeping heavily but was no longer in the semicomatose condition that had been his at first. Donald Carlin had been watching over him and came anxiously toward us as we entered.

"I want to know what happened to Dad," he told Doctor Dale. "He seems to have had an attack of illness just like mine."

"It was the same kind of attack, Donald," Dale said gravely. He went on then

to tell Donald Carlin the whole story of Peter Mione and his family of the evil eye.

Donald was as astonished as I had expected. "And I was stricken by Rose's evil eye? It's incredible!"

"It's only too true," Doctor Dale affirmed. "Even though Rose and her father are innocent, their gaze can kill; and until her grandfather revokes his black compact with evil it will be so."

"And that's why she wouldn't see me!" Donald Carlin exclaimed. "If I had ever known that—— Dale, I'm going to be there with you tonight when you do this!" he said. "I've got to be there with Rose!"

"You can't!" I exclaimed. "To meet the eyes of Rose and her father and grandfather—and no symbol like ours can protect you who have already been a victim——"

"Yet there's a way in which Donald might go, Owen," Doctor Dale said. "If we bind his eyes with a bandage faced with lead-foil—lead being impenetrable to supernatural forces—he can not meet the eyes of the Miones and will be safe from them for the time being."

"Then I'll do that," Donald Carlin told him. "And if you're successful tonight I'll not need to fear Rose's eyes."

"If we're successful, yes," Doctor Dale said. "And if we're not—but we mustn't think of that."

THE hours of that day were busy ones. After making sure that the sleeping Henry Carlin was slowly recovering, and giving Mrs. Grassia directions as to his care, Doctor Dale began preparing for the struggle that night.

He took from his equipment-case a number of unusual objects we had brought, selecting from them two curious silver symbols. These were like the ones we had worn in our lapels, with the eye and seven smaller symbols graven on

them. But they were larger, five inches across, and had around the seven small symbols a border of interlaced wheel and crescent designs.

The two symbols had silver loops by which they could be fastened around the wrist like wristlets. Doctor Dale showed how they were to be worn on right and left wrist, and how so worn they summoned to the wearer the tangible and terrific forces by which he meant to overcome Peter Mione.

Dale also made ready a cloth bandage faced with lead-foil for Donald Carlin. When evening came, Henry Carlin still slept and Doctor Dale and young Carlin and I ate dinner silently.

IT WAS nearly eight and already dark when we went out to the car. Donald Carlin drove across Tauriston, halting the car at Dale's direction a block from Cardell Street. We walked on to that street and down to the dark lower end where loomed the dark house of the Miones.

Before knocking, Doctor Dale adjusted the lead-foil bandage around Donald Carlin's eyes. Then he rapped, and at once Joseph Mione answered. For still another time I felt the shock of his eyes against the shield from the silver symbols Dale and I wore in our lapels. Donald Carlin, blindfolded, experienced nothing apparently.

"Your father's not returned yet?" Doctor Dale asked.

"Not yet," said Joseph Mione, deathly white. "But he should be back soon now."

He held the door open and we went inside, Donald Carlin holding to my arm for guidance.

Rose Mione was in the soft-lit room inside, her eyes as she turned toward us again smiting us with that strange tangible force. She gave an exclamation at sight of young Carlin, blindfolded. "Donald!"

"It's all right," Dale told her. "The blindfold protects him."

Donald Carlin groped toward her, held her close. "Rose," he said, his voice low. "I heard all today—all of what you've been through——"

We were all silent for a moment. Then Joseph Mione—"You're going to hide until my father returns?"

"Yes," Doctor Dale answered. He surveyed the room, then indicated the door-hangings of dark cloth separating it from the back rooms. "Owen and I will hide behind these until Peter Mione comes. Donald, you had better go with Rose back into the house."

Rose Mione hesitated, Donald holding her arm. "You're not going to—hurt Grandfather?" she said to Dale.

Doctor Dale shook his head gravely. "I trust not." He showed her the big silver wrist-symbols, attaching them to his wrists so that their disks were flat against the top of the wrist. "With the forces summoned by these symbols I am going to try to make your grandfather revoke his compact of the evil eye, but that will be an ordeal."

She went back into the rear of the house then with Donald Carlin. I could hear their low voices.

"And what do you want me to do?" asked Joseph Mione. He was trembling.

"Just wait in the room here," Doctor Dale told him, "and try to get your father's back to these curtains. Owen and I will do the rest."

Joseph Mione nodded and then Doctor Dale and I took our places behind the door-hangings, invisible to any who entered the room from outside. We made ready in our hands short lengths of thin, hard rope that we had brought with us.

WE WAITED in silence. It was a tense wait that seemed very long. Minutes fled by and still Peter Mione did not

return. Out in the room Joseph Mione was becoming increasingly nervous, moving restlessly about. There was no sound from Rose and Donald Carlin in the back rooms.

Then at last a steady step on the sidewalk outside! I knew it for Peter Mione's step even before I heard it stop and the door open. Peering with Dale through the crack between the hangings that concealed us, I saw Peter Mione step inside and close the door.

He was laughing! I had never seen him more evil in appearance, for the mirth in that mask-like face was demonic. His terrible eyes seemed a little more dilated, the black forces in them stirring near their surface. Unholy exultation was in every line of his face.

"Joseph, I think it will be very long before that fool Millera leads crowds against me again as this morning," he said. "Very long!"

"What do you mean about Millera?" Joseph Mione asked. Peter Mione, flinging hat and coat aside, was walking across the room within a few feet of the hangings behind which Doctor Dale and I waited.

"I mean," said Peter Mione, still gloating, "that Millera will know now what it means to——"

Dale and I sprang out on him. He gave a wild curse, but before he could resist, our ropes were about him and we had thrust him into a chair, in which swiftly we tied him.

Rose Mione, young Donald Carlin with her, came quickly into the room, the girl very white. Peter Mione looked from her and her blindfolded companion to the trembling Joseph Mione, then to Doctor Dale and myself. His gaze became dreadful, smiting at us with a force more than physical.

"So, you plan to trap your father, Jo-

seph!" he hissed. "You and this Dale, this meddler from outside!"

"It's more than a trap, Peter Mione," Doctor Dale told him. "It's going to mean the end tonight of your power of the evil eye!"

"What do you mean?" Mione exclaimed, his fury diabolical.

"I mean that you are going to revoke tonight the compact that gave you that power and lift it from yourself and son and granddaughter!"

Peter Mione's terrible laugh rasped. "You fool, do you think you can make me do that? More than one I've sent to death who tried to overcome me."

"Yet it's going to be done tonight," Doctor Dale returned, his voice steely. He turned a moment to us. "Owen, see that no one enters and that we're not disturbed. That is vital."

Then Dale placed a chair to face that in which Peter Mione sat, and seated himself in it, face to face with Mione.

Doctor Dale extended both hands, making a series of swift gestures almost too fast for the eye to follow. Peter Mione snarled in defiance, yet as he glimpsed the big silver symbols on Dale's wrists his face changed. Doctor Dale placed his hands on his knees, the wrist-symbols upward, and then stared steadily into the eyes of Peter Mione.

There began then the strangest of duels. It was a silent, deadly struggle between the eyes of Doctor Dale and Peter Mione. It was as though their eyes, their gaze, were but the channels by which alien forces far mightier than either of these two men were coming to grips, struggling in supernatural combat.

Tensely, silently, we watched this deadly struggle, Joseph Mione shaking, Rose hiding her face partly against the blindfolded Donald Carlin's shoulder, I beside them. I felt my heart beating rapidly, seemed to feel the room electric

with strange forces crowding it. Peter Mione's black eyes were dilated now to a terrible extent, as though the forces working through them were too great for them, while Doctor Dale's hazel eyes flamed with burning, tawny light!

Doctor Dale spoke, his voice low, monotonous. "Revoke your compact!" he said, his eyes gripping the other's.

Peter Mione snarled. His face and hands now were bloodless, and Dale's too were unnaturally white.

"Revoke!" Doctor Dale repeated. Again Mione made no answer.

It was as though time were forgotten by us as the eyes of those two clashed on each other in deadly struggle.

Peter Mione's black force-filled eyes wavered a little. The forces in Dale's flaming gaze were beating too strongly against his.

"He's winning!" I whispered hoarsely to Joseph Mione. "Dale's winning——"

"Revoke!" said Doctor Dale in the same monotone.

"Listen!" said Joseph Mione to me, his eyes startled.

From outside, farther up the street, came a confused roaring sound, growing louder. We sprang to the door and looked out.

Up the street a mad mob of two or three hundred men and women was coming down toward us! At its head, carrying a girl's limp form, walked Domenic Millera. Many in the mob carried flashing lights.

"Revoke!" came again Dale's voice from where he and Peter Mione sat unmoving in their terrific deadlock.

"Death to the *jettatori*!" came the cry of the nearing mob.

"They're down here to kill your father and you!" I cried to Joseph Mione. "Get back in——"

I thrust him behind me as the mob surged down into the street in front of

the Mione house in whose door I stood. I saw now that the girl Domenic Millera carried was his daughter Julia, her form unmoving in his arms, and that his face was insane with passion.

"Millera!" I cried. "What are you doing here with these?"

"We come to kill the *jettatore*—Peter Mione!" he yelled, his voice crazy. "To kill him as Peter Mione killed my Julia this night!"

My heart checked. "Killed your daughter? What do you mean?"

He held up the girl and now I saw her face was the waxen one of the dead. "But now he did it!" Millera cried. "Peter Mione was even more angry with me for leading the crowd here this morning, and as he came down the street to his home tonight he took his revenge on my Julia. Yes, he came up onto my porch when none saw and looked in at her, the gaze of his evil eye again upon hers. And she, weakened already by his evil eye, died almost before she could whisper to us what he had done. So we come now to kill Peter Mione of the evil eye before more die!"

"Death to the *jettatori*!" roared the crowd about him, surging forward.

"Millera, for God's sake get them back!" I cried, but was not even heard in the bellow of the mob. Stones struck about me as they rushed forward. I leapt back, slammed and locked the door.

The mob hammered on the outside. I spun around to where Joseph Mione stood, white and trembling. At the room's center, heedless of all else, Doctor Dale and Peter Mione held still to their terrible duel.

"Get back and lock every door—push furniture against the windows!" I cried to Joseph Mione. "Donald, you help him—if they get in here before Dale wins, everything is lost!"

"Revoke!" came Doctor Dale's steady

command to Peter Mione, louder now and more forceful.

As Joseph Mione ran back to lock and bar the doors and windows of the rear of the house, Donald Carlin, still blindfolded, and Rose Mione hastening to help him, I shoved the room's furniture against the windows and doors as rapidly as possible. Already the smash and tinkle of glass sounded as stones shattered windows.

"Death to the *jettatori*—death to Peter Mione!" came the cry.

At the room's center Doctor Dale and Peter Mione still faced each other. Dale's eyes were as terrible now as Mione's, and seemed beating the other's down. The room was pregnant with mighty forces.

"Revoke!" came Doctor Dale's inexorable command again.

"Kill the evil-eyed—kill Peter Mione as he killed my son!" screamed the Safetta woman outside.

"Death to the *jettatore*!" came Millera's mad cry.

The door split beneath blows and now the mob was pounding upon the heavy cabinet I had shoved against it. I held against the cabinet.

"Carlin, they're breaking in here!" I yelled. Donald Carlin, blindfolded still, stumbled from the house's rear, where was pounding and smashing too, with Joseph Mione and Rose.

"We can't hold them out much longer!" Donald panted as he and Joseph Mione pushed with me to hold the cabinet against the door.

"We've got to!" I cried. "Dale is winning, but if they kill Peter Mione now it means all chance of lifting the curse of the evil eye is gone!"

The door and cabinet crashed further inward despite our efforts to hold it. The mob bellowed triumphantly—

Doctor Dale and Peter Mione now had

risen from their chairs, eyes still holding each other, Mione's wrinkled face now ghastly as with gaze still riveted to Dale's force-flaming eyes he struggled. He seemed gasping for breath.

The mob was breaking through! They were pushing us bodily back with the cabinet from the door, Millera's insane cry spurring them on, their shouts a confused roar in my ears. Rose Mione screamed and I heard over her scream the thunder of Doctor Dale's command.

"Revoke!"

The maddened mob burst in, Domenic Millera foremost among them with his daughter's limp body still in his arms.

They halted, transfixed by the sight of Peter Mione staggering at the room's center, face ghastly and contorted as he clutched the air, his eyes riveted on Doctor Dale's.

"*I revoke!*" screamed Peter Mione, then toppled sidewise in a heap.

Millera and his followers stared, petrified.

Doctor Dale, staggering himself, steadied and bent over Peter Mione. The face he turned up was lifeless, black eyes wide in death.

He turned to Joseph and Rose Mione. In their eyes was no longer that deep

stirring of black forces, that outthrust of tangible evil force! Their eyes were cleansed, normal. Unbelievably, father and daughter stared into each other's eyes.

Doctor Dale turned to Domenic Millera and those behind him. "Peter Mione is dead and you heard him revoke his power of the evil eye before he died," he told them. "The evil eye is gone now from these two as from him."

Millera, like a man in a dream, nodded. "It is so," he said. Then as his eyes fell on the limp body in his arms, a sob of utter human woe came from him. "My Julia!"

He stumbled out, the mob withdrawing with him, slowly, awed.

Doctor Dale turned. Donald Carlin had ripped the bandage from his eyes and they sought Rose Mione's as he held her.

"Rose," he faltered. "Rose——"

"Donald, it's gone—you can look now!" she said. Then she was weeping. Donald held her close. Joseph Mione was still bemazed.

"It is gone, yes," Doctor Dale said, "the curse of the evil eye that Peter Mione brought on himself and his. The house of Mione can go on but the house of the evil eye is—ended."

