

Weird Tales

March
1954

-
- THE EYRIE Inside front cover
- CALL NOT THEIR NAMES (A novelette) . . . Everil Worrell 2
The old gods held, yet it was not right that it should be so.
- THE ARM Justin Dowling 40
*"Right arm, what are you? Ugly, they will say—
like uncooked meat. . . ."*
- THE LILY MAID Dorothea Gibbons 47
What was it my crazed mind tried to remember among the shadows?
- MORPHO ON THE SCREEN Arthur J. Burks 57
... straight away to the Valley of the Amazon to research my dreams.
- NEPHTHAE Suzanne Pickett 66
Blown in with the salt spray and the very essence of love.
- THE GHOST THAT NEVER DIED
(A novelette) Elizabeth Sheldon 76
Office politics carried to incredible lethal lengths.
- WITCH'S BREW (Verse) Dorothy Quick 87
- BRENDA Margaret St. Clair 89
What, after all, was entombed in the eerie quarry?
- MAKE ME A CHILD AGAIN David Eynon 100
Something that various people have sighed for at one time or another.
- OUT! (Verse) Leah Bodine Drake 107
- THE GRAVE AT GOONHILLY (A novelette) . G. G. Pendarves 108
What did it want—that evil THING at the fifth tee?

Cover by EVAN SINGER

Published bi-monthly by SHORT STORIES, INC., 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y. W. J. Delaney, President & Treasurer. R. M. Cogan, Secretary. Reentered as second-class matter January 26, 1940, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. *Subscription rates:* One year in the United States and possessions \$2.00; two years \$3.50. Canadian: one year \$2.25; two years, \$4.00 Foreign: one year \$2.30; two years, \$4.10. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts.

D. McILWRAITH, Editor

Copyright 1953 by WEIRD TALES. Copyright in Great Britain.



Title registered in U. S. Patent Office.

... shadows that crept across the floor. . . .



THE LILY MAID

BY DOROTHEA GIBBONS

I WISH they would leave me alone. All I want is to be still and to be able to watch the doors, the folding doors which are dark and always in the shade.

Why should I have to turn my chair towards the window and the sun, and the slanting shadows on the grass? The wind makes a whispering noise in the leaves outside, and the little

wrought iron gate throws crooked shapes on to the lawn. But I don't like any of these things. I like the dark corners of the room, and the folding doors which lead to what used to be the library. No, that's not true. I don't *like* the dark shadows, heaven knows I don't, but I must look at them—I must. Oh, what strange fate has brought me again to Astolat, the house I knew so well those years ago?

The Sprys have sold it, and it has been turned into a hospital for people who are suffering from things wrong with their nerves. I didn't ask to come here, and of course I didn't know I was to be sent to Astolat. But I suppose the way I looked and behaved must have worried Aunt Ellen. It's no good, anyway, being here, and I can't tell these people anything, because I'm at Astolat, of all places, and no one must know I've known it before.

And to be in this room, with the folding doors in front of me all the time. If they knew about everything, they would never let me stay in the Magnolia Room, as it used to be called, but I can't *not* be here, even though I hate it. I might find out, you see—

A knock at the door, and I called out impatiently, "Come in." It was a nurse with my tea.

"Hullo," I said.

"Hullo, dear," she answered,

in a sort of cream and roses voice. "I'm going to look after you." She beamed at me with an attractive smile which for a fleeting moment made me feel comfortable inside. I heard her speaking again, but I had lost interest as I always did.

"Dian's your name, isn't it? I hope I may call you that, and now please eat your tea, I do so want you to."

Vaguely I noticed the teacup with the roses on it, and the bread and butter cut as fine as could be. Done to attract the sick mind, of course, but I was wearied now with the nurse's chatter. She said her name was Phoebe. But I turned my eyes towards the folding doors and kept on thinking of the far off days when Jennefer Spry and I were friends.

I GOT through tea somehow. It was less trouble to eat it than to argue with Phoebe. I discovered you couldn't annoy her and make her lose patience, so it was no wonder she had been picked to look after a wreck like me.

Then "—the doctors say you won't talk about yourself, won't help them to help you." Phoebe's voice went on tinkling through my head.

I said to her, "If you all think I'm mad it's better I should know it."

"You're *not* mad. You wouldn't be here if you were. You must have had some shock, something that's preying on your mind—"

I laughed. I didn't know I could, but it can't have been a pleasant sound, because I saw Phoebe wince.

I wouldn't talk any more, my head ached and I had started to think about the night which I dreaded, and the drugs I had to have before I could sleep. And here I am, in this room and brought back to Astolat. Now I may have a chance to find out what has haunted me all these years. But how can I, just from a room and folding doors kept locked? They are locked, because I've tried them.

But now I was not to be left alone, it seemed. I suppose they were afraid I should run out of the long windows into the garden and drown myself in the lily pond. That I didn't want to live was true enough, but it was far too much trouble to try to die.

After a few days Phoebe went on night duty with me. I dreaded the nights so much and I asked if I could have her.

One night when the moon was full, I lay watching the lawn and the trees which were somehow like people, quite different from how they look by day. It was about three in the morning and I always woke then. Phoebe was

knitting by the light of a shaded lamp. I didn't speak to her, but watched the moonlight, and gradually it started to make a track across the floor towards the far corner, now darkly in shadow. I lay very still and watched. The moonlight crept further into the room, and then the light flickered at the bottom of the folding doors.

It will be said that a woman in my state, filled with sleeping stuff, will imagine anything. Moonlight may appear to be a shining ship or a fairy's palace, or a creature born of wind and water, but what I saw crouching there where the moonlight lay was none of these things.

I screamed. Then Phoebe was beside me her strong arms round me, reassuring me. I couldn't tell her what I had seen. I couldn't tell anyone, and the fear of what it might have been was almost more than I could bear.

A FEW days later I was told that a visitor had arrived to see me, and when the door opened, in came Simon Drew—a link with the past indeed. He had been a great deal at Astolat in the far off days, and he was one of those little middle aged bachelors who never get any older. He lived in the village and was possessed of considerable private means. He had always been charming to ladies, as he

called Lucinda and me, neither of us much over eighteen then, both of us spoilt and in all truth good looking. Lucinda definitely was—but I don't want to talk about Lucinda now.

Simon hopped across the room with his well remembered jerky walk. I felt perfectly frightful because he reminded me of all the things I feared and hated.

He said, "My dear child! To think we should meet again after all these years, and to find my little friend at Astolat of all places! And I only knew you were here because your aunt wrote and told me. They tell me here that you have never said you used to know Astolat so well, but I can understand it when the nerves are all upset. Now, I've not come to tire you, but to cheer you up. You've a grand view from this room, I've always loved it."

He hopped and bustled about the room, chattering like a bird, and except that his bushy eyebrows were whiter now, he was very much the same little man who used to flatter us, especially Lucinda. He avoided my eyes as if he didn't want to look at me much. I knew only too well what I was like. I had a mirror in my bag which no one had found. You're never allowed mirrors. You might try to cut your throat.

I felt like screaming, and Simon went on and on.

"Lovely Dian," he ran on in the silly way he had, "the same ash blond hair and the wide gray eyes—the Lily Maid indeed—" The same ridiculous name he had for me too.

"Shut up, Simon, there's a dear," I said wearily. "You needn't act, I know what I look like, and if I do look anything like the Lily Maid, it must have been when she was dead and floating down the river in the barge to Astolat."

I laughed and Simon didn't seem to like the sound any better than Phoebe had done.

The visitation was got through somehow, and Simon jerked his way to the door, where he stood for a moment with his head on one side, his twinkling eyes as bright as a robin's.

"Goodbye, Simon, goodbye," I said, trying to get rid of him. "Yes, I'll try to get better soon; yes, of course, you must come again."

Now Simon, in spite of his easy manners, had always had one great failing and it was strange I should hear it now. It was his habit of whispering. I suppose he thought he was just speaking softly, but he never was. He whispered, and the hissing sound of it carried far more than an ordinary speaking voice. I could hear him now when he was outside the door.

"That poor child! I couldn't

have believed she could have changed so much. Will she ever—?”

He was apparently discreetly removed.

THE next day the weather broke and a gale tore the young leaves from the trees and scattered them on the lawn. Many of the tulips were broken, their heads lying in the mud and they brought me some, with the usual silly chatter about what a shame it was that the bright colors were dimmed by dirt, battered and spoilt.

“But they’ll revive in water,” one of the nurses said brightly. “Look, I’ll put them where you can see them.”

I didn’t want to see them and turned my eyes away, and in the dimness of the overcast day I sat and looked at the folding doors.

That night the moon came out, struggling through the clouds, and dim and frail, the light fell across the floor as I had seen it before. It was so nebulous that it was in a sense nothing, the thing that I knew I was seeing for the second time. It was faint and shifting, it had no real light, no color. The faintness shivered towards the folding doors, and this time I could see it had a face, undulating, moving, never still.

But it was a face.

I cried out in horror, I shriek-

ed as I had done before, and Phoebe was beside me.

“The doors!” I gasped. “You saw?”

“Moonlight, dear,” she said stoutly.

“No!” and I shuddered, icy cold. “Not moonlight, Lucinda.”

For you see, Lucinda was dead.

AND now I shall have to speak of Lucinda. I shall tell it as quickly as I can, because I hate doing it. At the beginning of the war, the Sprys were living at Astolat, and Lucinda Spry worked on the home farm. I drove an ambulance for the A.R.P. and I lived in the village with Aunt Ellen. There was nothing much to do, no bombing then; we just had rather a good time. Naval Officers came from Keignmouth and we entertained them and among them was John Tregellick.

Lucinda was beautiful and gay and John fell for her, or so I thought, and I, unfortunately for me, fell in love with him. I can remember the happy days altering, and I grew madly jealous of Lucinda. There were four of us at Astolat many evenings of that late summer, Lucinda and I, and John and Simon, fussy little Simon Drew, making the fourth.

One evening I couldn’t bear it any more and I ran across the lawn in the twilight, tears on my

face. I can hear John's voice now, calling to me.

"Dian! Dian!" But I ran all the faster, and tumbled into a rose bush where he caught me, lifting me out as if I was a child, and holding me close.

"It's you I want, little fool, it always has been. I don't like her, not like that, but she—" And then across the garden we heard her calling his name. She could never let him out of her sight, she was one of the possessive sort, and as John and I stood there together even after what he had told me, I knew I hated and feared her because of him. And that's what is so awful now.

It happened on the night of the first blitz we had. It was a bad one, and to us, who were as yet untried, it was ghastly. On the way back from Keignmouth when it was over, I stopped the ambulance in a lane near Astolat, and ran up across the field to see how they were. I found the front door unlocked and I went in, shining my torch. It was a very dark night and the blob of light wavered about like a will o' the wisp, over the walls, the stairway, the doors. Then I remembered that, of course, they must be in the shelter.

But then I thought of the library and when I went in I heard something moving . . . and then I saw. Against the window,

open and unblacked, the garden door, something black was running, running through the long window, away across the lawn.

NOW comes the appalling part of it, and I must hurry on with the telling because I hate it so much. It was worse than the air raid, and the dead people, and the things that had been people, hidden away under sacks—

Because I can remember nothing at all after that, until I woke up next morning at the ambulance station. When I asked them what time I had got in, they said about four o'clock. I had apparently said I was late because I had had engine trouble. I had been in a queer collapsed state and they had put me to bed.

When I got home the following morning, the maid we had told me the news.

Lucinda Spry was dead. Found dead in the library at Astolat, lying near the folding doors, and she had been strangled with a little bit of fine cord.

And I had been at Astolat that night.

There was no one to talk to. Aunt Ellen, whom I lived with as I've said, was away. Anyway I couldn't have told anyone I had been to Astolat, and about the black running figure, and how I remembered nothing after see-

ing it until I woke up that morning.

You see, even if I'd been accused of Lucinda's death, I would have told, I would indeed, but I couldn't for a very good reason.

Because I *had* remembered something else after I'd seen the running figure.

I had seen in the beam of my torch a naval cap lying on the floor in the library, and John Tregellick was still in Keignmouth.

A verdict of murder by a person or persons unknown was brought in. There were very few witnesses forthcoming because poor Mrs. Spry was in the shelter all the time. There was no mention of the naval cap.

There was another awful thought in my mind as well, which lived in company with the other horror all those cruel years.

Had I killed Lucinda and couldn't remember?

I WENT to the north and drove an ambulance up there. I would have nothing to do with men, and when John wrote to me, which he did frequently, I never answered his letters and when he came on leave I managed to avoid him. That was my life for the rest of the war, and after I was released I seemed so peculiar that Aunt Ellen made

me see a doctor. After that I was sent to Astolat, Astolat the nerve hospital now, that house of all others in the world.

And now it seems to add to my misery, I've seen Lucinda who is dead.

The days dragged on and I got no better. Then through the open windows of my room one evening I heard voices, and one was the hissing whisper of Simon Drew and it roused me as no ordinary voice would. I had been half asleep and it echoed in my mind like something half remembered, half forgotten. Someone answered him.

"Hush, Dr. Drew. She might hear you. No, she's no better. She won't speak of what's troubling her. Can *you* remember anything about her which—"

They moved away.

That night the awful things which troubled my mind were worse than ever. As the darkness came on, I felt as if a pendulum was swinging in my head, first on one side, then on the other, louder, louder, then softer and loud again. Was it John? Was it me? Did you kill her, John? Or did I? Which of us! Which of us? And the words beat inside my head like the long swinging pendulum of a monstrous clock, never ending, never ceasing, until I rushed down into the blessed unconsciousness the drug

brought me—black and warm and quiet and uncaring.

Simon came again next day and he hopped into my room in his usual bird-like fashion.

"You're not helping the doctors, I hear. Dian, my dear, this won't do. We're worried about you, you should get on faster, Dian," and he lowered his voice. Then, as I feared, the whispering started.

"Dian, what can you remember of that night when poor

Lucinda died? I believe you *can* remember?" His soft hissing voice terrified me.

"I remember nothing," I told him. "Don't worry me, Simon!" I cried.

"But you do," he whispered, his face close to mine, his round eyes peering at me, "you do, and you won't tell. Say it to me, your old friend. Were *you* here, at Astolat, that night?"

Something seemed to snap inside my head.

"Yes!" I screamed back at him. "Yes, yes, I was here, and I saw someone running — no, that wasn't it. I expect *I* killed Lucinda. But I can't remember, I can't. But say I did it. It's probably true."

It had come out, part of it, after all these years. Ashamed and horrified I heard someone a long way off screaming and it must have been me. Then I was given something and I slept.

It was after that I saw the gargoyle. It wasn't one really, but when I woke in the gray summer's dawn before the color had come back to the garden, I saw something behind the little wrought iron gate on the lawn. Something which looked like a face was peering through, and the tracery of the iron work made a gargoyle of it; a grinning thing buttressed on a wall or a satyr leering by a pond. I was terrified and the thing tantalised my



memory. In some dim way I associated the face with something or somebody.

When I looked again, it had gone. The sun rose in soft pale majesty, and drew the dew off the grass like spangled cloak—I slept again, uneasily

THAT morning I saw a bit in the paper which at once thrilled and terrified me. Some naval officers had received decorations for conspicuous gallantry during the latter part of the war. There was a picture of some of them outside Buckingham Palace.

Among them was John Tregellick and he looked much older.

I was always listening at night, and it wasn't so much that I was afraid of seeing what I thought had been Lucinda, partly because the moon had gone now and the nights were very dark. But I had an uneasiness always with me about the garden outside. Once or twice I thought I heard something padding by on the grass. I asked that the long windows should be kept shut, until one night there was a storm brewing and they had to be open because of the heat. I was half dreaming of John Tregellick and poor Lucinda and Simon Drew—Simon Drew and John and Lucinda. They all muddled together in my mind until

they became a solid block of horror and fear.

Ah God! Quite suddenly I was wide awake. There was a flash of lightning, a muffled rumble of thunder, but in that light I saw two figures, one behind the other, running towards the house. I screamed to Phoebe. There was another flash of lightning, the lamp in the room fused, but not before I had seen something coming in at the window. Then in the pitch darkness I felt hands clutching at my throat, and a man yelling and grappling at the thing which was attacking me; I heard Phoebe shrieking for help.

Then lights blazed out from torches, the night porter and night Sister came running, I saw Phoebe's white face, and something on the floor struggling in the grip of a tall man who had his back to my bed. There was a ghastly gobbling going on from the creature on the floor. The doctor and the night porter and the tall man dragged it out of the room.

But I had seen the faces of the two who had run in from the darkness, the tall man and the thing which gobbled.

One was John Tregellick, he was the tall man, and the other—the other who had attacked me was Simon Drew.

Then I knew that Simon's had been the face behind the iron

gate, the grinning gargoyle, the leering satyr. He had looked like that now, without the tracery of the wrought iron in front of him.

He must have been utterly mad. How could he kill me in a room where somebody sat with a light, and not be found out?

THEN John came back, and with him all the sane and happy things, and he held me so tight that I could hardly breathe. His hard cool face was against mine and everything went round like a rainbow joined together. I couldn't speak. I just shook and cried from thankfulness. From a long way off I heard Phoebe speaking.

"The doctor says you may stay for a little while," she said to John.

"So I didn't kill Lucinda," someone said in a thin high voice which I knew was mine, "and you didn't either. Of course it was Simon. There's been something puzzling me for a long time about him. I expect I saw him that awful night and have forgotten."

It was as if John's health and love was running into my weak body from the very touch of his

hands, and what had died in me was coming to life again. The flame of his strength ran down into my veins like wine.

The tangled web was sorted out between us, how Simon now owned to killing Lucinda in his jealousy because she cared for John. He had tried to kill me tonight for fear I should remember seeing him at Astolat, which he believed I had. The cap was a yachting cap of Simon's, and he had returned to fetch it after I had gone. They seemed to think he was very unbalanced and would probably be sent to Broadmoor.

John had tracked me down to Astolat and arrived off a late train that night. He said something made him go there and he prowled round the gardens unseen by anybody. He had come across Simon Drew creeping into my room.

And poor pale shivering Lucinda? Was she a moon creature I had seen against the folding doors? Perhaps she had been the imaginings of an overwrought mind. I don't know. But what I saw was so very like her, even to the little pearl necklace she always wore.

Poor Lucinda.