

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 26

CONTENTS FOR SEPTEMBER, 1935

Number 3

Cover Design . . . . .	M. Brundage	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "The Blue Woman"</i>		
The Blue Woman . . . . .	John Scott Douglas	274
<i>The eerie mystery of a beautiful woman whose body glowed in the dark</i>		
Night Song . . . . .	Hung Long Tom	291
<i>Verse</i>		
The Carnival of Death . . . . .	Arlton Eadie	292
<i>A ghastly adventure with a Golden Mummy, and strange death that walked by night</i>		
The Man Who Chained the Lightning . . . . .	Paul Ernst	317
<i>Another amazing story about the sinister Doctor Satan, the world's weirdest criminal</i>		
Vulthoom . . . . .	Clark Ashton Smith	336
<i>A terror-tale of frightful tortures and ery horrors, and a doom that menaced Earth</i>		
Satan in Exile (end) . . . . .	Arthur William Bernal	353
<i>An astounding weird-scientific story about a daring brigand of the space-ways</i>		
Vampires . . . . .	Dorothy Quick	367
<i>Verse</i>		
The Shambler from the Stars . . . . .	Robert Bloch	368
<i>A blood-freezing horror was evoked from Ludvig Prinn's terrible "Mysteries of the Worm"</i>		
One Chance . . . . .	Ethel Helene Coen	376
<i>A brief tale of horror and the plague in New Orleans</i>		
The Toad Idol . . . . .	Kirk Mashburn	377
<i>The story of a dread stone fetish from an Aztec temple</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Monster-God of Mamurth . . . . .	Edmond Hamilton	381
<i>An eerie, creepy, goose-flesh story from an early issue of WEIRD TALES</i>		
The Return of Orrin Mannering . . . . .	Kenneth P. Wood	394
<i>A brief story of a jail-break and its ghostly sequel</i>		
The Eyrie . . . . .		395
<i>The readers express their opinions</i>		

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1922, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$3.00 a year in the United States. English office: Charles Lavell, 13, Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E. C. 4, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 840 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright 1935, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company.

COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

"It was an inferno of light, a soundless, rending explosion of it."



# The Man Who Chained the Lightning

By PAUL ERNST

*Another amazing tale of Doctor Satan, the world's weirdest criminal, whose startling exploits will hold you spellbound*

## 1. Death on the Wall

**T**HE wind played an eery chorus among the dank leaves of the trees lining the wealthy residen-

tial street. Far off, the flickering of lightning split the black September night.

From behind the high wall bordering the Weldman estate came a hoarse cry. It

was not a shout so much as an exclamation; but in it was packed a horror that could not have been more vividly expressed had the person yelled at the top of his voice.

With the low cry, the wind seemed to die down as if to listen. In the lull the slam of a small gate in the high wall rang out.

A man sped through that gate. His face was white in the light of the street lamp fifty yards away. His eyes were wide and staring. His mouth was half open and twisted as if for another cry.

He began to run down the street toward the town section. He pounded through puddles and mud, with his head straining forward and his breath tearing in sobs from his throat. He was slight, bald, middle-aged, and fear lent such speed to his feet that he ran as a youth might run. But only for an instant did he speed through the night.

The end of the Weldman wall was still a hundred feet in front of him, when suddenly he stopped. This time a piercing scream came from his lips instead of a suppressed exclamation. The scream echoed down the midnight quiet of the street like a banshee wail.

The man began to dance, as if grotesque, horrible music sounded from somewhere near. And as his feet beat clumsily on the muddy sidewalk, he struck himself with his clenched fists. Against his chest his fists beat, and then against his throat, as though he had gone mad and was attempting to punish himself for some recent transgression.

His screams ripped out in an almost unbroken flow of sound while he struck at his throat and chest. But only for a few moments did he dance there, and swing his arms. Abruptly his screaming stopped, as though cut across the middle with a knife-blade. His arms ceased to move.

He stood in the center of the sidewalk, staring up beyond the end of the Weldman wall. A patrolman was running toward him, drawn by the frightful screams. But the man did not seem to see him. He simply stood there, silent now and motionless, as if turned to rock. And then, with the policeman still a dozen yards away, he fell.

Full length to the sidewalk his body crashed, stiffly, like a thing of wood rather than of yielding flesh. And like a rigid thing of wood he lay in the water and mud of the walk.

The patrolman reached his side and bent over him.

Glaring, sightless eyes turned up into his face. The man's lips moved stiffly.

" . . . master . . . millions . . . "

"What?" said the policeman, raising the man's head. "What's that you said?"

The middle-aged man's voice sounded again, muffled and thick: " . . . master . . . shaving . . . "

The patrolman almost shook him in his anxiety to hear what was wrong.

"What is it?" he snapped. "Are you sick? Have you been hurt? What's happened?"

But the man said no more. His face was blackening and swelling. His lips were parting over bared teeth, while between them his breath rattled with ever more difficulty and agony.

Then the agonized breathing stopped. The man's eyeballs rolled up so that only the whites were visible. And the patrolman lowered him to the sidewalk and blew his whistle.

The man was dead.

Instinctively the policeman crossed himself as he stood looking down at the body. There was something hellish here, something diabolical beyond all his experience in a world of violence.

A SQUAD car screamed to a stop beside the dead man and the cop. A detective jumped out from beside the driver and ran forward. One look he took at the dead, blackened face; then he shook his head and whistled.

"Weldman's valet! He was on his way to the station house to tell us something. I was standing near when the desk sergeant took the call. Something terrible, and too important to be told over the phone, the guy said. Something about his employer, John Weldman. Some danger hanging over him, I gathered."

He stared at the agonized dead face.

"Well, whatever it was he was going to tell us will never be known now. But it must have been something big—for him to have been knocked off like this to keep him from spilling it!"

"Hey, he wasn't knocked off," said the policeman. "I saw him keel over. There wasn't anybody else in sight."

The detective stared somberly at him.

"It doesn't matter whether anyone was in sight or not. This guy was murdered!" He touched the curiously rigid body with the toe of his shoe. "If only he'd said something before he died——"

"He did," said the policeman.

"What?" The plain-clothes man's hand shot out and clutched the cop's shoulder. "What did he say?"

"Just three words. And they don't seem to make sense at all. He said 'master . . . millions . . . shaving . . .'"

The detective relaxed his tense grip.

"'Master. Millions. Shaving.' That doesn't mean anything to me. I guess the valet's secret died with him."

But the detective spoke too soon.

As far as the police force went, the dead man's secret might have died when he did. And the three words muttered by the dying lips might never be made clear to them.

But the night was alive with an intelligence far beyond theirs; an intelligence which was aware of things reaching back beyond this death of a servant, and which was already moving ahead of the death toward the apprehension of the cause.

Across the street from the two men who bent over a blackened corpse was an unusually large tree. In the branches of the tree a shapeless shadow clung.

The black figure slowly and silently descended while the plain-clothes man and the patrolman waited for the coroner and the ambulance. Under his arm was what appeared to be a small square box.

The figure got to the sidewalk, faced the men unseen for a moment, then moved silently off into the night.

FROM a square black box in a pitch-dark room came a beam of light, spreading from a half-inch opening to cover a six-foot-square silver screen. On the screen showed a high white wall—the wall of the Weldman estate.

In the blank white wall could be seen a dim oblong which was a small gate. The gate opened suddenly and a man leaped forth. Even in miniature, on the screen, his face could be read: an expression of stark terror was on it, twisting the partly opened mouth and glinting from the wide eyes.

Faithfully the movements of Weldman's valet were reproduced on the screen. Slight, bald, middle-aged, he ran through the night along the white wall. Then the picture showed him stopping and beginning his clumsy, inexplicable dance, and beating insanely at his own neck and chest.

But the picture revealed something more—something which made the halt and the self-punishment only too logical!

Just before the man stopped, something moved at the top of the high wall ahead of him. The something was a

hand. The hand curved out over the wall with fingers contracted as if to pluck something. But the hand did not gather anything in. Instead, it released an object—a tiny object which did not show in the rather dim moving-picture until it had hit the unfortunate valet. Then it showed on the whiteness of the valet's throat.

It was a tiny blur, too small to be described by the camera lens. But it moved.

In the picture it showed for just an instant on the running man's throat, and then disappeared under his collar. It was just after that that the man stopped and began beating himself.

"An insect," a deep, brooding voice split the blackness of the room. "A poison insect! Carried into the Weldman home, no doubt, for the death of the valet there. But the man had left the house on his way to the police station. He nearly escaped. . . ."

The picture went on, showing the valet's sudden immobility, showing him fall and lie like a log in the mud.

Then—it showed something else, at the top of the wall where the hand had appeared.

The hand was withdrawn now, and a face looked over. It was turned toward the dying man and it was a face to haunt the soul in nightmares.

There were no features to it. Only a blank expanse showed from forehead to chin, with black holes for eyes. A face masked as though for a masquerade; but there was in the masquerade no suggestion of humor.

Over the masked, terrible face was a low-brimmed black hat, and the top of the shoulders showing over the wall also showed black; some sort of cloak.

Evil emanated from the masked face as, like the covered face of a ghoul, it bent over the top of the wall toward

where the valet lay dying. Calmly, terribly, it watched the man twitch and lie still. Then, leisurely, indifferently, it disappeared.

"Doctor Satan——" a girl's half-stifed cry sounded in the darkened room.

There was no reply to the exclamation. The picture continued, revealing the movement of the man's numbing lips.

A hand slowed the projector. The picture, running at a slower tempo, showed the formed words on the man's lips: ". . . master . . . millions . . . shaving. . . ."

Then the lips stopped moving and the figure of the patrolman edged into the film. The projector stopped. There was a click, and light flooded the room.

## 2. *Beneath the Metropolis*

IT WAS a huge room, a library, with books running from floor to ceiling of all four walls, crowding windows and the one door of the chamber. The books were all volumes of learning—a library such as few universities have, and containing some yellowed tomes dealing with the occult which no universities would have permitted on their shelves even had they the wealth with which to purchase them.

In the center of the library was a great ebony desk. Standing beside this was a girl, lovely, tall, lithe, with dark blue eyes and hair more red than brown. The sudden light revealed in her dark eyes, as they rested on a man next to her, a look of perplexity, vague horror, and something soft and glowing and shy, which faded the instant the man's gaze answered hers.

The man was one who had brought a glow to many a woman's eyes. For this was Ascott Keane, interesting to the mercenary for his large fortune, and to the unmercenary for his looks. His face, under coal-black hair, with steely gray eyes

shaded by black eyebrows, had been reproduced in many a rotogravure section. To readers of those society sections he was a wealthy young man who idled when he was not playing games, a fellow without a serious thought in his head. But the girl beside him, Beatrice Dale, his more-than-secretary, knew better.

She knew that Ascott Keane's playboy character was a cloak under which was a grim seriousness of purpose. She knew that he was one of the world's most learned men in all the sciences—and in those deep arts known, for want of a better name, as Black Magic. She knew that he had devoted his life to the running-down of such super-criminals as could laugh at the police and rise to the rather lofty altitude of his own attention.

And she knew that the masked, terrible face that had peered over the top of Weldman's wall for an instant belonged to a criminal who was perhaps more than worthy of his attention. A man known only as Doctor Satan, from the Luciferian costume he chose to wear when engaged in his fiend's work. A man of great wealth, who had turned to crime to stir his jaded pulses. A man whose name and identity were unknown, but whose erudition, particularly in forbidden fields of learning, matched Keane's own.

That was the veiled personality which occupied Keane day and night now, to his own great danger. That was the devil who had killed the valet with a poison insect—and who had done other things in the last few weeks at which Keane, till now, had been able only to guess.

The telephone on the ebony desk buzzed softly. Keane picked it up.

A harsh voice sounded, speaking in a flat monotone.

"Ascott Keane, you are meddling again!"

Beatrice Dale heard the voice as well

as Keane. Her soft scream rang out: "Doctor Satan!"

Keane's eyes glittered. He dropped the instrument as if it had turned into a serpent in his fingers.

"I've told you death would strike if you interfered with my plans again," the harsh voice continued, sounding from the floor where the phone lay. "And I always keep my promises——"

The words ended, swiftly and dramatically. With their ending, the telephone on the floor jumped like a live thing, while from transmitter to receiver, in a thick blue arc, crackled a stream of electricity that would have killed a dozen men.

The crackling arc streamed just as far lightning flickered in the skies south of New York, and died as the lightning died.

Keane stared at Beatrice, who had gone white as death.

"He can harness the lightning!" he breathed. "That I cannot do myself! If I can't stop him soon, God knows what will happen to this city—to the whole country——"

He stared at the instrument. The metal was half melted. The hard rubber had been utterly consumed. Then he shrugged and turned toward the screen again, where, dimmed now by the lights in the room but still showing, was the picture of the dying valet, showing motionless with the stoppage of the projector.

"But I *will* stop him!" Keane's voice came bleakly. "Doctor Satan, hear that, wherever you are now."

He stepped across the melted telephone with a gesture that brushed into a past of forgotten dangers the fate he had just narrowly escaped, and stared at the lips of the pictured man.

"Shaving," he repeated, while Beatrice gazed at him with the fear in her dark

blue eyes almost buried by that soft glow which she never, never allowed him to see. "Shaving. I think in that word lies the key to the problem we've been working on for the last few weeks. The problem ending with the death of Weldman's valet."

**S**WIFTLY Keane reviewed the problem, one which he alone had become aware of; a string of events which singly had been noted by several people but which in their entirety had been remarked on by no one.

One by one over the past two weeks four wealthy men in New York had done odd things. Each had disappeared from his office without warning, in three cases breaking important business appointments. Each had then been seen neither at home nor in any accustomed haunt for many hours. Following that, on his return, each had seemed to avoid both his home and his office, appearing only now and then at either place and letting his business take care of itself.

Each, in those two weeks, had personally drawn large sums in cash from the United Continental Bank of New York—always that bank, never any of the others in which they kept money. Each of the four was living alone in his great home with only the servants, his family happening to be away at the time. And each, in the few times he was in home or office, did odd things which seemed to indicate a suddenly faulty memory.

These things Ascott Keane, alone in the city, had noted and pieced together into a pattern he felt sure had sinister meaning. More, it was a pattern behind which he thought he could sense the figure of Doctor Satan in his red robe, with red rubber gloves hiding his hands, and red mask and cap hiding face and hair.

John Weldman, copper magnate, had

been the last to go through the queer antics. So to the wall outside Weldman's estate Ascott Keane had taken his special moving-picture camera, which recorded movement in dark night by means of an infra-red ray attachment he had invented.

And the camera had recorded the death of Weldman's valet—which Keane had been too far away to prevent—and the movement of his dying lips: ". . . master . . . millions . . . shaving. . . ."

Beatrice peered into Keane's steely gray eyes.

"What does it mean?" she whispered. "Do you know yet, Ascott?"

"I think I do," said Keane slowly. "I—think—I—do!"

**T**HE flickering lightning to the south of New York lit with its rays a small graveyard in the heart of the downtown section of the city. It was a curious little cemetery, less than a hundred yards square. Long unused, it was dotted with crumbling tombstones over which long grass grew.

On two sides of it a great factory, built in an L-shape, made a pitch-dark, five-story wall. On the third side an old apartment reared its height. On the fourth side, the street side, a high, rusty iron fence closed it off.

A curious, forgotten place of death in the heart of New York, encroached on by the factory and the apartment building. But more curious yet was a figure which furtively approached the rusted gate in the fence and paused a moment to make sure no person was near.

The figure was tall and gaunt. A low-brimmed black hat hid its head and most of its face. The rest of the face showed masked—a blank expanse covered by red fabric. A long black cloak covered the figure from neck to ankles, making it blend into the darkness.

The gate creaked open and the figure glided in among the moldering tombstones.

Beside one which lay prone in the rank grass, the figure stopped. Then it stepped on the six-foot slab—and the slab sank under it. A yawning hole appeared where the slab had been; a dark pit into which the figure disappeared.

After an instant the slab rose and settled into place, apparently as it was before, looking as though it had lain there solid and undisturbed for a dozen years.

Under it the black-cloaked figure went down a passage that slanted yet lower into the earth. The passage was lined with broken rock, and through the cracks occasional bits of rotted wood projected. They were remnants of ancient coffins, and with them now and then could be seen bleached white fragments. Bones.

The figure opened a door at the end of the passage and stepped into a chamber as bizarre as it was secret.

It was a cavernous room twenty feet square, lined with the broken rock as was the passage. It was very dim, with a small red lamp in the corner near the door as its only illumination. Along the far wall were cages, small, about the size of large dog-houses. In these cages four white figures squatted like animals. In the dim light their species could not be determined. They were simply whitish, distorted-looking beasts which seemed too large for their small cages.

Leaning against the wall near the light were four figures that looked at first like sleeping men. But a glance told that they could not be that. Fully clad in expensive clothes, they leaned there like sticks, without flexibility or movement, more like dolls than men, perfectly fashioned in the image of Man but seeming to want motive power and direction.

In the center of the room, drawing

themselves to attention as the black-cloaked figure entered the weird chamber, were two creatures that would bring a chill to the spine of any man.

One was an alert, agile little man with pale eyes shining cruelly through a mat of hair over his face. And this one, ape-like in movement and thought, was Girse, Doctor Satan's faithful servant. The other was a giant with no legs, who supported his hugely muscled torso on his hands, swinging it along on his knuckles as he moved. This was Bostiff, the second of Doctor Satan's henchmen.

The figure that had entered the room stood straight. Its shoulders moved, and the black cloak dropped. With a sweep of a hand, the black hat was removed, and the figure became a thing to haunt for ever the sleep of any who might chance to see it.

A red robe sheathed body and limbs. Red rubber gloves were over its hands. The face was masked in red, and the head was covered with a red skull-cap so that even its hair did not show. From the skull-cap, in mocking imitation of Satan's horns, two small red knobs projected. Lucifer! Someone going robed as Satan to a costume ball! But instinct whispered that this was no mere costume, that the man under the sinister make-up was as malevolent as his garb was mocking.

"Master!" breathed Girse. "Doctor Satan!"

Bostiff scraped his calloused knuckles along the floor uneasily and stared at Doctor Satan out of stupid, dull eyes.

**D**OCTOR SATAN glanced at the cages in which were dimly to be seen the curious, whitish animals. In his eyes, peering out of the eyeholes in the red mask, was a glint of velvet cruelty.

"Have they been fed?" he asked, his voice a harsh monotone.



"They have been fed," replied Girse.

"They have given no trouble?"

"None, Master," said Bostiff, grinning significantly.

A feeble groan sounded from one of the cages.

"One is ill?" snapped Doctor Satan.

"One is near death," retorted Bostiff.

"The cold down here——"

"No matter. All have their duplicates, so that any may die without hurting my plans. Any save the last to come here. And I intend to remedy that now——"

The arrogant, harsh voice of Doctor Satan was drowned by a shriek from the cage in which the groan had sounded a moment before. The strange white animal in it suddenly reared up, or tried to, beating its head against the top of the cage. It rattled the bars for an instant, and then fell.

There was deathly silence in the chamber under the graveyard. Then Doctor Satan strode to the cage.

"Dead," he said, indifferently.

At the word, the other three animals in the adjoining cages set up a wailing and howling, chattering noises that sounded oddly like words.

"Silence!" commanded Doctor Satan. The chattering ceased. "Bostiff."

The legless giant hitched his torso toward the cage.

"Take this one into the next chamber." Doctor Satan's red-gloved hand went under his robe. It came out with an odd thing like a crystal tube an inch in diameter and nearly a foot long. "Place this against the body, with the free end slanting toward the south where the lightning still plays."

Bostiff visibly paled.

"But that draws the lightning in here, Master. The walls and roof will collapse——"

"Do as I bid you!" grated Doctor Sa-

tan. "The walls and roof are safe. But the fires of heaven will consume that carcass, and so we are rid of it."

Bostiff grunted and nodded his great head. He opened the cage in which the white beast had fallen, and dragged it out. But now as the carcass was drawn nearer the light, it could be seen that it was not a beast at all. It was a man, elderly, naked, hideously scarred and emaciated. And so the other three left alive in their cages were men, penned up like animals in spaces too small to allow them to lie or stand at full length, pitiful captives held here for Doctor Satan's purpose!

Dumbly, cowering behind their bars, they watched the red-robed, fiendish figure.

Doctor Satan went to a chest as Bostiff dragged the dead man through a door leading to another underground room like the first. He took from the chest a small object looking prosaic in this dimly lit chamber of horrors beneath a small, forgotten cemetery. It was a checkbook, on the United Continental Bank of New York City.

Doctor Satan walked with the checkbook to the end cage. He handed it, and a pen, to the shadowy white figure within.

"Make out five checks," he commanded. "Three for a hundred and fifty thousand dollars apiece, two for a hundred thousand."

The cowering figure in the cage straightened a little, and refused to take book and pen through the bars.

"Bostiff," called Doctor Satan. His voice was soft, but there was in it an essence of terror that made Girse, the little ape-man, shiver.

The legless giant came from the next chamber, leaving the door open. The doorway was suddenly flooded with light

that beat at the eyeballs like whips. Through the portal could be seen the dead man who had been taken out of the cage. But when the flash was over, only charred remnants of the corpse were left. That was all. The crystalline rod in their midst waited to bring the next lightning flicker from the south to consume even the remnants.

"Yes, Master?" said Bostiff, dragging his great body forward.

"This man does not want to do as he is ordered. You will 'persuade' him——"

"I'll write them!" screamed the man in the cage suddenly. "My God, don't let that legless fiend get me—I'll write them!"

Doctor Satan's red mask moved slightly, as though beneath it his lips shaped themselves to a smile. He handed pen and book through the bars to the miserable, naked creature in the cage.

### 3. *The Red Trail*

**I**N THE morning, which was flooded with calm sunlight after the night's storm, Ascott Keane paused a moment before the impressive stone façade of the United Continental Bank.

The bank building looked like a fortress, with thick walls and bronze doors that could have withstood an army. It spoke of comfortable, prosaic wealth, and the power to hold it indefinitely from marauders. It spoke of a world of skyscrapers and giant industrial plants and motor cars.

It seemed to give the lie to the possibility of the existence anywhere of a person capable of looting it—a person like Doctor Satan who could laugh ironically at bronze doors and stone walls.

Keane passed through the guarded entrance of the bank, and went to the rear of the great room within, past marble and glass counters, cages in which shelves of

money changed hands, and desks at which transactions involving millions were being accomplished.

At the rear was a private elevator which went up to a big office on the fourth floor of the building. The office was marked, President.

Keane's name gave him instant entree to the president of the bank. For Keane was known to this man not only as a wealthy citizen whose business would be useful, but also in his more secret role of marvelously capable criminal investigator.

"Keane!" said Mercer, the president. "It's good to see you. What brings you here?" He glanced at the electric clock on his desk. "Only nine-thirty in the morning! That's practically dawn for you. At least that's what you like to let people think."

Keane did not smile in return. He studied the man.

Mercer was a small man, lean and leathery, with prim nose-glasses like a school teacher. One might be tempted to dismiss him as prim and fussy—till the jaw was noted. Mercer had a jaw like a steel trap, and blue eyes that were shrewd, capable, and honest-looking.

"I'm here to ask about a few of your customers," he said.

"I think I know which ones," said Mercer, the smile fading from his leathery face. "Sit down and tell me about it."

Keane took a chair at the end of Mercer's desk. It was an enormous desk. On it there was no welter of papers; it was bare save for a large onyx electric clock which was at the back and end of the desk between Mercer and whoever sat in the visitor's chair.

"The men I wanted to talk to you about," Keane said, "are Edward Dombey, Harold Kragness, Shepherd Case and lastly, John Weldman, all rich, and all depositors here."

Mercer leaned back in his chair, putting the tips of his fingers together and saying nothing, letting Keane talk before he told what he himself knew.

"I've learned," Keane went on, "that all four of these men have been making heavy withdrawals of cash here lately. For some reason each of them has found it necessary to have hundreds of thousands of dollars in bills with him. Yet here's an odd thing.

"Each of the four has deposits in other large New York banks. Between the four of them, indeed, they have large sums in no less than six of the biggest banks in the city. Yet they always have come here to draw their cash."

Mercer stirred.

"I didn't know that," he said thoughtfully.

"Well, it's true. So I came here to see if I could find out why. And I think I have." Keane glanced at the onyx electric clock. "That is, I believe I have—if the checks happened to be made out in this office."

Mercer nodded. "They were. All of them."

"All right, tell me about them," said Keane, leaning back to listen in his turn.

Mercer cleared his throat.

"Those are the four men, and that's the business, I expected you to ask about when the girl announced your name," he said. "Because there's something damned queer about it, although I haven't been able to puzzle out what it is.

"It started two weeks ago. Harold Kragness came up here. He talked pleasantly enough with me for a moment or two and then said he wanted to cash a rather large check. A hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. He thought I'd better put my initials on it so the teller would pay the money without question.

"That was queer—both his desire to get the sum in cash, and his idea that I should countersign his check. I wouldn't have had to do that. He could get anything up to half a million downstairs without special arrangement. But I scribbled my initials on the check and——"

"Just a minute," said Keane. "Did he bring the check here already made out?"

Mercer shook his head.

"He wrote it out here on my desk, before my eyes. He waved it a minute or two to dry the ink, disregarding a blotter I passed him, and then handed it to me."

"It was his signature, all right?"

"Oh, yes! No doubting it!"

"Go on."

"Kragness went out with the check and cashed it downstairs. I thought about it a lot. Why should he want all that in cash? The obvious idea was that he might be blackmailed or something. But he didn't look like a man under a strain. He was cheerful, laughing. And I certainly couldn't question the genuineness of a check made out here in front of me.

**I** THOUGHT no more about it, then—till two days later. Then Dombey came in and went through the same rigmarole, only with a check for two hundred thousand dollars. After that the flow started.

"Kragness came in again, and Dombey, and then Case, and finally Weldman. All well known to me. The four of them cashed check after check, all for big sums. Never did any of the four seem worried or terrified, as they would have been if they were buying their way clear from some sort of danger. Yet—all those checks!

"I was certain something was wrong. But I couldn't put my finger on it. In each case the check was written here in the office by the man himself. Each man

denied that anything was wrong, when I exceeded my rights and asked them bluntly.

"I went so far as to put a private detective on the trail of one of them, Dombey—though for heaven's sake don't ever let anybody know that. The detective reported that Dombey met no suspicious characters. He went home with his money, where he seemed cheerful and unalarmed. His wife and daughter are away in Europe, you know——"

"I know," said Keane grimly. He glanced at the clock again. "Each man made out each check here, before your eyes, so that you could testify that nothing could possibly be wrong——"

"Testify?" said Mercer quickly.

"Let it go," said Keane. "We'll put it this way: each check is beyond suspicion, and you, the president of the bank, could swear to it. Which is an important part of the game."

"Game? Come, Keane! Tell me what's wrong?"

"It's too soon, Mercer. Tell me one more thing. You say each of these four men is known to you personally. You couldn't possibly be fooled by somebody made up to represent them?"

"Not possibly!" said Mercer. "Besides, there were the checks, made out in their handwriting while I watched."

"The four seemed absolutely normal to you?" Keane persisted.

Mercer hesitated for a full minute before he answered that. Then his voice was a little strained, a little chilled.

"Normal? That's a hard word to define. Each of them was undoubtedly the man he said he was. The four who came in here, and between them have drawn several millions in the last two weeks, were certainly Dombey, Kragness, Case and Weldman. And each seemed cheerful and without worries. And yet——"

"Well?" prompted Keane as the man stopped.

"Well, in spite of all that they didn't seem what I would call 'normal'. It's hard to describe it. And I can't, as applied to them. I can only tell my own reactions."

He moistened his lips, and stared past Keane at the blank office wall.

"There was something the matter with those men, Keane! Something devilish! All the time I talked to each of them, I could feel it. A sort of chill along my spine—a feel of horror." He tried to laugh. "I used to feel that way when I was a boy and passed near a cemetery at night. That's all I can tell you, Keane. I'm afraid it isn't much."

"It's a lot," contradicted Keane. He got up, eyes icy with growing knowledge. "A lot! Thanks, Mercer."

He left the bank. Four men who seemed without worries—but who cashed large checks as though being bled by some criminal ring! Four who seemed normal at first glance—but who made the bank president feel as he had felt when near a graveyard as a boy!

Keane went to the presidents' offices of the five other big banks in which the four men had large deposits, but from which none had drawn money in the past two weeks. He found what he had thought he would find.

On the desks of none of the five executives was there anything corresponding to the onyx electric clock on that of Mercer. Their desks were bare of all but papers.

**I**N HIS big library, to which none gained admittance save after searching preliminaries, the frosted glass television screen on his ebony desk glowed softly. The face of Beatrice Dale was reflected.

He pressed a button and the door

swung open. Beatrice came in. He stared inquiringly at her. She was dressed in street clothes and had evidently just come in.

"I've just come from Mr. Weldman's home," she said. "I talked to a maid there. The servants are all terrified, of course, at the death of the valet."

Keane nodded impatiently. "They would be, naturally. But Weldman! How about him? How does he act?"

Beatrice caught her red lip between her teeth.

"He acts cheerful, absolutely normal. In fact, he seems almost too cheerful, after the murder of his man. Certainly he seems in no danger, nor does he act like a man who is being blackmailed."

"Did you see him?"

"Yes, I saw him for a moment from the servants' wing. I got just a glimpse. But, Ascott"—her voice sank—"I had the most uncanny sensation when I saw him! There's something about that man—something—" She stopped with a shudder.

"Go on," said Keane gently.

"It's impossible to put into words. He frightens me. I don't know why. And it isn't exactly fright—it's horror."

"Do the servants feel the same way about him?"

The girl touched her burnished, red-brown hair distractedly.

"Yes. They're a little afraid of him without knowing why. Several are leaving, because of the valet's death, they say. But I'm sure that vague feeling of horror is part of their going."

Keane's large, firm mouth tightened. His strong fingers clenched a little. But his voice was even as he said:

"The rest of the report, please. You saw the barbers I listed, and talked to the other valets?"

"Yes. I talked to the barbers in the

four buildings where Dombey, Case, Kragness and Weldman have their suites of offices. And I talked to the valets of Kragness, Case and Dombey. None of them has shaved any of the four in the past two weeks."

Her face colored a little.

"It seemed a silly question to ask them, Ascott. But I know you must have had a good reason for telling me to inquire about it."

"I did," said Keane. "The best. The answer to that question clears up in my mind almost the last of the mystery of Doctor Satan's latest crime methods—precisely how he is draining the fortunes of these rich men."

Beatrice shook her head, bewildered. "Perhaps it's clear to you. I certainly can't understand it! And I can't understand what it is that takes place in Doctor Satan's mind! He is master of a hundred secrets of nature unknown to all others, save perhaps you. He could get all the money he wanted, if he chose, without these dreadful crime plots."

Keane looked at her with his gray eyes reflecting a knowledge of the motives of men that was far beyond the knowledge other mortals could glean from human contacts.

"You don't look at it from the right angle, Beatrice. Money? It isn't money alone Doctor Satan wants. He has more than enough of that without plotting for it. It's the game itself he is after. The grisly, stark game of plundering his fellow men of their fortunes and souls and lives—solely for the thrill of conquering them. Of course he must get the money too. One of the dark rules of his game is that his crimes must pay. But the fact that he is not purely a money-grabbing criminal is what makes him so infinitely dangerous. That, and his learning."

His voice lowered, and into it crept the

resolution that had tempered the steel of his nature since first he had heard of the ruthless, cold-blooded individual who chose to dress in the devil's masquerade and call himself all too appropriately, Doctor Satan.

"But I'm going to stop him, Beatrice! It may cost me my life, but the cost will come *after* the purchase—which is the destruction of Doctor Satan!"

He smiled, and his voice returned to normal.

"However, histrionics won't catch him, will they? It takes work and persistence to do that. Such work as the sifting of news items, for example. And I think I have one here that is to prove very, very important."

He took from a drawer a half-page cut from the society section. It pictured three people, a woman with a granite chin and gray hair like cast iron in a wave over her forehead; a girl who was a replica of her; and a foppishly handsome young man with a harassed look.

"Mrs. Corey Magnus, wife of the financier, is sailing at midnight tonight for England with her daughter, Princess Rimsky, and her son-in-law, the prince, last of the Borsakoffs. They will be received at court——"

Keane stared long at the pictures and the text.

"Another wealthy man living without his family for a time. Corey Magnus. And all the others were left alone by their families before beginning their cash withdrawals. . . ."

He put the clipping carefully away. And in his eyes was pity as well as stony resolve. For he knew that another man had been marked by Doctor Satan. Another victim for the strange and as yet unconquerable crime-routine contrived by the red-masked, red-robed demon who juggled with human beings as though

they were pawns—to be thrown away when the game was over.

#### 4. *The Fifth Victim*

IN THE home of Corey Magnus at nine next evening, Magnus's private secretary opened the library door and almost tiptoed in. He walked softly to the fireplace, in front of which was standing a tall, heavy-set, imposing-looking man with gray hair and slate-gray eyes who stared with a frown at the leaping flames.

The secretary's bearing expressed the deference due the man who was Chairman of the Board of the American Zinc Corporation, president of the New York & Northwestern Railway, president of the New York Consolidated Trust, and many other huge financial and industrial groups.

"Mr. Bowles, of the Gull Oil Corporation, is here to see you, Mr. Magnus," he said.

Magnus's slate-colored eyes turned on him.

"Ask Bowles to wait for a moment. I don't feel very well . . . a touch of dizziness. . . . But don't tell him that!"

The secretary nodded and went out, closing the doors of the library behind him. He was looking worried and perplexed. Asking a man like Bowles to wait! Even Corey Magnus might be sorry he had done that.

Behind him, his employer stared dully at the closed door, and then back at the flames in the fireplace. His eyes contracted as though he were in pain. He swayed a little, and caught at the mantel-piece for support.

The open French doors leading to his garden caught his gaze. He walked toward them, breathing deeply of the chill fall air. Small beads of perspiration studded his forehead, and his heavy face was pale.

He walked out of the doors.

His head was bent forward on his thick neck, and he looked intent, almost rapt, as though something called him from out there and he must find out what it was.

It was ten minutes later when his secretary came back into the library again, not daring to keep Bowles waiting longer. He saw that the room was empty, and went to the open French doors.

The garden was empty too. He rushed back to give an alarm—and saw something he had missed before. A note on the library table.

"Send Bowles away," the note read. "Tell him I'm ill and will see him in the morning at his office. You may go home, yourself. C. M."

The secretary bit his lip. No word in the note as to where his employer had gone so abruptly! No explanations of any sort!

But the brusque letter was indubitably in Magnus's handwriting. There was nothing for him to do but obey its commands.

**U**NDER the little cemetery, in the rock-lined chamber, Girse and Bostiff, servants of Doctor Satan, were busy.

More lamps had been lit. Now the room was brightly illuminated with garish red light. In the brighter illumination the cages along the end wall showed plainly: the one empty cage, the occupant of which had been consumed by the trapped lightning in the next chamber, and the three occupied cages.

The figures in these cages, seen in detail under the better light, would have astounded the city in the heart of which this chamber was buried. Naked, disheveled, gaunt with hunger and mottled with cold, they were Edward Dombey, John Weldman and Shepherd Case, men among the two per cent who controlled four-fifths of the wealth of the country.

The empty cage had belonged to Harold Kragness.

Girse, with ape-like movements, was clearing out the empty cage. Bostiff, with a look of stupid awe and fear on his bovine face, was stirring something in a large metal bowl.

It was curious stuff he stirred, faintly phosphorescent, like a colorless, opaque jelly. It clung to the pestle and, once, splashed sluggishly high enough to touch Bostiff's hand. When this happened, he exclaimed aloud and shook the stuff off his flesh, to land in the bowl and mingle with the rest.

Girse sneered at the exclamation.

"What are you afraid of, you ox?"

"This—this stuff in the bowl," Bostiff rumbled. "It's kind of alive!"

"Sure it's alive," chuckled Girse, keeping his distance from the bowl. "It's this here proto—protoplasm, Doctor Satan said. The junk you're made of, and me, and everybody else."

"I don't like it," said Bostiff, leaving off his stirring.

"I do! Anything that brings in the cash that stuff brings, I like a lot. God, Doctor Satan's smart!"

"Smart?" Even to Bostiff's limited intelligence the word seemed feeble. But he could supply no other. "Smart enough to know everything we think or say. And to kill us if we don't think the right thing."

Girse nodded, his ape-like grin fading. He had seen his red-robed master read treachery in one man's thoughts, and kill him in a blue flame the only materials for which were mysterious powdered chemicals in a little heap.

The ape-like man started to say something, then stopped. The red lamp near the door was winking on and off, on and off. He opened the door and went down the passage revealed.

"Bostiff!" The voice came from a distance.

The legless giant hitched his way out of the chamber and down the tunnel to join Girse. Beside Girse, at the foot of the shaft down which the broad tombstone slid as an elevator, was a motionless figure. A heavy-set, important-looking man who was breathing stertorously but was obviously unconscious.

"Corey Magnus!" Bostiff rumbled. "I've seen him many a time in his private car when I worked on the New York & Northwestern Railroad! That's where I lost my legs. So he's the next! God, it'll be a pleasure to handle *him!*"

Even Girse paled a little at the dull ferocity in Bostiff's eyes.

The two of them dragged Magnus to the chamber and shut the door. There, working with the method of those who have performed the work before and know in advance every move, they began a strange series of tasks.

Girse hopped agilely to a box beside the metal mixing-bowl in which Bostiff had stirred the protoplasm, afraid of it, but having no conception of the marvel of it. From the box Girse took moistened, pulped papier-maché.

He pressed a thin blob of it over Magnus's unconscious face. It slowly hardened there. As it did so, Bostiff stripped the man, leaving his slightly paunchy body bare and white in the cold underground chamber.

Bostiff moved with the clothes to the row of figures leaning against the wall near the door like life-sized dolls. And now it could be seen that there were five figures leaning there instead of four.

One of the figures was naked; and its nudity revealed a fact about itself and the clad four beside it that was the most startling thing about the underground room.

These were not mechanical things—dolls the size of men and dressed in men's clothes. These were corpses; bodies; dead men, perfectly preserved but nevertheless as dead as last year's leaves!

Bostiff, handling the corpse as though it were a thing of wood, clothed it in the garments of Corey Magnus. And Girse, after feeling the papier-maché sheet over the unconscious man's face to make sure it had hardened properly, carefully lifted it off.

He held in his hands a perfect mask of the millionaire.

THE red light next to the door winked again. But it was a different signal this time. Instead of winking on and off at random, it blinked twice, hesitated, then blinked three times.

"Doctor Satan!" said Girse. "Is everything ready for him?"

"Everything is ready," said Bostiff, leaning the freshly clad corpse against the wall.

The door opened, slowly, as though no hand had touched it. A step sounded in the passage. Into the room came Doctor Satan, red-robed and gloved, with the crimson light reflecting dully from his red mask and the skull-cap with the mocking, Luciferian horns on it.

An instant Doctor Satan stood within the doorway, black eyes glaring at the two who served him so well. Then he swung the door shut behind him with an impatience of movement that made Bostiff and Girse glance apprehensively at each other.

Doctor Satan was in a rage. The icy brain under the cap and horns was glacially angry at something. They knew the signs.

"Has all gone well, Master?" said Girse, timidly.

The coal-black eyes behind the mask



narrowed as if their owner would ignore the question of an underling. Then the mask moved with words.

"You have the man, Magnus, whom I directed here in the little death of hypnotism. Doesn't that mean that all has gone well? And yet——"

Doctor Satan strode to the unconscious, stripped financier.

"All has not gone well," he grated at last. "Keane escaped the lightning. And he was not in his home awhile ago when I went there to deal personally the death he has avoided so far. Keane. . . . A man in my own position—wealthy, learned, making an avocation of crime prevention as I have made a pastime of crime."

The grating, arrogant voice softened with thought, almost with doubt.

"The ancient Greek theory had it that every force that reared in the world soon found an equal, opposing force rearing against it as an antidote. Can that be true? Has some high Providence observed my rise, and in the observing prepared for me an antagonist like Ascott Keane? But, no! There is no God, no higher Providence. Keane is an accident—an opponent more dangerous than most, but still one to be destroyed by me almost at will!"

The red-clad figure strode to the cages. Doctor Satan stood with folded arms, staring at the three men who cowered within them at his near approach.

"And you are three of the world's great," Doctor Satan's harsh, glacial tone lashed them. "Observe! Three who thought themselves all-powerful! Cringing here like animals in a cage! But I am more powerful than any other, though the world does not yet know that."

The three men cowered lower. Doctor Satan turned abruptly.

"The mask is prepared? The body

matching Magnus's body in height and weight and build is prepared? But yes—I see it is so clad, and the garments fit it well. Bring me the mask, and the bowl."

He bent over Corey Magnus. Bostiff and Girse went to the corner and came back with the bowl of protoplasm, and the papier-maché mask.

Working with deft, gloved fingers, Doctor Satan began a process of scientific sculpture the methods and materials of which transcended anything yet known in science, art, or plastic surgery.

### 5. *Chained Lightning*

AT A NOD from Doctor Satan, Bostiff hitched his great body over to the newly clad corpse, dragged it down, and carried it to him with one huge hand under the dead man's belt.

He laid it beside the unconscious financier. Doctor Satan carefully placed the mask over the dead face, and thrust a small tube into the bowl of living substance. The other end of the tube was placed between the mask and the dead face.

No process of siphoning was begun as far as Girse or Bostiff could see. Yet the level of the protoplasm lowered steadily in the bowl as the jelly-like stuff flowed sluggishly up the tube and under the mask.

After a while the level ceased to sink in the bowl, and Doctor Satan stood up.

"It is done. Tomorrow another industrial giant shall go to the bank and draw out the first of many blocks of cash."

He removed the mask, and even Girse and Bostiff, who had seen such things before, gasped aloud.

The face of the dead man was the face of Corey Magnus!

Doctor Satan's coal-black eyes fixed themselves on the altered face of the

corpse. His gaze was electric, compelling, mystic.

"Magnus," he said, "for from now on you are Magnus—rise!"

The man, lying there nameless in oblivion, was dead. That was beyond questioning. His flesh was cold and stiff. For many hours the heart had not beat.

But—the body rose slowly, stiffly, at Doctor Satan's word!

Doctor Satan's eyes impaled the dead eyes of the moving, standing corpse.

"Smile," he said.

The dead lips, altered with the protoplasm, moved in a smile. It was the wolfish grin of Corey Magnus, pictured many a time in cartoons.

"Speak. What is your name?"

"My name," spoke the corpse, "is Corey Magnus."

"I shall tell you silently what you are to do tomorrow," said Doctor Satan. "Then you shall repeat my instructions."

For several minutes, the glittering, coal-black eyes probed the dead eyeballs of the animated body. Then the stiff lips moved.

"I shall go to the United Continental Bank tomorrow. With me I shall have a check written out by the man who lies behind you. I shall take this check to the president's office——"

But now a new voice spoke in that underground room, a voice not heard before. One that made Bostiff grunt in amazement, as though he had been struck. One that stiffened Doctor Satan's red-draped body as if an electric shock had coursed through it.

The voice came from behind Doctor Satan. And its message was as electrifying as its presence in that chamber.

"Let *me* tell you what the corpse was to have done for you tomorrow."

For the space of a heart-beat the silence that chained the room was more ter-

rible than shrieking chaos. Then Satan whirled and stared at the man who had been lying behind him.

The man was sitting up now; and though body and features were those of Corey Magnus, there was something about the eyes . . . something. . . .

"Keane!" Doctor Satan whispered. "*Ascott Keane! Here!*"

The black eyes glared at the head of the man, so different from the lean, hawk face of Keane. Glared amazement—and rage.

"You have altered your face and body with protoplasm! You blundered onto my method of using and creating it. . . ."

Keane's voice came again, amazingly, from Magnus's throat.

"That's only one of the many things I've discovered, Doctor Satan. I know all you've done and planned to do."

"Tomorrow that revived corpse would take a check, made out in advance by Corey Magnus, to the office of the president of the United Continental Bank. Why to that one bank? Because only on that one presidential desk is there an object—such as an electric clock—behind which your puppet could write with a dry pen over the words and figures already made out by Magnus, and thus seem to write the check fresh 'under the very eyes' of the president."

The coal-black eyes glaring at him from the red mask were like living jet, burning with hate. But, relentlessly, Keane went on, slowly getting to his feet as he spoke.

"A clever, if somewhat complicated, scheme, Doctor Satan. But like all complicated plans, it provided its own drawbacks as it went along.

"For one thing, your dead men roused an inexplicable feeling of horror and dread in the minds of observers. They seemed all right, and acted all right—

but something chilled those they came in contact with, and that fact was remembered.

"For another thing, there was the matter of their queer actions at home and in their offices. Clever as you are, you couldn't know all the details of their private and business lives, so your masquerading corpses made mistakes sometimes.

"Again, there was the matter of shaving. Hair does not grow on the dead, contrary to superstition. And your mask of living protoplasm, of synthetic flesh, covered the facial hair of the dead who did your bidding. So there was no shaving to be done—to the bewilderment of barbers and valets. It was this that started Weldman's valet to spying around, as a result of which he started for the police, and his death.

"Finally, you had to pick rich victims who were not living with their families at the moment: No matter how marvelous the disguise, immediate relatives of course could not have been fooled. It was that fact which informed me, when Corey Magnus's family went abroad, that he would probably be next on your list. So I persuaded him to go away secretly while I took his place. An easy way to find you, wasn't it, Doctor Satan?"

**W**ITH the fires of hell glittering in his jet-black eyes, Doctor Satan had heard Keane out. They flamed like fire opals as he finally spoke.

"An easy way to get here, Ascott Keane. Very easy! But you may find it more difficult to leave."

"I'll take my chance on that," said Keane.

Doctor Satan's red-clad body quivered. "Seize him!"

Girse and Bostiff clutched Keane's arms and held him in apparent helplessness.

"Bind him!"

Rope was wound around Keane's arms and body and pulled so taut that it cut deep into the synthetic flesh with which Keane had built out his hard, firm body to resemble Magnus's pudgier one.

Keane stared at Doctor Satan—and smiled.

Doctor Satan's hand brought from under his red tunic the deadly, crystalline tube.

"The lightning tube!" muttered Bostiff, mouth open stupidly. "But, Master, there is no storm tonight. The sky is clear——"

"Fool," said Doctor Satan, "there is always lightning, and storm, somewhere in the world. And distance makes no difference to *this*."

He thrust the crystalline tube between Keane's bound arm and his side, jet-black eyes flaming with triumph.

"When the next lightning bolt splits the sky, somewhere on earth," he said, almost softly, "you die, Keane. That may be in five seconds—it may be in ten minutes. But whenever it comes, death comes with it."

And still Keane smiled.

"You're so sure, Doctor Satan? Under this synthetic flesh on my body there might be something that would astonish you——"

The sentence was never finished.

In some far distant place, lightning flared.

And suddenly the underground chamber was ablaze with blue-white light that dazzled the eyes even through closed lids. It was an inferno of light, a soundless, rending explosion of it.

In a blinding sheet it played over the body of Ascott Keane. Played over it—and as suddenly shot away from it at a crackling right angle!

Girse screamed and Bostiff roared like

a lanced bull as a little of the tremendous current rayed into them. But Doctor Satan made no outcry.

The main stream of blue-white death was streaming from Keane's body—straight into the red-clad figure!

Doctor Satan's body convulsed at the touch. A smell of burning fabric filled the room, to mingle with the acrid odor of burned ozone.

And then Doctor Satan was down, with sheet after sheet of lightning bathing Keane in harmless radiance and streaming from him to plunge into the writhing red figure on the floor.

**K**EANE'S bonds were burned away by the force he had redirected. Some of the synthetic flesh over his abdomen was charred from him, revealing part of a crystalline plate, like armor over his body.

He dropped Doctor Satan's tube, which smashed on the floor, and leaped over the moaning figures of Girse and Bostiff toward the cages in which three men screamed pleas for help.

From walls and roof of the low room bits of rock and earth were falling, loosened by the lightning bolts. The very floor seemed to sway under his feet.

He opened the gates.

"Run!" he shouted. "Run!"

The three staggered to the door and into the passage, with Keane behind them. At his touch on a concealed projection, the tombstone from the cemetery above sank down to get them. . . .

With a soft roar the earth behind

them caved in, burying many feet deep the passage between them and the room in which they had left Doctor Satan, Girse and Bostiff, and the five dead men who had served Satan's turn.

The passage shuddered and quivered. Air from the cave-in screamed about their ears. The four clung to one another for support.

Then, in the racking silence succeeding the pandemonium, they stared at each other in the faint light of the stars coming down the black pit.

"The end of Doctor Satan," breathed John Weldman at last. "Thank God for that!"

But Ascott Keane said nothing. He was remembering that in the burned patches of Doctor Satan's red robe he had seen some crystalline stuff. And he knew that was armor such as he himself had devised against the lightning's bolt. Not as impervious as his own, perhaps—letting some of the current through to convulse the man's body—but still saving him from death.

The cave-in? That could not have harmed Doctor Satan. He must have constructed the chamber to resist the lightning shocks, because he drew them there himself. Only the passage between the room and the end of the tunnel could have collapsed.

So Keane said nothing to Weldman. But he knew the truth: neither lightning nor cave-in had killed Doctor Satan. He was alive—to continue his grim forays against all the laws of decency and humanity.

Another thrilling story about Doctor Satan,  
"Hollywood Horror," will appear  
next month