

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

A MAGAZINE of the

BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME XI

NUMBER 4



Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457, E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. English office: Charles Lavell, 13, Sergeant's 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 450 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.
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Contents for April, 1928

Cover Design	C. C. Senf
Illustrating a scene in "The Jewel of Seven Stones"	
The Eryie	436
A chat with the red-eyes	
The Haunted Castle	440
Verse	
The Jewel of Seven Stones	445
A tale of revivified mummies and the <i>ka</i> of an Egyptian priest—a startling adventure of the ghost-breaker, Jules de Grandin	
The Magic of Chac-Mool	467
A truly weird tale of the Yucatan jungles—hidden treasure—and the sinister apparition of the Priest of Ah-Puch	
The Time Will Come	481
A pseudo-scientific story of the future, when the Chinese have conquered the world and women have become the stronger sex	

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

[CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE]

The Phantom	Cristel Hastings	489
<i>Verse</i>		
Whispers	Robert S. Carr	490
<i>Creeping horror slithers through this strange tale by the young author of "The Rampant Age"</i>		
Remembrance	Robert E. Howard	502
<i>Verse</i>		
The Strange People (Part 2)	Murray Leinster	503
<i>A three-part serial of mystery and adventure among a people who guarded with their lives a ghastly secret</i>		
Medusa	Royal W. Jimerson	519
<i>Marian Bardwell's snaky hair led to a weird tragedy when her husband tried to cut it off—a tale of atavism</i>		
From Beyond	Everil Worrell	525
<i>A strange gift of occult sensitiveness was Sheila's, and strange were the consequences of her weird clairvoyance</i>		
The Spectral Lover	R. Anthony	535
<i>Barney came back from beyond the grave to terrify the girl that had refused his love when he was alive</i>		
Folks Used to Believe:		
The Familiar	Alvin F. Harlow	541
<i>One of the weird concepts held by our ancestors</i>		
The Fantasmal Terror	Willis Overton	542
<i>Sometimes a writer of fiction creates entities that he can not easily destroy—this one threatened to destroy its author</i>		
The Chain	H. Warner Munn	547
<i>A grim, terrible story of torture unendurable—a tale of frightful vengeance in a medieval oubliette</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Legend of St. Julian	Gustave Flaubert	554
<i>A fascinating story by a famous French author—about a parricide who became a saint</i>		

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THE PHANTOM

By CRISTEL HASTINGS

Last night the wind blew fitfully against
Wet window-panes, and tapped a pallid hand
In sudden bravery upon my door,
Seeking admittance with a shrill demand.

My candles flickered in a sudden draft
As from the opening of a hidden door
Silent upon its hinges, and I felt
The cold, wet touch of winds from down the moor.

Somewhere a dog howled dismally and long
To midnight skies, and branches brushed my roof
Like groping fingers seeking entrance where
Something once lived and held itself aloof.

The long night through, dead leaves tapped here and there,
Seeking for entrance long denied their kin
Save in the logs that blazed upon my grate,
Old driftwood bits the raging tide brought in.

It must be these old things from out the brine
And kelp of oceans have their bluish souls
That wail at night in winds that haunt the marsh
When driftwood logs are burned to dying coals.