

# WEIRD TALES

THE UNIQUE MAGAZINE

EDWIN BAIRD, Editor

Published monthly by the RURAL PUBLISHING CORPORATION, 234 North Clark Street, Chicago, Ill. Application made for entry at the postoffice at Chicago, Ill., as second class matter. Single copies, 25 cents; subscription, \$2 a year in the United States, \$2.50 in Canada. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts in transit, by fire, or otherwise, although every precaution is taken with such material. All manuscripts should be typewritten and must be accompanied by stamped and self-addressed envelopes. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright, and publishers are cautioned against using the same, either wholly or in part.

Copyright, 1923, by the Rural Publishing Corporation.

VOLUME 1

25 Cents

NUMBER 1

## Contents for March, 1923

### TWENTY-TWO REMARKABLE SHORT STORIES

- The Mystery of Black Jean.....JULIAN KILMAN 41  
*A story of blood-curling realism, with a smashing surprise at the end.*
- The Grave.....ORVILLE R. EMERSON 47  
*A soul-gripping story of terror.*
- Hark! The Rattle!.....JOEL TOWNSLEY ROGERS 53  
*An uncommon tale that will cling to your memory for many a day.*
- The Ghost Guard.....BRYAN IRVINE 59  
*A "spooky" tale with a grim background.*
- The Ghoul and the Corpse.....G. A. WELLS 65  
*An amazing yarn of weird adventure in the frozen North.*
- Fear.....DAVID R. SOLOMON 73  
*Showing how fear can drive a strong man to the verge of insanity.*
- The Place of Madness.....MERLIN MOORE TAYLOR 89  
*What two hours in a prison "solitary" did to a man.*
- The Closing Hand.....FARNSWORTH WRIGHT 98  
*A brief story powerfully written.*
- The Unknown Beast.....HOWARD ELLIS DAVIS 100  
*An unusual tale of a terrifying monster.*
- The Basket.....HERBERT J. MANGHAM 106  
*A queer little story about San Francisco.*
- The Accusing Voice.....MEREDITH DAVIS 110  
*The singular experience of Allen Defoe.*
- The Sequel.....WALTER SCOTT STORY 119  
*A new conclusion to Edgar Allen Poe's "Cask of Amontillado."*

## Contents for March, 1923—Continued

The Weaving Shadows.....	W. H. HOLMES	122
<i>Chet Burke's strange adventures in a haunted house.</i>		
Nimba, the Cave Girl.....	R. T. M. SCOTT	131
<i>An odd, fantastic little story of the Stone Age.</i>		
The Young Man Who Wanted to Die.....	? ? ?	135
<i>An anonymous author submits a startling answer to the question, "What comes after death?"</i>		
The Scarlet Night.....	WILLIAM SANFORD	140
<i>A tale with an eerie thrill.</i>		
The Extraordinary Experiment of Dr. Calgtoni.....	JOSEPH FAUS and JAMES BENNETT WOODING	143
<i>An eccentric doctor creates a frightful living thing.</i>		
The Return of Paul Slavsky.....	CAPT. GEORGE WARBURTON LEWIS	150
<i>A "creepy" tale that ends in a shuddering, breath-taking way.</i>		
The House of Death.....	F. GEORGIA STROUP	156
<i>The strange secret of a lonely woman.</i>		
The Gallows.....	I. W. D. PETERS	161
<i>An out-of-the-ordinary story.</i>		
The Skull.....	HAROLD WARD	164
<i>A grim tale with a terrifying end.</i>		
The Ape-Man.....	JAMES B. M. CLARK, JR.	169
<i>A Jungle tale that is somehow "different."</i>		
<b>THREE UNUSUAL NOVELETTES</b>		
The Dead Man's Tale.....	WILLARD E. HAWKINS	7
<i>An astounding yarn that will hold you spellbound and make you breathe fast with a new mental sensation.</i>		
Ooze.....	ANTHONY M. RUD	19
<i>A Remarkable short novel by a master of "gooseflesh" fiction.</i>		
The Chain.....	HAMILTON CRAIGIE	77
<i>Craigie is at his best here.</i>		
<b>A STRANGE NOVEL IN TWO PARTS</b>		
The Thing of a Thousand Shapes.....	OTIS ADELBERT KLINE	32
<i>Don't start this story late at night.</i>		
<b>THE EYRIE</b> - - - - -	<b>THE EDITOR</b>	<b>180</b>

Also a number of odd facts and queer fancies,  
crowded in for good measure

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES apply to YOUNG & WARD,  
Advertising Managers, 168 North Michigan Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois

*There's an Eerie Thrill in*

# *The Scarlet Night*

By WILLIAM SANFORD

**D**R. LANGLEY was in love with my wife.

This had been very evident to me for many weeks. Also it was most evident to me that his love was entirely reciprocated.

The doctor was a young and handsome fellow, who bore the reputation of being more or less unscrupulous. An unpleasant story had followed him from another city—the story of the drowning of a young girl. Although the coroner's verdict had been that of accidental drowning, there were those, it was said, who thought that the doctor knew much more of the matter than had been brought to light, and rumor had it that he had left the place because he was no longer popular there.

The doctor had a pleasing personality, however, and a way with him that had the effect of disarming any prejudice against him. He was, in brief, a ladies' man, possessing all of the little attentions and flatteries so dear to the heart of women. And he gave them all with a subtle manner of sincerity that made them doubly potent.

The doctor's practice was fairly large, and he had also succeeded in having himself appointed local medical examiner for our town. He was deeply interested in his chosen profession, and still fascinated by the dissecting-room. He owned a handsome touring-car with which, as I knew, my wife was very familiar.

My wife was twenty-five — fifteen years my junior—pretty and with much charm of manner, yet possessed of a certain hardness of nature and lack of

sympathy for the suffering of others, unusual in a young woman of good breeding. She came of excellent family, was well educated and always had associated with good people.

I had been somewhat addicted to strong drink before we were married, but had managed to keep it from her to a certain extent. She knew that I drank, but thought that it was no more than many men do at their clubs. Of my several wild sprees out of town she had never heard.

We had been married two years when Dr. Langley took up his practice in our town, and from the moment he made a professional call on my wife, for some minor ailment, they had become intensely interested in each other.

My drinking habits had increased, rather than diminished, since my marriage, and I no longer made any effort to keep occasional lurid fits of intoxication from her. My love for liquor became as much a part of my life as food or sleep. My position as assistant manager in a large wholesale house was fairly secure, however, and one not easy to fill, which perhaps accounted for the firm still holding me.

One cold, bleak evening in November, while I was playing cards at my club—and, thanks to the rum-runners who thrived in our town, drinking whisky—I heard a strangely-familiar voice call my name in greeting, and, looking up, I was overjoyed to behold an old friend of bygone days, whom I had not seen in several years. He had dropped off on his way to another city.

The time was ripe for a celebration

in honor of our meeting. My friend produced a quart flask of whisky from his suitcase, saying that it was the duplicate of one he had already sampled, and spoke to me of its age, strength, true quality, and the high price he had been obliged to pay for it. Thereupon he presented it to me. I thanked him heartily and opened the flask, and we all drank a couple of rounds from it. All of that day, and the day previous, I had been drinking more or less heavily.

Cards were resumed and we played until after midnight, when, with many a handshake, I bade good-by to my friend, who was obliged to catch a train to reach his destination the following noon. The card game being broken up, we had a farewell round of drinks, and

I stumbled out into the night.

The cool air soon revived my somewhat befuddled brain. Also, I was soon shaking with the cold. Remembering the generous sized flask of whisky in my pocket, the gift of my friend, I uncorked it and took a long drink, rejoicing in the fact that the bottle was still almost two-thirds full.

Reaching home, I went at once to my bedroom. My wife was seated in a chair by the window in her dressing-gown. As I entered, she rose and, without any preliminaries of speech, she asked that I at once give her a divorce so that she might marry Dr. Langley. She said there was no reason why I should not do this, since I might then marry some woman who cared for me, and that she would be happy with the man she had learned to love.

The abruptness of her request, together with the cold, matter-of-fact way in which she put it dumfounded me, but, hastily regaining my composure, I flatly refused any such action, told my wife that she must remain true to her marriage vows, and that nothing would ever induce me to give her the divorce she wanted. Furthermore, I told her that the doctor was a scoundrel—that many people believed he had murdered a girl before coming to our town.

At this, my wife became livid with fury, accused me of deliberately be-

smirching the doctor's character because of jealousy, and declared she would never live with me again.

The next day, however, she seemed much changed. She was very agreeable, even tender, to me. We walked about the little garden of our home, as we had often done in the early days of our marriage, and I felt confident that she had decided to put the doctor out of her mind and allow our married life to go on as usual.

We chatted pleasantly together at the dinner table that evening, and as usual I drank a cup of strong coffee after the meal.

A few moments later a heavy drowsiness came over me and I knew no more.

**I AWOKE** with a feeling of suffocation—as if a thousand tons of weight were resting on my chest.

I gasped for breath. I was suffering torture. All about me was blackness—impenetrable blackness. I moved my hands and encountered boards, above and on every side. Gradually, to my numbed senses, the horrible realization came to me, and the cold sweat started out on my body—I had been buried alive!

The terrible realization had a tendency to clear my mind somewhat, in spite of the difficulty I encountered in breathing. I saw it all now. My wife had given me some powerful drug in my coffee, a drug obtained from the doctor. They had planned and plotted the thing in case I refused to consent to a divorce.

They probably had known I was still alive when I was buried. The doctor, as medical examiner, had filed some fictitious report of death from natural causes, and they had contrived to have a hasty funeral. How I had managed to breathe for so long in the coffin, while under the power of the drug, I did not know. Now that I was fully conscious again I felt myself stifling.

No power of imagination can picture the horror and torture of mind that my terrible predicament forced upon me. I must die a slow, terrible death, while

those who were responsible for the hellish crime enjoyed themselves and went unpunished. The minutes seemed to drag into hours, as I lay there struggling for breath.

Suddenly, out of the horrible black stillness, I heard a noise above me. Listening, with every racked nerve on edge, I heard it come nearer—nearer. At first I could not make it out—could not understand—and then, suddenly, the truth dawned upon me with a horrible intensity: *The body snatchers were after me for the dissecting-room!*

I tried to cry out, but was unable to make a sound, because of my stifling condition. They reached the coffin, and I heard the shovel scraping against it. Then I felt myself being slowly lifted upward, and the coffin was dumped on the ground.

Now I heard a voice, and my blood ran cold, for it was the voice of Dr. Langley.

"The drug was an Oriental one," he was saying. "It causes a semblance of death that lasts a long time, but he probably died a few minutes after he was buried. I am anxious to dissect to see what effect such a drug has on the human body!"

And then, with a terrible shock, I heard the voice of my wife:

"I don't care. Do as you wish. I hated him from the moment he refused to give me a divorce. I could even watch you cut up his body!"

I struggled to rise in the coffin, gasping for the breath of life, and then the lid was pried off, and, summoning all my dying strength, I rose to my feet, waving my arms wildly back and forth

and inhaling a great breath of life-giving night air.

The doctor let the shovel fall to the ground without a word, and staggered back and sank to his knees, while my wife gave a hideous scream of terror. Then she snatched a knife from his kit of dissecting instruments and drew the razor-sharp blade across her throat. She then threw herself upon the prostrate doctor, her blood drenching his body.

My senses reeling, I staggered forward, tripped over my coffin and fell swooning to the ground.

**NONE** believe my story. Neither will you. I have told it to them all, but they will not believe it.

I am in a hospital, where they tell me I have been for several days. It is a prison hospital, where guards in uniform patrol the corridors, lest even the sick try to escape.

They ask me if I cannot remember that I came home that night from the club in a blind frenzy of drink and found my wife and Dr. Langley together. They tell me that I choked him with such ferocity and strength that my fingers broke into the flesh of his neck. They tell me that my wife, screaming with terror, tried to escape, and that, just as the people in the adjoining apartment burst into the room, I seized a razor from the bureau and slashed her throat from ear to ear, and threw her body, with the blood streaming from the wound, across that of the doctor.

Are they going to hang me for this double crime that I did not commit?

They will not believe my story. Yet every detail of it is as clear to me as the stars that shine in the heavens.

