



TALES OF FANTASY AND SUSPENSE!

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No. 9

EEERIE



HANDS of DEATH
PHANTOM HITCH-HIKER
HAUNTED MELODY
DEATH on SKIS

The THING from the GRAVE!

If I hadn't decided to major in archeology none of this would have happened. But just as soon as I attended my first class and heard the handsome young professor explain how the history of mankind can be read in bits of bone and pottery dug out of the earth, I knew that this was the only subject I wanted to study.

Looking back, however, I have to admit that the fact that Professor Richard Jones was so attractive may have had something to do with my decision. And after I had attended his class only six times, he kept me after school, supposedly to discuss a special problem. But we both knew what the problem was, and it was only a matter of weeks before we were engaged.

It was Dick who told me about the old Indian tribe that had lived in our town hundreds of years ago.

"Might be a lot of interesting stuff waiting for someone to dig it up," he said. "The trouble is, though—the tribe lived on the piece of land that is now the graveyard! Can't very well go around digging up graves, can we?"

I looked at him in amazement. "My goodness, why not?" I asked. "It's all in the interests of science and human knowledge!"

He looked dubious. "Well," he said, "it's one thing to go

digging in a bunch of foreign, deserted tombs, but it's another thing to start ripping up the graves in your own town's cemetery!"

Then I got the idea. "Richard!" I squealed. "Let's go there tonight! We'll only dig for a little while. Nobody will see us, an' think of what fun it would be if we found something really important!"

He tried to protest, but when I make up my mind to do something—well, he didn't struggle long....

The cemetery was dark. We moved well into the center of it, so that we would be completely out of sight of any curious passers-by. I lighted the lantern we had brought with us, and set it down on the nearest gravestone. "Might as well start to dig right here, Richard," I told him.

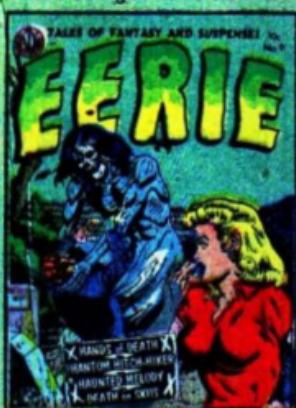
Richard gave a resigned shrug and started to swing the pick up to his shoulder. Then suddenly he stopped. "Look what it says on the gravestone!" he said.

*Who disturbs my sleeping trust
Will be changed to mortal dust!*

are you Dick?" I noticed that he had grown pale, but he forced a grin and started to dig. It was when the point of the pick bit into the springy green sod for the second time that we noticed the smell. It was an odor which warned of death and age and mystic occurrences. Richard stared at me in great wonderment, but before he could speak there was a clap like thunder, and a great crack appeared in the grave at our feet. Up from the crack, squeaking and beating their wings, flew two great bats. And following them out came—it!

It flowed out of the grave like a cloud of smoke, yet I saw the bony, skull-like face and the long Indian-black hair that streamed around the scraggly neck. The monster's huge, trap-like hands closed around Richard's throat. I stared in amazed horror, and then I screamed hysterically and ran.... *

They're holding me on suspicion of murder. Several people saw us enter the graveyard together. Of course, they haven't been able to find the body. They keep trying to persuade me to show them where I hid the corpse after I murdered Richard. Of course, I tell them about the spirit that came out of the grave, but they send the psychiatrist in whenever I mention that. I even took them to the cemetery to show them where it happened. But, at the grave, the pick and the lantern were gone, and Richard was nowhere to be seen. And a pile of dust stood by the foot of the grave, and whenever the breeze blew it grew smaller and smaller.



I read it aloud. "Isn't that a queer epitaph," I exclaimed. "But you're not superstitious,