

WEIRD TALES




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"May plotted to
blow up the
mausoleum."

Turn Over

By DOROTHY QUICK

Turning in his grave was Rufus Fletcher's way of making his family turn over a new leaf.

THE very last time I saw Rufus Fletcher he was in a rage. "Young man," he snarled, "you'd best keep away from my family. The things they do are enough to make me turn over in my grave!"

I muttered something about being sure Celia was too sweet to worry anyone.

He looked at me and little wrinkles of laughter pushed the anger out of his eyes.

"That shows how much you *don't* know, young man. Blonde curls, blue eyes, peaches and cream complexion, a beautiful torso and a smile that mows *them* down! That's Celia. She looks like an angel at the top of a Christmas tree, too

holy to touch, but don't let that mislead you. She's engaged to you and she came in at four o'clock this morning and spent twenty-five minutes in the hall saying good-night to the upstart she'd been out with. I declare, it's enough to make a man turn in his grave when a girl carries on like that!"

IT WAS enough to make me feel some cool prickling down my spine. I, too, had spent a long time saying good-night to Celia on various occasions, Celia in my arms, her lips clinging to mine. I was deeply in love with Celia. I'd thought she was in love with me, but if I was just part of a racket—her fiancé, perhaps because her grandfather approved of me—I felt rage surging through me.

"And that's not all," old Rufus went on. "It isn't enough that my granddaughter carries on in what I consider an indecent fashion—her mother does the same thing. She's got a gigolo! A young Italian she's supporting with my money! I declare, I'm ashamed of Frances and her husband—a stuffed shirt—as for Timothy, he's my only son, but he gives me no peace. Wastrel, drunkard, his wife's a fool, and my grandson Rufe is no better. He doesn't drink, but his business methods are nefarious. He'd skin me alive if he could get another nickel for it, and he knows his methods burn me up."

"But, sir," I interjected, I was afraid he would have a stroke, the red was mounting in his face and his white eyebrows jutted out from his forehead like tufts of cotton on a ripe tomato.

"No buts. My other daughter ought to be a comfort to me—the spinsters in the family usually are—but May isn't. She's got queer Communistic ideas, and practically goes around waving a red flag. I sit on her of course—I sit on all of them. They know what I want, what I like and what I don't. I keep them in line, but I'm

getting old—eighty-one, and what will happen when I'm gone I don't know. I don't expect any peace in my grave, but I've found a way to manage them. Tell that father of yours I want to see him. I'm going over it again with him just to be sure he understands. Don't marry Celia unless you can wield a horsewhip and are willing to. She's young—you might be able to tame her down."

Just at this point Celia, ravishing in ice blue satin and ermine, came in.

"So," she said, in the voice that always reminded me of the chiming of silver bells, "he's been maligning me." She dropped a kiss on the old man's halo of thistledown hair.

"Get along, and come in earlier tonight." His tones were gruff, but his eyes were smiling and the red was fading from his forehead.

"I'll make it three, just for your sake. Come on Terry." She caught my hand.

"Don't forget to tell your father, I want to see him tomorrow," Rufus called as we went out.

"Oh, dear," Celia whispered, "he wants to see his lawyer. That's a bad sign!"

"I don't consider wanting an interview with my father anything of the sort," I said stiffly.

"Stupid, you know I didn't mean that. Your father's a dear, almost as nice as his son." We were in the famous hall Rufus had been talking about, and Celia put her arm around my neck. "I'm afraid he's going to change his will again, and maybe this time I'll be out. Oh, well, let's forget these sordid things." She tilted her face so her lips came close to mine.

I didn't kiss her. I was remembering what old Rufus had said.

"Celia," I remarked sternly, "my love-making can't be very satisfactory if you have to find other kisses, so perhaps we'd better consider our engagement—"

Her face paled and she put her lovely hand over my mouth.

"Oh, no, Terry. No! I guess Rufus told you about last night? You were so busy I did go out with Bob Morton. I did drink too much, I did let him kiss me. I wanted to find out if any other man could thrill me as much as you do."

"Did you—find out?" I managed to mumble through her fingers.

"I found out that I got a certain animal reaction—any man that isn't unattractive can give a woman that—but there wasn't any more—no sting to it. I didn't want to carry on, I didn't want to belong to him wholly the way I want to belong to you. Oh, Terry, let's get married soon." She took her hand away.

I KISSED her. "We'll be married in June," I announced.

She clung to me. "No, Terry, sooner. Let's go down to City Hall tomorrow. The Fletchers are rotten stock, and even though my name's Norton I have Fletcher blood. I need someone to look after me. Let's get married right away!"

"Good idea!" Rufus popped his head out from behind the velvet curtain where he'd been hiding. "Promise me, Terry, you'll marry her no matter what that weak-minded creature, her mother, says."

"I promise," I told him with due seriousness. We shook hands, while Celia clapped hers, then smiling, like a benign old Santa Claus, he let us out the front door.

"Best night's work I've done in a long time." His words floated after us, but Celia and I were too busy making plans for the wedding to hear. Neither of us had any way of knowing that we would never see Rufus alive again.

When we came home we were met by Mrs. Norton who told us that shortly after we'd gone, Rufus had had a stroke and died almost immediately.

"We were just talking when it happened—just talking—poor dear father." She began to sob.

I could imagine what the "just talking" had consisted of! Being in my father's law office, where Rufus Fletcher's affairs were handled, I knew every time his daughter "talked" to him it meant money, requests that usually were granted. Tonight he'd been on a rampage anyway so had probably refused. That would have been a signal for fireworks. I could picture everything perfectly but I hadn't much time to check. Here I was with two waiting females on my hands. Celia had buried her face on my shoulder and begun to cry. I knew her tears were genuine, she had been fond of the old man, but I wasn't sure about her mother's.

I was greatly relieved when I saw my father coming downstairs. He looked very solemn and rather disturbed.

"I'm glad you're here, Terry," he nodded to me, and then addressed Mrs. Norton. "I'm sorry to intrude on your grief and that of the other members of the family, but in view of the"—he hesitated—"rather unusual directions Mr. Fletcher has left for his burial, I thought I'd better talk to the family at once. The others are waiting in the library."

Then and there I *knew* Mrs. Norton's grief wasn't real. She stopped sobbing at once and regarded my father coldly. "Surely Mr. Winthrop, we might have a few hours of privacy."

"It seems best to acquaint you with these—er—somewhat unusual provisions—at once—"

"Just what are these arrangements to which you refer?"

"If you'll come to the library I'll go into them fully."

In solemn procession we followed my father, Celia clinging to me. Once there we found Thomas Norton, very quiet and Timothy Fletcher and his son. Timothy

had been drinking and young Rufe had the avaricious look in his eyes his grandfather had disliked. His mother, Bertha Fletcher, was a nondescript kind of person; she was sniffing unobtrusively. May Fletcher sat straight and stiff in a high-backed chair. She was the only one who resembled Rufus, and the likeness came more from her thick white hair, which aureoled her face as her father's had done.

They all looked up when we came in and Thomas Norton came over and put his arm around his wife. She promptly shrugged it away. Frances was the brittle, beauty parlor type—a woman of forty-five who looked thirty, but nevertheless gave the impression to a really observant regard, that without the make-up, massages, and lotions she would look her age.

Young Rufe acted as spokesman. "We are all very curious, Mr. Winthrop."

My father sat down and eyed him.

"I don't doubt it. Once again my apologies for intruding upon your—er—grief, but as Mr. Fletcher has made some very peculiar arrangements I thought you should know about them beforehand. For instance the coffin that your father ordered—and paid for—is extra wide."

There was a little chorus of exclamations. May Fletcher finally crashed through with, "May I ask why?"

"Certainly. Your father expects to turn often in his grave."

Another chorus of exclamations; the shock stopped Celia's crying.

"Mr. Fletcher said that with the collection of heirs he had—I beg your pardon but I am quoting the words of your father—that he would probably spend most of his time turning in his grave, so he might as well do it in comfort."

"Preposterous—won't allow it!" Timothy spoke up.

My father shook his head. "You can't prevent it. Mr. Fletcher had it put in his will. The coffin will be connected with

a very expensive electrical apparatus, which will register each turn on an instrument in my office. It has already been installed in the family mausoleum by the electric company Mr. Fletcher selected. When Mr. Fletcher's—er—remains are placed there it will be connected with wires coming from the coffin. In the bottom is a thin pad on which Mr. Fletcher will lie. If Mr. Fletcher turns in his grave, it will definitely be registered. I have instructions to have a clerk constantly watching the instrument in my office which will register the convolutions."

"It's crazy, and shows that my grandfather—" Rufe began.

My father held up his hand.

"There's a good reason for it. Mr. Fletcher has left his estate divided equally between you all, including Mr. Norton and Mrs. Timothy Fletcher. He said he'd like them to have some independence—they hadn't had any so far, and if they didn't soon they'd be buried without ever having been able to call their souls their own."

Mrs. Norton bit her lip, Timothy Fletcher laughed aloud, while his son was obviously annoyed.

Father continued, "The money is to be held in trust by the bank and myself and paid out in a monthly allowance to each one, *but* if Rufus Fletcher turns in his grave that month's check is to be withheld from the person responsible for his turning and divided equally among the others, or if I cannot determine who is responsible, then no one is to receive any money that month, and the money is to go to charity."

"We can break the will," Rufe squinted his eyes. "It's perfectly obvious that my grandfather was out of his head."

MY FATHER smiled. "Mr. Fletcher anticipated that you might say that, and also that the—er—unusual arrange-

ments might give some cause for such a conclusion, and guarded against any action on your part. He had three of the finest sanity experts examine him and certify to his sound mentality, also two judges and his personal physician. I think you'd not get very far with a suit, Rufe, and I must also tell you that anyone who tries to break the will can have no share whatever in the estate."

Rufe's importance collapsed like a deflated rubber tire.

Mrs. Norton began sputtering until May drew herself up still higher in her chair.

"Don't be ridiculous, Frances. It's all very silly. I'm sure I'd never do anything to—make Father turn in his grave, but if that's the way he wanted things to be we'll have to abide by what he says in the will."

"I'll jolly well say so, and I think it's a good joke on all of us." Timothy laughed.

"You won't think it's so funny when you have to stop drinking." It was the first time Bertha, Timothy's wife, had ever asserted herself so far as I, or anyone else, knew. We all looked surprised, Timothy most of all. The mirth trickled out of him.

Frances Norton looked at May. "You don't need to be so sure of yourself either, my dear sister. Father didn't approve—"

"When it comes to approving, how about your—" May cut in but father stopped her.

"It may interest you to know a few of the things your father most disliked. He gave me a list, but it's pretty firmly stamped on my mind. Once again I apologize—you'll realize, however, I'm only quoting:

"May's Communistic ideas. None of my money can support anything but Americanism, and I don't like her holier-than-thou attitude either. The two don't go together and she'd better forget them both.

"As for Frances, she'd better stick to her

husband, forget society and try to be a good mother, and not spend so much on clothes.

"Timothy—stop drinking. Get to know your wife and thrash your son.

"Rufus, try to learn it's more blessed to give than to receive, and honesty is the best policy.

"Celia, be sweet and natural, stop playing, and make Terry a good wife."

At this point Celia put her hand in mine.

Then Father went on. "He said, 'The only thing Thomas and Bertha can do to make me mad is not to take advantage of the independence I'm giving them.' There, I think these things are almost verbatim, but I'll mail a copy to each of you. I also forgot to mention there is a register here as well as in my office." He walked to the book case, turned a key, swung open the door; the books came with it, and behind was something that looked like a radio. On the dial, which resembled a compass, were four things—"R. I. P., Full Turn, Turn to Right, Turn to Left." There was a needle that at present indicated "R. I. P.," "Resting in peace." Father said, "If there's any change, the needle indicates it, also a bell rings. It will, I'm afraid make quite a bit of noise. Rufus wanted it like that, but once it is noted in my office, where it rings simultaneously, though not so loud, it will be switched off until the next time."

"Idiotic! We're all fools to even listen to this rigmarole. I shall consult a lawyer!" Rufe raged.

"If you do, you'll lose your inheritance. Besides the firm of Winthrop and Winthrop is the best in the city. The world knows that," Thomas Norton said pompously.

Timothy laughed. "Don't be an idiot yourself, my boy. There's no use giving up anything or fighting the will. Everything will be just as Father wanted it."

Everyone looked at him in surprise.

"Are you going to stop drinking?" his wife asked.

He laughed again. "Of course not. You don't suppose I believe Father can turn in his grave—do you believe it?" He threw the question in my father's face.

For the first time that evening my father smiled.

"I've been wondering how long it would take that point to penetrate, and who would see it first. Congratulations, Timothy. You are quite right. I don't believe Rufus Fletcher or anyone else can turn in their grave. I told him so. He didn't agree, but that's beside the point. I take it no one wants to interfere with Mr. Fletcher's arrangements."

NO ONE did, not even young Rufe. He was quite chagrined that he had not thought of such an obvious solution. There was a general lifting of spirits. Even May unbent and talked kindly to Bertha.

Celia clutched my hand harder, pulled me down until my face was on a level with hers. "Terry, I want to be married right away."

"Now?" I exclaimed. "But the funeral!"

"I don't care. Grandfather wished us to be married right away—we promised. I—I don't want him to turn over in his grave."

I looked at her closely and saw that, incredible as it seemed, she actually believed it was a possibility. I leaned over and kissed her, then led her to my father.

"We want to be married right away, Dad—tomorrow."

The others, who had begun to cluster in little groups, immediately focused their attention on us.

"Isn't this a bit soon?" my father asked, but I could tell from his tone he didn't dislike the idea.

Celia began to explain. She told them what Rufus had said earlier in the evening, and our promise, and reiterated that she

didn't want her grandfather to turn in his grave.

"I quite see your point. So far as I can see it's only advancing the date. I'll arrange with Judge Freeman to marry you tomorrow. Fortunately you've got the license."

Father knew I'd been carrying that around for weeks.

"Nothing of the sort. Just because Celia is an heiress is no reason for gobbling her up immediately!" Frances Norton was her nastiest self.

Father replied to her. "Celia's always been an heiress and, so far as that goes, my boy not only is my heir but has money of his own."

"I don't care. I positively forbid the match, and Celia's not of age. I won't allow her to be married before June—if then—"

There was a silence broken by a piercing scream from upstairs. We all rushed outside to find Molly, the housekeeper, rushing down the steps faster than her age would ordinarily have allowed.

"It's the master!" she gasped. "I was sitting there watching him and all at once he moved. As sure as I'm speaking he turned over on the bed. He's lying on his side, and I don't believe it's dead he is!"

No one spoke, no one moved. Frances turned white under her rouge. My father rushed upstairs and came back looking pale around his mouth.

"There's no doubt he's moved. He was lying on his back when I left. Telephone for the doctor, Terry."

Dr. Linden lived next door. He came in and solemnly reiterated that Mr. Fletcher was quite dead, mumbled something about it being either a practical joke or a cadaveric spasm, and went away as quickly as he had come.

Celia turned to her mother.

"It was just after you said I couldn't marry Terry. Grandfather knows what

we say, what we do! I'm going to do what he wanted. I'm going to marry Terry tomorrow."

This time Frances Norton made no protest.

WE WERE married at noon. I took Celia home to my apartment for the honeymoon as we had to attend the funeral the next day. I told her I didn't think she should go to the cemetery but she shook her head.

"I'm going to be a good wife, Terry, and do what you say, but not this. Grandfather would want me to be there. I did so many things he didn't like when he was alive that I want to make up for them now."

"So you believe he knows?" I asked, as I kissed her.

"Yes, I do. The money doesn't count, Terry. I—I just want to please him."

"I know that, sweet." I kissed her again.

THE funeral was quite in keeping with the Fletcher tradition. The extra wide coffin was so arranged with flowers that its unusual size passed without notice. The interment was to be private. It took place with a great bevy of electrical experts who connected a complicated series of wires supervised by my father, while the heirs took refuge in stony silence. Timothy, for once, was quite sober, and clung to Bertha in a fashion that brought a glow of happiness to eyes from which it had long been a stranger. Celia was the only one who cried, but I knew that underneath her grief was the great happiness we had found together which would soon pull her out of her misery.

When everything was finally settled, we left the mausoleum and father locked the door and put the big heavy key in his pocket.

"I forgot to tell you, there's to be a guard here day and night. Mr. Fletcher

was afraid someone might cut the wires." He looked at Rufe and from the young man's face it was easy to read that he had had such an idea—even though his words denied it, "As though it would be necessary!"

"You forget—" Frances began.

"That," Rufe faced her fiercely, "was a cadaveric spasm, or else Molly moved him. Anything else is unthinkable."

"According to instructions I am probating the will at once. Shall I come and read it to you all tonight?" my father asked.

"No," Rufe flung at him. Being the business man of the family, he seemed to always assume the role of spokesman, and nobody differed.

"Your first checks will be due on the 15th." It was the tenth, so there was not long to wait.

"Considerate," Rufe sneered.

Then the group broke up.

THREE days later Celia and I were invited to dinner by—wonders of wonders—Bertha Fletcher. It was the first time we'd been to the Fletcher home since the funeral. Celia's mother had pointedly ignored her daughter's existence. Celia didn't want to go but when I pointed out it would be much better to be friendly, and this was a way of breaking the ice—besides encouraging Bertha's independence, she gave in very sweetly. As we went up the steps she said, "It's funny, but I don't feel any sense of belonging here any more."

"Of course not—you belong to me."

The door opened; Broadstairs, the butler, was delighted to see us. Bertha came out of the living room. I was amazed at the change in her. Before she had been an inconspicuous old maid type, despite having a husband and son. Now she was as smart looking as Frances and much prettier, for her skin was naturally lovely, and

the dusky hair which was rejoicing in its first permanent made her look young and stylish.

"I'm glad you came," she said hurriedly. "We want to see if you can't do something with your mother. She's been seeing a lot of that Mr. D'Alvari and I thought—"

Thomas Norton came down the stairs and greeted Celia affectionately. He, too, had suffered a "sea change." He was more natural and much less pompous. The other drifted in—Frances, brittle as a newly formed icicle. It seemed funny to think of them all still living in the old house as they had done when Rufus was alive.

Conversation was difficult at first but soon simmered into normality.

After dinner the ladies left the dining room. I saw determination in Celia's eye, and knew she meant to speak to her mother.

Timothy refilled his brandy glass.

"It's funny how strained we've all felt—as though we had the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads."

"Don't be silly, Father. It's all nonsense. Grandfather can't turn over in his grave. No bell's going to ring." Rufe spoke calmly.

"Are you sure of that?" There was eagerness in Timothy's voice.

"Certainly."

"Then why didn't you sign the papers for the Carleton deal you knew Rufus wouldn't approve of?"

The young man laughed. "Because there was a clause I didn't approve of! Not for any silly foolishness about graves."

"Oh." Timothy drained his glass and filled it again.

"Let's go upstairs," Thomas Norton suggested, nervously eyeing the brandy bottle.

We all started upstairs, but when we

reached the drawing room, Timothy wasn't with us.

"I'd better go back and look for him," Norton said to me. "He's been drinking very little since the funeral. I'd hate to see him start." He turned toward the door, but Frances' high-pitched voice arrested him. "Thomas, I wish to tell you all that I will not have my friendships interfered with—"

"But, Mother, I only suggested—" Celia began.

"That my friendship with Tony D'Alvari is more than a friendship," Frances cried. "You've all been talking about me behind my back, setting my own child against me—afraid I'll make Father turn over in his grave, I suppose, whereas the truth is—"

It went on and on—arguments until I wanted to pick Celia up and carry her home. It had just reached the point where a hair-pulling row between Frances and Bertha seemed imminent when the bell began to ring.

At first they thought it was the front door, but gradually the idea of what it really was seeped through their consciousness. It was the bell in the library! Rufus Fletcher had turned over in his grave. When we got there, the library dial had registered a full turn!

It seemed incredible, but they had seen with their own eyes when the apparatus was installed that here was no possible trickery. My father had attended to that. The only thing that could ring the bell was movement inside the coffin.

I shivered inwardly. Celia was quite calm, and apparently not surprised.

"I knew it would happen." She had to talk loud, the bell made such a clamor.

"It's your doing," Rufus told Frances. "You and your gigolo! That's what made him turn."

Frances gasped, but recovered herself quickly.

"Not at all. I've done nothing. Father—Father wouldn't turn over for a family quarrel—he actually enjoyed those. I—it's much more likely to be *your* father. He's probably drunk, and father always hated that."

She was right—about Timothy. We found him sprawled on the dining-room table, the empty brandy bottle beside him. There was no doubt of his condition being the cause of the infernal din that still went on from the bell.

By the time we'd gotten him to bed, my father arrived. Frances was screaming hysterically, "I can't stand it—Father couldn't turn over in his grave, but he has, he has! Oh, please make that bell stop!" Just at that moment the bell ceased ringing. It was a tremendous relief to us all.

Young Rufe tried to put some of the blame on Frances, but after everyone else had spoken up Frances was absolved from blame. She was still hysterical, so Celia took her upstairs where Bertha was already watching over Timothy.

The rest of us milled over the situation for a long time without reaching any definite conclusion. Thomas Norton believed in the supernatural, just as Celia did; Rufe didn't. I never had, but in view of the facts it was beginning to look as though I were wrong.

I didn't like the glint in Rufe's eyes.

"I am going to investigate that mausoleum and the wiring," he announced.

"Investigate all you like, but you can't open the coffin. That's in the will," Father told him. "Mr. Fletcher didn't want to be given what he spoke of as 'the once over' every time one of you doubted whether he'd moved or not."

"If there's trickery it doesn't come from *inside* the coffin." Rufe looked at me.

"May I ask—" I began.

"Certainly. If one of us loses his share, there's that much more for the rest. You married Celia pretty quickly, and she's

been behaving remarkably for a Fletcher. I can only assume that's your influence!" he sneered.

"Celia happened to love her grandfather. She's the only one of you with a heart. She also thinks it's quite possible for him to turn and she isn't going to be responsible. So far as the money is concerned, I have plenty without Celia's. I wouldn't touch a penny of it."

Rufe walked out of the room and May, the stiff bulwark of propriety, cried out, "Father—Father!" and fainted.

On the way home I asked my father, who was walking a few blocks with us, "Do you believe old Rufus is turning over in his grave?"

My father hesitated. "I wouldn't have a week ago, but now—"

THAT was the way we all felt. Except young Rufe, who went to the mausoleum the next morning with a formidable barrage of experts of his own. They had hardly started their investigation when the bell began to ring. I was in our office at the time, and could hear it buzzing away in the room set apart for it. Rufe continued his investigations despite it, but all he got was the indisputable opinion that the bell had to be rung by movement within the coffin.

So he returned to the Fletcher mansion with no satisfaction and much poorer, for he had lost his first allowance on account of the bell's ringing.

The rest of the month was hectic—the bell went off so frequently. Sometimes our office had difficulty in placing the cause. Once was obvious. After the allowances had been paid Frances Norton gave a generous check to D'Alvari. Rufus Fletcher's instructions had been definite about keeping an eye on the activities of his family. Father had suspected D'Alvari would be the source of trouble sooner or later, so he had had him watched. The

minute he went to cash the check, the bell rang!

Once it seemed as though we'd have to give up placing the blame for a half turn on old Rufus' part, and Father said he'd withhold everyone's allowance for the month. Then Bertha tearfully confessed that she'd given her money to Timothy. That, of course, didn't fit in with Rufus' idea of independence.

Another time the bell sounded was when young Rufe signed the papers for a business deal his father had mentioned. The dial registered a full turn for this.

Even my sweet Celia was responsible for a turn to the left. Being lonely and bored when I had had to work late several nights, she went out dancing with Joe Blake. I knew about it and didn't mind, but Rufus apparently did, for the bell rang.

May Fletcher set it off several times; two donations to the Communist party and one speech distinctly on the Red side were the causes.

Timothy also was responsible for electrical discords and half revolutions, for he went on drinking. Even Thomas Norton made old Rufus turn when he allowed his wife to interfere with his going to his college dinner because she wanted him to stay at home with her.

The St. John Orphanage was much richer that month and Rufe had to run the house, as he had means of his own.

The worst of all was when May plotted to blow up the mausoleum. The guards pretended to be bribed, but reported what was going on, and we caught her with one of her Communistic friends about to plant a time bomb. The needle made three full turns around the dial and the bell went on for hours.

Things continued like this for several months, then the bell rang less frequently. Finally Rufe called a family meeting one morning. We all came and sat silently in the Fletcher library. The book case was

open and the dial was plain to be seen. Nobody jested about it any more; in fact, they were too serious.

"I've never believed in ghosts. I really thought when Mr. Winthrop first mentioned the turn over business that Grandfather had been insane. I realize now that this isn't so. There are more things in heaven and earth than we dream of. Grandfather turns all right! It registers, and if he didn't move—actually move, I mean—it wouldn't. I've had experts, and I've sat hours out in that cold mausoleum with the guards. I know no one touches the wires. I've even encouraged Father to get drunk to see if the bell would ring at the right time. Well, it did. I am convinced, and I've called this meeting because I think we're being fools."

"What do you mean?" Frances asked.

"To lose money all the time and be responsible for disturbing our relatives' rest. After all, it lies with us as to whether Grandfather turns over or not."

I could see Father nodding his head with approval. Bertha, who had been angry when Rufe spoke of getting Timothy drunk, deliberately calmed down, and Timothy himself laughed in his jovial way.

"It would come hard with me. I'm fond of brandy."

"You'll stop drinking it if I have to beat you to a pulp," Rufe told him.

"Look—look at the dial!" Celia cried.

Our heads turned, like those of people at a tennis match, toward the dial. The hand, which had been at "R. I. P.," had begun to quiver and move toward the "Half turn to the left."

"I didn't mean it, sir—really!" Rufe spoke as though his grandfather was actually in the room. "I wouldn't beat him, but I will see he behaves himself—you'll like that, I know!"

The hand moved back to "R. I. P." where it was finally still.

"That settles it," Timothy whispered.

"I've never really quite believed Father moved, but I do now."

"How can he know what we do, as we do it, so quickly?" May asked.

"All things are possible to the soul. It is free and can be everywhere." Thomas Norton, who was very religious, spoke the words as though he were in a pulpit of the church.

"The old Egyptians had a theory—they believed that a unity was composed of three parts—the body, the ba, or spirit, and the ka, which was more or less the body's guardian. The ka stayed in the tomb to watch over the body, but the ba, or spirit, could roam about at will—sometimes even take human form, though eventually it must return to its two other components," Bertha told us. "It's Father's spirit that knows everything we do, though his body registers it."

I COULDN'T help thinking how completely Bertha had changed. She had always been scholarly, but before Rufus Fletcher died she would no more have dared to share her knowledge of erudite matters than she would have appeared in the nude.

"There's another explanation," I put in, for I had been giving the matter considerable thought. "I believe that everything produces a vibration of its own, like a radio wave length, for example. Well, Rufus Fletcher's body may be so attuned to the things he disliked that when one of them happens it produces an automatic reaction."

May nodded her head. It was plain that this appealed to her more than any of the other reasons.

"I think the dead do know what we do. I believe they have power—much more than we, even if they can't make themselves visible. I'll do anything I can to have Grandfather rest in peace, and not have that horrid little hand moving

around." Celia's voice shook with emotion.

"Good girl," for once Rufe wasn't intolerant. In fact, his whole nature seemed to have mellowed. "Now, how about the rest of you?" He looked around; everyone nodded. "You'll stop drinking?" He directed his question to Timothy.

"I'd be a brute if I didn't. Perhaps the thought of Dad turning over will keep me sober. I hope so." Timothy was actually serious.

Bertha put her hand in his. "I'll help you, Tim—and—I'll be independent."

Rufe switched to May. "And how about the Communist party?"

She sniffed. "I'm finished with them anyway. Ever since we tried to bomb the mausoleum and they told me I belonged with the aristocrats because I owned a marble palace, for that's what they thought the mausoleum was, I'm through! I'm thinking of taking up the cult of Karish-el-Khiam."

"Look," Rufe swung around, "Grandfather doesn't like it!" The needle was wobbling again.

"All right—I wasn't very enthusiastic about Karish. I'll go and help the Reverend Spleen at Father's own church."

The needle went back to "R. I. P."

"And don't think it's on account of the money," May went on. "I—I hate to think of Father so restless—"

"So do I!" exclaimed Frances. "I've been worrying about it lately and I told Toni last week I didn't want to ever see him again. You know, Father seems closer now that he's dead than when he was alive. I want you to know, Thomas, there's never been any harm in my friendship with D'Alvari. I was just vain enough to be flattered with attention, and silly enough to want to be young and go on dancing and having good times. I've given you some horrid moments, but I'll make up to you for them."

Norton took his wife's hand. "I've been foolish, too, letting you go your own way—staying in too much. Hereafter we'll step out together. I can dance myself—after a few lessons."

Celia's tears were quite dry now and she smiled happily.

"That just about settles everything then," Rufe said, "except I do want you to know it isn't all money with me either. I'm going to give up all my shady transactions and be as honest in my dealings as Grandfather was. He made his fortune squarely, I guess I ought to be able to do as well. It's only lately that I've realized what a darn fine man he was. I want to think of him at peace." Rufe actually wiped a tear away from the corner of his eye.

Father got up and said that their decision had made him personally very happy and he knew that it would have an even greater efficacy where Rufus Fletcher was concerned. Everyone shook hands and the conference ended on a high note, unusual for that family.

ON OUR way back to the office I asked Father, "What did you think of my theory of vibration?"

"It's as good as any. I've got one of my own."

"Why didn't you mention it?"

"I don't want to interfere with their good resolutions. They'll be hard enough to live up to as it is. But I'll tell you if you promise to keep it to yourself."

"Of course."

"Not even a whisper to Celia."

I promised solemnly.

Then Father began. "Rufus Fletcher knew his family. He knew that underneath all that screw ball exterior was intrinsic worth, but he was wise enough to see that only something drastic could strip off the outer skin. He was also sure that, alive, he couldn't do it, but he obviously

thought he might be able to—dead. I know he believed thoroughly in after life, and the survival of the soul. But Rufus Fletcher wasn't a man to take chances. It has occurred to me that he might have had some kind of an electric machine hidden in the lining of the coffin that would ring the bell and register turns or half turns every so often. He'd know his family well enough to know there'd be plenty of cause."

"That's a swell theory, but it doesn't explain how the bell rang so opportunely."

"Coincidence."

"And the way the needle quivered this morning when young Rufe threatened to beat up his father, and May spoke of that cult."

"Oh, I'll admit it's a theory you can shoot full of holes, still it's odd that he said in the will his coffin must never be opened or disturbed. It was because he made such a point of that I got the idea. I may be right or wrong. I don't suppose we'll ever know the truth."

We never did. The complete right-about change in the Fletcher family didn't happen all at once. There were lapses; Timothy found it hard to give up his brandy and Frances, even if she is my mother-in-law, is primarily a fool. The bell rang occasionally in spasmodic lengths of time over a period of thirteen months—just long enough to "set" the entire family in their new roles. Soon they were letter perfect; then the bell ceased ringing.

No one ever doubted that it would sound again if they didn't live up to Rufus Fletcher's idea of them, so they did—and Rufus Fletcher rested at peace in his grave.

Had he ever turned over? Had my father just happened to hit on the real solution, or had Rufus Fletcher's last slumbers actually been disturbed? Personally I believe they were, but it's a question that will never be answered.