

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

A MAGAZINE of the



BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME IV

NUMBER 4

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 325 N. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1913, at the post-office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$4.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in our 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. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor. Copyright, 1924, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

Contents for December, 1924

Cover Design.....	Andrew Brosnatch	
Death-Waters.....	Frank Belknap Long, Jr.	9
<i>Snakes—and a Black Man in a Black Lake</i>		
The Earth Girl.....	Carroll K. Michener	16
<i>A Distant Planet—Destruction of a Civilization</i>		
With Weapons of Stone.....	C. M. Eddy, Jr.	28
<i>Cavemen—Primitive Love—the Saber-tooth Tiger</i>		
The Death Clinic.....	Otto E. A. Schmidt	34
<i>Weird Revenge of a Great Surgeon</i>		
Cave of Murdered Men.....	W. Benson Dooling	47
<i>A Fantasy</i>		
Kaivalya.....	Mrs. Edgar Saltus	49
<i>Fourth Dimension—Hypnotism—Crime</i>		

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

A Tryst With Death	Edgar White	58
<i>A Rendezvous at the Tomb</i>		
The Valley of Teeheemen (Part One)	Arthur Thatcher	61
<i>Two-part Novel—Airplane Falls Into Strange Valley</i>		
Black Temple Band	Elwin J. Owens	87
<i>Six Black-robed Men—and a Weird Cave</i>		
His Family	C. Franklin Miller	93
<i>A Mad Colonel in the African Wilderness</i>		
A Hand From the Deep	Romeo Poole	98
<i>Strange Tale of Quack Surgery</i>		
After	Denis Francis Hannigan	106
<i>Beyond the Door of Death</i>		
Creeping Mist	Thomas B. Sherman	108
<i>Crime of a Man Who Was Already Dead</i>		
The Silent Five	Anthony D. Keogh	116
<i>A Haunted House and a Secret Society</i>		
The Case of the Russian Stevedore	Henry W. Whitehill	123
<i>Facts in the Strange Death of Dr. Dinwoodie</i>		
Voodoo	Estil Critchie	128
<i>Haiti—Worship of the Green Serpent</i>		
The House of Dust (Conclusion)	L. A. Botah	132
<i>Two-part Mystery Serial</i>		
Youth	Howard R. Marsh	156
<i>Storiote of Shattered Hopes</i>		
Fairy Gossamer	Harry Harrison Kroll	159
<i>A Cave of Hungry Spiders</i>		
The Song Eternal	Galen C. Colin	163
<i>Through the Ages It Sang to Him—of Love</i>		
The Crimson Crucifix	H. Thompson Rich	170
<i>A Birthmark—an Innocent Kiss—and Disaster</i>		
The Eyrie		175
<i>A Chat With the Readers</i>		

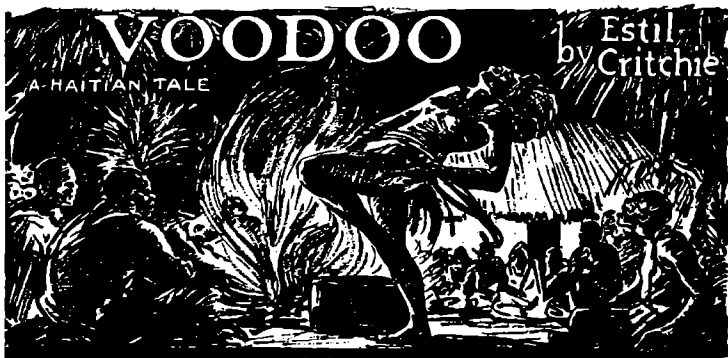
For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply to

W. B. ZIFF CO.

Transportation Building
Chicago

Architects Building
New York

Bryant Building
Kansas City



Author of "Thus Spake the Prophetess"

NO OFFICER in any of Uncle Sam's services would have assigned Rodney Davis such a mission as the latter had sought for himself. Yet every officer knew full well that if ever Cerimarie Sam were brought to the justice he deserved it must be accomplished by one brave man, working unhindered and alone. When Davis quietly sought an interview with the commanding officer and calmly asked that he be given the job of bringing in the voodoo priest, the commanding officer looked at him in amazement and no little doubt. Surely a man must be insane to ask for such an assignment—to ask for it! But the C. O. was quite willing to let Davis have his way. Cerimarie Sam, if he existed in fact, which no white man knew for sure, never having seen him, was believed to be the greatest monster in all Haiti. The C. O. would not assign one man to the task, and to send a detachment were worse than useless. No white man knew the inland trails and runways of Haiti as Cerimarie could know them. The proverbial needle in the haystack was a cinch compared to Cerimarie Sam.

The C. O. welcomed Davis with open arms, figuratively speaking. But he wondered. He did not know that

little Charlie Hepner, the Music, had been the special friend and protégé of Davis.

Davis had found the little Music. And he would have cried had not stark horror dried any tears that, being a strong man, he might have harbored.

Music had left camp to be gone only for an hour or two, just before sunset. Darkness came and no Music. The detachment in the field, of which Davis was a part, turned out in force and beat the surrounding jungle until daylight, without finding little Hepner. A hard-eyed bunch of men gathered in the early morning about the hasty breakfast, only Davis could not eat. He kept up the search and found Hepner. Dead.

Death in itself is not so horrible to a soldier. In the field he walks always by the monster's side, growing calloused to the thought of dying, even with his boots on, unshriven. But when death is attended with such gory details as those which attended little Hepner, it is something else again. Hepner's clothing had been stripped from his body and the little Music had literally been skinned alive! From just above his ankles the flesh had been cut to the bone and stripped off

over his feet, apparently, as the hunter skins the hide from a rabbit's leg!

Davis' cry of agony as he recognized his little chum carried back to the breakfasting men and something in it chilled every last man of them to the bone. Even before they had reached the terrible scene, each man knew that he was soon to look upon some unspeakable horror. And not the least of the horrors was the appearance of Davis himself. He had become in a few moments a graven marble image, cold as starshine, with eyes that saw but one thing, that recognized neither superior officer nor bunkie. A creature with but one aim in life and no hope beyond that aim. An automaton. A mechanical creature made to rend and destroy.

They sent him back to the capital city, where he spent six months in the study of Haitian *patois*. And, made mentally strong by the fires within him, he mastered the language—if it may be called a language. Then he sought his audience with the man at the helm, was admitted, accepted, and sent forth, to become a pariah in Haiti, where all outside the uniform and without visible means of support are pariahs.

He had known that the slaying of Hepner, right on the very edge of the encampment in the hills, had been the work of Cerimarie Sam. For this one was like a vulture. The detachment had had four or five native prisoners who had run to the scene and looked upon Hepner, and one of them had mentioned the name of the terrible priest before he could check the ejaculation. This had been enough. But the next morning the man who had spoken the dread name had been found dead outside the camp, his lips sewed together with hair from the tail of one of the detachment's horses. The significance of this was too plain to misread.

TWO MONTHS after his departure from the capital city of the Black Republic, Davis, grimy from studied failure to bathe, every inch of his skin dyed ebony black, lips thickened with injections of paraffin, entered a dim trail somewhere in that little known country lying inside the triangle formed by the capital city, Jacmel, and San Pierre. Something whispered to him that fulfilment was at hand. He met natives on the trail and avoided conversation with them with studied carelessness. Later in the day he encountered others, of both sexes, who traveled the same direction as did he. It was much easier to join the pilgrimage than he had thought. Too easy.

When the dim trail branched off into a dimmer trail and most of the people entered this, Davis managed to slip into the jungle on one side until darkness fell. Then he was but another black shadow with those who went before him and those who followed behind.

In a hollow surrounded by beetling hills he saw a great fire in an open place, beyond which was the odd shadow of some sort of building. He knew without being told what the building was. A shell of a place, covered with rude daubs, obscene in the extreme, representing pictures. He could see that many people had gathered about the fire and the building. Restless blacks, beasts of prey more terrible because they were human beasts, slouched here and there, or sat on their haunches, sunken in apathy. They paid him suspiciously little attention as he crept in and joined the devotees.

There was a stir shortly, and expectant craning of necks toward the dark opening in that building beyond the fire. Davis' nerves became as tautened wire. Into the circle of light came an ebony woman with the form

of a Venus and the face of a human beast.

"*Maman Lou! Maman Lou! Maman Lou!*"

A weird moaning cry, thrice repeated. Greetings to the priestess of the serpent!

The woman began to dance, first a slow movement of the body from the hips upward, not without a certain grace. The blacks moaned and touched their heads to the ground. The woman, weaving here and there like an upright serpent, began to glide into the terrible spirit of the dance. Her bodily postures now expressed the lowest meanings of sensuality, low enough in truth, yet she had just begun. The brain behind that black skull must have crawled with devilish vermin. Her movements were the acme of obscenity. The lust of the beast is clean because it is natural. The natural emotion of man is clean because it is sacred. But the lust expressed in the dance of the *Maman Lou* was the lust of a man or woman for a beast—horrible, revolting, inexpressible in words. As she worked herself into a frenzy a sort of froth came to her lips, and her eyes rolled until one could see the dead white of them. She seemed to be possessed of serpents that crawled within her bosom, causing her to writhe with their writhing. In her frenzy, which the devotees began to share, she tore her thin clothing from her body, standing naked in the firelight and writhing still in the ghastly contortions of the dance. She fell to the ground at last, as if taken suddenly with catalepsy. When her bare feet fell into the fire she seemed not to notice.

Heads were raised and another wail went forth.

"*Papa Lou! Papa Lou! Papa Lou!*"

The priest came forth with the sacrifice! A goat without horns! A nude girl of sixteen or so, black as midnight, so stupefied with some sort of drug that she knew not whither she went, nor cared what became of her. Then Davis noticed several other things. The priest, his face hidden by a mask fashioned after a serpent's head, carried a red book in his hand. There was a round stone near the fire. The ground near the circle of devotees was covered with sawdust.

When the *Papa Lou* threw the girl upon the ground and opened the great vein in her neck, she made no sound. Only her eyes moved as do those of a stricken bull. The priest caught the blood in a vessel, dipped his fingers in it, and with the precise flicking movement of long practise made a perfect cross of crimson in the sawdust. Three drops he let fall upon the holy stone, three drops he used to anoint the book which he carried in his hand.

There was a different timbre in the moaning of the devotees. Louder, more malevolent, demanding that the ceremony proceed with greater speed. The priest, a butcher in the guise of a serpent, began his work. But why follow? Davis saw revolting black lips become dyed with crimson, saw terrible trophies in the hands of the devotees, trophies that had once been part of a fellow being. When the trophies disappeared there was nothing but clean white bones, and a circle of beasts that had gorged themselves.

The ceremony proceeded to its inevitable conclusion, as if there were no depth to the filth into which the devotees might plunge themselves. Men and women, one with the other, forced themselves far, far down below the level of the beasts—in the name of the most terrible religion in all the world.

Davis wondered if Hepner had been poisoned before he had been tortured,

and hoped that such had been the case. Better all around for Hepner.

Davis looked up. The priest with the serpent's mask stood before him.

"I am Cerimarie Sam," he said.

"Who are you?"

There was a threat in the voice that told Davis he had been found out. He looked around the circle before replying. He came to his feet with a leap that carried him atop the monster, this beast in human guise that murdered children; who had children by whatsoever woman he desired and attended none of them; who had even offered some of these children, on occasion, as sacrifices to the serpent. The devotees were too far gone in their beastliness to notice what took place. It was only at dawn that they missed their high priest. He had disappeared from among them.

TWO WEEKS later Davis reported back to his commanding officer, who would have had him thrown out of the office as a dirty nigger had the C. O. not heard English words on the black man's lips. After the greetings were over the C. O. asked:

"And what of Cerimarie Sam?"

"Very strange about him, sir," replied Davis coldly. "I found him all right, but someone had literally skinned him alive, added to which the poor fellow had been thrown over a cliff and mashed beyond all human resemblance!"

"Oh, by the way, sir," he said as he turned to leave the office, "I also learned the identity of Cerimarie Sam, and it is my duty to inform you that the district of San Pierre has lost a valuable senator!"

"Luisima's Return," another powerful Haitian tale by Estil Critchie, will be published next month. It deals with the crimes of Henri I, Emperor of the North, who marched a whole company of soldiers over a high cliff to prove to a visiting minister that his discipline was iron-bound.