

Weird Tales

The Unique Magazine



Edmond Hamilton — Arthur J. Burks — Arlon Eadie
Seabury Quinn — Nietzin Dyalhis — Everil Worrell

Weird Tales

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The **RAY'S**
of the **MOON**
by *Everil Worrell.*



"Dead she had been and dead she should be again."

FOR hours I had lain hidden behind the gravestone. I was a medical student—and I needed a cadaver.

My pal and I had always been different from our classmates. We would have departed from the ways of other doctors, too, had we gone on to practise our profession. In our class there were men who have given their lives in the service of humanity—but we would have made humanity serve us. We aspired to fame, to the making of spectacular discoveries, perhaps—and we would have stopped not for fear or mercy. How quickly we would have been expelled from the college in which we were enrolled, had our standards of con-

duct been made known to our fellow students and instructors!

Well, it would not matter now if we had been expelled. Better for us if we had been. My pal died of septicemia—the revenge, perhaps, of the corpse he was working on in the close-shuttered basement of his house when his knife slipped and infected his hand. For that corpse had been walking on two feet only a week before, the healthy body of a charwoman who worked in the medical school building, and whose naturally appointed time to die had not yet come.

Ah, well! The charwoman's disappearance created hardly a ripple of interest, and Browne's death not much more.

And now I lay hidden through hours of darkness in a large, well-filled cemetery not far from the outskirts of a city. The city was not the one in which I lived and pursued my studies. For caution's sake, I had driven more than forty miles. Yet I was familiar with the countryside, for six months before I had passed this way often, on my way to the home of a girl to whom I was engaged. I had loved this girl until I became sure of her affection, and then I tired of her. Besides, I had given my allegiance to morphia, and had become unsocial. After I wearied of her it became a monotonous thing to know that she loved me, and so I broke my engagement. A few months later her brother called on me, begging that I go to see his sister, if only once more. She was a delicate, sensitive, high-strung girl, not very strong. My treatment of her, he said, had broken her heart, and her family actually believed her to be dying of grief. Her brother was not very courteous to me, for he had gotten the idea that a little kindness from me might save his sister's life.

"You may not be a murderer, but you have the heart of a murderer," he said to me.

I laughed at him, and never went near the girl again. That sort of thing is ridiculous! No girl with any sense pines away and dies of disillusionment and lost love in this day and age, as I told him. I had no time to waste in considering her feelings. And a girl who would have so little pride as to do such an unreasonable thing would be better dead, in any case. I told him that, too; and he went away and left me alone, and I never again traveled that road until I went to tear from a new-made grave its quiet tenant.

I had gone there in the early evening, in order to reconnoiter. It was a cloudy night, and although the moon was full, it would be hard to locate

the fresh grave I hoped to find, after dark. I might have carried a flashlight, but I had not the nerve for that. A moving light in a graveyard at night is more likely to attract the curious than to terrify chance passers-by and send them hurrying away, as would have been the case a century ago.

Driving slowly past, I got the lie of the land, and then drove on. I had seen what I wanted to see—a mound of fresh earth, far in from the road. I parked the car a little way down in a side road and walked back, climbed the low fence and crept to my place of vigil, and waited. I wanted the road empty and deserted, but I wanted to leave myself plenty of time to rearrange the despoiled grave before dawn, and to get the heavy burden I expected to take away with me safely hidden in the bottom of my car. I did not care very much what kind of body I would find in the new-made grave. Man, woman or child—I was going to use the brain for some experimental work, and the brain of one was as good as the brain of another.

While I waited, I had added a new mark to the many tiny puncture marks my pocket hypodermic had left upon my arm. With a strong shot of morphine in my veins, time had gone pleasantly and fast.

As I started to dig, the clouds thinned overhead, and a faint, ghostly light shone down upon me. Accustomed as my eyes were to the darkness, I could do without the light, and I did not like it. True, it was hardly strong enough to make me visible, even from a short distance. But it had an unwholesome, sickly quality that preyed upon my spirits. To me a corpse was just a corpse—but why is it that ghosts are always said to be seen by the light of the moon? For every ghost-story in which the moon is not mentioned, there are a thousand in which it is. Digging into this grave in the dark-

ness, I had experienced no more emotion than, in my boyhood, I had felt on digging into a hill of potatoes. We had needed potatoes for dinner, and I had taken a spade and dug into a hill after them. I needed a body, and I was digging into its hill after it. But with the coming of this unwelcome, eery half-light, I began to feel a chill creep up my spine.

I tried to laugh it off, to see my adventure again in its true perspective. I needed a corpse, and here, beneath my spade, was one that was going to waste. It was dead enough. It would not be annoyed, and the people who had placed it here in the heart of the cemetery could adorn the grave with flowers just the same, thinking there was that beneath them which perhaps occupied, in part, various alcohol-pickle jars.

I caught myself up with a shudder. My bravado was going too far. Instead of reassuring myself, I would unbalance my nerves.

Just then my spade struck something hard, and I breathed a sigh of relief. Now to get it over! Since I had gotten myself into this uneasy, shivery state, the quicker I proceeded the better. I had brought tools to force the coffin lid. I meant to replace the coffin, and throw in the dirt. I had brought a bundle of gunny sack to wrap the body in. It would be a serious enough thing for me if I were observed carrying my burden to the car, but better wrapped than unwrapped. A curious observer might possibly give me the benefit of the doubt in the first case, and pass on speculating.

I worked hard, now, the perspiration standing out all over my body from my efforts and my excitement.

I DUG out the coffin, and, straining every muscle, lifted it out. And just here an actual physical giddiness seized me. I had a sudden feeling as though the yawning hole at my feet were infinitely deep—as

though I stood precariously upon the earth, and might slip from my footing and fall endlessly into some horrible abyss. I was overcome by the feeling of *space*—though why this should be, as I looked down into the hole I had dug, I can not say.

I knelt by the coffin and with shaking hand attacked the lid with my tools. Prying, wrenching, hurrying more and more, I threw the lid aside, at last, with a muffled clang. The dim light of the cloud-covered moon faded at this moment, and it was as dark as I could wish. Little comforted, however, I made no attempt to inspect my prize. I could see that it was a woman, who had been buried in a white dress. The face was no more than a white blur, but I had—I, the cold-blooded, intellectual resurrectionist—I had a feeling as though it *saw* me. Hastily snatching one of the gunny sacks I had at hand, I wrapped it around the head, shrinking a little from the clammy touch of lifeless hair and flesh where my bare hand came in contact with them.

I had time to wonder at the strength of my nervous revulsion of feeling—only for a moment. Only for a moment, and then the clouds parted, as if at a signal, and the moon shone out. God, what a sight met my horrified eyes!

It was midnight, for the moon was full, and it stood in the exact zenith of the sky. It shone directly down on me, and on the pitiful figure of the dead that I had torn from its last earthly refuge. It shone into the yawning grave, and seemed to gather there in a pool, to fill it as it filled the vast dome of the sky. There seemed to be no bottom to the grave, and this was so strange a thing that I reeled and would have fallen to the ground, overcome again by the dizziness I had felt before. Suppose the feeling of fixed attachment to the earth should fail you—that the bonds of gravity should not seem to hold you firmly—

and you can imagine something of the physical sensations that beset me. But you can form no image of the mental agony, the mental horror—for I have not told you all.

I say I *would* have fallen to the ground. I did not, for even as the desperate dizziness assailed me, a greater horror assailed me also, and I could not fall. It seemed to me that the pale but brilliant rays of the moon had taken hold of me, as the invisible power of a magnet takes hold upon a piece of steel. As the sickening feeling struck me that the earth was, somehow, letting me slip away—fall away into the hollow ether—so, a second later, it seemed to me that I was upborne by a force to which I did not willingly submit. I could not fall, because the moon was directly overhead, and because it held me, drew me, as the tide draws the sea.

Who can explain the mysteries of matter? The sea follows the moon; why not, then, our corporeal bodies, which are made up largely of water? Are there not tides within us which we should feel? On this night, the moon was drawing *me*, with a resistless, inexorable attraction. I was being drawn upward, so that I could not fall. I was being drawn upward, so that I felt less and less the pressure of my feet upon the earth—more and more that horrible dizziness, the dizziness of space. I was being drawn upward as a mote is drawn into a vacuum.

And surely, that were enough—but it was not all, nor was it the worst. For the still figure lying at my feet—the white-clad figure with the gunny sack incongruously wrapped around its head and face—that figure, too, was being drawn upward. It was rising slowly from the ground, swinging a little, almost imperceptibly, into an upright position. In I know not how long a time, while I stood motionless as though frozen into stone, watching its stiff gyration through the air, it assumed, finally, an upright posture,

and stood facing me—facing me, with the horrible, gunny-shrouded head opposite mine, as though it were peering out, perhaps, through some thin spot in the coarse fabric.

Suddenly my own voice pierced the night in a frantic shriek that seemed to echo among the low white stones and massive monuments. I had screamed out in a nightmarish feeling that what was happening could not be real. And then I clapped my hand over my mouth in a very ecstasy of terror. For all around me, a doleful moaning proceeded from the graves. And above every grave in the vast acreage gorged with the rotting corpses of the dead, the sod was billowing—swelling outward, as though a mighty struggle took place beneath the surface of the earth.

There is a passage in the Scriptures, in which the evil-doer implores the hills to fall upon him. Maddened by my frantic terror, this passage flashed into my mind. I wanted to take refuge from the unnatural horrors surrounding me; from the merciless, pale light that displayed them to me, and—horrible thought!—that exposed me to them. Another moment, I thought, and the dead will leap out from their tombs and fall upon me in vengeance for desecrating the city belonging to the dead. And still I had the desperate feeling that the rays of the moon exercised a potent attraction upon my body, as though I were about to be swept entirely off my feet by them, and drawn upward into space.

The open grave before me appeared in that awful moment as a refuge. But between me and it swayed that upright figure—the figure of the corpse I had dragged out of it, with its head swathed in the coarse bag I had drawn over it. I leaped madly forward, my hands out-thrust to push that figure aside, to hurl it to the ground—and as I leaped, I felt that I was rushing *upward*. The cemetery with its long rows of mounds and gravestones fell away from me.

Around me I was conscious of nothing but the misty flood of moonlight, and the horrible figure I had sought to thrust from me—the rigid body of the dead woman, which still confronted me with its faceless, bundled head. Then I plunged into unconsciousness.

AS ONE recovering from a swoon, I felt the powers of thought and feeling return to me. Slowly and wearily they came back. I knew, before I remembered the horrors of which I have just written, that they were no kindly gift. Better an eternity of unconsciousness; I did not want to think and feel again.

Heavily, impelled by an urge that could not be longer denied, I lifted the lids from my aching eyes. And for a merciful moment, I thought I was alone.

Where? I was not, thank God, in the cemetery. Those countless heaving mounds of earth that should have lain quietly over their decaying contents were not around me now. But *where* I was, and in what manner of place, was quite beyond me.

Imagine a desert of white sand, hemmed in by mountains white, but not of the sparkling whiteness of snow—of the whiteness, rather, of bare, bleached bone; and yet this desert was not of sand, for instead of tiny particles, the floor of the plain on which I lay was rather like bare, bleached bone, too. There was a deathliness about the very substance of which plain and near-by mountains were formed, which is indescribable. There was a deathliness in the silence of the place. There was a deathliness in the absence of motion, in the absence of color; even the sky was colorless, although it was dead black. But there were glaring lights hung in that black sky—not stars! Surely, no stars shone down on any part of the earth's globe, as these lights shone.

Somehow, they terrified me, those glaring, tiny points of light, thick-strewn against the blackness, varying

in the colors of their flames, distant yet overpowering in the intensity of the rays they hurled against my retinas.

Has it ever occurred to you to think of the panic into which you would be thrown if the consistency of a single law of nature failed you? Imagine, for instance, that your optic nerve suddenly forgot to register perspective in transmitting images to your brain, as it has been trained from boyhood to do. Imagine your terror at the growing immensity of a house-fly, darting toward your eyes, blotting out the world with its black body and spreading wings. So it was that the strangeness of those awful stars, shining down on me, terrified me.

As I turned my head so that I could see more of the heavens—my arm, lying across my face, had shown me but a small sector of them before, although I had been able to see my nearer surroundings by looking beneath it—a sight burst upon my vision which I can never forget. If I were to live through indescribable tortures for a thousand years, even then the wonder of it would not fade from my memory.

In the midst of the heavens hung two glorious orbs: the one, the first glimpses of which all but blinded me, a blazing mass of flame; the other, a beautiful disk shining with a softer light, on which there was a faint tracery which reminded me of the schoolroom globe on which, years ago, I had studied the oceans and continents. The rim of this disk had a softened, slightly blurred appearance, which added to its beauty. And the whole disk was large—perhaps some four or five times larger than the full moon is.

And now, my mind and vision began to correlate my observations. Those burning stars and that ball of flame that glared upon me, as though the softening veil of air had been withdrawn from between them and my eyes; the familiar, maplike tracery

of that enormous sphere, with the softer outline which set it apart from everything else within the range of my vision; those baldly glaring peaks towering around me on every side—their glaring outlines sharply cut against the dead, black sky—their contours wild, fantastic, like the shapes of the mountains of the moon—

I uttered a wild shriek, and fell upon my face. I was panting madly. An unbelievably awful conviction had swept over me. That dreadful, drawing feeling which the moon's rays had exercised upon me—my swooning memory of slipping from the earth—

I was not on the earth. The earth hung there, beautiful as a lost paradise, in the sky above me. I was on the moon, among the desolate, dead mountains of the moon. The veil of air had indeed vanished from before the faces of the stars, for the moon was as airless as it was lifeless. There was no air for me to breathe—no air for me to breathe! That thought in that moment eclipsed all other thoughts. Prostrate, I groveled, I gasped, I threw out my arms. My lungs seemed laboring madly, my chest expanded as though it would burst.

Then something touched me, from which, even in that desperate moment, I shrank away. And there came to my ears a sort of soundless voice—no voice such as we of earth know voices, yet some impulse which seemed to impinge tonelessly upon my eardrums, and which my brain translated into words.

"*This* distress is needless," said the voice. "You are suffering from an idea. A disembodied spirit—an astral body—needs no air to breathe."

Relieved of my instant physical terror, I was at once the victim of a more subtle, more excruciating anguish. I need not fear to die! No; for this—*this was death!*

I had been in the moonlit graveyard in the hour when the dead wake, and

ghosts "walk." And I had become one of that dread company. My body, not swooning, but lifeless, lay in the cemetery—perhaps it had fallen into the grave toward which I had leaped. But I, unknowing, had parted from it and from the fair earth, and had fallen under other bonds.

I got to my feet; turned in that direction from which it seemed to me those words had proceeded; raised my head—and dropped it lower, not to see.

Not to see! For in the lifeless desolation around me, I had one companion—the rigid figure of the dead woman with the shrouded head!

Twice, then, I sought to flee; and twice the grisly Thing confronted me.

At last I sank down in a hopeless, ultimate despair.

If this were death, and I a spirit, moving in an astral body—I had heard of such things, and had laughed quite merrily at them—then this companionship in death seemed to be ordained. For the present, there was no escape from it. And so, for a while, time passed, while I sat motionless, brooding, in an inaction which, it seemed, might endure for all eternity. And while the radiant vision that was the earth with its teeming nations of living men, turning the passing instants to good or evil, showed a changing face—for the faint traceries of continents slipped aside and another hemisphere began to appear—that other figure waited.

AT LAST I summoned all my fortitude and spoke to it. Better the emptiness of a dead planet than its company, and yet—it had occurred to me that I might learn of it, since it seemed, after its brief tenancy of the grave, more versed than I in the way of death.

I shrank anew from the sound of my own voice, which sounded toneless as that other voice had sounded. But somehow I asked where were the other dead.

"Space is the pit into which the souls of dead men fall," was the pitiless answer. "By God's merey, some are saved—but you, standing at midnight by the open grave from which you dragged my unwilling body, are not a candidate for God's merey, in your present state.

"I—I may be one, perhaps. I am on a mission, now. And even you—since it is for your sake that I was sent on it, there may be hope for you. Later I shall speak of that.

"The dead who are lost in space are drawn to the moon, which exerts a compelling power upon their astral bodies. That is why spirits sometimes appear to living men in the pallid light of the encircling satellite. When the light of the moon is turned from the earth, the dead can not easily revisit it; but when it bathes the earth in its radiance, they are sometimes able to follow the rays of moonlight to the planet that was their home. So they sometimes reanimate their abandoned physical bodies—the graves in the cemetery tonight were disturbed by the efforts of bodies and souls to reunite."

Suddenly I was seized with a desire to know more. Even my terror was held in abeyance by my longing to understand more of the mysteries of death.

"There should be other dead around us, then," I said. "Why do I not see all of them, as well as you?"

"The sight would unseat your reason, and you have still a chance to undo some of the evil you have done," came the reply. "Besides, few of the dead concern you. To the dead who wander here, only the evil they have done is real. *Look!*"

Obedient to the pointing finger, I turned.

"There, before me now, appeared the shadowy form of my pal—of Browne, who had kidnaped and murdered the old charwoman, and had died of septicemia. And beside him,

ghastly with a cruel hole in the head, was the woman.

I shrank away, and as Browne held out his hands to me in pleading, I made a threatening gesture which repelled him. Slowly the vision faded, and again my only companion in the desolate place was the figure with the shrouded head.

"That was not well done, nor was it well-omened," said the monotonous voice. "You would not have seen him, but for the fact that you encouraged him along his evil way. True, you were ignorant of the murder until it was accomplished. Yet I tell you that but for your influence upon his life on earth, it would never have been committed. It was not well done to cast him from you. He is not evil incarnate, but only the lost soul of an evil-doer, and little worse than you."

Once more I was the victim of an unreasoning terror. During my whole life I had refused to hold myself accountable to any law, human or divine. I had made my rules of life, and succeeded in "getting away with them." Now there was a deadliness of import in the words I had just listened to, which I did not understand; they implied that in some awful way I was at last to be brought to book—confronted with a terrible reckoning. Perhaps an eternity of this—

I was desperate, and in my despair I grew bold.

"Unloose that covering from your head," I cried. "It is horrible to me. I can not stand to see it. I would rather see your face!"

Somehow, I felt the unseen gaze that greeted my outburst. I felt the approach of a horror, unseen, unknown.

"The time is not yet. Your hands put this covering upon my head, and over my dead face; roughly they put it there, to hide your wrongdoing from the eyes of men. Your hands

shall remove it—but the time is not yet.

“And be not surprized if the sight of my face is more terrible to you than this that hides it from you.”

I held my hands before my eyes, and sank again upon the ground. And again it seemed as though eternity were passing, without life or motion, with nothing to look forward to but the dread reality of death.

Yet it could not have been long before I felt again the unwelcome touch upon my shoulder. For when I drew back from it and leaped to my feet, the continent that had been slipping away toward the rim of the earth was still visible. On that part of it which had been my mortal home, the moon was setting. Longingly I strained my eyes upward.

Oh, to know again the joy of a sunrise on the earth! The wholesomeness of things that lived—of things that had their lives to turn to good account! To be again a living man among my fellows, with the right to *hope*—to spend my days in worthy things, and to hope that at the end of them I might have earned the right to another fate than this upon which I had fallen!

Once more the specter approached me.

“Come, it is time to go, before that open grave has turned away from the moon. We are to go back there, you and I together. I told you, there is yet a chance for you! We are to go back, and you have yet more time to spend on earth. See that you use each moment to good account, for perhaps the first few moments of your return may decide eternity for you. Come, you must go back with me, into the grave.”

Into the grave!

I could not have prevented my shudder at that, if that alone had cost me my salvation.

“I told you, you should not have shrunk from Browne. It will be better now, not to shrink from me. You

dragged me from the grave into which they put me—why should you not take me back there? Who are you, a soul steeped in sin, that you should spurn the company of the stolen, lifeless body you would have violated in your laboratory? You would have dissected it—severed bone and thew and sinew. Instead, it is a part of your reparation to resume your earth life in that grave—with me.”

I had no time to question farther. The deadly, sickening dizziness of space had seized upon me. In some mysterious manner, or by some dispensation, we were to be borne back on the rays of the moon that had swept me from my living body, as the tide is lifted above the barriers that hold the sea at ebb.

And the Thing from which I had shrunk since that moment in which I felt the earth slipping from me—the Thing for which I had developed an unspeakable repulsion—that Thing was with me, pressing close beside me, turning its hateful hidden face toward me, as my senses swam and faded into unconsciousness.

IN MY mind there was, at first, little more than a confusion of memories. I seemed to have looked down upon my own body, lying in the bottom of the grave which I myself had opened, in a sickly glimmer that might have been reflected from the long beams of the sinking moon, or might have been a phosphorescence of the damp earth. In that open grave, partly resting on my body, there was another that bore it down—a gruesome thing of death between me and the open air.

I seemed to have seen this, but in a second instant, it became rather *feeling*, than seeing.

I lay heavily pressed against the damp ground that was the bottom of the grave. The horrible thing was with me there; a fold of that gunny sack I had used to hide its face when first I dragged it from its coffin lay

across my mouth and nostrils. I seemed to inhale the very air of death and of decay.

I was weak, and my first struggles were futile. Only one thing in the world could have been more appalling—to be buried alive. I seemed, even, to taste of the horror of that. Somehow my arms were pinioned beneath me, so that for long moments I could not even free my face. I began to think that I would die, here, in the open tomb with this dead body, and that someone might come and hastily throw down the dirt and sod upon us both.

Spurred by this unreasoning terror, my strength began to return. I raised myself to a sitting posture. I breathed freely. I began to prepare for the effort of climbing out of the grave.

But what awful sound assailed my ears?

Surely, the quiet form that lay at my feet was waking too. The occupant of the grave, that had lain there many hours before my coming, was doing that most horrible, unnatural thing—returning to life after its burial.

And I, alone, nerve-shattered, horror-stricken—I was the sole witness of the dread sight.

The bosom of the dead girl moved beneath the folds of her burial gown. The whole form stirred. Long sighs and deep groans burst from the unseen lips.

I gathered all my energies for flight.

Let life reanimate the corpse before me—I would not stay to see the awful drama. I *dared* not stay. It would be ruinous to be found here, to be known as the violator of the grave. If I lingered, someone would come. If I lingered and this returning life were not transient, then the corpse itself could condemn me. True, I would have been the unwitting means of giving it a second chance at life—but it would surely be known in what

manner I came to have done so. The dead woman who was agonizing her way back to life might not even thank me for my part in her return; her suffering seemed dreadful, now, and, since she had once passed the portals of the grave, this reawakening might be as unwelcome to her as it was to me.

I was clambering to my feet, when I felt a clammy, damp, yet unbelievably strong hand close upon my ankle. I tripped and stumbled, and could not get away.

Helping itself by clinging to me with both hands, now, the body of the woman who had been dead rose slowly to a sitting posture.

A smothered, stumbling, thick-tongued speech greeted my unwilling ear.

“So this was why—was why—my last request, not to be embalmed. I knew. I must have known. Something told me, that I must come back. Yet I did not want to come back! You—you—ah, why is the grave open? It was you opened it—but not for my sake. *Morton!*”

Spellbound, I waited. The voice was changing, becoming more lifelike. As it spoke my name in accents of dread import, it was familiar. *This woman who was buried yesterday knew me!*

Suddenly, a shriek pierced the still air of dawn. “Oh, I am afraid, I am afraid! I died, unhappy to the end, longing for one last glimpse of your face. I wake here in my own grave—and you are here. But you are as hard now as you were then. You came—you came—oh, I remember how you told me once, that some day you would rob a grave. I thought it was a horrid jest—I thought you meant to frighten me. It was true—it *was* true, and you came to rob my grave! Oh, I am afraid to be here alone, alone in a grave. You shall stay with me—I will scream until someone hears me, and you shall stay here until they come. No, I will not let you go. I

am afraid to be alone. You shall stay, and I will tell what you have done—I will tell, and you shall be punished for *that*—”

Frantically I strove to free myself from the grip of those elinging hands.

It was in vain to plead, to threaten, to reason. I snatched the gunny sacking, at last, from the head of the girl who knelt at my feet. But it was dreadful to look upon the face of this girl who had loved me. It was dreadful that we should have met thus; a thing unspeakably dreadful, a thing outside all human experience.

God! Why should it have been *her* grave?

And in her eyes, I read that she was on the verge of madness.

No arguments would serve; she would not listen. No appeals to her old love for me could move her; waking within the narrow limits of her grave, there was room in her brain, room in her heart, for but two things—fear and vengeance.

Outside, the light was growing. Soon people would be passing along the road. They would see from afar the open grave with the coffin lying beside it, and the heaped-up earth. They would enter—and hear the things she was saying.

What they would do to me, I did not know. At the very least, my life would be ruined. I could never practise my profession. I could never occupy my place in the world again.

And suddenly, the girl at my feet began to scream.

THERE was but one thing to do, and I did it. Dead she had been, dead she should be again. I seized the slender throat in my hands. . . .

Although she had seemed so strong, the life so newly returned was easily banished. Almost at once, I felt her grow limp in my grip.

There was not time to rearrange the grave. There was only time to fly.

Of course, there was a great mystery about it. A grave had been

opened, presumably by body-snatchers, and the body of the girl who had been buried there the day before was found lying in the bottom of it, while the open coffin rested on the ground outside. Strangest of all, the corpse had not been taken away, but it showed signs of violence, marks upon the throat that had not been there before.

I have saved myself from disgrace, but I have given up my profession. Death frightens me too much. I can not endure the presence of the dead or dying.

I have changed. Surely I have changed! After my headlong flight from the cemetery, I remembered the things that had happened to me. I had fallen, fainting, into the grave, dragging down with me the corpse. That is, my physical body had fallen into the grave—but something that was I had been drawn upward, beyond the limits of the earth, into the realm of death.

Never do I see the full moon shining from the midheavens without a shudder. I hide away from its rays. It is as horrible to me as a corpse.

Was it fantasy—a nightmarish hallucination that visited my brain between swooning and waking? I should say so, for I was to be a doctor. The profession I was not fit to practise would agree that it was so, for they would seize upon a natural explanation.

I managed, prompted by a ghastly curiosity, to verify the words of the reanimated corpse with regard to its embalment. The girl who had died of a broken heart had had a horror of embalment—she had indeed made the unusual request that her body be buried without it. I could, then, assume that she might have been buried alive; that her departed spirit had not journeyed from the earth with mine its unwilling companion, but that she had been buried and laid in the grave in a state of coma.

This would explain it all—explain it naturally. And then, there was the shot of morphine I had taken in the evening, which might have overcome my senses and inflicted a wild vision upon my inflamed brain. Then, too, there is a moon-madness that is known to the tropics. Perhaps some might say that the rays of the moon shining more strongly than is their wont in our temperate elime had maddened me.

But the horror that lives on with me is too real. The memory is too vivid. Too well do I remember certain doom-laden words: "The first few moments of your return may decide eternity for you."

I know that for the space of that night, two lifeless bodies lay in that open grave. I know my memory of that night is no fantasy, but the awful truth, and that in driving forth by violence the returning spirit from that other body, I made an eternal choice.

I, who had been told that I had the heart of a murderer, have become that most awful thing—a murderer!

I wait for death, which will come some day to me, with a dread beyond description. I no longer believe, as once I believed, that death is the end. I believe it is the beginning—the beginning, for the evil-doer, of an eternity of the horror of death.



The Burial of the Rats

By BRAM STOKER

LEAVING Paris by the Orleans road, cross the Eneainte, and, turning to the right, you find yourself in a somewhat wild and not at all savory district. Right and left, before and behind, on every side rise great heaps of dust, the waste accumulated by the process of time.

Paris has its night as well as its day life, and the sojourner who enters his hotel in the Rue de Rivoli or the Rue St. Honoré late at night or leaves

it early in the morning, can guess, in coming near Montrouge—if he has not done so already—the purpose of those great wagons that look like boilers on wheels which he finds halting everywhere as he passes.

Every city has its peculiar institutions created out of its own needs; and one of the most notable institutions of Paris is its rag-pieking population. In the early morning—and Parisian life commences at an early