

DARK ADVENTURE RADIO THEATRE:
MAD SCIENCE

Written by

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Based on "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" and "From Beyond"
by H.P. Lovecraft
"The Electric Executioner" by H.P. Lovecraft and Adolphe de Castro
and "Winged Death" by H.P. Lovecraft and Hazel Heald

Read-along Script
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INTRODUCTION

SFX: static, radio tuning, snippet of '30s song, more tuning, static dissolves to:

Dark Adventure Radio THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Tales of intrigue, adventure, and the mysterious occult that will stir your imagination and make your very blood run cold.

MUSIC CRESCENDO.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

This is Dark Adventure Radio Theatre, today featuring a special anthology episode: Mad Science.

THEME MUSIC DIMINISHES AND EPISODE MUSIC BEGINS.

LESTER MAYHEW

Science. Mankind's effort to bring a small light of understanding and meaning to the swirling darkness that surrounds us. But mankind's ambitious steps into the unknown sometimes probe the unknowable. Or that which we should not know. The pursuit of knowledge can come at a terrible cost and lead to hideous results. Join us for four tales by an author who well understood the wonder and the terror of science, and the frailty of the human mind. Tonight we bring you H.P. Lovecraft's "Beyond the Wall of Sleep", "The Electric Executioner", "Winged Death", and "From Beyond".

MUSIC punctuation.

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

But first, a word from our sponsor.

A FAUCET fills a cold, delicious glass of water.

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

Mmm, a cool refreshing glass of H₂O - that's the scientific formula for water. But before you drink it, do you know what's in your water?

(MORE)

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)

The water coming out of your tap could easily be crawling with organisms and germs; creatures so small that they're invisible to the naked eye. You and your family could be drinking Cryptosporidium, Rotifers, Copepods, and even Naegleria fowleri. These little monsters can be devastating to your children's health, causing serious illnesses and even death. But there's a simple solution at hand - a Revigator! This in-home water cooler is the only brand with a tank lined with radium, the miraculous metal scientifically proven to kill germs. Fill your family's glasses with the clean, health-giving water they deserve - buy a Revigator.

ANNOUNCER

Four out of five scientists surveyed drink irradiated water in their own homes! Order a Revigator today!

MUSIC TRANSITION.

LESTER MAYHEW

I have frequently wondered if the majority of mankind ever pause to reflect upon the occasionally titanic significance of dreams, and of the obscure world to which they belong. Join me now for the story of one man who dreamed, and the doctor who tried to understand him. It's the first act of our mad scientific experiment, H.P. Lovecraft's "Beyond the Wall of Sleep".

THE ATTACK

The sound of SHOUTING HILLBILLIES and BREAKING FURNITURE comes from next door.

MRS. SLAADER

Lordy what's that? Sounds like Old Joe's on a tear again.

OBEDIAH SLAADER
He's been at the white lightning
since yesterday afternoon.

PETER SLAADER
Meaner than a black bear with a
toothache when he got drink in 'im.

MRS. SLAADER
The two of yous put a stop to it!
He'll hurt hisself for sure this
time!

OBEDIAH SLAADER
Fine! C'mon, Pete, let's go shout
some sense into him.

MRS. SLADER
Children! Y'all stay in here with--

The DOOR SLAMS as Moses and his brother go outside. Joe
HOLLERS SOMETHING INCOMPREHENSIBLE in his house and BREAKS
SOME CROCKERY.

ENOCH SLATER comes RUNNING out of Joe's house.

OBEDIAH SLAADER
Y'allright there, Enoch?

ENOCH
Best stay back - Joe's in a rage.

OBEDIAH SLAADER
Joe! We've herd just about enuff of
yer caterwaulin'!

JOE SLATER comes ROARING out of his cabin.

SLATER
Damn you, Enoch! I'll kill you!

OBEDIAH SLAADER
Easy there, Joe. No need fer that
kind--

SWOOSH - Joe takes a swing and misses. Hillbilly neighbors
SCREAM and RUN.

SLATER
When I git my hands on you--

MOSES SLADER
Ready boys? Git 'im!

FIGHT SOUNDS. SHOUTING. SLATER ROARS.

SLATER
(a crazed maniac)
I gotta kill it, the thing that
shines and shakes and laughs!

ENOCH
Ain't nothing shinin', Joe. C'mon
now--

WHAM! Joe punches Enoch, knocking him out cold.

PETER SLAADER
(breathless)
We ain't messin' now, Joe...

A MEATY PUNCH.

PETER SLAADER (CONT'D)
Aaaaaah!

SLATER
(shrieking fiendishly)
I'll jump high in the air and burn
my way through anything what stops
me!

OBEDIAH SLAADER
Joe, stop it! That's just Peter!
Let 'im go! Help! Help!

We hear the BEATING get WETTER as Slater beats Peter to death.

OBEDIAH SLAADER (CONT'D)
(shouting to his wife as
he runs)
Lock the doors - I gotta get the
sheriff. I think he's killed him!

MUSIC.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

At the Hudson River State Hospital for the Insane, two psychiatrists talk to a New York State trooper. DR. BRAINERD (60s) is one of the facility's directors. He's joined by DR. TALBOT the HRSHI's newest shrink. The SCRATCH OF A PEN as they fill out paperwork. HOSPITAL AMBIENCE.

DR. BRAINERD

Thank you, Officer Gantry for bringing him to the hospital. We'll keep him safe.

OFFICER GANTRY

It's not him I'm worried about.

DR. BRAINERD

Yes, yes, of course. We'll be sure he won't be able to harm anyone else.

TALBOT

He didn't seem all that dangerous. Struck me as a rather submissive simpleton.

OFFICER GANTRY

Yeah? You should'a seen the man he beat to death with his bare hands. Sent another one to the hospital. We found him days later, caked in blood, hiding out in a tree.

DR. BRAINERD

Do we know the correct spelling of his name, Officer? Slater? Slaader? I see it both ways here.

OFFICER GANTRY

Took us while to sort that out. Slaader's the victim, Slater's the perp. They're all related to each other up there. None of 'em can read or write.

DR. BRAINERD

Ah, of course. I don't suppose we know his age, either. Let's say 40.

PEN SCRATCHING. RUBBER STAMPING.

OFFICER GANTRY

Don't underestimate this one. There's something weird about him.

DR. BRAINERD

We'll take it from here. Thank you again, Officer.

OFFICER GANTRY

Yeah, no problem Dr. Brainerd. And doctor...?

TALBOT
Talbot. Edmund Talbot.

PEN SCRATCHING as Gantry fills out his own paperwork.

OFFICER GANTRY
Yeah. Good luck cracking a nutcase
like that.

The DOOR SWINGS SHUT behind him. MUSIC.

INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE

Drs. Talbot and Brainerd are midway through an interview with their new patient. Joe Slater is no longer manic - he's obviously a very simple man with no education.

TALBOT
Do you remember anything else, Joe?

SLATER
'bout what?

TALBOT
About the man who died?

SLATER
He were all wet and bloody. He
weren't movin' 'tall.

TALBOT
And what about you?

SLATER
I don't know how he got there, but
he were a right mess. There were
blood on my hands and my feet and
my shirt and my dungarees...

TALBOT
Yes, so you said. Any idea how that
blood got there, Joe?

SLATER
Nossir. But I heerd people a-
shoutin' an figgered I best make
fer the woods. I s'pose I done
somethin'.

TALBOT
How long were you in the woods,
Joe?

SLATER

Huh?

TALBOT

Do you know how long you were in the woods? Until the policemen came?

SLATER

Yep, them men came an said "You better come with us Joe Slater" so I did.

TALBOT

Do you know why they wanted you to come with them?

SLATER

(suddenly creepy)
They come where death is.

TALBOT

(taken aback)
Sure. Joe--

SLATER

(naive)
Kin I go home now?

DR. BRAINERD

Dr. Talbot, that should be enough for now. I think we can write a recommendation for the courts. Mr. Harper?

MR. HARPER, once a college wrestler, now wrestles unruly patients for the hospital.

HARPER

Yes, sir?

DR. BRAINERD

Would you please find some accommodations for Mr. Slater? Let's put him on the E Ward, just to be safe.

SHUFFLING FOOTSTEPS as Harper leads Slater out of the interview room.

HARPER

Come on, you.

DR. BRAINERD
Well, what do you think, Dr.
Talbot?

TALBOT
An interesting case, really. The
low level of cognitive--

DR. BRAINERD
I'll stop you there. Don't try to
impress me. It's not interesting.
The case, like the man himself, is
common in every way.

PEN SCRATCHING.

DR. BRAINERD (CONT'D)
Brain damage caused by alcohol
poisoning and, of course,
congenital moral insanity.

TALBOT
Yes, but...

DR. BRAINERD
The man's incompetent to stand
trial and should be committed
indefinitely in the interest of
public safety. Countersign here and
we'll send the paperwork on to the
prosecutor's office.

PEN SCRATCH.

DR. BRAINERD (CONT'D)
Excellent. I'll be home early
tonight, that'll please the missus.

TALBOT
Yes, but Mr. Slater... That's it?
He's been institutionalized?
Indefinitely? That's all it takes?

DR. BRAINERD
The man's a murderer, doctor. He'll
be lucky to spend his days with us
instead of heading to the electric
chair.

TALBOT
But there's something unusual about
him.

DR. BRAINERD

There's something unusual about all of them, Dr. Talbot. That's what makes them insane.

MUSIC TRANSITION.

OBSERVATIONS

A CELL DOOR OPENS. MORNING AMBIENCE.

NURSE HUNT

Ah, Dr. Talbot, you're in early again.

TALBOT

Shhh. Observation.

NURSE HUNT

But why do you watch him sleeping?

TALBOT

Sleep affords us glimpses into a sphere of mental existence no less important than physical life, yet separated from that life by an all but impassable barrier. When man is lost to terrestrial consciousness, he is sojourning in another and uncorporeal life of far different nature from the one we know.

NURSE HUNT

(impressed)

Hmmm. I never thought of it that way.

TALBOT

Oh yes, Nurse Hunt. That's where Mr. Slater is now. Perhaps this less material life is our truer life, and our waking life is the secondary or merely virtual phenomenon.

NURSE HUNT

You think so?

TALBOT

I'm sure you've noticed Mr. Slater's expression when he's awake - vacant, dull-eyed, slack jawed...

NURSE HUNT

Sure. That's not unusual with imbeciles and morons.

TALBOT

Yes, but I've noted the past two days that as he wakes, he shows subtle changes in his eyes and lips. Look here...

NURSE HUNT

Yes, I see what you mean. He looks... brighter.

Slater begins to MUMBLE.

NURSE HUNT (CONT'D)

He's waking up.

SLATER

(agitated)

...the edifice of light, towering with cyclopean grandeur, seeking me out through the dissonant chords.

TALBOT

Joe, can you hear me?
(to the Nurse)
Fetch Mr. Harper.

Joe STARTS, then THRASHES ABOUT violently.

SLATER

Don't you see it? Blazing and shaking with laughter. It mocks me!

TALBOT

Joe, you're dreaming. What do you see?
(shouting)
Mr. Harper!

NURSE HUNT

This way.

SLATER

But not with impunity for I shall kill it. Revenge above all else.

HARPER

What's going on?

TALBOT

Hold him down.

GRUNTING and RUSTLING.

SLATER

I shall soar through abysses of
emptiness, burning every obstacle
that stands in my--

Joe's tirade ends immediately. Joe the Hillbilly is back.

SLATER (CONT'D)

Hey, what you grabbing me fer?

TALBOT

(to Harper)

It's all right, Mr. Harper.

(to Joe)

Joe, do you know what happened
there? You didn't quite sound like
yourself.

SLATER

No.

TALBOT

You were saying things. Do you
remember what you were saying?

SLATER

Nuh-uh.

TALBOT

Something about an edifice of
light?

SLATER

(almost remembering)

No, there was a big, big cabin with
a kind of light come through the
roof and walls and floor, and the
loud queer music way off yonder.

TALBOT

What was it?

SLATER

(the memory is gone)

'Tweren't nothin' as I know of.
Nowinagin I do spout off queer-like
but I don' reckon I know why.

TALBOT

Hmmm. That's very interesting.

SUPERIORS

A RAP ON A DOOR.

DR. BRAINERD

Come in.

FOOTSTEPS.

DR. BRAINERD (CONT'D)

Dr. Talbot. Sit, sit. I understand you've been spending rather a lot of time with our Catskill Murderer.

TALBOT

Joe Slater. I have been observing him, yes.

DR. BRAINERD

Observing. Not treating?

TALBOT

I don't know what's wrong with him, sir. This is a man who's never read a book nor heard so much as a fairy tale, and yet he awakes from dreams spouting these extraordinary images.

DR. BRAINERD

(disinterested)

Hmm.

TALBOT

How can the stultified imagination of a backwoods degenerate conjure up sights whose very possession argues a lurking spark of genius?

DR. BRAINERD

Genius!? The man is pitiably inferior in mentality and language alike...

TALBOT

Yes, he's usually hard pressed to articulate these titanic images, but the visions themselves could only be conceived by a superior or even exceptional brain.

DR. BRAINERD

That's nonsense.

TALBOT

You haven't heard him in his delirium!

DR. BRAINERD

I assure you we've all heard him.

TALBOT

Then forgive me, sir, but you haven't listened. How can a primitive dullard have gained an idea of those glittering realms of supernal radiance?

DR. BRAINERD

Supernal?

TALBOT

More and more I'm inclined to believe that inside the pitiful personality who cringes in that cell lies the disordered nucleus of something beyond our comprehension.

DR. BRAINERD

(annoyed and exhausted)

Dr. Talbot...

TALBOT

In dreams Slater seems to drift through magnificent vistas and palaces of light. He seems to be some kind of important person checked only by a strange ethereal nemesis which had once wronged him, and which Dream Slater craves to avenge.

DR. BRAINERD

Yes, yes... fascinating. But I fear you're allowing yourself to become too attached to this patient.

(with a sigh)

I can assure you that over the years such attachment between patients and doctors has led to some... unfortunate outcomes.

TALBOT

I understand, but--

DR. BRAINERD

You're young, Talbot, and a hard worker. I appreciate that.

(MORE)

DR. BRAINERD (CONT'D)
 But you're overworking yourself and
 in the long run that won't serve
 you or your patients. I'm formally
 recommending you for two weeks
 vacation.

TALBOT
 That's very kind of you, sir, but--

DR. BRAINERD
 How about Maine? Ever been up in
 the woods there? A wonderful place
 to get away from it all...

MUSIC TRANSITION.

THE MACHINE

NIGHT AMBIENCE on the E Ward, Nurse Hunt and Mr. Harper keep
 each other entertained.

HARPER
 ...So I said, "If he's like this
 now, imagine what he must have been
 like BEFORE the lobotomy!"

Raucous LAUGHTER followed by a CLANK from down the hall.

NURSE HUNT
 (alarmed)
 What's that?

HARPER
 I'll go see.

ECHOING FOOTSTEPS.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 Who's there?

TALBOT
 It's all right, Harper, it's me.

HARPER
 (surprised)
 Dr. Talbot. Here, let me give you a
 hand with your equipment.

TALBOT
 Thank you.

We hear the CLANKING OF MEDICAL APPARATUS as they WALK down
 the hall.

NURSE HUNT

Dr. Talbot? I thought you were on vacation.

TALBOT

I haven't left just yet.

NURSE HUNT

It's awfully late to be making rounds...

TALBOT

I'm here to see Slater. How is he?

HARPER

Oooof.

TALBOT

What?

NURSE HUNT

He's deteriorating. He's pallid and weak. And his fits are more frequent, and more extreme. We've had to restrain him.

HARPER

I had to use the chains.

TALBOT

Poor man. There's no time to lose. Harper, help me take this down to his cell, won't you?

HARPER

What is all this, Doc? Looks like something out of *Popular Mechanics*.

TALBOT

Yes, it's a diagnostic tool of my own devising. I built it when I was at university. I theorized that human thought consists basically of atomic or molecular motion, convertible into ether waves of radiant energy like heat, light, and electricity. My device is able to transmit the unique electrical signals generated by the brain during sleep from one party to another. This headset here transmits, and this one receives - essentially allowing one to "hear" a patient's dreams.

HARPER
So, it's kind of a Dream Radio?

TALBOT
Well... yes. Sort of - that's a
good way to put it.

HARPER
Does Dr. Brainerd know about all
this?

TALBOT
Not entirely. Perhaps we could keep
it that way?

The CELL DOOR OPENS and we hear Slater SNORING peacefully.

NURSE HUNT
What good will it do?

TALBOT
I'm sure Slater's dreams are the
foundation of his troubles. They're
abnormal. Somehow they possess a
vividness that overwhelms his
waking mind. He's a simple man, yet
in his dreams he sees things he
does not understand and cannot
interpret. Somehow Joe Slater the
Dreamer experiences a reality
completely inaccessible to
Conscious Joe Slater. I mean to
find out how.

NURSE HUNT
He really is a sweet man. Stupid as
a stone, of course, but when he's
not raving about his dreams he's
one of my favorites.

HARPER
Yeah. Still, he's a handful when
he's all worked up.

TALBOT
Let's affix his headset now, while
he's docile. Good. That belt goes
under the jaw. Right. And turn the
crank to tighten it.

It sounds MEDIEVAL and PAINFUL.

NURSE HUNT

Look, his eyes are moving under the lids.

Joe MUTTERS some.

TALBOT

Yes. Time for me to put the receiver on. Mr. Harper, would you please activate that lever on Mr. Slater's headset?

CLICK. Joe MUTTERS more vigorously.

NURSE HUNT

So, will you hear his dreams, or see them?

TALBOT

With any luck, I'll live them.

HARPER

(quiet to Nurse Hunt)

Does that sound like a good idea to you?

NURSE HUNT

No.

TALBOT

Now I activate the receiver...

CLICK. Pause. Strange ETHEREAL ELECTRICAL SOUNDS. Suddenly Joe ROARS and THRASHES against his chains.

SLATER

...abide thy luminous mockeries!
No!

With a horrifying WRENCHING sound, CHAINS (and maybe some bones) BREAK and Joe tears himself free. Nurse Hunt SCREAMS. So does Talbot. Other patients awake and SHOUT in fear or violent glee.

HARPER

Come on, now Joe, none of that! You let her go.

NURSE HUNT

Doctor? Help!

SLATER

You shall not impede my ethereal flight!

HARPER
Joe, ain't no one doin' that.

TALBOT
(gently)
Joe?

SLATER
Eh?

TALBOT
This won't hurt.

Talbot STABS Slater with a syringe filled with a sedative.

NURSE HUNT
A sedative - thank god.

TALBOT
Are you all right?

NURSE HUNT
Yes. I think so.

The MANIA OF THE WARD crossfades with TRANSITIONAL MUSIC.

MANAGEMENT

OFFICE AMBIENCE. SHUFFLING OF PAPERS.

DR. BRAINERD
A "dream radio", eh?

TALBOT
Sir...

DR. BRAINERD
Dubious homemade equipment? After-
hours experiments? Unestablished
therapeutic protocols? And all this
after our last conversation?

TALBOT
Sir...

DR. BRAINERD
Mr. Slater is dying. If you were
paying attention you'd have noticed
all his vital signs are diminished.
Much like your prospects at this
hospital.

TALBOT

Sir...

DR. BRAINERD

If you wish to continue to work here, you will take a six month leave of absence. Effective tomorrow. Do I make myself clear?

TALBOT

Yes, sir.

THE CONNECTION

NIGHT AMBIENCE on Ward E.

NURSE HUNT

Dr. Talbot, what are you doing here? It's two o'clock in the morning.

TALBOT

It's my last night. My last chance. Look, I'm terribly sorry about what happened before--

NURSE HUNT

I wasn't hurt. Just startled mostly. You know Joe Slater's dying?

TALBOT

I do.

NURSE HUNT

Well then... we need to hurry.

FOOTSTEPS, Slater's CELL DOOR CLOSING. The STRAPPING ON of the Dream Radio. CLICK. SLATER BREATHES HEAVILY.

NURSE HUNT (CONT'D)

Ready?

TALBOT

Ready.

CLICK.

TALBOT (CONT'D)

Good. Now, turn the dial, there at his left temple, very slowly.

There's a strange form of STATIC which suddenly turns into a WEIRD LYRIC MELODY before dissolving into STATIC again.

TALBOT (CONT'D)
No, go back. There, that's it!

CHORDS. VIBRATIONS and HARMONIC ECSTASIES.

NURSE HUNT
Doctor, are you all right?

TALBOT
(awestruck)
Oh my, yes.

NURSE HUNT
Is it Joe's dream?

TALBOT
Yes. It's staggering... I never
imagined such splendor.

NURSE HUNT
What is it like?

TALBOT
Walls of living fire are blazing
around me. I'm... I'm floating in
the air! So... familiar...
(he begins to laugh with
delight)
Wide plains and graceful valleys...
glowing... ethereal... a stupendous
spectacle of ultimate-- aaaaaah!

The Dream Radio emits its ODD ELECTRICAL SOUNDS, but Talbot is suddenly silent.

NURSE HUNT
Doctor? Can you hear me? Doctor
Talbot? Oh, dear god. Dr. Talbot,
How do you turn this thing off?

CLICK. Dr. Talbot composes himself as he awakes from Joe's dream.

TALBOT
(a little disoriented)
What...

NURSE HUNT
I turned it off. I was afraid
that...

Joe STIRS.

TALBOT
He's waking up. Joe?

NURSE HUNT
Look, his face! It's changed.

TALBOT
There's color in his cheeks. The
mouth tighter.

NURSE HUNT
His eyes! I'd swear they're...
bluer than they were before.

TALBOT
Yes, luminous! This, this is an
active mind of the highest--

Joe MUMBLES.

NURSE HUNT
Mr. Slater? You want to say
something?

MUSIC.

SLATER
(in a soul-petrifying
voice)
Joe Slater is dead. He is better
dead, for he was unfit to bear the
active intellect of cosmic entity.
He could not undergo the needed
adjustments between ethereal life
and planet life. Too much of an
animal, too little a man; yet
through him you have come to
discover me, for the cosmic and
planet souls rightly should never
meet. He has been my torment and
prison for forty-two of your years.

TALBOT
Who... what are you?

SLATER
I am like that which you yourself
become in the freedom of dreamless
sleep. I am your brother of light,
and have floated with you in the
effulgent valleys.

(MORE)

SLATER (CONT'D)

It is not permitted me to tell your waking earth-self of your real self, but we are all roamers of vast spaces and travelers in many ages. Next year I may be dwelling in the dark Egypt which you call ancient, or in the cruel empire of Tsan-Chan which is to come three thousand years hence. You and I have drifted to the worlds that reel about the red Arcturus....

*

TALBOT

But, no... I don't...

SLATER

How little does the earth-self know of life and its extent! How little, indeed, ought it to know for its own tranquillity!

TALBOT

But... you'd been wronged somehow. You sought revenge.

SLATER

I cannot speak of the oppressor. You on earth have unwittingly felt its distant presence - you who without knowing idly gave to its blinking beacon the name of Algol, the Daemon-Star. It is to meet and conquer the oppressor that I have vainly striven for aeons, held back by bodily encumbrances. Tonight I go as a Nemesis bearing just and blazingly cataclysmic vengeance. Watch me in the sky close by the Daemon-Star...

His voice trails off.

NURSE HUNT

The Daemon-Star...

TALBOT

Nurse, check his pulse. There's something wrong. Joe?

SLATER

I cannot speak longer, for the body of Joe Slater grows cold and rigid, and the coarse brains are ceasing to vibrate as I wish.

(MORE)

SLATER (CONT'D)

You have been my friends in the
cosmos; you have been my only
friends on this planet – the only
souls to sense and seek for me
within the repellent form which
lies in this cell.

NURSE HUNT

There's no pulse.

TALBOT

My brother! Wait--

SLATER

We shall meet again – perhaps in
the shining mists of Orion's Sword,
perhaps on a bleak plateau in
prehistoric Asia. Perhaps in
unremembered dreams tonight;
perhaps in some other form an aeon
hence, when the solar system shall
have been swept away.

MUSIC.

NURSE HUNT

Dr. Talbot, he's gone. I'm so
sorry.

TALBOT

No. Don't be sorry.

THE AFTERMATH

RAPPING AT THE DOOR.

DR. BRAINERD

Enter.

(papers)

Ah, Nurse Hunt. Mr. Harper. Sit.

CHAIRS SCRAPE.

DR. BRAINERD (CONT'D)

I just wanted to follow up on the
incident from last week. You took
care of Dr. Talbot's contraption?

HARPER

Yes sir, it's been scrapped, just
as you ordered.

DR. BRAINERD

Good. Now I don't blame you two. You had to follow Dr. Talbot's orders, and I suppose you had no way of realizing just how much his own mental state had deteriorated. It can be tricky, in a place like this. We all have to be on our guard.

NURSE HUNT

Where has he gone, Dr. Brainerd?

DR. BRAINERD

Don't you worry, Nurse. He's not coming back. Now get back to your duties. Unless you feel you also need a "vacation".

HARPER

Yes, sir. I mean, no sir. Back to work, sir!

NURSE HUNT

Thank you, Doctor.

The DOOR CLOSES behind them. Their FOOTSTEPS ECHO down the corridor. Distant WAILING of insane people.

HARPER

That was close.

NURSE HUNT

Talbot wasn't insane.

HARPER

What, you have some kind of crush on him?

NURSE HUNT

You weren't there. I know what I heard. And what I saw.

HARPER

(hushed)
Careful.

NURSE HUNT

Next to the Daemon Star.

HARPER

Shut up about that!

NURSE HUNT

Look. Did you see this? It was in the paper and everything. It was all real. Slater said we would see him near the Daemon Star, and that very night we did.

HARPER

Well, maybe you think you did, but--

NURSE HUNT

No, it was in the newspaper. I have the clipping. Listen to this.

(reading)

On February 22, 1901, a marvelous new star was discovered by Dr. Anderson, of Edinburgh, not very far from Algol.

TALBOT

(crossfading in)

...from Algol. No star had been visible at that point before. Within twenty-four hours the stranger had become so bright that it outshone Capella. In a week or two it had visibly faded, and in the course of a few months it was hardly discernible with the naked eye.

Sad moody MUSIC leads us back to:

INTERMISSION 1

LESTER MAYHEW

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little lives are rounded with a sleep". Our next tale brings us to the mad intersection of science and its application to the art of death in "The Electric Executioner", a tale by H.P. Lovecraft and Adolphe de Castro.

DELIBERATIONS

A FAN WHIRRS/CLOCK TICKS late in the afternoon in a sweaty jury deliberation room.

*

JUROR #7

Ok, so we've reviewed the judge's instructions on punishment testimony. Can we please take another vote?

The crabby jurors GRUMBLE THEIR ASSENT.

JUROR #7 (CONT'D)

Those in favor of execution by electric chair.

ALMOST ALL

Aye.

JUROR #7

Those opposed?

SMITH

Me.

The jurors GRUMBLE IN FRUSTRATION.

JUROR #7

Oh, for Pete's sake!

JUROR #4

You, again?

SMITH

Sorry.

JUROR #4

What is the matter with you! He's guilty as sin!

SMITH

I agree. He's guilty.

JUROR #4

The law says he should pay with his life.

SMITH

Quite right!

JUROR #4

(very exasperated)

So why do you keep voting against it?

The other jurors GRUMBLE IN AGREEMENT.

SMITH

It's the chair. I can't send a man to the electric chair.

JUROR #7

Why not?

JUROR #4

Give us one good reason.

SMITH

Oh, I have my reason. But it's rather a long story.

JUROR #4

You may as well spill it, 'cause we're stuck in here until we reach a unanimous verdict.

SMITH

Very well. Back in '89, I was a Pinkerton investigator here in San Francisco. I was summoned to the office of the president of the Tlaxcala Mining Company, Walter McComb.

Transition MUSIC.

THE ASSIGNMENT

We segue into the richly furnished office of Walter McComb.

MCCOMB

Smith, good, you're here. Shut the door behind you.

DOOR SHUTS.

SMITH

How can I--

MCCOMB

We've got a problem at our Mine No. 3 down in the San Mateo Mountains in Mexico. On August 6th, the superintendent down there, Arthur Feldon, stole all of the records and documentation for the site. Stock records, securities, permits, licenses, everything.

SMITH

I can see where that would be a problem. Any idea why?

MCCOMB

Who knows? Maybe the heat got to him. I need you on his tail before he gets too far.

SMITH

Yes, sir.

MCCOMB

Here's a dossier - it's everything we've got on him. My private rail car is waiting for you at the Southern Pacific Depot. Our man, Jackson, will meet your train in Puebla. Any questions?

SMITH

No, sir.

MCCOMB

Good. Time is of the essence. And cost is no object. Your office said you were the man for the job.

SMITH

Me and Smith & Wesson, sir.

MCCOMB

Atta boy. Get going - the company's counting on you, son.

SMITH

I won't let you down, sir.

HEROIC MUSIC...

THE JOURNEY

...segues us into the RATTLE of McComb's Pullman car heading toward El Paso and points beyond. SEÑOR OBANDO, McComb's majordomo, takes care of Smith on the journey.

OBANDO

Señor, I took the liberty of preparing you a cold gin and tonic. It's a favorite of Mr. McComb.

SMITH

Thank you.

(sips)

It's a wonder you can keep ice cold crossing this godforsaken desert. I must say, this Pullman car's the way to travel.

OBANDO

First class wherever we go, sir.

SMITH

Indeed. What'd you say your name was?

OBANDO

Obando. Let me know if there's anything I can do to make your journey more comfortable.

SMITH

How long 'til we make the border at El Paso, Obando?

OBANDO

Tomorrow morning at half nine, señor. I've wired ahead - we'll connect to a private engine there to take us to Mexico City.

SMITH

Very good. Hey, Obando, you speak Spanish, right?

OBANDO

Por su puesto, señor.

SMITH

Have a look at this map. Here, east of Mine No. 3. "Sierra de Malinche". What's that?

OBANDO

The mountains are named for Malinche, the woman who helped Cortéz to conquer Mexico. It is a wild place, señor. The kind of place your ladrón might go to hide from the law.

MUSIC.

EL FERROCARRIL

A horrid MECHANICAL GRINDING is followed by the SQUEAL OF TRAIN BRAKES as the car comes to a stop on the tracks.

SMITH

Again? Damnation, we'll never make Mexico City in time at this rate. Obando! What the devil is happening out there?

CAR DOOR OPENS. FOOTSTEPS. SHOUTING in Spanish.

OBANDO

Señor, the engineer says the heat it has burned up the bearings. He will have to drive more slowly until we get to Querétaro for repairs.

SMITH

Repairs!! I can't wait for.... Delays, delays, delays! Feldon may as well keep everything - he'll be halfway to Madrid by the time I get down there!

OBANDO

We have no choice, sir. If he drives fast, he says the bearings may give out completely. We can make it to Querétaro in just a few hours...

SMITH

Just a few hours. Is there any other way?

OBANDO

I'm afraid not, señor.

Smith RANTS AND MUMBLES to himself.

SIDETRACKED

Smith's ranting crossfades into the NOISY PLATFORM of the station in Querétaro. DONKEYS BRAY, CHILDREN LAUGH, someone BEATS ON A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE WITH A HAMMER underscored by the sound of a DISTANT MARIACHI BAND. Smith is PACING.

OBANDO

Señor... I have news.

SMITH

Is it safe to assume it's bad news?

OBANDO

The parts are coming from Mexico City. Tomorrow.

SMITH

Tomorrow!

OBANDO

In the late afternoon.

SMITH

Dammit, Obando, this man, Feldon's on the loose--

OBANDO

I know, señor. I have taken the liberty of booking you a seat on the night express train coming from Aguas Calientes arriving here at one in the morning. I will stay with Mr. McComb's private car, and supervise the repairs. I have wired ahead to Señor Jackson at the mine and he can meet you in Mexico City at half six. Will this please you, señor?

SMITH

(with a sigh)

By god, good work Obando. I should send McComb a wire to--

OBANDO

I have already notified him, sir.

SMITH

(impressed)

Hmph. I'd be lost without you, Obando. Muchas gracias.

OBANDO

De nada.

MUSIC.

EXPRESS TRAIN

We hear the STEAM LOCOMOTIVE of the night express train.

OBANDO

Safe journey to you, señor. I hope you catch this man.

SMITH

Thank you, Obando. I'll commend your services to Mr. McComb.

EL CONDUCTOR

(off)

¡Todos abordo!

OBANDO

It's a European-style train with private compartments. It's this car, compartment C15.

SMITH

(climbing aboard)

Thanks again, Obando.

OBANDO

Vaya con dios, señor.

SMITH

(to himself)

All right, Feldon, now I'm onto you.

Smith CLUNKS ABOARD and OPENS THE DOOR to compartment C15. He SETTLES his bag, sits and SIGHS HEAVILY then GASPS. MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

DELIBERATION 2

Back in the jury room, the jurors are rapt.

JUROR #4

What was it?

JUROR #7

Was someone there?

SMITH

There was. The light from the oil lamp was so faint, I didn't realize he was there at first. He was a man of unusual size, clad in rough dark clothes. He was clutching a huge, battered and bulging valise to his chest. His expression was perplexing;

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)
at first he seemed confused, then
delighted, and finally he pierced
me with a malicious glare.

STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT

The train LURCHES into motion.

SMITH
My apologies. I didn't mean to wake
you. Do you speak English?

The TRAIN WHISTLES. The stranger does not reply.

SMITH (CONT'D)
Would you care for a cigar?

He OPENS A CIGAR CASE.

SMITH (CONT'D)
Cigaro? No? All right then.

The RUSTLE of upholstery.

SMITH (CONT'D)
(narrating)
I settled into my own seat and
pulled my hat down, pretending to
doze. Hatred, fear, and triumph
rippled across his face. I
concluded the man must be some kind
of lunatic and ever so slowly I
moved my hand towards the revolver
in my pocket.

The RUSTLE OF FABRIC, QUICK ACTION, AD LIB SURPRISE.

SMITH (CONT'D)
(narrating)
As I drew it, he was on me in an
instant, wrenching the gun away
from me and putting it in his own
pocket. He loomed over me for a
moment like some giant. He then
returned to his seat, smiled and
unzipped his valise to reveal a
strange object.

JUROR #7
What was it?

SMITH

I had never seen anything like it. It was like a cross between a catcher's mask and a diving helmet with a thick cord extending back to the valise. He cradled the thing in his arms with obvious affection.

The Stranger speaks in mild tones. He's an American of middle age.

THE STRANGER

You are fortunate, sir.

SMITH

Oh, and how's that?

THE STRANGER

I shall use you first of all. You shall go into history as the first fruits of my remarkable invention. Vast sociological consequences – I shall let my light shine, as it were. I'm radiating all the time, but nobody knows it.

SMITH

You seem to have a marvelously fine instrument there, if I'm any judge. How'd you come to invent it?

THE STRANGER

(delighted to be asked)

I contemplated the needs of the age and acted upon them. I realized, as no one else has yet realized, how imperative it is to remove everybody from the earth before Quetzalcoatl comes back, and realized also that it must be done elegantly. I hate butchery of any kind, and hanging is barbarously crude.

SMITH

(gulping)

Of course.

THE STRANGER

You know last year the New York legislature voted to adopt electric execution for condemned men – but all the apparatus they have in mind is absurdly primitive.

SMITH

I was not aware of that.

THE STRANGER

Oh yes! I knew of a better way, and told them so, but they paid no attention to me. God, the fools! As if I didn't know all there is to know about men and death and electricity.

SMITH

I believe electrical devices might have a big role in homes of the future.

THE STRANGER

(snorts derisively)
Homes of the future...

SMITH

Where's your home?

THE STRANGER

Rochester, New York. And Mexico. Back and forth. You see, I like Mexicans. Real Mexicans. The ancient ones...

SMITH

Um, yes...

THE STRANGER

(an unmelodious howl)
Iä! Huitzilopotchli! Nahuatlacatl! Seven, seven, seven... Xochimilca, Chalca, Tepaneca, Acolhua, Tlahuica, Tlascalteca, Azteca! Iä! Iä! I have been to the Seven Caves of Chicomoztoc, but no one shall ever know! I tell you only because you will never repeat it.

SMITH

Of course not.

THE STRANGER

Huitzilopotchli is coming back... of that there can be no doubt.
(pause then sudden vitriol)
Damn them!

SMITH

Who?

THE STRANGER

The Albany legislature. Adopting the "electric chair". I tell you it's a joke, sir, a joke!

SMITH

(humoring him)

Ha ha! Indeed.

THE STRANGER

(choked with emotion)

I'd wager that little chair of theirs couldn't make a frog's legs dance. Damn them all to hell! You see how mine is superior. I alone mastered the secret of the storage battery! Electrodes touch forehead and base of cerebellum—all that's necessary. You don't need to shoot a man through the body after you've plugged him through the brain. Am I right?

SMITH

I'm sure your invention is much better, and they'll probably--

THE STRANGER

Sure, are you? What do you care? The only good there will ever be in their chair was stolen from me! The ghost of Nezahualpilli told me that on the sacred mountain. Now, if we could have done a test, things would have been different. They would have seen its glory. My test on the burro, that was a good one, but a full slate of human tests are--

SMITH

By god, you should bring it to San Francisco! There's some politicians up there - just the right sort for--

THE STRANGER

Are you mad? I can't go back to the States.

SMITH

Why not?

THE STRANGER

Spies. They want to steal my invention. Still, a test on an American is the next step.

SMITH

Excellent! I can find you a dozen first-rate Yankee specimens as soon as we get to Mexico City!

THE STRANGER

No. You're the subject I've chosen, and you'll thank me for the honor in the other world, just as the sacrificial victim thanks the priest for transferring him to eternal glory. Rise and see what a genius of science hath wrought!

Weird MUSIC builds.

THE STRANGER (CONT'D)

Come thee from the frozen mountain peaks, great Itztlacoliuhqui with thy Obsidian Curl and take this, thy offering!

DELIBERATION 3

JUROR #4

He was stark raving!

SMITH

I know! I tried to play along as best I could, in the hope I could pull the signal cord, but he caught me.

JUROR #9

Why didn't you attack him?

SMITH

He was twice my size. And he had my gun.

JUROR #2

Why didn't you try to escape?

SMITH

Jumping off an express train would have been just as fatal as staying.

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

The only thing to do was play for time, so I used the ploy of needing to write out my will.

JUROR #7

Seriously? That old chestnut? Did he fall for it?

SMITH

He did. So I wrote madly, dragging it out as long as I could, jotting down every bit of memorized gibberish that came to mind - anything just to stall until we reached Mexico City.

JUROR #9

But he wasn't gonna wait that long, was he?

SMITH

No. Finally he demanded that I finish and hand over the "will". He tucked it into his jacket.

JUROR #2

Then what'd he do?

SMITH

He came at me, about to place the contraption on my head when an idea came to me. I offered to write a letter of introduction for him to my contacts in Sacramento and to send it along with a signed sketch of the device.

JUROR #2

You didn't.

SMITH

His hunger for fame wouldn't let him miss the opportunity. Soon I'd written a lengthy letter describing the device. I told him I couldn't draw the contraption right unless he put it on.

JUROR #9

Oh, come on! Really?

JUROR #2

Did he?

SMITH

He put it on - the electrical wires
going from his head back to some
kind of battery in his valise.

JUROR #7

Now I know how this story's going
to end.

SMITH

You might be surprised.

Transition MUSIC.

THE TEST

Smith SCRIBBLES away madly.

THE STRANGER

(slightly muffled through
the face mask)

Are you done yet? Hurry!

SMITH

Almost there. Look to your left a
little...

THE STRANGER

That's good enough. Give it to me -
I'll post it to Sacramento!

The RUSTLE OF PAPERS.

THE STRANGER (CONT'D)

Now - it's time! You shall be my
offering to Chalchiutotolin!

SMITH

(narrating)

He came at me with murder in his
eyes. I thought maybe I could
confuse him by repeating his own
gibberish.

Smith begins to STOMP about the compartment.

SMITH (CONT'D)

(in real time)

Eeyah! Eeyah! Quetzalcoatl,
hallowed be thy name! Thy will be
done! I see, I see!
Huitzilopotchli, Serpent-Eagle,
hail!

THE STRANGER

(quickly caught up in the
religious frenzy)

Yes, Mictlanteuctli, Great Lord, a
sign! A sign from within thy black
cave! Iä! Cthulhutl! Take this
sacrifice!

SMITH

Iä Cthulhutl!

THE STRANGER

Ya-R'lyeh! Cthulhutl fhtaghn!
Niguratl-Yig! Yog-Sototl-

SMITH

(pouring fuel on his fire)
Ya-R'lyeh! Yog-Sototl!

There's the THUD of a heavy battery falling onto the floor. A
SIZZLING ZAP. The Stranger SHRIEKS in agony.

SMITH (CONT'D)

(narrating)

The battery was yanked over the
seat's edge by the maniac's crazed
gesticulations and the switch
triggered full current. I saw
blinding blue sparks, and smelled
the nauseous odor of burning flesh.
That was all my overwrought
consciousness could bear, and I
sank instantly into oblivion.

*

SCREAMING. ZAPPING. Train BRAKES SCREECH, segueing into
MUSIC.

MEXICO CITY

We hear the sound of a BUSY TRAIN STATION outside. Smith
GROANS feebly.

DR. MUÑOZ

Señor? Señor, can you hear me? I am
a doctor.

SMITH

Yes. Yes.

DR. MUÑOZ

You were on the floor of your
compartment. Did you hit your head?

SMITH

What? No. Where is he? Where did he go?

DR. MUÑOZ

Who, señor?

SMITH

The man! The man who was in my compartment last night.

DR. MUÑOZ

(to the conductor)

¿Había otro pasajero en su compartimiento anoche?

CONDUCTOR

No, doctor. Compró el único boleto para este compartimiento.

DR. MUÑOZ

The conductor found you here alone. Only you had a ticket for this compartment.

MUSICAL PUNCTUATION.

SMITH

No, no...

DELIBERATION 4

JUROR #2

Now wait a minute...

JUROR #9

If this is one of those "it was all a dream stories" I'm gonna slug you.

SMITH

It's the truth. Had it been a dream? I didn't know. There was no trace of the man or his device.

JUROR #4

Maybe you're the one who's crazy.

SMITH

I was certainly anxious and my nerves at the breaking point.

JUROR #2

So then what?

SMITH

I still had a job to do. I departed Mexico City on a narrow gage train that would take me up into the mountains. Before long, I arrived at the town of Puebla.

*

MUSIC.

ANTICLIMACTIC

The rickety train's BRAKES SCREECH and DOORS OPEN. JACKSON, a slightly-too-friendly mine manager, calls from across the platform.

JACKSON

Mr. Smith! Mr. Smith! Over here.

Smith works his way through the BUSTLE.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Bart Jackson, how do you do? You have a pleasant trip down?

SMITH

No... actually. But I'm ready to get started. Have the police--

JACKSON

Oh, we got him.

SMITH

What? You got Feldon?

JACKSON

Yeah. He's dead. They found him this morning. Still had all the company's papers on him. So good news, I guess. I mean it's a shame you had to come all the way down--

SMITH

(a bit stunned)

I... I should take a look at the body - I'll have to file a report.

JACKSON

Sure, sure. We've got him up by the mine. Here, let me take your bag... The truck's just over this way.

They WALK through the BUSY STREETS.

SMITH

You knew Feldon? Worked with him?

JACKSON

Sure. He was kind of a queer fella. To tell the truth, I don't think he'll be missed much.

SMITH

Queer how?

JACKSON

He was real sullen. Always brooding about some secret machine he was inventing. Didn't want to spend time with any of the Americans but got real chummy with some of the Indians. He'd go with 'em up in the hills - wasn't any kind of regular church meeting, if you get my drift.

SMITH

What was this machine?

JACKSON

Heck if I know. He wouldn't say a thing about it around me. He was sure the company was trying to spy on him. I know he made a bunch of orders for parts from laboratories and machine shops up in the states. I think he stole the papers as some kind of revenge scheme. Crazy, right? Here we go.

TRUCK DOORS OPEN. TRUCK ENGINE STARTS. HORN HONKS. MUSIC.

MINE NO. 3

The TRUCK STOPS and the men GET OUT and WALK up a steep dirt hillside.

JACKSON

We've got him in the shack up above the arrastra there.

SMITH

Where'd they find the body?

JACKSON

Some cave on the slope of the
Sierra de Malinche. Oh, Hugo there,
he's one of the ones who found him.

(calling out)

Oye, Hugo! Aquí!

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. Hugo is a mine worker in his 50s. He
WALKS with them up to the shack.

HUGO

¿Sí, Señor Jackson?

JACKSON

Tell Mr. Smith here what you told
me, about finding the body.

HUGO

It was early this morning, before
the sun come up. We hear these
sounds - a kind of chanting.

SMITH

Chanting? What were the--

HUGO

The names of the old gods.
Mictlanteuctli, Tonatiuh-Metztlī,
Cthulhutl, Ya-R'lyeh. A few English
words too. Then we hear someone
yell in pain. That led us to the
cave. Inside there were old idols,
the idols of the Aztecas and burned
bones and candles. Very bad smell.

SMITH

And he was there in the cave?
Feldon?

HUGO

Sí, señor. He had a kind of
metal... thing on his head with a
wire that went to a bag. His head,
it was all burned up.

SMITH

I see.

HUGO

We put him on a stretcher and bring
him here.

The JINGLE OF KEYS. A DOOR LOCK OPENS. FOOTSTEPS.

JACKSON
Where you goin', Hugo?

HUGO
Con permiso, señor. I do not want
to see this again.

JACKSON
(to Smith)
You ready?

He OPENS THE DOOR. DRAMATIC MUSIC.

HUNG JURY

JUROR #9
Well? Was it him?

SMITH
I'd prepared myself for it to be
him, and somehow seeing it for
myself was less troubling than I
expected. It was him. Feldon had
been the stranger on the train.

JUROR #2
Oh my god.

SMITH
What troubled me was what I found
in his jacket pocket - the familiar
sheets of paper I'd written out.
His other pocket bulged with what
could only be a revolver.

JUROR #7
Wait. So what really happened?

SMITH
I couldn't tell you. Feldon was
some kind of lunatic, crazed by
some Aztec witch-lore. The battery
and the... device, seemed real
enough. They were there too. Some
unknown and unholy forces had been
at work.

JUROR #9
I think you're a liar - making this
whole thing up.

JUROR #7

You know if this is some scheme to get out of jury duty you're too late.

JUROR #4

He wasn't crazy. YOU'RE crazy with a story like that.

JUROR #7

We have to tell the judge. Bailiff!

JUROR #2

Maybe it was astral projection. You were so focused on catching him, that your mind raced ahead of your body.

SMITH

Was Feldon really with me in the railway car? Was I somehow with him in that cave? I don't know. All I do know is that I have not and will never return to Mexico, and I cannot abide the notion of any man dying by electrocution.

MUSIC.

*

INTERMISSION 2

LESTER MAYHEW

A shocking tale. But more mad science awaits in our next story. Insanity infiltrates the scientific fields of epidemiology and entomology in the steamy jungles of Africa in "Winged Death", a tale by H.P. Lovecraft and Hazel Heald.

MUSIC.

*

*

The Grand Hotel A.B.C. is a four-story hotel that sits high on a bluff overlooking the mighty Congo River. On Sunday, January 24, 1931, two men and a woman gathered in a room on its third floor. One was Kofi Adunga, proprietor of the hotel; another was constable Arnould Bosch of the Belgian Congo's Force Publique;

(MORE)

LESTER MAYHEW (CONT'D)
the third was Dr. Louise Pearce, an
American medical specialist
consulting the police. On the
floor, surrounded by broken
furniture and scattered items, was
the body of a dead man...

SCENE OF THE CRIME

*

BOSCH

Please, I'll ask you not to touch
anything until I complete an
inventory of the room's contents.
Let's see: a physician's case, pen,
inkwell and writing tablet, a
bottle labelled H2O:HCl...

PEARCE

Hydrochloric acid - be careful.

BOSCH

Hmm, interesting. This is labelled
MnO.

PEARCE

Oxide of Manganese.

BOSCH

You're astute with your chemistry,
Dr. Pearce.

PEARCE

Organic chemistry was part of my
medical training.

BOSCH

This bottle's unlabelled. A dead
fly inside.

(sniffs)

Ah - ammonia.

PEARCE

There's this - it looks like a
leather journal. It appears to be
well-used.

BOSCH

Does it say whose it is?

PEARCE

(opening and reading)

It's inscribed as belonging to
Thomas Slauenwite, M.D.

BOSCH

Hmm, same name's on the deceased's passport.

ADUNGA

But this man checked in as...
(checking his ledger)
Frederick N. Mason of Toronto,
Canada.

BOSCH

Curious. Did you know Dr.
Slauenwite, Dr. Pearce?

PEARCE

Only by his poor reputation. I'd
heard people were looking for him.

BOSCH

Why a poor reputation?

PEARCE

He had been a promising young
epidemiologist - but there was an
incident where he was alleged to
have plagiarized another
researchers's results.

ADUNGA

Did he write in this journal?

PEARCE

He did.
(reading)
"January 5, 1929 - I have now fully
resolved to kill Dr. Henry Moore,
and a recent incident has shown me
how I shall do it. From now on, I
shall follow a consistent line of
action; hence the beginning of this
journal."

BOSCH

How obliging of him. Would that we
could get all murderers to do that.

ADUNGA

Who is this Dr. Moore?

PEARCE

Henry Sargent Moore, Ph. D., of
Brooklyn, New York. Professor of
Invertebrate Biology in Columbia
University. Hmmmmm.

BOSCH

Something troubling you, doctor?

PEARCE

It's just that Dr. Moore died two months ago. He goes on, "This journal should be read after my death with the purpose of making public my scheme of revenge and to ensure I'm justly credited with its brilliant execution..."

MUSIC TRANSITION to Slauenwite's world.

A BEASTLY HOLE

SOUNDS OF THE UGANDAN JUNGLE fade up.

SLAUENWITE

(crossfading)

...and to ensure I'm justly credited with its brilliant execution. That bastard Moore's accusations of plagiarism have so undermined my career that the best position I can find these days is my new post at a field hospital in M'gonga - a beastly hole in equatorial Uganda. The place teems with venomous snakes and rare tropical diseases.

KNOCKING at his rickety door. The friendly voice of GOBO, the hospital manager, rings out.

GOBO

Hello?

SLAUENWITE

Enter.

FOOTSTEPS.

GOBO

I came to bid you welcome to M'gonga. I'm Gobo, the hospital functionaire - if there is anything you need, please do not hesitate to let me know.

SLAUENWITE

Yes, yes. Thank you, Gobo.

GOBO
 Settling in comfortably?
 (delight)
 Oh, I see you have brought books!
 "Diptera of Central and Southern
 Africa".

SLAUENWITE
 A reference work about flies, by my
 colleague in America, Dr. Moore.

GOBO
 That should be useful, sir. We have
 many flies.

Pause.

SLAUENWITE
 Was there something else?

GOBO
 After you have finished your
 unpacking and settling in, sir, I
 wished to prevail upon you to see a
 man in the infirmary - he is very
 sick.

SLAUENWITE
 Oh, yes. Yes, of course. Take me to
 him.

MUSIC.

THE DEVIL FLY

MUFFLED JUNGLE NOISES. AN ELECTRIC FAN. HUMAN MISERY.

SLAUENWITE
 (making notes)
 ...neural responses lethargic.
 Temperature 93.8 degrees. Papular
 urticaria at right shoulder...

GOBO
 That is the bite of the Devil Fly!

SLAUENWITE
 Certainly looks like he's been
 bitten, and it probably was a fly.
 Bright red papule, purple ring
 surrounding it. Hmmm. What sort of
 fly did you say it was?

GOBO

The Devil Fly. If it bites you, you will waste away and then just as you die, the fly swoops in and flies away with your mind and soul!

SLAUENWITE

Hmmmp!

MUSIC UNDER NARRATION.

SLAUENWITE (CONT'D)

(journaling)

Despite Gobo's superstitions about a devilish fly, I must admit the insect bite seems to be the likely point of infection. The patient, a man called Mevana, is in grave condition. I'm puzzled by the germ at work here.

Slauenwite visits Mevana the following day. Mevana MUMBLES in a delirium.

SLAUENWITE (CONT'D)

Ah, Gobo, how's Mevana today?

GOBO

I fear he gets worse, doctor. You see?

SLAUENWITE

We don't have many antitoxins here, so I'm afraid this is our best shot. Mevana? I'm going to give you an injection.

MEVANA

(weakly)

Gobo, tafadhali nisaidie. Ninaogopa nafsi yangu itachukuliwa na shetani kuruka. (Gobo, please help me. I fear my soul will be captured by the Devil Fly).

SLAUENWITE

Steady now. What's he saying?

GOBO

He fears his soul will be captured by the Devil Fly.

SLAUENWITE

Well that's... That's between him
and his priest, or what have you.
I'll do the best I can.

Transition MUSIC.

THE HEALER

Gobo KNOCKS at the door of Dr. Slauenwite's bungalow. He
brings with him BAZILIO OKELLO, an aged Ugandan healer.

GOBO

Hello?

SLAUENWITE

What is it, Gobo?

GOBO

Sir, I would like to make the
introduction to you of a very
important visitor today. May I
introduce Bazilio Okello.

SLAUENWITE

How do you do?

GOBO

He was the doctor for the whole
region. He helped the English build
the clinic here in M'gonga.

SLAUENWITE

Really? Fascinating. Won't you come
in?

OKELLO

A pleasure to make your
acquaintance, doctor.

GOBO

I told him of your efforts to treat
Mevana for the bite of the Devil
Fly.

SLAUENWITE

Did you, now?

OKELLO

Some thirty years ago, there was an
epidemic here. Thousands died and
it was traced to the bite of a rare
fly. I discovered a treatment.

SLAUENWITE

Well, you've got my attention now.
You wouldn't know the species of
fly, would you?

OKELLO

The Europeans called it *Glossina
palpalis* - a very hearty cousin of
the tsetse fly.

SLAUENWITE

You don't say...

OKELLO

It feeds on the blood of crocodiles
and large mammals. It turned out,
if these animals carried
trypanosomiasis, the fly would
acquire it.

SLAUENWITE

(getting an idea)
Sleeping sickness.

OKELLO

Exactly. But in these flies, the
germ would develop an acute
infectivity after an incubation
period of thirty one days. After
that, it was sure death for anyone
or anything it would bite.

SLAUENWITE

Good lord. And there was no
treatment at all?

OKELLO

Some of our traditional folk-
remedies could ease the suffering.
But I found also if I gave an
injection of tryparsamide soon
enough--

SLAUENWITE

Of course, an arsenic compound...

OKELLO

But I must warn you, sir. The folk
remedies are essential to the
treatment, for otherwise--

SLAUENWITE

Of course, of course. Well, as much as I'd love to stay and chat, I'm afraid my schedule's quite full today. Thank you for coming by...
(forgetting his name)
Mister...

GOBO

Okello. Doctor Okello.

OKELLO

Good day to you, sir.

MUSIC.

PESTILENTIAL PLACE

SLAUENWITE

(journaling)

My idea to use tryparsamide worked - Mevana's recovering and utterly indebted to me. He was convinced he was going to end up as a fly! He's agreed to take me into the bush to the place where the flies live. If I can capture some specimens, I think I have the perfect plan to exact my revenge on Dr. Moore!

MACHETES CHOP their way through a miasmal Ugandan swamp.
Thrilling JUNGLE SOUNDS.

MEVANA

Come, doctor, this way.

SLAUENWITE

By god, what is that thing, Mevana?

MEVANA

It is the kumbukumbu. A memory stone.

SLAUENWITE

But who could have erected such a thing here? Look - this looks like carving.

MEVANA

They say these were made by old gods - "The Fishers of Men".

(MORE)

MEVANA (CONT'D)

Evil gods, Clulu and Tsadogwa -
from long ago. Just ahead is Lake
Mlolo. Its shore is where the fly
bite me.

MUSIC.

SLAUENWITE

(journaling)

Success! Using traps baited with
infected crocodile meat, I captured
a number of the flies. I'll send
some to Moore - he'll study them,
one will bite him, and nature will
take its course. Oh vengeance is
sweet! Now, how to modify them so
Moore won't recognize the
species...

MAD SCIENCE

Gobo OPENS THE DOOR to Slauenwite's lab.

SLAUENWITE

(laughing)

Yes, yes, they're thriving!

GOBO

Good news, doctor?

SLAUENWITE

Trypanosoma gambiense - my germs -
they're thriving here in the test
tubes. We won't need to bring back
more infected crocodile meat.

GOBO

(unsure)

Oh, that is good news.

SLAUENWITE

And my ultra-violet incubator has
accelerated the flies' breeding
cycle. The hybrids I made by
breeding local flies with the ones
brought back from Lake Mlolo are
fertile. And they're feeding off
the infected meat.

GOBO

Very good. And this will help you
treat your patients?

SLAUENWITE

What? No, no, this is clearly
beyond your understanding, Gobo.
Get out.

GOBO

(disturbed)

Yes, sir. I apologize again for the
boy, Batta, who spilled the coffee
on you this morning. I can give him
the boot if it is your wish.

SLAUENWITE

Yes, do. He's useless. Tell him
to... No. Never mind. Don't tell
him anything. I'll take care of
Batta.

GOBO

Are you sure, sir?

SLAUENWITE

Yes. Gobo, make sure the screens on
the breakfast porch are all shut
tight before morning.

Slauenwite LAUGHS horribly. MUSIC.

BREAKFAST

PLEASANT MORNING NATURE SOUNDS. A CHAIR SCRAPES. Batta is a
friendly and obliging teenage servant.

BATTA

Good morning, Dr. Slauenwite, sir.
Your newspaper.

SLAUENWITE

Thank you, Batta. Would you fetch
my coffee, please?

BATTA

Yes, sir. Again, I am so sorry
about yesterday--

SLAUENWITE

Ah, water under the bridge.

POURING COFFEE. CLINKING DISHES.

BATTA

Thank you, sir. Here you are. They
say it will be hot today.

(MORE)

BATTA (CONT'D)
 You're wearing a high collar -
 should I fetch you a lighter shirt?

We hear fly BUZZING.

SLAUENWITE
 No, no. I'm perfectly dressed for
 the occasion. Bring me toast!

BATTA
 Right away, sir.

SLAUENWITE
 Ah, and the marmalade, please,
 Batta.

BUZZ.

BATTA
 Right away, sir.
 (with a yelp)
 Ouch!

SLAUENWITE
 Everything all right there?

BATTA
 Yes. A fly bit me.

SLAUENWITE
 Oh dear. Come by the infirmary
 later and I'll apply some iodine.

BATTA
 Thank you, sir. You're very kind.

Slauenwite CHUCKLES. MUSIC transition.

THE BLUES

SLAUENWITE
 (journaling, happy)
 My experiment is coming along
 splendidly. Batta's infection has
 taken hold. I'm treating him with
 placebos so I can determine just
 how long it takes the pathogen to
 kill its host.

KNOCKING at the door. The POOSH of a spray mister.

GOBO
 Sir?

SLAUENWITE

What do you want, Gobo?

FOOTSTEPS. Flies BUZZ in the background.

GOBO

Forgive my saying, sir, but your hands... they are blue.

SLAUENWITE

Yes, it's a dye for the hybrid's wings. He'll think they're a new species for sure.

GOBO

Oh.

(sadly)

I wished to let you know that we lost Batta this morning.

SLAUENWITE

Hm. Three months and eight days.

GOBO

His suffering is at an end. I've notified his family.

SLAUENWITE

(distracted)

Have you? Good, good. Batta, he was young and fit. With an old codger like Moore, I'm sure it will be even faster.

MUSIC.

UKALA P.O.

SLAUENWITE

(journaling)

The time has come. I've prepared my disguise and arranged a holiday from work here in M'gonga. I'll make the journey to Ukala and ship my virulent blue-tinted hybrids to Moore from there. There's no way they'll ever be traced back to me...

MUSIC transition.

The DOOR BANGS SHUT as Slauenwite enters the Post Office in Ukala. He now adopts a not-very-convincing British dialect. We hear the FAINT BUZZING of flies.

POSTAL CLERK

Good day, sir.

SLAUENWITE

Good day to you, my fine chap.

POSTAL CLERK

How may I assist you?

SLAUENWITE

I need to ship this parcel to the United States of America.

POSTAL CLERK

It is buzzing, sir.

SLAUENWITE

Yes, entomological specimens. I'm sending them to a brother-scientist there.

(pause)

They're very secure and completely harmless.

POSTAL CLERK

Very good, Mr...

(reading)

Nevil Wayland-Hall?

SLAUENWITE

That's right.

POSTAL CLERK

(sniffing)

What's that smell?

SLAUENWITE

Sorry, I included a bit of meat for the poor devils to feed on. It's a long trip.

POSTAL CLERK

But of course, sir.

We hear the THUMP of the clerk's rubber stamp on the parcel. MUSIC.

SLAUENWITE

(journaling)

The plan went off without a hitch.

(MORE)

SLAUENWITE (CONT'D)

The false beard and my accent worked perfectly. I have no regrets; after what he did to me, he deserves this and more. Nothing to do now but wait for news of Moore and his demise.

BACK AT THE HOTEL

PEARCE

(reading, cross-fading
with Slauenwite)

Nothing to do now but wait for news of Moore and his demise.

ADUNGA

He's worse than a monster. Some kind of demon, this man!

PEARCE

It worked, you know.

BOSCH

What? How do you know?

PEARCE

I read about it in the Journal of Infectious Disease. Dr. Moore received blue-winged flies from Africa and was much puzzled by them. He was bitten by one and contracted a lingering and painful disease with no known treatment. The flies turned out to be a tsetse/palpalis hybrid with artificially colored wings. There was an international search for this "Nevil Wayland-Hall" and some suspected Slauenwite might have been involved. The hospital's functionaire, Mr. Gobo, brought the doctor's dubious practices to the attention of the authorities in Uganda, and the British have been looking for him.

*
*
*
*
*
*

BOSCH

He must have cooked up this new Canadian identity and fled here to the Congo.

PEARCE

Moore died two months ago - and clearly this man was his killer.

*
*
*

ADUNGA

But what killed him? Was he bitten by the fly?

*

PEARCE

He was, but that's not what killed him. It was chlorine gas.

BOSCH

Is that what I'm smelling?

PEARCE

Yes. Look at his eyes - red and watery. The purple tinge to the skin. And he clearly coughed blood into that handkerchief.

ADUNGA

Was it suicide?

PEARCE

No. He was using the handkerchief to cover his mouth and nose. He must have thought he could protect himself with it. Foolish man.

ADUNGA

I don't understand. Why would he--

BOSCH

He was trying to kill the fly. Look at this room. Everything smashed up.

ADUNGA

Tsetse flies are very hard to kill.

BOSCH

That's why he cooked up the chlorine. He had all the chemicals he needed in his medical bag.

ADUNGA

Then how did the fly end up in the ammonia bottle? Such a narrow neck. It seems unlikely it fell in.

BOSCH

I don't know, maybe it--

PEARCE

To protect itself. Ammonia can
neutralize chlorine. It knew.

ADUNGA

What?

BOSCH

What do you mean "it knew"? It was
just a fly.

PEARCE

No it wasn't. Look up, gentlemen.
There. On the ceiling.

ADUNGA

Good god! That's...

PEARCE

Ink tracks.

ADUNGA

Writing! But what could have... I
mean how... It's a twelve-foot
ceiling!

BOSCH

The fly. From the open inkwell...

ADUNGA

(aghast)
A devil-fly!

PEARCE

By god, he's right!

BOSCH

But... no. It cannot be. It's not
possible!

ADUNGA

You see it for yourself, Inspector.

BOSCH

It can't be. Science tells us...
doesn't it, doctor?

PEARCE

Science tells us a great many
things, Inspector, but I fear it
cannot penetrate all the mysteries
of this world.

*

ADUNGA

The writing, I can't make it out.
What's it say?

BOSCH

(reading with difficulty)
TELL THEM... I WAS... DR. HENRY
MOORE.

Super-dramatic MUSIC sting!

INTERMISSION 3

MUSIC TRANSITION.

LESTER MAYHEW

(with a shudder)

Positively ghastly! For our fourth
and final act, we find ourselves at
the annual meeting of the American
Institute of Electrical Engineers,
where a crowd is gathering to hear
a very special presentation. Modern
science and advanced electrical
technology reveal the unseen and
the insane in H.P. Lovecraft's
"From Beyond".

TED'S TALK 1

Lead in MUSIC. The HUM of an expectant crowd in an
auditorium. An EMCEE steps up to a microphone. He is elderly,
and speaks shyly with an Eastern European accent.

TESLA

Gentlemen...

The microphone SQUAWKS and he TAPS IT.

TESLA (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, please. It is time.
Gentlemen, and ladies, please take
your seats for the lecture and
demonstration.

The crowd QUIETS DOWN.

TESLA (CONT'D)

It is clear from this large crowd
that our next speaker requires,
perhaps, not much introduction.

(MORE)

TESLA (CONT'D)

You have all no doubt read about his unbelievable experience in the newspapers, and like me you have come to hear the story from the man himself. I met him earlier this week, and it is quite a tale. It is my pleasure to present to you Theodore Waite, to favor us with his talk. Ted?

APPLAUSE.

WAITE

Thank you, Professor Tesla. It's a great honor to stand on the same stage as you.

MORE APPLAUSE, then the crowd SETTLES.

WAITE (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, and ladies, thank you for permitting me to address you this evening. As Professor Tesla suggested, the newspaper accounts of my friend Crawford Tillinghast, and of what passed between us that last fateful night, have been sensational, but not terribly accurate. They focused on the more lurid details - his raging moods and the mysterious sounds heard emanating from his house. But it is his amazing ideas that I want to talk to you about tonight.

It's true that my friend was obsessed with his work. And it is not pleasant to see a stout man suddenly grown thin, even worse when the baggy skin becomes yellowed, the eyes sunken and uncannily glowing, and the hands tremulous and twitching. His aspect genuinely shocked me when I returned to his house that fateful night.

*

That he should ever have studied science and philosophy was a mistake. These things should be left to the frigid and impersonal investigator, for they offer two equally tragic alternatives to the man of feeling and action;

(MORE)

WAITE (CONT'D)

despair if he fail in his quest,
and terrors unutterable if he
succeed. A fact I imagine this
audience knows only too well.

There is a light CHUCKLE or MURMUR of recognition from the
crowd. MUSIC transition starts.

WAITE (CONT'D)

Tillinghast had once been the prey
of failure, solitary and
melancholy; but now I knew that he
was the prey of success. I didn't
want to believe it, at first....

WE ARE BLIND

We join them mid-conversation.

TILLINGHAST

...for example, compared to the way
a fly sees, we are utterly blind.

*
*

WAITE

Nonsense. We have microscopes,
telescopes and--

TILLINGHAST

What do we know of the world and
the universe about us? Our means of
receiving impressions are absurdly
few. We see things only as we are
constructed to see them, and can
gain no idea of their absolute
nature. With five feeble senses we
pretend to comprehend the
boundlessly complex cosmos, yet
other beings with a wider,
stronger, or different range of
senses might not only see very
differently the things we see, but
might see and study whole worlds of
matter, energy, and life which lie
close at hand yet can never be
detected with the senses we have. I
have always believed that such
strange, inaccessible worlds exist
at our very elbows, and now I
believe I have found a way to break
down the barriers.

*

WAITE

I'm trying to be serious here,
Crawford.

TILLINGHAST

You think I'm joking? Within twenty-four hours that machine there will generate waves acting on unrecognized sense-organs that exist in us as atrophied or rudimentary vestiges. Those waves will open up to us many vistas unknown to man, and several unknown to anything we consider organic life. We shall see that at which dogs howl in the dark, and that at which cats prick up their ears after midnight. We shall see these things, and other things which no breathing creature has yet seen. We shall overleap time, space, and dimensions, and without bodily motion peer to the bottom of creation.

WAITE

You're going to wake up dormant parts of the brain? Come now, man, this isn't some story in a pulp magazine!

TILLINGHAST

You don't believe me?

WAITE

Well...

TILLINGHAST

Get out!

WAITE

What?

TILLINGHAST

I said get out! Now! I'll not have some mocking, snivelling naysayer unwilling to perceive the vastness of the universe inhibiting my discoveries.

WAITE

Crawford...

TILLINGHAST

Out! Now!

MUSIC.

TED'S TALK 2

WAITE

I did as he commanded and left. But I kept in touch with his faithful servant, Gregory, who informed me that Tillinghast all but sealed himself in his attic laboratory, eating little, working around the clock.

Ten weeks later I received a note from Tillinghast in a hand I barely recognized. Just what he now wished of me I could only guess - surely he had some stupendous secret or discovery that craved an audience.

MUSIC.

ARRIVAL

KNOCKING. The DOOR CREAKS OPEN. Crawford's voice is now hushed and hollow.

TILLINGHAST

Waite, it's you. Good. Enter.

WAITE

Crawford... you don't look... are you quite well? Where's Gregory?

TILLINGHAST

The servants all left. Three days ago.

WAITE

Even Gregory? He seemed about as dependable a fellow as you could--

TILLINGHAST

Gone. Follow me. Mind the stairs.

WAITE

What's with the candle? Is the electricity turned off on purpose?

TILLINGHAST

(muttering)

It would be too much... I would not dare.

WAITE

(narrating)

We entered his laboratory in the attic and I saw his bizarre electrical machine, glowing with a sickly violet luminosity.

TILLINGHAST

Come, this way.

WAITE

Is that some kind of battery there, to keep the electricity going?

TILLINGHAST

The glow's permanent, and it's not electrical. Not in any sense that you could understand.

WAITE

I see.

TILLINGHAST

Come, sit in the chair.

Tillinghast turns a SWITCH which causes some ELECTRICAL SPUTTERING which then turns to a WHINE and finally a soft electrical DRONE.

WAITE

(narrating)

As Tillinghast made adjustments to his device, the luminosity increased, waned again, then assumed a pale, outré color or blend of colors which I could neither place nor describe.

TILLINGHAST

(whispering)

Do you know what that is? That is ultra-violet.

(chuckling)

You thought ultra-violet was invisible, and so it is – but you can see that and many other invisible things now.

WAITE

I thought--

TILLINGHAST

Listen to me! The waves from that thing are waking a thousand sleeping senses in us; senses which we inherit from aeons of evolution from the state of detached electrons to the state of organic humanity. I have seen truth, and I intend to show it to you. Blow out that candle.

WHIFF.

TILLINGHAST (CONT'D)

Your existing sense-organs - ears first, I think - will pick up many of the impressions, for they are closely connected with the dormant organs. Then there will be others. You have heard of the pineal gland?

WAITE

Yes.... It's in the brain, isn't it? The epithala--

TILLINGHAST

(evil chuckle)

It's the great sense-organ of organs. I have found out! It is akin to sight in the end, and transmits visual pictures to the brain. That's how you'll perceive most of the evidence from beyond.

MUSIC.

TED'S TALK 3

There is a RESTLESS MURMUR from the crowd of scientists.

WAITE

I looked about the immense attic room, dimly lit by rays which the every-day eye cannot see. The far corners were all shadows, and the whole place took on a hazy unreality.

In the silence I fancied myself in some vast temple of long-dead gods;

(MORE)

WAITE (CONT'D)

some vague edifice of black stone columns reaching up to a height beyond the range of my vision. The picture was very vivid for a while, but gradually gave way to a more horrible conception; that of utter, absolute solitude in infinite, sightless, soundless space. There seemed to be a void, and nothing more. Afraid, I drew my revolver.

RHUBARB from the crowd.

WAITE (CONT'D)

Yes, gentlemen and ladies. It's true. Having been held up one night in East Providence, I carry a pistol after dark. Foolish, perhaps, but it makes me feel better.

MUSIC and SFX begin to underscore the description.

WAITE (CONT'D)

The sound softly glided into existence. It was faint, subtly vibrant, and unmistakably musical, but held a quality of wildness which made its impact feel like a delicate torture of my whole body. I felt like one feels when accidentally scratching ground glass. Simultaneously there developed a cold draft, which swept past me from the direction of the distant sound. As I waited I perceived that both sound and wind were increasing; the effect being to give me an odd notion of myself as tied to a pair of rails in the path of a gigantic approaching locomotive.

MUSIC and SFX ramp up.

WAITE (CONT'D)

Crawford, what is that--

MUSIC and SFX suddenly go quiet.

WAITE (CONT'D)

No, it's gone now.

The normal MACHINE HUM continues.

WAITE (CONT'D)

(narrating)

I saw only the man, the glowing machine, and the dim attic. Tillinghast grinned repulsively at my revolver, and from his expression I was sure he had seen and heard as much as I, if not a great deal more.

STILL AND QUIET

WAITE

I heard--, no I felt a--

TILLINGHAST

Don't move. In these rays we are able to be seen as well as to see.

WAITE

Be seen? By whom?

TILLINGHAST

I told you the servants left, but I didn't tell you how. It was that thick-witted housekeeper - she turned on the lights downstairs after I had warned her not to, and the wires picked up sympathetic vibrations. It must have been frightful - I could hear the screams up here in spite of all I was seeing and hearing from another direction. It was rather awful to find those empty heaps of clothes around the house later.

WAITE

Empty heaps of clothes? You mean--

TILLINGHAST

Mrs. Updike's clothes were close to the front hall switch - that's how I know she did it. It got them all. But so long as we don't move we're fairly safe. We're dealing with a hideous world in which we are practically helpless... Keep still!

TED'S TALK 4

WAITE

The combined shock of this revelation and of Tillinghast's abrupt command froze me.

TILLINGHAST

(in a whisper)

They're coming... from beyond.

MUSIC and SFX resume.

WAITE

I was now in a vortex of sound and motion, with confused pictures before my eyes. I saw the blurred outlines of the room, but from some point in space there seemed to be pouring a seething column of unrecognizable shapes or clouds, penetrating the solid roof at a point ahead and to the right of me. Then I glimpsed the temple-like effect again, but this time the pillars reached up into an aërial ocean of light, which sent down one blinding beam along the path of the cloudy column I had seen before. It was like being in a kaleidoscope, a jumble of sights, sounds, and unidentified sense-impressions. I felt that I was about to dissolve into--

We hear an otherworldly FLASH.

WAITE (CONT'D)

I seemed for an instant to behold a patch of night sky filled with shining, revolving spheres, and as it receded I saw that the glowing suns formed a constellation or galaxy of settled shape; this shape being the distorted face of Crawford Tillinghast.

RHUBARB from the crowd. MUSIC.

WAITE (CONT'D)

Huge animate things brushed past me and walked or drifted through my supposedly solid body, and I thought I saw Tillinghast look at them as though his better trained senses "saw" them through the preternatural eye of his pineal gland.

*

I possessed a kind of augmented sight. I saw the attic laboratory, the electrical machine, and Tillinghast opposite me; but also so much more. Of all the space unoccupied by familiar material objects not one particle was vacant. Indescribable shapes both alive and otherwise were mixed in disgusting disarray... whole worlds of alien, unknown entities.

*

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RHUBARB. A dubious voice from the crowd pipes up.

EDISON

Living things? What do you mean?

WAITE

Oh, yes. Foremost among them were great inky, jellyish monstrosities which flabbily quivered in harmony with the vibrations from the machine. They were present in loathsome profusion, and I saw to my horror that they overlapped; that they were semi-fluid and capable of passing through one another and through what we know as solids. They were never still, but floated about with some malignant purpose. They would devour one another, the attacker launching itself at its victim and instantaneously obliterating the latter from sight. It dawned on me what had obliterated the unfortunate servants.

MUSIC transition. SFX ramp up.

SOWING DEATH AND MADNESS

TILLINGHAST

(raving)

You see them? You see them! You see the things that float and flop about you and through you every moment of your life? You see the creatures that form what men call the pure air and the blue sky? Have I not succeeded in breaking down the barrier; have I not shown you worlds that no other living men have seen?

WAITE

(narrating)

I heard him scream through the chaos, and looked at the wild face thrust so close to mine. His eyes were pits of flame, and they glared at me with what I now saw was overwhelming hatred.

The machine DRONES detestably.

TILLINGHAST

You think those floundering things wiped out the servants? Idiot, they are harmless! But the servants are gone, aren't they? It's all your fault.

WAITE

Mine? How did I--

TILLINGHAST

You tried to stop me; you discouraged me when I needed every drop of encouragement I could get; you were afraid of the cosmic truth, you damned coward, but now I've got you! What swept up the servants? What made them scream so loud? Don't know, eh? You'll know soon enough!

WAITE

Crawford, please--

TILLINGHAST

Look at me – listen to what I say – do you suppose there are really any such things as time or magnitude? Form or matter?

WAITE

Look I'm sorry. I didn't--

TILLINGHAST

I tell you, I have struck depths that your little brain can't picture! I have seen beyond the bounds of infinity and drawn down daemons from the stars... I have harnessed the shadows that stride from world to world to sow death and madness... Space belongs to me, do you hear? Things are hunting me now – the things that devour and dissolve – but I know how to elude them. It is you they will get, as they got the servants.

WAITE

That's enough--

WOOD SCRAPES as Waite moves to rise from his chair.

TILLINGHAST

Stirring, dear sir? I told you it was dangerous to move. I have saved you so far by telling you to keep still – saved you to see more sights and to listen to me. If you moved, they'd have had you long ago. Don't worry, they won't hurt you. They didn't hurt the servants – the sight of them made the poor devils scream so. My pets are not pretty, for they come out of places where aesthetic standards are – very different. Disintegration is quite painless, I assure you – but I want you to see them. I almost saw them, but I knew how to stop. You are not curious?

WAITE

No, I don't want to see them. Turn it off!

TILLINGHAST

I always knew you were no scientist! Trembling, eh? Trembling with anxiety to see the ultimate things I have discovered? Why don't you move, then? Don't worry, my friend, for they are coming... Look! Look, damn you, look! Just over your left shoulder.

WAITE

No!

BLAM! Scary MUSIC climaxes!

TED'S TALK 5

The crowd is AGITATED.

EDISON

This is madness!

WAITE

The police found us there - Tillinghast dead and me unconscious. They released me a few hours later, once they discovered it was apoplexy which had finished Tillinghast and saw that my shot had been directed at the machine which now lay shattered on the laboratory floor. In the end, Tillinghast could not handle his own discovery. But where he failed, I shall succeed. I studied his machine, and I have perfected it. Mr. Stage Manager, dim the lights.

The crowd goes quiet.

WAITE (CONT'D)

With Professor Tesla's help, I have prepared a demonstration for you tonight. We present the Waite/Tillinghast Resonator! Professor?

An OMINOUS HUMMING and MUSIC.

TESLA

(with plenty of mad science)

(MORE)

TESLA (CONT'D)

Now please, gentlemen and ladies,
it is very important that you sit
still. Very still....

ELECTRICAL SPUTTERING and chilling MUSICAL sting! OPTIONAL
SCREAMING from the crowd.

OUTRO

LESTER MAYHEW

You've been listening to Mad
Science, a special anthology
episode of Dark Adventure Radio
Theatre, brought to you by our
sponsor, Revigator Water Coolers!
They're lined with radium to make
sure every drop is pure and
healthful. Protect your family from
impurities - buy a Revigator today!

I'm Lester Mayhew. Until next week,
this is Dark Adventure Radio
Theatre reminding you to never go
anywhere alone; if it looks bad,
don't look; and save the last
bullet for yourself.

ANNOUNCER

"Mad Science" was adapted for radio
and produced by Sean Branney and
Andrew Leman, and based on the
"Beyond the Wall of Sleep" and
"From Beyond" by H.P. Lovecraft,
and "The Electric Executioner" by
H.P. Lovecraft and Adolphe de
Castro and "Winged Death" by H.P.
Lovecraft and Hazel Heald. Original
music by Reber Clark. The Dark
Adventure Ensemble featured: Sean
Branney, Kacey Camp, Ken Clement,
Will Chris, Michael Feldman, Matt
Foyer, Andrew Leman, Jacob Lyle,
Johnny McKenna, Kevin Stidham, and
Sara van der Pol. Tune in next week
for "The Tale of Two Talking
Tattoos", a posthumous
collaboration by Mason Farley and
August Derleth.

(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

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