

« « « GRIPPING TALES IN EVERY ISSUE » » »

# Strange STORIES

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# The Dead Shall Rise Up

By WILL GARTH

*Author of "Fulfillment," "The Return of Eric Holm," etc.*

I CANNOT say what actually took place, for I arrived too late to see. But I do know what all of us encountered in response to the terrible cries that came from the cemetery on that August night so many years ago. I was aware of what had gone before, and there were sinister hints that did not escape me. It is not difficult to guess what hap-

pened, although no one can say definitely.

Most horrible was the thought of what might have been done with the body. It was known that a nearby medical college was in need of cadavers and would pay a good price for them. Whether they bought cadavers without asking any questions, we did not know.



The dead woman's arms reached out

pened, although no one can say definitely.

It all started with the mysterious theft of the body of Mrs. Ambrose Hall from her grave in the Sac Prairie cemetery one night in July. The grave robbery was discovered early on the day following her burial. At once the little Wisconsin town became incensed at the horrible deed that had been done. Yet, despite all efforts to trace the perpetrator of the

I think Father Shanahan was most hard hit by the occurrence, for it was he who buried the woman.

For days he hardly went out, and the Sunday after the crime he used the incident as the text for his sermon.

The second crime was an even more horrible shock to the town. This time it was the body of a little boy that was taken. It had been thought that the vandal might at-

## *A Prophecy Defeats a Merciless Ghoul!*

tempt a second robbery, and for a week following the burial the cemetery was watched every night. But the criminal was clever. Only when the leader of the posse, an ex-undertaker named Bob Jackson, decided that it would be useless to continue the watch, did the ghoul strike a second time.

The boy whose body was stolen had been a favorite all over the town, and to make the situation even more tragic, he had been Father Shanahan's nephew.

It was only a week after the second crime that a young woman died suddenly. What was in Father Shanahan's mind as he preached the funeral sermon was only too evident. He spoke a long time about the heinous crimes that had been committed; then he descended from the pulpit and made a special blessing over the coffin.

I was sitting near enough to hear at least part of the words he uttered so solemnly.

"Desecration shall not befall you," he murmured. "Should the hands of a ghoul approach, Lord God, let the dead rise up and destroy!"

Then he reascended the pulpit and spoke a brief closing paragraph to his fine sermon.

"There are two ways to combat Evil," he said. "One is with Evil. The other is with Good. The goodness and the Light are most strong, for Light has always been the enemy of Evil. Now let the forces of Good guard against the forces of Evil that have been molesting the dead in the cemetery yonder."

**T**HAT was all he said, but it had a powerful effect on the people who heard. And, as the days went past, it began to look as if his words had been powerful enough to hold off the ghoul who had twice before desecrated the graveyard. For a little while the new grave was watched, and then the guard was withdrawn. Three nights passed, and the grave was not molested.

But we had hoped too soon. The ghoul was waiting only for a night

of fury to perform his evil tasks. And the fourth night after the guard had been taken away a storm of unequalled wrath suddenly broke over the town.

A few of us had gathered at Father Shanahan's house for an informal discussion, when, above the noises of the storm, a new and terrifying sound cut into our hearing. For a moment the four of us listened. Then we rose to our feet and ran madly out of the house into the wild night. Somewhere in the storm a man's voice was screaming — screaming loudly for help!

And, when we got out into the street, we realized that the voice was calling from just a few blocks away, on the very edge of the village—from the cemetery.

**A**T FIRST we did not connect this frantic screaming with the ghoul who had been so mercilessly robbing graves, leaving hosts of sorrowing relatives to wonder where the bodies of their loved ones had gone. We ran swiftly on, though the screams had ceased suddenly, abruptly, as if they had been shut off by a hand clapped suddenly across a screaming mouth.

Then it was we came into the cemetery and saw the scene that has forever been imprinted on my memory. At the newly-made grave was a veiled lantern, and by its light we saw—

The grave had been opened until the coffin was reached. Indeed, the body of the unfortunate girl had been dragged from the coffin. But the ghoul was there, and he was dead! It was none other than the leader of the posse, Bob Jackson! And the thing that had killed him was the arms of the dead woman, the arms that had drawn him tightly to the fresh earth. *For the dead woman's arms had twined themselves around Bob Jackson's neck, and had broken it!*

Even as I stood there I heard the voice of the priest whispering to me: "The dead have risen up and destroyed!"