

EMPIRE NEWS
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The Magician of Loch Ness

Uncanny Happenings at Manor of Boleskine

EVIL INFLUENCE

I have been very intrigued by the recent stories concerning the appearance of some fearsome monster, about 30 feet long, with eyes reported to be "like the headlights of a motor-car," which is alleged to lurk in the depths of Loch Ness. Interested because at one time during the pursuit of my investigations into magic I owned the notorious manor of Boleskine and Abertarff, situated on the south-east side of Loch Ness half-way between Inverfarigaig and Foyers.

I say notorious because long before I purchased the Manor it was already the place around which a score of legends had been woven. All of them of a mysterious nature.

Thus the head of old Lord Lovat, who was beheaded after the '45, was believed to roll up and down the corridors of the rambling old place.

There was another legend that a lunatic had murdered his mother by smashing her brains out against the wall, and that she returned at times to pick them up again.

These alone had sufficed to give Boleskine an evil reputation, and my own experiences there by no means diminished that evil reputation.

NEVER GIVES UP

So you will appreciate my interest in the latest story of Loch Ness, about which there have been so many speculations.

I notice that the monster has been seen by a number of reputable people, who speak in awed tones, some suggesting that it may be a survival of some prehistoric creature released from some fastness in the earth by recent blasting operations in the district.

Others that it is some mysterious monster from the deep which has made its way to the loch from which it cannot now escape.

I know not. I only know that all the time I have known Loch Ness it has always been regarded by those living in the vicinity as "the loch which never gives up its dead."

Divers who have gone down as far as 200 feet have told of huge fissures and holes in the bottom of the lake, whilst the deepest soundings have yielded over 700 feet as its depth in places.

I have no knowledge of this monster, but I have knowledge of the Manor of Boleskine, where many un-canny events happened during the time I lived there.

It was in the early days of my magical studies that I decided to look around for a suitable place where I could prepare myself for the great "Operation of Sacred Magic."

It had to be a house in a secluded situation, with a door opening to the north from the room in which I was to make my oratory.

SECRET MASTER

Outside the door I had to construct a terrace covered with fine river sand, and at the end of the terrace I was to construct a lodge where the spirits might congregate.

All these instructions I had gleaned from my secret Master of the Lodge of which I was an initiate.

At the time I was a young man with a fortune of 40,000 prepared to spend every penny of it on the achievement of my purpose, but I had scoured the country for a suitable residence in vain before I lighted upon Boleskine, which fulfilled all my requirements.

The great "Operation" was to be commenced at Easter. I set aside the south-western part of the long, low building for my work, constructing my terrace and lodge outside the largest room there, in which I set my "Oratory" proper.

This was a large wooden structure, lined with mirrors, which I had brought with me from my temple in London.

The work would take me at least six months, and in view of certain dangers and interferences which I had already experienced from a rival magician, I invited an-other initiate [Charles Rosher, a fellow Golden Dawn member and friend of Crowley's magical teacher, Allan Bennett] to stay with me by way of company.

PRESENCES

He had not been there a month before he felt the strain unendurable. One morning I came down to breakfast to find him gone.

The butler was surprised that I did not know that he was going away by early boat that morning. He had come down in a rush and simply vanished, and it was years before I saw him again.

One day I returned from a wander over the hills to find a priest in my study. He had come to tell me that my lodge-keeper, a life abstainer from any form of alcoholic liquor, had been raving drunk for three days, and had tried to kill his wife and children.

I got an old Cambridge friend to come down and stay with me, but within a few weeks he began to display symptoms of panic and strange fears, stating that there were "presences" in the place of an evil nature. At length he left me, and I carried on alone.

I devoted myself to the task of preparing certain talismans, squares of vellum inscribed in Indian ink, and in order to make my task easier I did this work in the sunniest room of the house.

Yet even on the brightest days I had to use artificial light on account of the eerie darkness which could be felt.

It was if the faculty of vision suffered from some interference. But I completed my talismans and then sent to the Chiefs of the Second Order in London for certain documents to which an initiation in Paris entitled me.

These were refused and I made a special journey over to Paris. It was at this time that there occurred a revolt among certain members of the Order, and as a result my "Operation" was delayed, as it meant waiting for the following Easter before I could continue with it.

KISSED THE DIRK

I traveled for a time, climbing mountains in Mexico with that great climber Eckenstein.

At length I returned to Boleskine, to find it a place with a greater reputation for evil than ever. The natives would not pass the house after dark.

Yet for myself I shall always feel a little grateful to Boleskine for giving me my wife, although in later years this union which

held so much for both of us whilst it lasted became a domestic tragedy.

I was invited to go over from Boleskine to stay with a friend, and it was then that I met Rose. She was engaged to marry a wealthy American whom she did not love, at that time being enamoured of a flabby sort of individual over here.

The American was coming over in a few weeks and she confided to me that she hated the thought of marrying him whilst in love with the other man.

"We can soon remedy that," I said: "Marry me—that will put an end to the American romance—and you can settle down with your lover."

A crazy suggestion, but Rose jumped at the idea. We were married at a lawyer's in Dingwall by that simple process of declaring that we regarded ourselves as man and wife.

To add a touch of romance to the commonplace, I took out my dirk and kissed it as a pledge.

I did not kiss Rose. It was at this moment that my bride's brother burst in upon us to stop the folly, but suddenly Rose took command of affairs, and she told him to go to the devil, as she was going off with me.

I don't know whether it was my indifference to her and a sort of gratitude for getting her out of a hole which purged her heart of any infatuation for her lover, but the fact is that Rose fell in love with me.

What is more, the fine flight of her rapture evoked my love in return. She was a beautiful and fascinating woman of high intelligence, and the honeymoon which followed was an uninterrupted beatitude.

We traveled. From Cairo we went out and spent a night sleeping in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid, and thence up country for some big game shooting.

EVIL INFLUENCE

Rose was deeply interested in my magical work, and on my return to Boleskine I started to prepare once more for the great "Operation." Suddenly I knew that the rival magician to whom I have referred was attacking me.

At this time I kept a pack of blood-hounds, and he succeeded in killing them off one after another. There was absolutely no sign of any sort of disease. They simply died. The servants, too, were continually becoming ill one with this complaint, one with the other. Action was necessary.

One morning we heard screams and oaths from the direction of the kitchen. One of the workmen had become suddenly maniacal and attacked my wife, who was making her usual morning inspection.

We overpowered him and shut him in the coal-cellar until the police arrived.

Maybe the lake of Loch Ness is suffering from the same phenomena as the Manor of Boleskine. I do not know. But I am extremely interested in the ultimate end of the investigation into the existence of the monster which has created such excitement.