

Terrible Lady

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IT TAKES songs to waken memory. To call up the past, try a tune.

One tune- "Red-Headed Gal" foxtrot of a few years ago can bring the sweat beads to my face, stifle me with the scent of jungle flowers, call back the echo of voodoo drums and make me see visions.

Of Haiti -ghost-port of the Caribbean—dark gem of the Spanish Main—grave of the ebony Empire of Christophe. Of Morne Lunc, mysterious on the Santo Domingan border. Of emerald mornings and nights tiger-striped. Whispering palms and silent lighting. A lonely bungalow. An unwalked trail. Enoch Crade and I, frozen on camp chairs. Professor Piq, goatish, nimble-handed, peering at us across lampslime, his deaf and dumb nephew holding the woman's hatbox; the night outside drumming in a paroxysm of witchcraft, and in our midst that dreadful redhead, nodding and smiling dreamily as the Professor spoke.

"Do you realize, messieurs, that the human race is about to destroy itself? To spare it from that catastrophe, we must find a zombie!"

Memories in a foxtrot?

But there's the theme song—"Red-Headed Gal"!

This is the story:

I met Enoch Crade taking a

course on psychic phenomena. Extra-sensory impressionism. Hypnosis. It was his conviction that there was "something in it" that started him delving into the psychic and burrowing into such allied subjects as Black Magic, White Magic. Occultism. Hexery. Spells.

I took the course as a hobby. Crade didn't. We shared rooms together, and he was at it day and night. Plain blue eyes, chestnut hair, pale face, he looked thirty-five, but was only just thirty.

I did manage to get him out to the World's Fair—I suppose that's where this story really begins. On those 1939 fair-grounds full of exhibits, glass palaces and midway shows—the World of Tomorrow, it was a Hindu mind-reader who sold clairvoyance in a booth who interested Enoch.

"I see an aura around you, Sahib," the Hindu droned. "A golden aura. You are coming into a lot of money."

Queer again, for it was in that Hindu's tent that Enoch first learned of his fortune. I was with him when it happened. A tabloid dropped on a bench. "American Inherits Million Sweepstakes Ticket." And Enoch's photograph, big as life.

I can see him shouting as he picked up the paper, and the Hindu

salaaming and declaring he had seen it in the aura. It was true enough. Not a million, but a cool seven hundred thousand. From a wandering uncle who'd left Enoch a bungalow in Haiti and a jackpot in a lottery. Enoch was rich!

"Bill, I'm going down there. Haitian voodoo! Black magic! A chance to do real research right on location! Nobody can disturb us there! You're going, too!"

He'd always wanted to investigate Haitian witchcraft, reports of voodoo practices brought to the Caribbean in the dark days of slavery. Hispaniola, the Magic Island, had been a feature of our lectures. And the money, to Crade, was not only a means but an incentive.

Warned to Shun the Abode of Evil Spirits.

"Thank God!" he praised, on the day we reached the island. "With no newspapers or telephones here, I can even write a book. We're away from it all."

Away was right. That bungalow, remote in the Haitian interior, was two weeks by horseback to Port-au-Prince and at least two thousand years away from New York. Civilization was absent. In the little mud-thatch village at valley bottom, the natives liked to go around without their pants. Bingo, our house-boy, rattling his charms, might have just stepped out of the Congo. Our nearest white neighbors were two Bavarian naturalists, Herren Grumann and Letterspitz, camped twelve miles down the river. Beefy, bespectacled,

typical Germans of the old school, the pair said they were refugees from Nazi intolerance. They were friendly and democratic, but engaged in their own delvings in the Haitian wilderness; we saw them infrequently.

So Enoch had plenty of privacy for research, and material, too. Overlooking the valley, our bungalow faced a caravan of blue mountains marking the Santo Domingo border. Looming above our roof was a steep massif known as Morne Lune, a gloomy palisade, its lower flanks clothed in dense jungle, its higher escarpments darkly wooded, its summit awash in gray clouds and illuminated at night by noiseless lightning.

Trails were unmapped in this region; reportedly the morne had never been explored by white men, and the natives avoided it. Even the Garde d'Haiti, the famous Haitian Mounted Police, on their monthly patrol liked to skirt Morne Lune. Dangerous, they warned. Hideout for Caco bandits, outlaws, Santo Domingan renegades and snipers. Grumann and Letterspitz, hunting the lower ridges, had been shot at, and their advice was to steer clear.

And the valley natives warned us for another reason—Morne Lune was an abode of haunts, spectres and evil spirits, werewolves and their sorcerous masters. A rumored rendezvous of the Culte des Morts, that ghoulish society of magicians who resurrected corpses from their graves and turned them into zombies. Altogether it wasn't a comfortable mountain to have hanging over our back yard. Your Haitian hillman is

about the most superstitious creature alive; although voodoo is against the law in Haiti, the old papaloi priest in the village did a holiday business in amulets and ouanga charms, and all night long we'd hear the wooden drums.

Zombiism. Black magic. Voodoo drums. Enoch was in his element. When he wasn't interviewing the old root doctor in the village, he was analyzing the superstitions of Bingo. He was happy; I wasn't. Of course I didn't believe in walking dead men and all that; neither did Enoch. But about voodoo, I agreed that "there might be something in it."

After about six months it began to get on my nerves. The solitude. The jungle. Every day a steaming hothouse; every night a Halloween with the drums thumping in the valley, the lightning silhouetting the dark morne, Enoch immersed deep in his studies, and I left to twiddle my thumbs. The occult can be fascinating, but I felt Enoch was becoming too wrapped up in the stuff. Unhealthy atmosphere, it had me worried.

These memories in a foxtrot? Well, Enoch refused to own a radio—one of his pet aversions—but I had stumbled on an old gramophone and a dozen records; that tune among them. "Red Headed Gal". I played the records and hated them. Still, that Broadway ditty drowned out the incessant thump of valley drums and made a nostalgic connection with home. I was playing it that night—and Enoch was working—when the knock came at our door...

It sounded like, but it wasn't, Poe's Raven. It was a traveler, a

stranger, a shortish, spry individual with a long-nosed face, a heavy underlip and a gray chin whisker—a man who, standing in moon-shadow with the night behind him, resembled an elderly billy-goat. With him was a slim creature in sailor dungarees, whose youthful face looked very white under an enormous straw sombrero, and who, carrying on a shoulder what looked like a woman's leather hatbox, appeared even then to be frightened.

I saw a saddle horse and pack animals at the compound gate and — surprise — the man with the goatee asked for Enoch Crade. He snapped on ribboned glasses, jabbed a card into my hand and thrust by me into the bungalow.

Professor Pamphile Piq — Moscow Institute. Doctor of Necrology & Metaphysician of Macrobiotics.

He butted in, and his pale attendant with the hatbox followed. Enoch greeted them. Lamplight did nothing to dispel the elderly man's goatish appearance. Wearing cracked boots and battered sun helmet, he circled the room, examining the window blinds and the kitchen door. Then when he dropped into a chair and spoke out, hoarse-voiced, he seemed more goaty than before.

"Forgive this intrusion, Monsieur Crade, but I had to be sure there was no one eavesdropping under the window. I came here in dire emergency and what I have to say is of tremendous import. It is safe to talk?"

Enoch told him he could talk, and he started answering questions before we could ask them.

What brought him to our bungalow? Voila! He produced an old

tabloid from his hip—Enoch's picture—Millionaire Goes to Haiti to Study Voodoo—"I found that, monsieur, and the minute I saw it, I knew you were just the man to help me!"

Help him do what? All right, he would tell us. He knew of Enoch Crade's scholarly research from similar research of his own. Did we read Russian? No? A pity! He produced Russian newspaper clippings, accounts of his own work in the psychic field. Most of his experiments had been conducted in Moscow

His experiments? Working with the dead. Because, from the dead, one learned much of life, so he, Professor Piq, had specialized in corpses, mummies, cadavers. As a necrologist he had made a particular study of embalming; we knew, of course of Lenin's body preserved under glass at Red Square. He, Professor Piq, had helped do the job. He, too, was one of the scientists who had opened Amenhotep's Tomb. But embalming was not the goal of his research, no. The goal was the drugs of preservation. A means of sustaining life after death.

"That is my aim!" he told Crade. "The preservation of life- after death. You know we scientists are mystified by death. No one knows at what exact moment a body dies. The hair, the nails, certain corpuscles live on. The soul? What is it? Then is no medical name for it. When does it depart? Who sees it go? Does it go? Superstitious people see it as a gray vapor located in the chest. Spiritualists see it as an aura. I see it as the mind, in the

brain. Perhaps it lingers after death. How long? We do not know the answer. But if the body could be preserved, the lingering soul resuscitated, life would return. Ah there is the problem that has occupied men of science since science began. How to defeat the ending of life. How to revive the dead!"

The Professor Predicts a World Cataclysm

He broke off and peered around. Now, reaching a climax, he held us breathless.

"Messieurs, I believe I am on the verge of solving that problem!"

"Of reviving the dead?" Enoch stared.

Lampshine was moony on the Professor's glasses. "Scientists," he leaned at us, "are always examining future possibilities. Those of the Soviet were continually speaking of tomorrow. But I had heard of things in Haiti—rumors- reports—of corpses raised by witchcraft. Voodoo is very old. Perhaps these primitive children of Africa know of some secret drug, some life-restoring formula. Perhaps the answer lies hidden in the Past."

"If you're speaking of zombies---" Enoch began.

"Exactly."

"But there's no such thing," Enoch shook his head. "After six months' research here, I'm convinced they're only creatures of jungle legend."

"I have reason to believe you are wrong," the Professor spoke softly, "for, while scouting the jungle to find you, my assistant and I encountered

an ancient hermit who told us he had seen the un-dead dead—only recently—a corpse who walked in the jungle as a man in a dream, with outgroping hands and unseeing eyes.’

I don’t wonder Enoch expelled a husky "Damn!". Out In the night the drums were going, louder than usual; a full moon being over Morne Lune, and our visitor's statement was weird. Thrusting toward us, he made a weirder one.

“We must locate that creature, Monsieur Crade. With your knowledge of the territory, your intimacy with native lore, you can help me. Time is short. The situation is desperate. A global cataclysm approaches.” He held up his hand to stall questions. "I came to Haiti impelled to perform an experiment for the sake of humanity. If this experiment succeeds—and for the sake of humanity it must succeed!—it would mean world power. My findings will go to the world. But I need aid; helpers I can trust. You arc Americans. I appeal to you!”

He rose impressively. "Believe me, messieurs, the experiment I propose to show you will shake the world!”

The experiment? We must find a corpse raised from the grave. Draw blood from this living dead man. Attempt to isolate the drug or chemical which had restored it to life. Formulate a plasma or effect a transfusion. Inject this solution into dead matter and restore life in this second body—"or part of a body."

With this, he motioned to the youth, who’d been standing in the doorway, wordless, hatbox on shoulder all this time—and in answer to the

finger-wag, this figure moved forward and placed the hatbox on the table.

"This is Felix, my nephew," the Professor introduced, as the blue eyes under the sombrero averted shyly. "He is deaf and dumb, thus a discreet assistant. And now, messieurs, the subject of my experiment---"

He lifted the lid and, taking from the box a large glass jar, he placed it by the table lamp. Enoch whispered, "Good God!" Bingo, peeping from the kitchen, screamed and fled.

If I live to be a thousand, I can never forget the thing in that jar. The features asleep, the flowing tresses of red hair, the countenance composed like a Mona Lisa mask. Ears as delicate as abalone shells. Eyebrows arched as by the brush of a Da Vinci. Lips, exquisite, drowsy, quirked in a whimsical smile. The face turned slowly in the lamplight in a movement as unearthly as somnambulism. Only the disembodied could float in such slumberous peace. It was floating, too. In blue alcohol. A woman's head!

"Gentlemen," the Professor gestured, "I present Mademolsello Hideous." Actually what he said was, "Mademoiselle I. D. S." but the quickness of the eye deceived the ear; Hideous she was to me then, and from then on. I heard Enoch say thickly, "Where did you get it? Whose is it?"

"Whose? Whose?" The Professor bent over the jar, "In a way you might say it is mine. This head formerly belonged to the cool shoulders of a murderess. If you will notice the expert precision of the decapitation you will see it was severed from those shoulders by La Guillotine."

Murderess! La Guillotine! For all the tropic night outside, the bungalow went as cold as an igloo.

In the face of our appallment, the Professor went on to say he had picked it up at a cut rate—his very words—at a French penal colony.

"The woman's crimes must have been extraordinary ones for her head was rushed to the prison laboratory to be preserved for future study by criminologists. Is it not in a remarkable state of preservation? Observe," the Professor gestured, "it is as fresh as a daisy. Thus I chose it as a perfect subject for experimentation. Enfin, I know only her initials, Mademoiselle I. D. S."

He displayed some kind of certificate, which he showed us as a bill of sale. Enoch, staring at the jar, looked seasick, and I suppose I did, too. But then the Frenchman came to the high point of his speech.

"I propose, messieurs, to track down that living corpse seen on the mountain. To inject some of its blood into this head. To bring this head back to life so that the brain shall remember, the eyes shall open, the lips shall speak. Can you comprehend the implication of that?" he droned at Enoch. "It would mean we have solved the mystery of resurrection! Give us a plasma which would restore life, not only to the body, but to any part of the body! Think of the possibilities! No man could ever be destroyed, no human killed, no soldier die on the battlefield. Death would become a thing of the past! Think, for example, what a ruthless despot bent on conquest would give for such a life-preserving secret. Think, too, what it

would mean to all mankind if used for mankind's benefit, as in this case it will be used."

His eyes blazed at us. "But there is no time to lose. We must start our hunt for the un-dead dead tomorrow morning. Do you realize, messieurs, the human race is about to destroy itself? To spare it from that catastrophe we must find a zombie!"

It's all there in my memories of that tune, "Red-Headed Gal." The bungalow in lamplight. That redhead on the table. The deaf mute shy in a corner. The Frenchman in a posture of appeal. Enoch staring at that jar, then at the Professor. He thought the Frenchman mad; I could see that.

That was the time for Enoch to have given our visitor the gate. But Enoch was staring at that head in the glass jar. He delayed too long. Hoofbeats broke loose in the night, riding fast up the valley trail. Professor Piq put the head back into the hatbox. Horsemen halloped and Enoch darted out to the verandah.

Shadowy in moonlight, were the naturalists from down river. They explained, excitedly. "Europe is at war!"

"War?" Enoch cried.

"Hitler has swept into Poland. France and England are fighting. It has been raging for a month. We are leaving. Good-by."

They were gone. Enoch came inside, his face pale. Professor Piq, standing alert guard over the hatbox, nodded somberly.

"You thought me mad, no? But the cataclysm has begun."

"I'll join your zombie-hunt," Enoch said in an unnatural voice.

"When do we start?"

WE SET out for Morne Lune at dawn— Professor Piq and his silent nephew, Felix—Enoch, myself and Bingo.

Vainly I had reminded Enoch of the mountain's bad reputation. News of war had convinced him of the Professor's sanity, just as the coincidence of inheriting a fortune had once convinced him "there was something" in the clairvoyant powers of that World's Fair swami.

"You know there are unsolved mysteries, Bill. Voodoo is one of them. Professor Piq was right about the cataclysm. Maybe in this zombie theory he's got something."

He had something, all right. In that hatbox, riding side-saddle. Mademoiselle! Yes, that redhead went along with us. "We cannot leave her at the bungalow," the Professor swore. "Some native might make off with her. She must go with us." She did.

As I moved on, that head acquired a personality. Perhaps it was the Professor's naming it, referring to it in the third person feminine, treating it as a doctor might treat a patient. Nightly her hair must be combed; the alcohol changed. Felix always handled this ritual in the privacy of his tent, and then the jar would be there at our campfire with the deaf-mute presiding over it.

"Mademoiselle must be kept in good shape for her operation," Professor Piq would say, "Do you notice the expression on her face, messieurs? But who can deny that in her brain the soul may still exist?"

I think that's what captured Enoch's Imagination. That the brain

in that redhead preserved in blue alcohol might still contain a soul!

He spoke to me about it. "Who knows, Bill? If the soul should still be there in that woman's brain?"

"Enoch," I snarled, "have you gone crazy, too?"

"But that face does have expression! I noticed it tonight in the firelight. That wistful smile—magnificent red hair—Bill, it's really beautiful! And I can't help wondering who she was. Why was she guillotined? I've been picturing her as a charming person, aristocratic—a lady. I tell you, Bill, whoever she was I think she was innocent."

"And I picture her as a courtesan who cut the liver out of her lover," I snapped. "For heaven's sake, Enoch, wake up!"

But he was positive the lady was innocent of crime; he could read that from her facial expression. What's more, he was certain he'd seen her face somewhere before, perhaps in the newspapers. Somewhere he must have read about her case. Where? All day he'd been racking his memory. That wasn't all.

"If we could bring that brain to life, Bill— if zombie blood could revive it—if her lips could speak!"

"Man," I said, "you're delirious."

"I don't know. I think the Professor's right. The soul must be there, for the face to wear such an expression. Bill, we've got to go on with this. If the Professor's experiment works, it would save the world from destruction. Great God! It would revolutionize all life! No more dying. Great men preserved for generations! Why," he gripped my

arm, "it would even give this unfortunate woman a chance to prove her innocence!"

That was the straw that broke the camel's back of reason. The whole thing was so crazy, I began to think I was. There we were trailing into dangerous country to find a corpse brought to life by witchcraft, and there was no such thing as a zombie to begin with!

But I won't detail that insane hunt up through the Jungles of Morne Lune. The scorching sun. The gleaming nights. It was foolhardy, scaling that mountain into the Unknown. I didn't blame Bingo for throwing down his pack on the way and refusing to go farther.

I protested, too, but Enoch wouldn't listen to me.

Even after we found the old hermit in his hut up there. And that ancient peasant, as black as licorice and as wrinkled as a washboard, told us that he, Joseph the Lonely, had seen a zombie at the mountain-top In a forest of dead mahogany trees which marked an ancient battleground. Even after he described the zombie in detail as a creature in a grave- shroud with a great, bloody sabre gash on its forehead, walking as a man in a dream with unseeing eyes, even after we left him and pushed on up the summit of Morne Lune and found that forest. I was wholly skeptical.

No, I never expected to see a walking corpse, but if I had, I would have looked for it there. That mountain-top was a gathering place for ghosts, and I can see that forest in my mind's eye as a spirit medium's dream. Brown swords, rotted musket

barrels, wagon wheels, all the rusted debris of battle in the thickets. Skulls were everywhere, like toadstools. Ribs and shinbones like kindling in the grass. In that cemetery of arboreal and human skeletons, a great battle had raged and passed out of history.

Picture us. Four white men—and a redhead!—hugging a campfire at the edge of a dead forest at the top of Haiti, waiting to see a zombie. We didn't talk. But every few minutes the Professor would peer into the woods, listening. And Felix would peer. And Enoch would shift his gaze from that jar at Felix's elbow to scan the trees. And Mademoiselle, moved by some invisible current, would turn her head slowly in its aquarium of blue alcohol and, ear toward the forest, seem to listen, the firelight shining on her sleeping, Mona Lisa face.

Two hours of that and I was ready to weep. The swollen, tropical moon came up. Anticipating, Professor Piq opened a saddle bag and took out a case of surgical Instruments. Enoch, chin in hand, was gazing raptly across the fire at Mademoiselle.

And then—wow! I saw it first. Along a footpath, coming quietly out of the trees, something was advancing down that moon- reddened path. A shadow cloaked in dirty white. An apparition? But it moved. Slowly. Haltingly. Hands out-groping, as though blind. I saw a corpse-like face—glassy eyes—

"Yaaaah!" I must have howled like a hyena. Even at sixty yards I could see the raw sabre-gash on that creature's forehead.

And then bullets zipped past us, The black forms of natives emerged in

an onrush from the darkness. How or why they had dared to attack us in that nightmare spot I did not know. But we were grappling with them. In the end they fled. And the zombie vanished with them.

"Fool!" screamed the Professor. "The zombie has run away."

That strange figure had suddenly made a dive for the bushes. Enoch knocked me down with a flying tackle; Professor Piq and Felix were off through the trees with a rush. Felix had Mademoiselle in her hatbox, and the Professor had his surgeon's case, he was shouting "After it! Don't let it escape!" Enoch legged it in pursuit; I pursued Enoch; the professor pointed toward a ridge, shouting at us to go that way and head the zombie off, and the chase was on.

We lost the zombie; we lost Professor Piq and nephew; then Enoch and I got lost. When we gained the ridge there was no sign of that trio. The moon went down and the blackout was graying into morning when we finally heard the Professor's halloo.

Daylight was making when we found him; and that's another scene indelible in my memory book. The sky tinting blue, mists in the forest, and the open space where the Professor, surgeon's case in hand, stood like a solitary statue at the edge of a cliff. Mademoiselle in her hatbox was with him. But Felix and that corpse-like figure we had chased were nowhere to be seen.

The Professor beckoned us to the cliff-rim; motioned us to look over. Tears were streaming down his cheeks, and I almost wept, too, when I looked down. The wall fell sheer for

half a mile, and at the bottom was a crystal lake.

"Do you see it?" the Professor whispered. "The sombrero?"

Enoch spied it at the same time I did. That straw hat clinging to a bush fifty feet below. He recoiled from the chasm-edge with a gasp. "Felix!"

"Yes," the Professor nodded. "We trapped the zombie at this cliff-top. Felix was holding him; I, doing the surgery. Suddenly the creature shrieked and fought. He and Felix went over." Professor Piq paused sadly; then squared up. "But my poor nephew's death was not futile, messieurs. He gave his life for science, for humanity! Look! From the zombie I obtained this."

He held up a big hypodermic needle. It was fat, we saw, with blood...

Enoch stood glaring at that hypodermic needle, at Mademoiselle's hatbox. The Professor cried: "We must return to your bungalow, where I can set up my laboratory; I must prepare the plasma at once!" We raced through the forest to find our horses; and rushed down Morne Lune In the wildest ride ever made In Haiti. We were riding to perform a miracle, to save civilization from destruction- yes, and also to vindicate a lady!

We found Bingo waiting for us at the bungalow, and set to work unloading the Professor's mules and helping him erect a tent He advised us to sleep while he set up his special equipment.

"Enoch." I remember blurting, "this thing will shake the universe!" Your skeptic turned believer can be the biggest fool of all.

"I don't know, Bill," he seemed grave. "We must wait and see."

Sinking into a chair, he looked haggard.

"Bill, I almost hope it doesn't work. I've been wondering; a plasma that puts an end to death would it be a good thing for the world? Would it be right to perpetuate our lives? Wouldn't it be defeating a law of Nature? And the bad would be preserved as well as the good. What," he spoke falteringly, "what if we should restore life to a woman who'd been guillotined only to find her guilty?"

It was midnight many hours later when Bingo told us the Professor wanted to see us in his tent: the demonstration was ready.

RED-HEADED GAL- and that last scene forms on the retina of my memory as a stage-set. That tented interior, shabby, rigged up like a sideshow on a carnival lot. Oil lamps swinging from the ridge-pole. All the clap-trap apparatus of a sideshow was there—drums outside—the wizardish Professor, the bottles, test-tubes and surgical instruments, magician-like on a table at the side. And on a platform at the back of the tent, the lady.

The Professor had set up a sort of operational platform, and on the platform a table covered with black oilcloth, and on the table, free at last of the hatbox and her jar, the head of Mademoiselle I.D.S. Seen in a gallon of alcohol, that face had been beautiful. Now, out of that glass jar, the hair spread out like a crimson shawl, it was as lovely as Madam Recamier's. Yet the expression had changed a little. Eyes closed, sleeping as if anesthetized, it looked smaller up

there on the table, very pale, and somehow frightened as if it sensed what was going on and a little sad.

"Please stand back from the platform, messieurs. Please keep the tent flaps closed."

We weren't going to do any shoving forward. Enoch, just inside, sat rooted, cheeks pallid, he was staring as though mesmerized by that awful head.

"Professor—you think you can bring it back to life?"

"I think you will see a miracle. Monsieur Crade." He plucked from a sterilizing pan that blood-filled hypodermic needle. "But," he hesitated, looking at us over his mask, "there is something I must first speak to you about. Monsieur Crade, if the demonstration works, you will go on with me as partners—furnish me with money?"

Enoch stared. "Money?" And the Professor's voice apologized. "But I am penniless, monsieur. You were asleep this morning when the Haitian soldier brought me that cablegram from France. See—there on that packing box—the war—I am ruined. To exploit this plasma I will want your guarantee for a hundred thousand dollars. If it works "

"A hundred thousand," Enoch's tone had flattened. "But I don't think you'll get it, Professor Piq."

"What?" the Frenchman bleated, "Why, Hitler would offer two hundred million! For a life-restoring plasma? Perhaps a billion!"

And then the whole scene had gone crazy, for Enoch Crade, stepping forward, had Professor Piq by the collar "Why, you great old goat. I think

you would sell out to the Nazis. But you won't, because you haven't anything to sell. The minute you set foot in my bungalow, I took you for a quack-doctoring fake! Zombie-blood? Hell! I think that thing we saw up there in the forest got away! I think that's Felix's blood in that hypodermic syringe. You murdered that poor deaf-mute, threw his body over the cliff and you're going to try to pull off some stunt with this miserable, guillotined woman's head !"

"Murdered my nephew? Stunt? But you shall see." Wrenching loose, the Professor leapt up on the platform "Your skepticism goes too far, Monsieur Crade! Stand where you are! Watch! See!"

Nothing was clearly visible at that appalling moment. I think the Professor injected that needle somewhere at the side of that sleeping head, but as he swung around to face us, I got the shock of my life. Mademoiselle's eyelids were fluttering Her mouth had opened a little. I saw the nostrils quiver, heard a small sigh. And the eyes were open. Widely Dilated. Staring straight at Enoch and me!

I heard Enoch, frozen beside me, groan.

"Mademoiselle!" Jubilant, shouting, the Professor bent over her hair. "Mademoiselle, can you hear me?"

The eyes looked up at him rolling in terrible beauty.

"Can you speak?" Piq screamed "Answer me! Speak!"

The voice from the head came faintly. A whisper. Painfully from that breathless disembodiment "Ah, mon

Dieu! Where am I?"

"Alive!" the Professor's voice trembled. "Alive, mademoiselle! Think! Think! What is the last thing you remember?"

Tears started from the dark eyelashes. The lips moaned. "La Guillotine! La Guillotine!" A spasm of anguish contorted the features. And then, speaking directly to Enoch Crade, the head spoke, still in that disembodied whisper "Buy not! He tries to cheat the world."

Crash!

The explosion was simultaneous with the Professor's slap on those speaking lips. He spun back from the table with a cry, blood spurting from his shoulder. A second explosion dropped me flat. I saw the head disappear from the platform table, saw Enoch sway, crumple down, saw the tent flaps burst inward, two gunmen posed there. Letterspitz and Grumann! Fat faces malignant. Pistols smoking in their fists.

"Hands up! Up, all of you. Come here, Professor! We want that zombie plasma!"

WHAT they got was a revolver blast from the Frenchman huddled beside the table. Shot through the stomach, Grumann went down bawling an astonishing "Heil Hitler! Letterspitz, sweeping the platform with a fusillade, dropped the Professor in a riddle Another riddle came when he wheeled, aimed deliberately at Enoch; bellowed. "No verdammt Democracy---" and choked off as glass smashed behind the platform, gunfire roared, his throat cut by a scythe of bullets.

Pitching sideways, Letterspitz

fell across his compatriot Then Enoch and I in a wash of smoke, were somehow on our feet The tent was a shambles; the two Germans lying in a welter; Professor Piq on the platform dead; a third person, there, crawling out from under the operating table. Felix! Without a sombrero. With a head of magnificent red hair, frightened blue eyes and lips no longer deaf-and-dumb. Alive, clutching an automatic. Felix a sobbing, red-haired girl!

Done with the aid of mirrors. That's the story. The old "living head" illusion of the midway, the sideshow yes, the World's Fair! Professor Piq had never been to Moscow but he had been to Flushing Meadow, operating a small concession. There he had met that Hindu swami who knew of Enoch and Enoch's fortune, impressed by Enoch's seeming gullibility, that wolf in goat's clothing had joined forces with the mindreader in a swindle calculated to relieve Enoch of a lot of money.

Of course two Nazi spies running a radio station atop Morne Lune hadn't entered their financial calculations. Aimed at Enoch, their swindle ricocheted. Letterspitz and Grumann, instead of leaving for South America, had been up there in a secret mountain-top wireless nest; had seen and trailed our expedition and witnessed that swami in a sheet playing zombie.

Following Enoch and me throughout the hunt, those Germans had swallowed the phony death hook, line and sinker. They had been suckers for the Professor's wonderful story. So nobody cashed in on Enoch

after all. Unless it was that old hermit Piq hired to spin us that ghost yarn, and the waxworks museum which sold him that pretty wax head.

Wax head? The one in the alcohol jar. A relic from some waxworks museum. Marie Antoinette. Small wonder Enoch thought he recognized the face. It was a good likeness; Felix showed it to us after we got out of the Port-au-Prince hospital.

Felix? The Professor's niece, performer in his sideshow. Made up to play deaf-mute boy; then Mademoiselle I. D. S. in that magician's illusion at the pay-off, substituting for the head of wax. Doubling back from Morne Lune under cover of night, she had slipped into her professional platform role in the Professor's tent, then hadn't been able to go through with the act. She had a heart, apparently, and her red hair, which she'd kept hidden under that sombrero, was also genuine. So, it seemed, was her falling in love with Enoch on that junket up through the jungle.

So was Enoch's falling in love with her. Don't ask me. Psychic attraction of some kind. They were married the day he left the hospital. I managed to stand best man.

Yes, songs and a band...

For example, that foxtrot with Red-Headed Gal. Popular in its day. A swingy dance-tune. But I favor other numbers. Best of all, "The Star-Spangled Banner."