

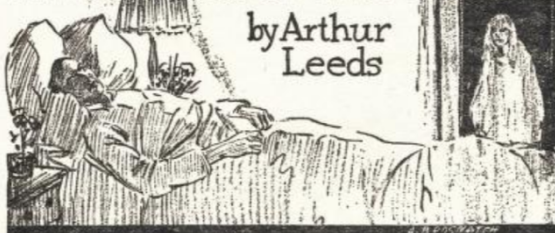
1925-2025

un an avec Howard Phillips Lovecraft

298 | 31 octobre 1925

THE RETURN OF THE UNDEAD

by Arthur
Leeds



"That the ghastly extremes of agony are endured by man the unit, and never by man the mass—for this let us thank a merciful God."—Edgar Allan Poe, *The Premature Burial*.

TO HAVE died—and yet to be undead! What a horrible thought! And yet, what a fascinating story, albeit one that fairly set every nerve in my pain-racked body trembling with the frightful suggestion contained in it! And to think that this book that I had just finished reading told, in the form of fiction, what the poor devil of a German also had told me as he lay there beside me in shell-scarred "No Man's Land," waiting for his ticket to "go West," only a few months before.

"Yes, there are wehr-wolves," he assured me, solemnly, his face contorted with pain the while he talked—in his own language, which I spoke almost as well as himself; "they are the slaves of the vampires—the undead—those beings who claim their victims after death, and who carry on their terrible act of mutilation and desecration"—he paused to cross himself and murmur a word of prayer—"forever and forever! Doubt it not, *Kamerad*. My brother, now, knew a man, an Austrian, who had met a wehr-wolf at midnight, in the forest

district of his own homeland. Shortly after that, in our own Black Forest, my brother himself encountered a wehr-wolf. In the following year, my brother died; and as he lay on his death-bed, he called me to his side.

"'Karl,' he declared, laying his hand on my arm, 'remember what I have told you in the past. The undead are as swift in their movements and as immune to harm from human hands as were the valkyries of old. I am marked by a being, a vampire—one of the undead host; an overlord of wehr-wolves—and he—*it*—has given me the sign. Therefore, brother of mine, heed what I say; and, as you love me, carry out this, my last request, even as you hope for the death of a Christian and for salvation after death. After they have buried me, you must take my body out of the ground—on the day of my burial, remember, and before sunset. Do not forget that—*before sunset*. You must have help; Heinrich Arndt will assist you; I have spoken to him as I am now speaking to you. Take me from the coffin, and plunge the old sword of our great-great-grandfather straight through my heart. Leave the sword in my body; bind it there with wire. Then, bind the crucifix in the clasp of both my dead hands. Return

[1925, samedi 31 octobre]

Up aft. Sonny call — look over story plot — both down to GK — look around & discuss — Sonny lv. — HP & Leeds out to theatre — changed show — buy *Weird Tales* — N. 44 Roof — dull — Times — back to GK — cafeteria — GK & SL — SL lv. — gang disperse 5:00+ a.m. — back to 169 & read — retire in morning.

Levé parce que passage de Sonny Belknap. On examine son nouveau sujet d'histoire, puis on part pour la librairie de Kirk, on voit ce qui a changé, on discute. Sonny nous laisse. Je pars au cinéma avec Leeds, et finalement on change de film. J'achète Weird Tales. Le toit du gratte-ciel. Triste. Vue de Times Square. Retour à la librairie, puis à la cafétéria. Kirk et Loveman nous rejoigne, puis Loveman s'en va. On se sépare à 5 h, retour au 169 et lecture. Couché au matin.

Arthur Leeds fait tellement partie du cercle intime des plus proches de Lovecraft, mais avec si peu de renseignements sur qui il est, sinon, à 43 ans, sa passion du cinéma, sa misère rédhitoire, son prochain retour à Chicago où il a laissé femme et enfant, qu'on serait presque heureux de cette scène de nuit : peut-être à la librairie au bas de l'immeuble du *Times*, en haut de Times Square, alors qu'ils sortent d'un film qu'ils ont choisi la place d'un autre (de *Peak of Fate* évoqué il y a quelques jours ?) et où Lovecraft s'est ennuyé (*dull*), il achète de ses sous le *Weird Tales* où le récit de Leeds figure en deuxième position, juste après la locomotive qu'est le H.G. Wells qui fait la couverture... Mais non, on sait que là, à la veille du 1^{er} novembre, c'est le numéro daté décembre qui paraît, celui où Frank Belknap Long figure sur la couverture. Et si Leeds avait touché le chèque de Farnsworth Wright pour le récit paru dans le numéro précédent, il n'aurait pas dû changer sa chambre pour une mansarde pire encore en plein début d'hiver. Un trou dans les lettres donc une fois de plus, le journal épistolaire préservé recommencera lundi, mais comment le secouer, Lovecraft, encore assailli de ces démons d'aboulie, les copains, les copains, les repas pris à la cafétéria et les heures pour écrire, dont il aurait pu disposer aujourd'hui, consacrées à l'examen du synopsis d'un nouveau récit de Belknap Long, toujours sous son aile protectrice ou c'est ce qu'il imagine, et à peine le récit sera-t-il écrit, dans quelques jours, que Belknap reviendra Clinton Street pour qu'ils le révisent ensemble...

New York Times, 31 octobre. Hier soir, le commissaire Enright a ordonné à douze policiers dandys de ranger leurs tenues de soirée, dans lesquelles ils fréquentaient les cabarets du quartier des théâtres à la recherche de « lounge lizards », et de reprendre

leur service de patrouille en uniforme. L'odeur de camphre qui imprégnait leurs tenues de soirée depuis une semaine, lorsque la brigade avait été réactivée par un ordre mystérieux du commissaire, s'était à peine dissipée que le décret leur ordonnant de redevenir de simples policiers leur parvint dans un ordre général. La brigade avait été créée il y a environ un an, après les meurtres de Dorothy King et Louise Lawson. L'objectif était de recueillir des informations dans les cabarets afin, espérait-on, d'établir l'identité des meurtriers. Chaque détective avait été sélectionné parce qu'il se sentait à l'aise en tenue de soirée. Plusieurs candidats avaient été disqualifiés parce que la taille de leurs pieds ne correspondait pas au déguisement qu'ils devaient porter. Le quartier général de la police n'a pas pu expliquer pourquoi l'équipe avait été à nouveau dissoute après une reprise aussi brève. Le commissaire Enright a également supprimé la « brigade armée », qui était chargée de repérer les bandits sur le point de passer à l'action et de les désarmer. Vingt hommes avaient été affectés à cette brigade il y a environ un an, sous les ordres du sergent Kreuse. Jusqu'alors, Kreuse était l'homme de confiance du commissaire Enright. Personne au quartier général de la police n'a connaissance des résultats obtenus par la brigade dans son domaine particulier. Certains de ses membres rejoindront la division des services spéciaux, tandis que d'autres continueront à patrouiller en uniforme. Le capitaine par intérim Daniel Curtayne, de la sixième division des détectives de Brooklyn, a été promu par le commissaire Enright à la tête des brigades chargées des coffres-forts et des greniers, des pickpockets, des automobiles, des receleurs et des camions. Ce poste était vacant depuis le récent départ à la retraite du capitaine par intérim George Busby.

Police "Lounge Lizard Squad" Abolished; Doff Evening Clothes, Pound Beats Again

Twelve police dandies were ordered last night by Police Commissioner Enright to lay aside evening clothes in which they had been frequenting cabarets in the theatrical district in quest of "lounge lizards" and go back to patrol duty in uniform. The smell of camphor which they had stored their evening apparel up to a week ago, when the squad was revived by a mysterious order of the Commissioner, hardly had been dissipated when the edict ordering them to become plain cops again reached them in a general order.

The squad was organized about a year ago after the slayings of Dorothy King and Louise Lawson. It was the intention to gather information in cabarets through which, it was hoped, the identity of the murderers could be established. Each sleuth was selected because he felt at home in the evening garb. Several applicants were disqualified because the size of their feet was out of harmony with the disguise they

were to assume. Why the squad again was abolished after such a brief revival could not be learned at Police Headquarters.


Commissioner Enright also abolished the "gun squad," which was supposed to discover bandits about to start on forays and disarm them. Twenty men were assigned to this squad about a year ago under Sergeant Kreuse. Kreuse until that time had been confidential man to Commissioner Enright. Nobody at Police Headquarters is aware of any record of accomplishments by the squad in its particular field. Some of them will become members of the special service division, while others will be in uniform patrolling beats today.

Acting Captain Daniel Curtayne of the Sixth Detective Division of Brooklyn was promoted by Commissioner Enright to be head of the safe and loft, pick-pocket, automobiles, fence and truck squads. A vacancy in that command existed since the recent retirement of Acting Captain George Busby.

Makes Autos Go

49 Miles on a Gallon

of Gasoline



I have perfected an amazing new device for practically all makes of cars that is enabling them to travel all over the country in the most economical way. It will be doubling their mileage per gallon. I have made 49 miles on a gallon. It also removes every particle of carbon from their motors, increases motor power and speed, eliminates all noise, stops the engine and starts it again, and keeps the engine running smoothly, quickly, and greater power to pull hills. This inexpensive little device works entirely automatically, is self-adjusting and easily attached by anyone, without tapping or drilling, in five minutes.

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WHAT USERS SAY

60 Miles Per Gallon
"Took a Wren on a Ford and averaged 60 miles per gallon, after removing the device."
—**BERNARD J. KOPP**,
North Chicago

60 Miles On a Gallon
"Astonished that Wren did that and equal on my old Cleveland and ran 60 miles on a gallon."
—**H. J. KRAMER**,
Minneapolis

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I Even Pay You to Try It

You, I want you to try my amazing new device. I will pay you \$10.00 to try it. I will send you the device free of charge. If you want to keep it, I will send you \$10.00. If you want to return it, I will send you \$10.00. I will send you the device free of charge. If you want to keep it, I will send you \$10.00. If you want to return it, I will send you \$10.00.

Saves 1/4 On Gas Bills

Pays for itself Every Few Days

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AGENTS WANTED

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