

a STEAMPUNK GUIDE TO HUNTING MONSTERS

VOL 2

TYSON VICK

a STEAMPUNK GUIDE TO HUNTING MONSTERS

Volume Two

BY TYSON VICK

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY ALISA KESTER AND TYSON VICK

a STEAMPUNK GUIDE TO HUNTING MONSTERS

Volume Two

A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters by Tyson Vick

Based on an original idea by Alisa Kester and Tyson Vick

Photography by Tyson Vick

www.tysonvick.com

Copyright © 2017 by Tyson Vick
All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review or scholarly journal.

ISBN 978-1-365-94922-7
First Printing: 2017

One Delightful Day Publications
Bozeman, Montana 59715
www.onedelightfulday.wordrpess.com

www.steampunkmonsters.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Contents	1
	Automatons on an Airship	2
	The Dreaded Locomotive of the Living Dead	16
	The Problem with Pirates	32
	A Blob on a Boat	40
	An Institute for the Insane	50
	The Were-beast of the Wild West	60
	Credits	82


EASE REFRAIN
OM LOOKING
SPICIOUS AT
L TIMES.



AUTOMATONS ON AN AIRSHIP

Thursday, June the Third

I am writing again so, clearly, we survived the crash, but now I am going to recount the bizarre tale as best I can before I forget it. The remaining crew is digging through the wreckage for any intact automatons, which makes me shudder. All of the members of our group are alive, save for poor Mr. Vandenklamp, who was, shall we say, defenestrated most egregiously.

It all started when Mr. Vandenklamp came to meet me in my chamber looking for his missing wife.

"She told me last evening she was weary of the service," Mr. Vandenklamp said. "And if the quality of breakfast did not improve upon the morning, she would take matters into her own hands. I am quite worried what she might be up to!"

After checking many rooms, we found our way down to the spa. The spa, like the rest of the airship, is most sumptuous. There is a hallway of small cabins with pools of hot and cold water for bathing, and separate chambers for steam.

In one chamber we found an overpowered Mrs. Vandenklamp being serviced nearly to death!

We could not get to her by fighting through the attentive automatons for they were all gathered around her quite tightly! I found a book that had fallen from Mrs. V's reticule which discussed, exclusively, the programming of automatons! The poor foolish woman had been so dissatisfied with the service, that she set the crew's hospitality units all the way to 11!

The automatons were holding her down and giving her all sorts of beauty regiments, massages, beverages, they were even dying her grey hairs red, the poor woman!

The lifeless glowing eyes of these mechanical people turned on us.

"You must relax," they called in their lifeless voices. "You look very agitated."

Oh, they tried to give me tonic water, and remove Mr. V's coat and prop his feet up on a cushion. It was horrible!

The automaton spun open its human interface to show a smiling visage. "For your immediate comfort," the attendant said, noticing our excited state. "I must immerse you in a hot sauna."

We could not even make a move to inform Sir Hammerhorn, for the robots locked us in one of the spa cabins! There we sat for some time, and the spa cabins down the hall began to fill, one by one, with more prisoners of these caring monsters!

I looked through the tiny window and saw the Mayor violently resisting a nice hot bath in the room across the way. He was being forcibly disrobed, and I turned away at once before seeing any part of his muscular frame that I might regret seeing.

Mr. Vandenklamp was thumbing through the programming book, and said, "If someone were able to turn the hospitality dial down, we would be able to wrest back control of the ship from the automatons!"

The room was filling with an unspeakable amount of steam. It may have gotten the wrinkles out of my dress, but had I stayed longer, I don't think I could have survived without removing



at least some layer or other, and that improper thought is enough to leave me reeling still. To my relief there was a porthole that led to the outside, which we managed to open, and that gave us temporary relief. We decided that I, being the slightest, should crawl out the window, to the outside of the airship, and find a way to the control room. I was, of course, the only one who could fit. I managed to squeeze quite easily through, but about half-way I seriously reconsidered my choices. There was not much of a walkway or footpath outside in the wide open sky.

Oh, I have never been so full of awe! The sky was in every direction, for full miles, nay leagues. I clung to the wall for dear life. I managed to scuttle my way onto a platform.

It was at that time that I came across that Cherubic Greek sailor Cyprien Lehman—the very boy who stole the Genie I mentioned earlier and who had taken on this respectable job to make amends for his wicked past, and one of the only human crew members aboard the ship.

"What are you doing out here?!" we both cried at once.

Apparently the automatons had discovered some of our destinations, and they felt that these frightful monster hunting excursions might cause us some distress, and so they were diverting the ship to some place much less stressful. Cyprien Lehman was below deck trying to manually alter the course of the ship to direct it to a safe port.

I am much impressed by his heroic intentions. I wonder if there are any other men on board who would do the same? There is something noble about a reformed villain.

The two of us formed an impromptu alliance and we made our way to the control room.

Cyprien had his rifle drawn, which apparently made us look stressed and caused an automaton to approach.

"Your stress levels are heightened. Allow me to assist you both by preparing some hot soup," it said, "which will contain zero turnips. Fourteen percent of humans find turnips to be a stressful ingredient."

"Oh, we are very calm," I replied, trying to look languid and relaxed. Cyprien followed suit. We drooped gaily, with our best aesthetic pose, and the machine allowed us to continue down the hall displaying our most consummate and unaffected airs.

We managed to sneak to the control room, and narrowly missed being forcibly taken to watch dolphins sporting below. The Mayor was being carried bodily away by three Automatons in order to partake of an ice cream sundae. I wished to rescue him, but I feared rescue would be quite impossible at the moment. Cyprien had some knowledge of how the control room worked. Apparently he had spent many of his formative years at sea. I told him that we should turn the controls down, and immediately he switched the hospitality unit off! I was so pleased I jumped and hugged him for joy, but I was too quick at this celebration, for the door flew open and a featureless mechanical face glowered at us. It seized us by our arms, and we could not escape.

"How... how far did you turn that dial?" I asked Cyprien. The crew was now gathering around us in an ominously diminishing circle, their human interfaces flipped up to a most unpleasant glower.

I realized that we had not adjusted the hospitality unit as we thought, but we had shut it off entirely!

"We took away their hospitality completely!" Cyprien cried.

And to my surprise the automatons began smashing the hospitality controls! They threw us into the hall and locked the control room completely.

Pandemonium ensued as we rushed down the hall.

Passengers were ripped from their cabins. All the people at the bar, who moments before were being force fed alcohol, were now having the mechanical waiters throw drinks in their faces! Men were being mugged, their wallets stolen by

the hostess. I saw one automaton rifling through a lady's personal effects! To my horror, Mr. Vandenklamp was pulled from the sauna right in front of us and thrown overboard! Only my shock kept me from screaming.

Why, oh why, are there only two settings? Hospitable and inhospitable? No neutral? Whose idea was that? The J.W. Wells company can expect a strongly-worded letter!

Cyprien and I passed a locked room containing Sir Hammerhorn of the rest the human crew, who were pressed against the window trying to get our attention. Cyprien is a sturdy boy, and I could go into detail about this, let me tell you, because he is indeed a fine-looking young man, but I won't go on about how strongly-built a fellow he is, because it would take up too much time. He is sort of thin, not particularly muscular in cut, but strong throughout. Sort of sinewy, one might say. It's a very attractive shape for a man to have, if I were to have opinions about that sort of thing. I might find that sort of shape attractive in a husband. But he could not pry open the door.

Through the little window, Sir Hammerhorn scolded the sailor for shutting the hospitality unit off. Cyprien gave me a very comical and wry look.

"There is only one hope for us now," Sir Hammerhorn shouted through the glass pane. He told us that if we could get to the First Mate and turn the hospitality dial on the back of its—her?—head, it would be able to land the vessel safely.

The airship swayed suddenly, and grinded against the side of some mountain. It knocked me quite off my feet and I fell through the door of



a nearby cabin. Inside, a mechanical hostess was thrashing Percy Longville about in a comfy chair, saying, "All organic lifeforms will report to airlock five for immediate disposal."

Cyprien burst into the room, fired his rifle, and destroyed the automaton, knocking it clean through the window.

I grabbed Percy. "We need to get to the First Mate and adjust its settings so that it can land the ship safely!"

All three of us charged for the bridge where Cyprien blasted open the door with his gun.

"There's the First Mate," Cyprien said, bursting through. We all hopped in, and the Third Officer turned towards us.

"Please remain still and prepare for disposal," the Third Officer said, trying to wrest the gun from Cyprien.

The First Mate did not seem to operate in the same manner as the other automatons, and continued operating the ship as Cyprien fought off the attacking mechanical mates.

"I am the bos'un here," Cyprien said, lifting his gun. And apparently he was saying Boatswain in his lower, working-class accent. I discovered this just a moment ago while speaking to the captain.

Then he shot the Third Officer. The officer, a



sparking mess of gears, slipped the Boatswain's gun out of his hands and threw it directly out the window and into the empty sky. Then, the Officer's body broke into two pieces, one dropping to the floor.

The broken Third Officer began to crawl towards us. It pulled up its human interface and began to flip through the various expressions. But apparently no emotion felt right, and it dropped the mask. "Human interfaces will not be required when there are no humans."

I could not help it—there was something so… so empty about their faces without the buffer of painted-on humanity—and I screamed.

"The Dial!" Percy cried, having seen it on the back of the First Mate's neck. He sprung up to the robot and turned the dial sharply, clockwise.

However, the surge must have been too much for the crew as all the remaining mates' heads began sparking and the clatter of dropping flip-mask interfaces filled the bridge. The menacing figures gathered around Cyprien who grabbed me to keep me safe. Percy frantically spun the dial back and forth.

"You have displayed emotions which indicate you are stressed," one of the sparking machines informed us.

Here the monster slammed us together with such force I have begun to bruise, saying, "For your comfort, and feelings of safety, please participate in a calming embrace. Human to human contact can reduce stress in eighty-five percent of the population."

Then—oh, the impropriety!—it said, "You will now kiss!" In the most menacing and unnatural manner! Oh, the horror.

I am not a fast young thing, and no amount of prompting would get me to kiss a man I knew for only a few short days. And I need not mention this, as it can only be misconstrued, but Cyprien is a sailor, and, as far as sailor's clothing goes, when working on deck, he is not entirely clad from head to toe like a noble gentleman would be. And he







was sweating, and, oh Lord, pressed against me so firmly. He was, perhaps, not as violently opposed to the suggestion as I was, and his lips—his perfect Cherubic lips—hovered over mine like a moth hovering over a flame.

Thank God for Percy Longville.

Percy quite ingeniously pulled the head off of the First Mate, and the automatons oppressing Cyprien and I suddenly shut down. They came to a complete stop, looking quite dejectedly at the floor.

Percy was peering intently into the First Mate's skull. "This technology is really quite fascinating. I wonder if there is a book that explains it in layman's terms?"

But just as he spoke, the airship's left side brushed against one of the mountains. The shock tossed the head out of his hands, and I was thrown off my feet. The automaton's head rolled about on the floor as the airship lurched. The devil must have been laughing at us in that moment, for the head bounced out a shattered window and rolled down the catwalk outside.



I glared at Percy. "What have you done? The head is outside; we have to get it!"

Percy looked suddenly very noble, straightened his shoulders, and pulled down his goggles. "I will save you!"

Then, he ran and jumped out the window after the head!

I ran after him and burst out onto the walkway. Air roared about me. The ship was descending fast. Directly in front of the ship loomed the immense plains. Closer and closer the plains approached, filling the entire view. I was so overcome that I lost my bearings, and felt all of my wits flying away, carried by the winds.

We were going to crash. But Percy grabbed me by the hand and led me across the walkway. He held the First Mate's mechanical head under his arm.

We rushed down the catwalk to an escape hatch and climbed back inside the aircraft. Surprisingly, we entered into the control room. Percy traced his hands over the various devices on the control panel, but it was broken. I saw something, and immediately took the First Mate's head and thrust it into a slot by the neck, and turned it sharply.

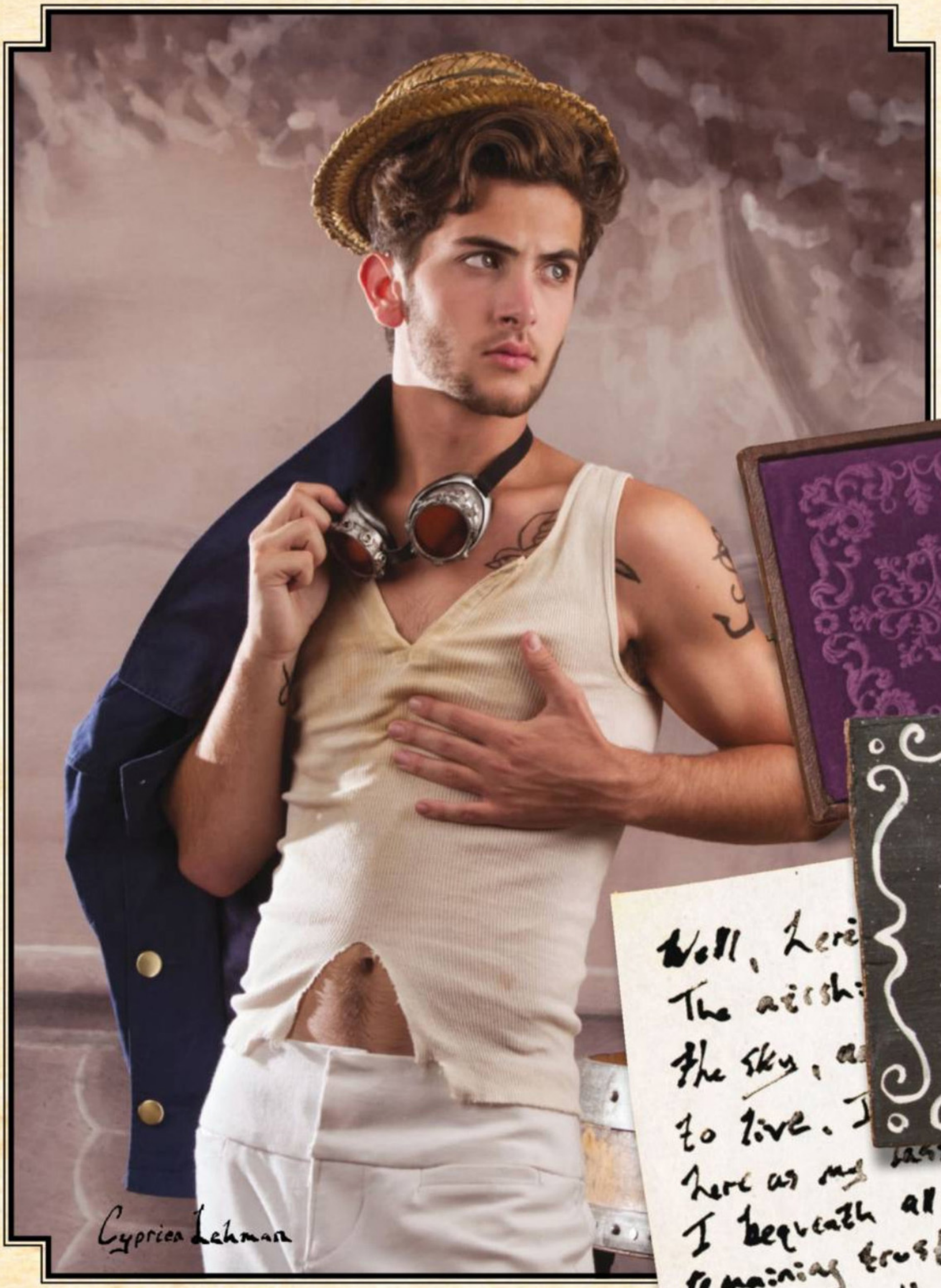
Cyprien said that at that moment, the First Mate's body began to regain control of the ship, headless and everything, on the bridge.

The First Mate spoke, and its voice also came from the intercom throughout the ship.

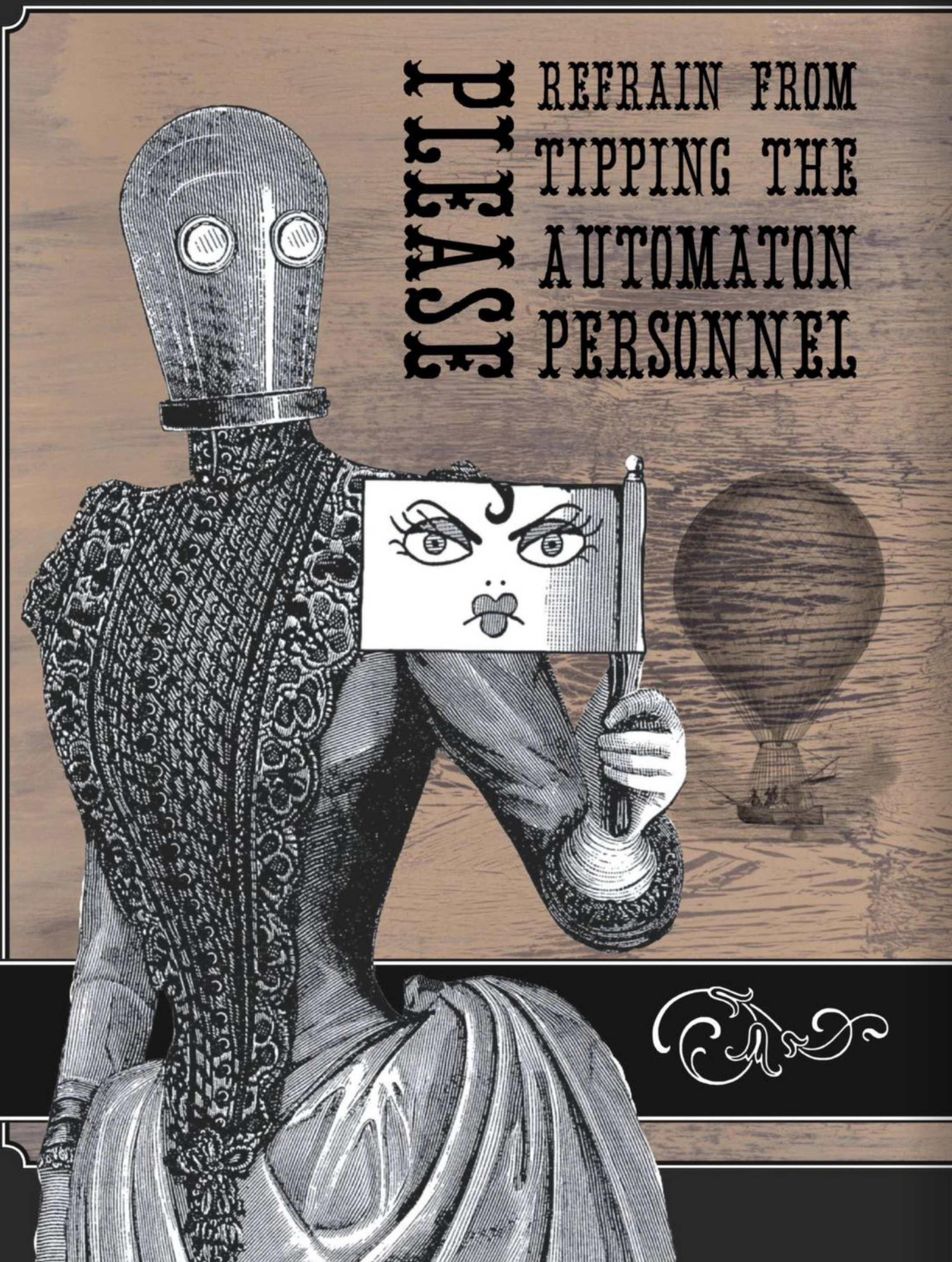
"Good afternoon. We regret to inform you that we have lost control of the ship and must make an emergency landing. We are sorry for any inconvenience. Our estimated time of arrival today is three minutes and twenty-seven seconds. We thank you for flying with us."

So, we crash landed.

And all of this because a woman was dissatisfied with breakfast.


Cyprien Lehman
PLEAS
FROM
SUSP
ALL


Automaton
E REFRAIN
LOOKING
PICIOUS AT
TIMES.


REFRAIN FROM
TIPPING THE
AUTOMATON
PERSONNEL

Tips for Lady Monster Hunters No. 05

No member of an airship's automaton personnel crew is ever tipped. The mechanical attendants have no use for pocket change. There is a famous story of an airship named The Grayling Aardvaark whose attendants were tipped most liberally by their American travelers. The automatons would accept the coins and store them, but the passengers came and went so frequently that no one noticed the sheer amount of pence and schillings collecting in the luggage compartment. Storage space is limited on an airship and it is vital to determine the amount of weight an airship carries before it takes off. The coins had altered the weight of the ship! The passengers were in for a terrible surprise when they discovered their ship was overladen and was plunging into the sea. The quick thinking automatons cut a hole in the floor to compensate for the buoyancy, causing over 90k pounds in spare change to rain over Perth. But the sudden loss of weight launched the airship so high into the sky that, so far, the passengers have not been seen to return to earth to this day!

While one will want to avoid mechanical gratuity, one may, however, say good-bye to the automaton steward or stewardess in attendance at the gangplank when debarking. She will not care, but one may say it all the same.



THE DREADED LOCOMOTIVE OF THE LIVING DEAD

Tuesday, June the Eighth

Since Mr. Vandenklamp tragically perished in the unfortunate incident with the robots, the entire group of monster hunters came together and decided to attend his funeral. It was not far off from where we were crashed, and as repairs were going on, it gave us some free time.

Mrs. Clothilde Vandenklamp is suddenly quite frugal since her husband died, and claims that if we take a certain train, and disembark at a certain station, we can switch over to the Necropolis line, a train that runs the dead from the major cities to the countryside for burial. That train stops directly at the Vandenklamp family plot and costs under half the fee of any other railway, as long as the travelers are in mourning.

Many in the group like the idea of the savings, though I'm not so sure I need to be so frugal as to ride a train of death! After all, one could place the blame for our entire situation on her. But she has been very helpful, perhaps trying to make up for the crash, by helping us take care of the arrangements and luggage.

The Mayor is staying behind. All of his belongings have been scattered across the countryside and he means to go looking for them. Poor man has been left without a shirt on his back! I envied his adventure to recover his clothing, for a train ride and a funeral seemed dreary by comparison.

It is the Mayor's express goal to learn more about monsters to protect his city, that most glorious jewel of all Italia, Venice. However, the handsome man seems to have the most terrible luck. It turns out that he slept through our encounter with the Genie. He was quite contented with the hot bath and dessert he was given by the renegade automatons — until they jettisoned his luggage in the crash. He wound up lost and ended up taking tea with a charming young lady during that debacle with the witch. The mummy he had located in Egypt had remained most resolutely dead. As far as his adventure was coming along, it was rather uneventful compared to mine, and he seems to despair of ever finding a monster worth his mettle.

Thursday, June the Tenth

We boarded the first train and switched to the death train a few hours later. Night fell during the ride and many of the hunters fell asleep in their seats—which are only as comfortable as the cost of the ticket allows, much to my great annoyance. While I sat trying to gain some semblance of comfort, Missus Mister crept up upon me and whispered in my ear, "Come with me."

Oh, covert secret operations! This was the type of adventure I signed up for! We navigated through the rows of mourners, through the cars, and to the back until we came to cars filled with the corpses of the dead in rows of coffins lining the walls.

"Something is amiss, Miss," said Missus Mister. "Look at these corpses. Does anything seem strange to you?"

As I had not yet had the grave misfortune of having seen too many corpses to tell if something seemed off, I did not quite know how to answer, and so I just stood with a look which must have fallen somewhere between horrified and dumbfounded.

"I object... faintly...," I began, my throat catching, "to two ladies observing corpses alone in the middle of the night. Yet other than that, I cannot say with any authority that I see anything out of the ordinary. They look like plain corpses, ready for burial. Very plain."

Missus Mister nodded, then continued gravely, "When we arrived, I made my customary rounds. I dare not set foot near the dead without making sure..." (Here, she gave me a solemn and knowing glance.) "As is my custom. Therefore, as I looked upon these loved ones stacked neatly in a row, I noticed that they were indeed being buried with their usual wedding bands, favorite jewelry, etc. But look at them now."

I observed the corpses nearest me with some slight hesitation, and indeed, as she said, there was a line on one of the fingers where a ring had been removed. I also noticed that there was a coffin missing towards the back, but perhaps death trains don't wait for a fully booked trip before heading for burial? Putting bodies in seats seems a nasty trick!

"Do you think," I asked, slowly turning my head away from the body, "that someone on the train has been robbing these poor people's graves before they've even been laid to rest?"

"I have been keeping a keen eye on the goings-on of this train. It is my duty to keep the dead, dead. And I swear to you, not a single living soul has entered or exited this car since we departed the station. You are a keen girl of some sense, and the only one of us awake. Will you help







me get to the bottom of this?"

"Certainly!" I agreed.

We moved through the car, slowly. I think Missus Mister was observing things, but I can't be sure, because I was mostly preoccupied with trying to look like I was contributing. I was nodding gravely and making broad, hawk-like scans of the room. We both heard a rustling coming from the luggage car at the same time! Of that I can be sure.

We opened the door and looked in. Someone was standing over one of the open trunks, rifling through other people's possessions.

I was outraged! I may be a modern and adventurous woman, but let me tell you, I never thought for a moment I would ever see someone rifling through the personal effects of mourning British ladies and gentleman! No how!

"Now, you see!" I cried, while Missus Mister grabbed ahold of my arm. "You thief! You did not board this train with us, and I think that you should leave at once!"

Missus Mister's grip was quite strong, then, and she said lowly, "They didn't board the train with us, Philomena, because they were already on board..."

The raider turned towards us. It was a zombie! One of the undead! Missus Mister slowly raised her gun, and I'm glad there was no one to see me then for I must have been pulling the most outrageous and un-lady-like faces.

Can you believe it was dead AND it was rifling through somebody's luggage? Dear Aunt would not be hearing this story when I returned! Oh, the scandal! The creature's jaw was vile and grotesque, held on or enhanced by some horrible mechanical contraption. It bit at us, moving our way, slowly.

Just as Missus Mister aimed for the biter, the zombie lunged at us and I yanked on Missus Mister so hard, the Mister missed her shot!

"Don't let it bite you!" she shouted, ably slicing the restraints on the trunks nearest, which toppled to the ground, blocking the biter! She kicked the trunk open and pulled out various guns, handing one to me!

Now, I have attended a grouse shoot, but I have never been expected to run and gun! We ran back through the train car of the dead as each corpse began to rise from their coffins along the sides! Goodness gracious, me!

"Aim for the head!" shouted Mister, blowing off zombie heads left and right, leaving me quite bewildered. She shot around me, I say! As if I was a tree branch or some leaf blowing by on the wind, only minorly obstructing her view! I, myself, was struggling with whether or not I should actually shoot at a person's head, reanimated or no!



We burst through to the passenger car where the tour members were sleeping only to find a towering monster of a zombie, something akin to a circus Strong Man, ripped apart at the jaw and reorganized with a gun—I might say a mortar—for a mouth! The monster charged at us, his mouth cannon firing!

This woke the passengers just in time to find zombies bursting from the car behind. One passenger who I did not know—he was not part of this particular tour—was grabbed and bitten. I did not know whether I should shoot towards the person who was being attacked. I was not prepared for this event! I went to some tennis lessons once! I saw a person's leg get run over by a wagon once. None of my experiences were helping! We were trapped between a brutish monster on one side and a horde on the other!

Hammerhorn rose behind the gun-mouth and toppled it, allowing Mister, some passengers, and I to struggle past. "Why are there zombies on the train?" he asked. Oh, Lord, a zombie was approaching from behind him as well!

The train began to slow, and at that moment I realized that the ridiculous Percy Longville had been sleeping soundly through the commotion! A zombie lunged to bite him, and somehow a wild courage overtook me and I shot it dead. It would not make a snack of my friend, no how!

And this, of course, woke the poor fool.

Hammerhorn and Bamfield began tossing out weapons as the train came to a stop and the zombies burst fully into the car. Percy was handed a flamethrower and we all leaped out of the train and into the Necropolis cemetery!

"Where is that poor woman, Vandenklamp?" Hammerhorn asked.

"It's too late for her; we can't go back," said Missus Mister.

Mr. Longville tried to get the flamethrower working, figure how to put it on, and learn what all the doo-dads did, but he struggled most pathetically. It's a Mukow, Percy Longville, they practically operate themselves! Even the advert states how they're safe enough for a baby!



The zombies stumbled off the train after us. The gun-mouth pushed past the less intelligent undead with a purpose. It fired a blast from its mouth and we all ducked behind some gravestones. I looked back at the train to see the biter coming through the swarm as well!

We all prepared our weapons for firing, when suddenly every grave plot around us began to open! Corpses burst forth from the ground! They grabbed ahold of Brunhilde Bamfield, restraining her against the ground. Hammerhorn used the back of his gun to smash the rotting limbs apart. We all stood and began firing at the dead as fast as we could! But the grounds below us were giving way to the dead as well!

I shot my last, but the gun-mouth zombie was approaching quite quickly. I don't know if I was thinking or if it was instinct, but I lunged forward, shoving my gun into his own mouth barrel. He fired at me then and his entire head exploded. It was not at all pleasant, let me tell you!

Our group was encircled by the undead, our bullets nearly spent.

"Ah, you've frightened the dears," said a voice. "We only meant for you to be gently bitten in your sleep!"

It was Clothilde Vandenklamp. The zombies parted for her to approach.

"What is this!?" cried Hammerhorn.

"It's a Bokor," said Percy, seemingly breaking the flamethrower he was fiddling with. "The person who controls the zombies!"

"You," said Mister. "You are the one controlling these zombies?"

"They are my friends and family, Missus Mister," said Vandenklamp. "Just like you and all the other splendid people I've met over the years. All so lovely, and all so very, very, incredibly rich. Biters, come forth!"

The zombies with mechanical enhancements on their jaws came forth.

"Please bite my dear friends, I need them turned, and it would be a dreadful sin to kill them first. Murder is a most unpleasant business."

One biter moved towards Bamfield, but Mister threw herself in the way, knife drawn. The creature latched on to her and began to overpower her.

"What is this? What is going on?" Brunhilde cried.

"I'm afraid I find myself stretched a little thin these days, my dears," said Vandenklamp. "But as the sole heir to your fortunes, I shall find myself with the means to live a life of leisure for quite a few more years."

"You are not the heir to any of our fortunes," said Hammerhorn.







"Oh, but I will be. You see, when you are dead and turned, you shall be my zombies and shall obey my every command, fulfill my every wish, and hasten to my every desire. It is something I picked up during my dreadful stay on that awful, overheated oven of a plantation in Haiti. I needed a change in climate and so we came out here."

The biters grabbed for Sir Hammerhorn at the very moment that Percy's flamethrower exploded to life, flames enveloping a whole row of the undead! The biters caught fire, allowing Mister to push off her attacker, and we all fled to the edge of the graveyard.

To our great despair, it turned out that the graveyard was built on a cliff face. Percy kept the flames burning and the zombies at bay but there was nowhere to go! His fuel was running out!

A pile of charred corpses lay in a half-circle at our feet, the approaching zombies stumbling over the burning heap.

Clothilde Vandenklamp appeared once more, facing off against us, perpendicular to the cliff, as the undead pushed us closer to the edge. Grotesque limbs reached for us, rotting body parts and bones!

"The long dead are mindless drones," Mrs. Vandenklamp boasted, "but my biters are special. Their kiss turns you slowly, giving me time to turn you into my own little pets! And it matters not if we do it at the top, or meet you at the bottom! Behold!"

The zombie of her own relation, Mr. Vandenklamp, shambled through the crowd, bumping into one of the walking dead, looking strangely disoriented, and then bumping into another.

Zombie Mr. Vandenklamp was so bewildered that he tripped over the flaming pile, stumbling into a zombie who dumbly grabbed onto the next, and since each zombie's rot and ribs and bones caught on each other, a domino effect followed.

They all started to fall. Zombie Mr. Vandenklamp whirled about, knocking his wife over. She was caught on the pile of the dead as they slid right off the edge of the cliff!

We watched in horror as Clothilde Vandenklamp, covered by zombies and riding atop zombies fell to her doom.

"God damn it!" she cursed, as she fell through the mist below.

I suppose the moment she hit the bottom was the moment all the reanimated fell, as a zombie only obeys its Bokor. We were surrounded by heaps of dead bodies, but one remaining biter stood complacently about, like a child waiting for the bus! Whatever arts Clothilde had used on it caused it to behave quite uniquely.

In the end, Mr. Vandenklamp gave his life to save us. Or, at least he gave his life and then saved us. Suffice it to say we all attended a very touching funeral service.

We never heard what happened to Clothilde Vandenklamp, but Missus Mister did find the biter so docile that she packed it in a crate and shipped it home where it went on an Exposition tour for her Marvelous Monster company!

We returned to our repaired airship a few days after the zombie incident. After our wait for the final equipment check, we boarded the airship and set off once more, this time across the Atlantic towards America.

Our ship was sailing gaily through the skies when the pirates attacked...





ENTERTAINMENT UNPARALLELED!

MISSUS MAYFAIR MISTER'S MARVELOUS



MONSTERS

NEW ZOMBIES and
ASSORTED UNDEAD
EVERY SEASON !
GRAND GHOSTS
SPLENDID PIXIES
SIX FINE GOBLINS
AUTHENTIC SPHINX

On the appearance of MISSUS MAYFAIR MISTER and her establishment, it may be necessary to offer an explanation relative to the effect and import of each exhibit. Monster Entertainments are but too often conducted in a manner regardless of the morals of the Visitors, and thereby many persons of moral character, absent themselves from the establishment. To oviate such objections, it is the proprietor's intention to select ONLY the finest MONSTER EXHIBITS so that the most careful Father or Mother need not fear the blush of modesty will ever be excited within the Arena. In all of the parts that the company has had the honor of appearing, they have been received with the most flattering reception from the community.

DOORS OPEN AT SEVEN OCLOCK

SEATS AVAILABLE FOR OVER 1,000 GUESTS!

POLICE OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE TO PRESERVE THE SAFETY OF GUESTS

THE IMPORTANCE of ZOMBIE ETIQUETTE



Little did Josiah Mortimer expect, when he first crossed paths with the Caribbean peoples, that the zombies of those island nations would become the most hunted monster in the northern hemisphere. Among the more barbaric male adventurers it is generally agreed that it's not the kill that counts, but only how horribly gruesome the hunter can make the zombie's demise. This is just not so for a refined lady monster hunter. No matter how competent she may be, no woman should ever conduct herself in any but a dignified and feminine manner.





A lady understands that the dead, whose souls have left, would prefer to have their bodies treated with the respect they received in life. Therefore, a girl of reasonable morals will always aim for the head and try to produce only the most innocuous and delicate of wounds, and avoid adding to the bereavement of the deceased's family when the corpse is returned to its interment.

Tips for Lady Monster Hunters

NO. 06

5 10 15 20 25 SEPTE 30 NTRIO. 35

ENGLAND

LONDON

GHOST

GERMANY

EUR

PARIS

ZOMBIES

FRANCE

VENICE

SEA MONSTER

AUTOMATONS

SPAIN

CORDOBA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

MAP OF EUROPEAN MONSTERS

J.W. WELLS &CO.

15 20 25 30 MERI 35 DIES. 40



MAP OF EUROPEAN MONSTERS

WITNESSED ON THE J.W. WELLS & CO. MONSTER HUNTING TOUR

The journey began in England where a ghost was discovered.

Following this, the J.W. Wells & Co. monster hunting expedition traveled to Eastern Europe where a witch was collecting children. The tour valiantly quelled this threat.

Next the trip continued briefly to African Egypt for a mummy unearthing expedition.

From there, the tour visited the palace of Abdullah-Al-Khafid where his captive genie stole the palace and crashed it into the hills of Spain.

The tour then traveled North and faced the inconvenience of a malfunctioning automaton crew.

Sadly, having lost a tour member, the group took a brief excursion to attend the funeral of the deceased where they were attacked by a horde of zombies.

THE PROBLEM WITH PIRATES

Sunday, June the Thirteenth

Brunhilde and I have become fast friends, and she has even lent me her favorite book, "Moonlight." I have tried to read it, again and again, but I simply cannot get into its narrative. It is some nonsense about a swooning woman who falls in love with a glimmering vampire who was bitten by a werewolf, and then died and came back as a ghost. Still, however, perhaps the swooning was a ploy to lure the vampire in, and the glimmer a mere authorial metaphor, for... for something more intelligent? In order to avoid looking through its melodramatic pages for too long, I decided to wander around the ship to talk to Cyprien Lehman—who was instrumental in the repairs, I imagine!

I must admit, after spending some time with him, he is much more attractive than I initially suspected. I sat for a while watching him wrestle some monkey wrench around some bolts.

Our ship was sailing gaily through the skies when the pirates attacked.

When I heard a lot of shouting and stamping of feet, I naturally assumed the worst where the mechanical crew were concerned. Were we all to be subjected to relaxing saunas and comforting beverages once again? But it was pirates.

Perhaps hearing of our crash in the mountains and coming one day too late, the sky pirates descended upon our airship. They launched ladders and rigging, harpoons and hooks into our decks. The raid was quite sudden.

Cyprien and I quickly sank into the depths of the cargo hold to avoid the attack, but as we huddled





behind some luggage, the wall was ripped apart! A group of pirates, looking much more like Goblins than men, came rushing in with guns and sabers and began splitting apart the crates. I could tell that they were not members of civilized society. In their greed to look for treasure they smashed open the crate of Brunhilde's tiny blob—the one she discovered in Spain. This turned out to be a horrible disaster.

Mistaking the small creature for a jar of jam, perhaps, one pirate stepped straight into the middle of it and it latched onto his leg, dissolving his skin and flesh! The other pirates rushed to his aid, but the blob digested everything it touched, all organic matter! It could eat the people, their clothing, the wood of the ship, and my luggage! Oh, my precious dresses from Harrods! It was too much to watch, too much! I leapt forward and grabbed onto one of my best woolen skirts with a matching hat. Cyprien pulled me back away from the blob as it devoured my clothing! I closed my eyes and buried my face in Cyprien's manly chest.

"My dresses!" I cried, but the monster had finished with them and was pursuing the fleeing pirates out onto the deck.

"Okay, Miss Dashwood," Cyprien said. "We have to do something about this. If we don't lure this monster into another crate, the airship is



doomed! If it is hungry enough, it can dissolve many of the materials that keep the vehicle aloft!"

He motioned forward toward the open-air deck with his rifle. I immediately rose to my feet and we rushed out into the noon-day sky. Pirates were leaping onto the deck, exchanging blows with the automaton crew members. The pirates' airships were tethered by grappling hooks immediately off our starboard side, their balloons and sails much patched and worn. Apparently the pirates had come in numerous dirigibles, attacking from as many sides as possible. The ships had an altogether disreputable appearance, as did their crew. We should have been able to beat them off quite handily... if so many of our automatons had not been previously damaged or destroyed.

One pirate slipped on the goo of the blob, and the monster seized onto his arm. The pirate pulled most violently away, pulling the blob across a rope which was holding a lifeboat safe. The moment the blob touched the rope, it snapped, dropping the boat from one side and knocking the sailor overboard. The lifeboat swung in the wind while dangling by one cord. I was most troubled by this event, for I couldn't help but think that if the lifeboat fell into the waves below, it would not be available for our escape — should such an escape be required. But it held fast by that one rope.

The blob began wandering around towards a duct. It leaned against the wall, and part of the wood was devoured, while the metal of the duct corroded, but was left intact. The duct seemed to swallow the goo of the monster and the blob slipped down the grate!

I was distracted and the pirates overcame us. Cyprien could not fight them off alone! Rather than murdering us outright, the pirates first disconnected the automatons, then locked all of the tour within the only room on board the ship for which the pirates had no use: the library.

"There are pirates about," Percy stated, obviously, greeting our arrival. "I have seen them!"



I thought that the rogues might proceed to loot our cabins, and thus find several items that would be dangerous in their hands. The Djinn, for instance. Mrs. Bamfield admitted her fear that they might steal her first edition of the "Moonlight" book she had been reading. It was a rare edition, and signed by the author. Everyone at once assured her that her book (however treasured by herself) would be quite safe from the company of pirates. I resisted stating that they might have more use for it than me, however. Instead of looting our quarters, the pirates immediately ransacked the kitchen where they discovered various types of alcohol and proceeded to inebriate themselves. They were, I fear, foreigners.

Percy tapped me on the arm, then indicated one of the portholes.

"Did you not," he said. "Fit through one of these before? You could come around to the door, and release the rest of us."

Looking at the dimensions of the porthole, I could see the proportions of my wardrobe were too great! I knew at once that I must change outfits! Luckily, I had rescued just such a thing from the blob! With some help from Missus Mister and Brunhilde, who guarded my noble changing from the prying eyes of men, I managed to slip into something more squeezable.

"You must give me a hand up," I told Percy, opening the porthole and bracing my hands on the edge. He did so, with rather more vigor than I had prepared for. Instead of balancing upon the porthole edge, and then taking a moment to decide my next action, I went sailing clean through, and landed, not upon the decking as I anticipated, but the collapsed and mangled remains of the walkway! I knew at once that the blob had been nearby, for the outer edge of the ship was corroding.

Struggling in the wind, I managed to scurry back through an exit door. I released the captives from the library and we began to head towards the bridge.

"Most inconvenient," Captain Hammerhorn grumbled.

We made it successfully to the bridge, only to discover the reason why the rest of the ship had seemed so empty of invaders. The pirates, apparently preferring their debauchery with a view, had taken over the bridge itself. Drunken pirates were draped across flat surfaces; their Captain, with his long, red goblin nose, looked up at us.

"You knave!" Captain Hammerhorn shouted, staring indignantly at the bottle still clenched in that pirate's hand. "You have drunk my best bottle of rum! We are taking back my ship, now!"

Throwing back his shoulders, Captain Hammerhorn shifted a step to the right and laid his hand upon one of the many levers on the panel beside him. "You, sir, will immediately vacate my ship."

I saw immediately that the pirate understood the meaning of Captain Hammerhorn's threat, even though I, myself, did not. The pirate straightened out of his easy slouch, and a wary alertness came into his eyes. I will admit Sir Hammerhorn looked quite magnificent with his great mustache billowing in the wind and his hand firm upon the mysterious lever. I quite believed he would actually do it; whatever it was he meant to do!

"You wouldn't dare," the pirate captain said. He put his hands on his hips and stared arrogantly down from his great height. Captain Hammerhorn and the pirate stared at each other, the blood rising in Hammerhorn's face until it quite matched the nose of the pirate.

The subtle throb of the engine immediately sputtered and went out. For a moment, there



was perfect silence… and then, a most ominous hiss of air.

"You crazy fool!" The pirate yelped. "You pulled the lever!"

"I never pulled the lever!" Hammerhorn yelled back.

We all looked up through the glass. There was at first no difference to be seen, but then the great balloon above us buckled inward as though punched by some invisible fist. Underneath us, the decking dropped by several feet as the balloon's ability to carry us was diminished. In fact, it was not merely a downward lurch, but an actual plunge.

The First Mate's voice came over the intercom. "Good afternoon. We regret to inform you that we have lost control of the ship." It said this as it had once before, as if it were a standard announcement. "We would like to remind all passengers that there is no such thing as a water landing. It is called crashing into the ocean. We are sorry for any inconvenience. Our estimated time of arrival today is thirty-seven seconds. We thank you for flying with us."

Our previous crash was an easy crash. It took three minutes and was slowed by both the First Mate's abilities and the tall grasses. This crash was happening far too fast! I clung to the wall as I stared out the window at the expanse of sky and sea surrounding us. One could almost not tell the difference; how strange to think I would likely be killed by something so serene.

"We can yet survive this," I said to Percy.

"If," he said, "we survive the crash itself, the deflated balloon is likely to fall across us and smother us all within minutes... We could suffocate. There are also sharks."

Perhaps comforting a person in distress was not one of his strong suits.

PIRATES!



Calling Cards

Tips for Lady Monster Hunters No. 07

Always Be Prepared!

As every lady monster hunter knows, preparing for pirates poses a problem. It is best to be ready for inconveniences when they rear their ugly heads. Therefore, it is highly recommended that every prepossessing lady pack with the expectation of getting kidnapped by pirates at least once on her adventure. Preparing for the worst will help prevent even the more embarrassing situations.

Always carry a dainty visiting-card-case and a few dozen extra calling cards. Pirates are notorious for informality, and in order to maintain the proper decorum you will want to present these cards to each member of the crew when given the chance.

Remember to fill your bodice or sleeve with a few extra handkerchiefs. Cleanliness is not generally regarded by pirates, and when shaking their hands or eating their foods or sitting at their table you may come away with an unpleasant stain, or, heaven forbid, a cold.

It may benefit the discerning lady to bring along a tincture of perfume when adventuring. Not only can this help alleviate the malodorous scents of any pirate ship, but also can come in handy when dealing with musty mummies, wet werewolves, or a decomposing demon.

Handkerchiefs ❀ Perfume





A BLOB ON A BOAT

SUNDAY JUNE THE THIRTEENTH

"Look, Percy! Directly below us!" I said, laying my hand against the glass. "Is that an ocean liner?"

It was an ocean liner indeed—and not just a regular ocean liner, but one of those massive ocean liners of which the nouveau riche are so fond. Personally, when one has the option of traveling by airship, an ocean liner seems somehow... vulgar. Though perhaps I am being unpatriotic for thinking so, as most of the truly great liners are built in England.

In any case, we crash landed rather neatly upon the rear deck of the ocean liner, and since the liner was moving, our balloon trailed behind us and did not smother us to death. Also, attached by their ropes and hooks, were the pirate airships, dragging behind our own airship like kites in the wind!

"This is very peculiar," I said.

Just at that moment a little bell rang, and immediately one of the pirates glanced up at the glass ceiling. The blob was crawling across the glass, and its weight was making cracks above. The glass shattered and the blob fell onto the pirate!

The collision caused Cyprien's hat to fly off. "My best hat!" he cried as it landed on the blob, intact. After a horrifying struggle, the blob had devoured the goblin pirate and continued to sink straight through the floor, melting a hole into the deck of

the ocean liner and then further below.

"And whatever am I to do about this!" Brunhilde Bamfield exclaimed, reaching down toward the hole in the floor. "That blob was meant for my husband... I mean, sister, in San Francisco!"

I knew at once the cause of the ship's collapse from the sky had been the blob.

"It was so tiny," she said. "I feared it was not strong, and would perish from lack of care, but you see how it escaped. Through the pirate—by eating it!"

And then we heard a noise come from below like the great groaning of a whale. The metal of the ocean liner's hull was buckling beneath. At that moment the Pirate King pushed between our group, kicking out a window. Sir Hammerhorn grabbed the nearest lady and yelled, "To the life boats!" After that, there was considerable commotion. I tried to take hold of Brunhilde or Percy, but both were far too distraught to be of any real help in this venture.

"It's my best hat!" Cyprien wept bitterly in the commotion.

I grabbed Cyprien's arm. "Quickly - perhaps it is not too late to save the ocean liner."

It was a simple matter to see which way the creature had gone: straight down.

"Do you see any wayward water down there, Cyprien? For I am wearing wool, and I dare not risk the destruction of my only remaining dress!"

"No, Miss."

"Through the hole!" I charged. Cyprien grabbed a rope, and we both climbed down to the next level. The hole in the deck below was larger than the hole on the floor above. We proceeded through it as well, passing through many decks. It was darker than I would have liked in the boiler room. There was, of course, the ambient red glow of the massive furnaces, but the boiler pipes were melted and corroded far beyond what seemed safe. The floors, however, were intact. There, laying in some ooze, was Cyprien's hat. He clutched it to




Philomena Dashwood

his chest most triumphantly, then set it on his head—still with the goo.

A strangely glutinous gurgle came from around a bend in the corridor, and both of us froze. It is one thing to hunt a monster, knowing beforehand what one will be facing. It is quite another to step around a corner blind, and face an unknown gurgling.

There was a terrible squelching, and the creature emerged from around the bend. We both screamed and Cyprien swung his gun, but as it struck the creature, it was absorbed within its immense bulk.

Literally, absorbed.

The creature nearly filled the entire corridor. I knew blobs were able to consume any organic matter. They will really only avoid glass, or incorruptible metals, but apparently they can choose to digest whatever they desire, for here the gun just floated serenely in this blob's belly. It could not possibly still be hungry, I thought; it had eaten a goodly portion of our transportation and part of a pirate crew already.

"Glurb!" the creature said, lifting a gelatinous appendage, and swiping at Cyprien's head.

We began to back slowly down the corridor, and to my surprise, the blob followed us, squishing slowly past the corroded pipes. Perhaps, if we could get it up on deck, we could somehow contain it or push it into the sea? But how to lure it up three levels? It would never follow us for that great of a distance.

"Gliggle," the blob said, reaching again for Cyprien's head.

"It wants my hat," Cyprien said.

"Oh, who would not?" I said, ironically, and perhaps a bit rudely.

Cyprien pulled off the wicker head-wear and held it out at arm's length. The blob surged forward, reaching out for the hat with both its stubby arms. We lured it through the ocean liner most successfully. There was a nasty moment toward the end of the boiler room when it nearly touched my skirts, and another higher up, when the blob paused to consume half a dining set, and it appeared to grow enough that it might not fit up the final staircase. But those matters were resolved, and we successfully came out on deck.

"Quite the easiest way," I said, "would be to simply throw the hat into the ocean. I do think it might simply follow it over the side."

"Miss!" Cyprien exclaimed, pointing down the deck of the ocean liner. I cast my eyes about and was suddenly struck by a peculiar thing: we were the only people on the deck. In fact, there was only one remaining lifeboat. It was full of the ocean liner's passengers, and it went dropping to the sea the moment I saw it.

"They have all gone off and left us," I said indignantly. I should have thought someone might have noticed I was not among the evacuees!

This was nothing to what I saw next! I noticed a veritable river of water spreading across the deck — straight for my skirt's hem. It would have soon been the end of my skirt — for the ocean liner was sinking, and wool could not withstand the water!

"Philomena!" a voice called. It was Brunhilde! "I could not leave without you!" she shouted, rushing towards me. I was quite pleased to call her my friend at that moment! I ran to embrace her. I thought for certain all my friends had abandoned me. But here was Brunhilde Bamfield!

"Or my blob!" she continued. She was, perhaps, harboring a rather immense affection for her blob, but I like to imagine it was our close feminine bond, alone, that prompted her to stay.

My skirts were in danger, and as I avoided



the rising waters I saw Cyprien was more concerned with something else. The ocean liner was capsizing on the distant side, where our airship had crashed, first. Our airship was caught firmly in the deck of the ocean liner but also still hooked and anchored to the pirate airships by their harpoons and tethers. Those pirate ships were still airborn, but dragging behind. Since our airship was the major weight causing the ocean liner to capsize, all of this sinking was causing the pirate airships to be pulled by their tethers down into the waters as well. If they were dragged under, all of those sailors would surely drown!

Cyprien grabbed a wayward cutlass as it slid past. The airships were pulled closer and closer towards the waves. He ran forward. The blob followed. Cyprien, then, most majestically, and in a very manly fashion, slashed at the ropes that were entrapping those hopeless pirate ships! He thrashed through the water like one born to it! At each snap of the cord, a ship sailed away into the air with cheers from its airdeck.

I wrested my skirts over my knees. I could love such a man, I thought at that moment. What a different view from the thief who once tossed me on my seat during a pursuit!

Then our own airship sank entirely below the waves, snapping the ocean liner in two. As the airship was swept up under the waves, a portion rose out of the water. I saw the lifeboat from earlier— the one still hanging on by that one cord the blob didn't dissolve! It was quickly passing over my head. I grabbed ahold of a portion of broken rope and held on for dear life, trying to prevent our only means of escape from being pulled under. I have no idea why I thought my strength could equal that of an airship embedded in an ocean liner sinking into the sea. Brunhilde wrapped her arms around me to hold me onto the deck. Cyprien swung from his last pirate rescue and landed on the upper portion of the lifeboat, slashing at its remaining rope, dropping it safely to the deck onto the blob, neatly slicing one piece the size of a largish child from the rest.

But the lifeboat started to slide down the deck.

"Jump!" I commanded, and together, Brunhilde and I leapt into the sliding lifeboat. Cyprien followed. And therefore, too, did the blob, lunging forward and waving its stubby arms at the hat.

"Oh dear," Brunhilde said, gasping at the sight. "Is that my blob?"

Date Missing

It is very awkward to do one's memoir-keeping while in a lifeboat with several other persons and a very large blob. It has the hat now. It is wearing it at quite the rakish angle, I might add. I did not think it would fit, but it suits him.

I have picked up an oar to keep the beast at bay in case he grows hungry. A true monster hunter makes her own weapons from whatever she finds around her; one cannot count on always possessing the required weapon to suit every kind of beast and creature. It is not actually necessary to always carry a weapon. Though it is usually advised to carry something.

At least, there has been no further loss of life... unless one counts the other section of the blob lost to the sea.

I write these notes in the back of a copy of "Moonlight." It seems this dreadful novel is the only thing that has survived the sinking of the airship. Mrs. Bamfield clapped her hands as it floated by, exclaiming, "Oh, excellent! One needs only a good book to make waiting for a rescue less tedious. How far did you manage to read, Miss Dashwood?"

Mrs. Bamfield did not appear to care about the change of itinerary... so long as she was reunited with her book. I opened the book once more, and I rejoined my chiffon-clad swooner and her metaphorically-glimmering vampire. I still hoped the swoon was a ploy.

It was not. I am finished now.



The blob has grown weary of wearing his hat. He has taken it off now and shoved it in his mouth.

Tuesday, June the Fifteenth

Well, here's a strange turn of events! The sky pirates spent the rest of the day gathering up the people from lifeboats, rescuing any floating luggage, and delivering both to safety! They came back for our lifeboat a few hours later. But my astonishment does not end there, for they witnessed Cyprien rescue many of their numbers from being dragged into the sea. In gratitude, they offered him the position of pirate king and in retaliation for the whole dangerous mess with the entangled airships, they made their own king walk the plank!

To my surprise, Cyprien agreed to take the position! He says he grew up on the sea and thieving was in his nature. Maybe I cannot bring myself to wish him well, exactly, but I am quite sure that he will find no shortage of questionable headwear among the pirates to bring him many long and happy years.

I think the blob has joined their crew as well. I'm not quite certain for it cannot speak yet. It did ride off with the pirates and made a most gracious bow to me, then waved goodbye most politely as it sailed into the air.

I think I have had quite enough of the sea, for I feel quite confused.

AN APT LADY ALWAYS BRINGS A BOOK!



TIPS FOR LADY MONST
NO. 08

An Excerpt from

LADY TOKINGHAM'S MOONLIGHT

Call me Lothair, darling, throw away all awkward reserve," he said, putting his arm around my waist, and placing his glimmering hand on my cheek. "Go on; tell me all about those fiendish priests who have been plotting to ensnare me."

"Take my advice, Lothair," I went on, nearly swooning at his touch. "You will find their opinions quite changed; the Cardinal's orders are positive that Clare is not to spare even her honour if necessary, to capture you. But her honour is an article I saw her surrender to that confessor." Then I described to him the horrifying seduction I had witnessed in the chapel.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, a glimmer in his eyes." Dear Beatrice! Last night I felt able to lose life rather than her, and now the feeling is gone, fled like a shadow, but what is it after all, but a mean, mistrustful shame; You, Beatrice, must be mine, I can't restrain the fire of love which is consuming me; the very sin makes the idea more delicious."

My faint efforts were useless, he was a fine strong young fellow; in an instant I was thrown backwards on the long grass, or was it a swoon? The furor of lust was upon him, but I made a fair show of resistance, and seemed only to yield to force, shutting my eyes as if afraid to see his majestic glimmering beauty. His lips were fixed to mine; the soft velvety tip of his tongue was a titbit I could not refuse, and I sucked it till I almost choked for want of breath.

It was a most erotically voluptuous love engagement. Only one heart and one soul seemed to animate us, his glimmering arms grasping my swooning frame.

He parted from me very lovingly; and on my return to St. James' Square, I found that Lady Montairy had brought an invitation from the Duchess for us to spend a few days at Crecy House before our return to the country.



AN INSTITUTE FOR THE INSANE

Thursday, June the Seventeenth

We landed on American soil and the tour began to re-group. J.W. Wells is arranging new transportation and we should be taking a train across America. Hammerhorn has scheduled a visit to an American Civil War battlefield where we can look for fine ghost specimens. Before that, however, we have been most graciously invited to a dance to relax after our harrowing experiences!

Percy Longville, it seems, has begun to catch a cold after all those incidents with water. I do feel for the poor man. He has spent much of the past few weeks going out of his way to help people. There was Cyprien, whom he found that job on the ship. He helped me with that witch business. Perhaps he is, by default, just a helpful sort of person. It does explain why he always manages to bumble about and get in my way. I remember the first time he tried to manhandle me on the streets of London. I suppose he meant to help then as well?

Friday, June the Eighteenth

Well, I was quite excited for the ball. After all this crashing and sinking across the globe, I was excited to return to a social event that required some semblance of poise and dignity.



I have made it a personal rule never to pass up a chance to dance, but one wonders how an American ball can be worth the effort? An American ball must be something a bit like a German Muffin or a Canadian Silk.

I had a long conversation with the Mayor this morning. I had hoped to add him to my dance card! The gloriously bearded man is confused by this monster hunting tour because he says there have been no monsters. He wished to know if it would be ill-bred of him to request a discount upon the price he paid.

I was already well aware he missed the zombie attack entirely due to his misplaced luggage, but surely he cannot have missed the pirate attack?

"The pirates on the airship?" I enquired.

"Yes," he replied cheerfully. "Most amusing! But they could hardly be considered monsters."

It turned out that he managed to find himself entirely separated from any sight of the blob oozing through the ocean liner as well. What a curious adventure for the poor man. He may not return to Venice well equipped to stave off monster attacks after all. But I did get his name on my dance card, though the effort would prove futile... for Percy was still feeling quite ill, and though I had to swallow my pride to do so, I decided to attend to him—perhaps in an attempt to try to appear helpful, as he often tries to do for me. This was what caused me to miss the ball!

For the man had fallen quite ill and it seemed best to guide him to a doctor. All the other monster hunters had departed, so I packed the sickly boy up and we took the carriage to the nearest Doctor—who was out, it seems, attending the dance!

"Must... dance," Percy said in his delirium. "Prove... Philomena... I can..."

But he must be disappointed, for all the doctors in town, it seemed, were headed out to the ball.

A most gracious footman explained that there was always a doctor on staff at the state Asylum. It was, in fact, an asylum for the insane. This resident physician was our only hope at this point, and so we rode out to the Asylum.

The building was massive, built of weathered brick, and surrounded by the jagged spears of an iron wall. It was clearly meant as more of a prison, but it was quite the size of Versailles, and that it housed the insane and afflicted caused me some minor apprehension. But, as I reminded myself, even the insane suffer illnesses of the body which must be tended to.

"Come, Percy," I said, jostling him.

"Would she ever deign to offer me a kiss?" Percy said, apparently addressing a nearby horse.

"I imagine she'd be willing enough if you gave her a carrot," I replied.

Once inside, it was a most shocking sight! We were greeted by an excessively attentive person in a badly-fitting uniform. At the time I thought, "Why must Americans purchase all their garments prêt-a-porter?" The uniformed person began urging us to take a seat in the waiting area. Waiting around us in this seating area were some truly disturbed looking people. One demented, wall-eyed man nodded at me smiling, but not in that polite 'how-do-ye-do' way. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if he was still nodding and smiling at me to this very day, even though I was no longer there.

Percy was getting sicker by the moment and the fever had overcome him.

"The Doctor will see you now!" a nurse called.

We were ushered along past a door that was closed and bolted, and in the small observation window, I glimpsed a man's face, staring out. When he saw me, he threw himself upon the door and began screaming for help. I suppose I thought this was typical behavior in a mad house, having never been to one, and mustering my most reserved affectations, nodded politely and continued into an operating room.

The nurse stopped in front a pair of double doors before swinging them open with a flourish. There stood the doctor and what could be described,

most generously, as his nurses, posed like some sort of theatrical ballet troupe, wearing masks and standing completely still in front of dull, stained curtains. They were all completely still, and I felt a prickle of unease twist up my backbone.

The doctor wore the ancient plague mask, which struck me as most anachronistic!

"Welcome, my dear friends!" the Doctor said, moving with a flourish. "Please come in, and take a seat. Please don't mind the mess."

A nearby nurse kicked a bloody something under the table.

The Doctor approached, the nurses spreading out as if in a dance formation, all gathering around us. The Doctor observed me most closely saying, "Now I don't want to alarm you, my dear, but you certainly do look ill. Open wide and say "ah," so that I may observe your heart beat."

I thanked the doctor for his concern, and continued by indicating that it was Percy, not I, who was very clearly ill and had a fever. However, I knew something was wrong here in this asylum, and I also suggested that we might, perhaps, come back later.

The nurses locked the door at that moment, and that was when I realized it was the inmates who were running this asylum. I know not when or how it happened, only that it happened very near the day or time of our arrival. We were now sequestered in this institute for the insane!

"Nonsense," said the Doctor. "I promise to take care of your beautiful little sister."

"Why are we at the theater, Missus Dashwood?" Percy asked, delirious.

I could not correct him then, for the nurses guided Percy away from my protection. He was in no state of mind to heed me anyway. They began to try to remove his clothing, to which I objected. It is never proper to prepare for a hospital bed in



front of a lady.

"I urge that we make haste..." the Doctor said, ushering Percy to a table. The nurses began to strap him down. The Doctor began summoning tools, which it seems to me turned out to be a bone saw and a syringe fit for tranquilizing a horse.

Just as the nurses strapped Percy to the table, I heard him react slowly, "What's… going… on?"

The Doctor stepped forward just as the nurses sprang into action, pulling aside the dull, stained curtains with a melodramatic swoosh to reveal a row of gurney tables, each with a struggling or nearly dead person strapped to them! I let out a small shriek. One man lay with his chest opened as though it were a valise. Another - a woman! - struggled uselessly against her bonds, her jaws wired together and her right side drenched in blood. One man was missing his lower limbs. These grotesque figures were bloodied and terrified, and to my great horror, Percy was wheeled into the line.

The Doctor made a move to inject Percy's head with the syringe. Even as an adult, I do not care for injections, and as a child, I was quite terrorized by them. I tried to move to his aid, but the nurses—or should I say inmates?—restrained me!

"She has the most lovely eyes," Percy said dreamily. "Like fried eggs. The pretty ones with sprigs of rosemary."

It was precisely the buck-up I needed.

"Wait!" I cried.

The Doctor looked up. "Whatever for?" he asked, sounding genuinely curious.

"Because... because... these other people were here first!"

I struggled desperately with the nurses and managed to free one hand to point at the gurneys. "You must cure these other patients first. Percy and I are English. Queues do matter to the English!"

The physician handed the syringe back to a nurse. "You are quite right, of course."

The nurses let go.

"For example, this one," I indicated the pathetic wretch struggling for his life nearest.

The Doctor paused. Then he skipped over to the table that I had indicated where lay the terrified and bleeding person. "Indeed you are quite right!" the Doctor called. "What he has cannot be cured easily. He has many illnesses that must drain out from the body like pus, but there appears to be some sort of blockage deeper in! Note that I have already removed his hatred and placed it over there." (He indicated a bloody pile.) "And now I shall remove his guilt!"

The nurse handed him a saw. Well, now in my failed attempt to rescue Percy, I had put this poor man in peril!

"But wait!" I cried. "With deadly illnesses you must be very exacting, for things such as guilt can hardly be perceptible. Moreover, does not one wash away one's guilt? I have heard that a cleanly touch will produce the best effects. You must be delicate, and anywhere you don't find an illness, perhaps you should take care, lest an illness creep in."

"Yes!" cried the Doctor, agreeing far too joyously, and he delegated the job to a nurse "You must examine this man very minutely. Use magnifying glasses, telescopes, anything to aid in the discovery of these tiny illnesses. If you do not find an illness, make each part comfortable with a pillow of gauze or a fresh drink of disinfectant!"

The man in the next bed down screamed, for horror seems to come in piles when the insane are left unrestrained, and the nurses had begun sawing off his foot! The Doctor leapt to the man's side, crying, "This man needs a new leg! Perhaps we can take your friend's leg? My saw!"

"But wait!" I cried. "No doubt there must be a better way to help this man, than to play musical chairs with everyone's limbs."

"Do you really think so?" asked the Doctor.

"You must stop the bleeding, or he will die!" I commanded.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Nurse,




Philomena Dashwood

you must stop this man's bleeding. But where shall I find him another leg?"

I hesitated, and, struggling, suggested, "Why not the leg of a chair? It is very sturdy and often stood upon."

"Most indeededly so! Nurse, we must discover a way to fasten this wooden leg to this fleshy body the moment the leg has healed!"

The Doctor started laughing, hysterically.

I slowly stepped backwards to check on Percy. I took his hand, which was strapped to the table, and he said, "I thought we were going to a ball?"

I replied gently, "Things are getting a little hysterical."

"Do you think I have hysteria?" the Doctor exclaimed, almost immediately invading my personal space, as if we had been in an intimate conversation. "What shall we do? My father will surely send me away to the asylum."

"Uh… what are some of your symptoms?" I asked, cautiously.

"I feel nervous," the Doctor replied. "My mind gets confused. Sometimes I feel sexual urges. I killed a cat. I have a complete loss over my ability to speak. My womb wanders."

"You don't have a womb," I corrected him, with a slight air of indignance.

"I know," he replied gravely. "I don't anymore; that's how far it has wandered."

"Eye ache? Back Strain?" I asked, attempting to stall long enough to figure out what to do next.

"Yes!" he agreed. "Numbness of the extremities! My sister lives in Baltimore. I have a sudden weakness of willpower."

"Cramps?" I continued.

"Yes! Difficulty swallowing! I have a continual and insatiable craving for sympathy and love."

"Most definitely."

"Clenched teeth! Vapors!"

"And wouldn't you know it, I'm cured! And so is my friend!" I shouted, trying to wrap the conversation up on a positive note.

The Doctor started clapping, gleefully, and I smiled most graciously and began to untie Percy from the table.

"And so," I said to the Doctor, "as you have so many other patients to cure and help with their problems, we couldn't possibly take up another moment of your time."

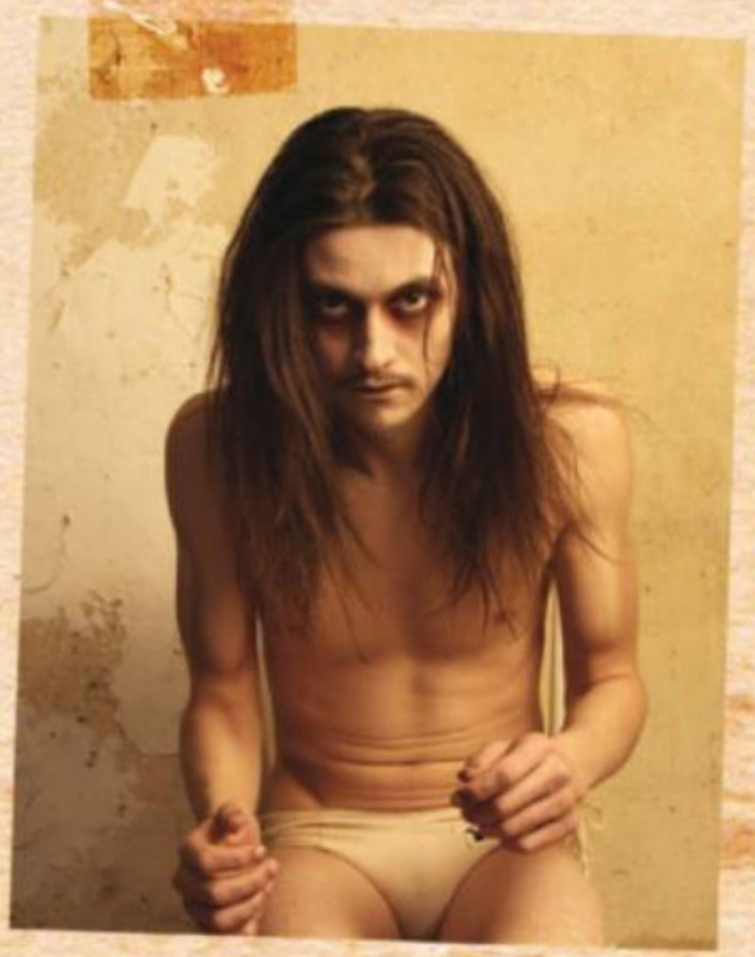
I propped Percy up against my shoulder and we backed out of the room, which was opened for us. I tried to invoke my most gracious humility upon leaving, as to not raise suspicion. Luckily, we made it out unscathed.

Sunday, June the Twentieth

I have taken Percy to a hotel and tended to his fever myself. It has been a few days since our ordeal. I immediately telegraphed the inspector to inform him of the Asylum's takeover, and I demanded they send several burly police constables. After some time, I received a message from that same man. It claimed therein that there was nothing at all unusual about the Asylum. In fact, the inspector claimed it looked to be the most well-run medical establishment he had ever seen and quite an improvement from the last time he had visited. In one room, they were studying and making advances in germ theory, in another they were creating the most realistic prosthetics to help a disabled man walk, and finally, the mental health program where each inmate discussed his issues with a counselor seemed to be increasing the general welfare of the populace. In fact, it seems the Insane Asylum had been driven sane! The telegram ended with a stern warning against false accusations.

Percy sleeps mostly. He appears to remember nothing of the other night, but once spoke in a brief moment of wakefulness to say something like, "I'm so glad you are here with me. The worst thing in the world is to be sick and to be alone."

I find it is very gratifying to be appreciated.





– M – White? – 24 yrs – Insanity on day of admittance – Homicidal Mania.

Has never attempted to kill anyone here. He tears off his clothes, and then sits quietly in a corner. Is kept in a separate cell at night. At night he prevents his neighbors from sleeping. Speaks of seven men whom he (is said to have) killed. Considers his deed as the most natural, and finest ever performed by any one – In killing these men, he undoubtedly did so through an irresistible instinctive impulse.





– F – White – 30? yrs – Pica

This unfortunate woman has fine traits and her appearance would denote a woman of refined habits, may be of a high origin. This lady reasons her case so very well as to induce the belief that she is not insane. Her reasoning was so lucid, that I was about to discharge her when she began to devour the items on my desk. Matter not what is placed before her, she will eat it, wood, metal, etc. She has since eaten her own lips and parts of her mouth and must be muzzled.





– F – W – 32 yrs – Melancholic Hallucination.

This woman, about a month ago, was reading an illustrated paper which criticizes in bad every thing. She imagined that the critic of the paper alluded to her in particular, and from this time her insanity began, & has been growing worse ever since. She is a slave to the belief that she is nursing her youngest child which is a linen doll. She speaks of her children who are in the garden, whereas they are not present, nor is there a garden near by.



– M – White – 16 yrs – recommended his confinement, finding him insane, suffering from Stupidity.

This boy is of a quiet & retired nature. He does all that he is told to do at the prison or work house, but at home, is uncontrollable. His mother says that he entered a man's house, stripped himself naked, overturned the furniture, and when asked what he was doing, answered to get out of the way, he was the boss of the place. He answers rather correctly to questions asked but foolishly. His principal answer being "I don't care."

March 4th, 1883. Last evening he managed to steal a dessert table knife from the mess room, and though the knife is very dull he managed to cut his throat, opening the wind pipe, and bled from the subcutaneous (2 in number) arteries. The superficial jugular vein on the left was partially severed. Surgical assistance saved him.



– F – White – 27 yrs – Insanity on day of Admittance – Hallucination, to-day the same – Imagines that snakes are after her, with obscene intentions.

To-day, she is in a continual state of terror caused by "a creature who is up stairs, and is going to stab her to death". Her movements are quick & nervous. Her look inquisitive & fugitive. She will speak rationally, and all at once, she will stop, turn her eyes in an opposite direction, and speak by signs to some imaginary being. If you call her attention to you & ask her what is the meaning of this, she seems not to understand you, she will resume her rational conversation with you, then again suddenly interrupt it to again speak by signs with her imaginary object or person. Her general health is good. Her nights often sleepless. She will cry. In her rational conversations she is gay, jovial & pleasant, & yet says that "something is tormenting me & preying on my mind".



– M – W – ?? yrs – Insanity on day of Admittance – Delirium of Grandeur.

He's very witty. Imagines himself as a very accomplished surgeon. Says he owns a reputable medical practice, and has the means of saving hundreds of lives a day. If medical conditions are mentioned to him, his face radiates with joy, and he becomes talkative. If any one contraries him, teases him or denies his imaginary medical practice, he becomes furious, abusive & aggressive. On all other subjects he is perfectly sane and rational.

We have been unable to obtain any information about him, from any sources whatsoever.





THE WEREBEAST OF THE WILD WEST

Tuesday, June the Twenty-Second

The Transcontinental Railroad is taking us across the vast American landscape past a quaint little town called Omaha, Nebraska. It is very strange to me to see such wide open spaces, for we have been on the train for days without end.

Percy has recovered from his fever, and to bide his time seems insistent on following me around with three over-sized volumes about Werewolves, including a pictorial on the Beast of Gevaudan. He persisted in attempting to show me lithographs of exhibits we might see if we ever found ourselves in France together (???), but fortunately Mrs. Bamfield noticed my distress and provided me a socially acceptable pretense to abandon Mr. Longville.

Wednesday, June the Twenty-Third

Well, now we're at it again. The train engine was thrown quite off the tracks and onto its side. Some small passenger or other has been stolen away and a railroad detective was crushed in the wreckage. It is one adventure after another on these J.W. Wells tours! Percy has been up to his eyeballs in werewolf lore and is convinced he heard howling (the wind) and saw some claw marks (a misapplied wrench, no doubt.) His imagination has run away.

We were stalled only a short mile from a wild western town, and our party was commanded to ingloriously drag our own luggage there. What is the point of paying for automaton service if it's just going to sink to the bottom of the sea and leave you to do all the work for yourself? Somehow the first mate survived the entire ordeal, so at least we don't have to lug about our weaponry. How the robot managed to save that trunk would probably be worth discovering and retelling someday.

We came to the barren little town, and it was mainly one lonely street with a pub, a blacksmith, some stables, and a hotel—though I call it a hotel only to be polite. It may well have been a brothel when foreign travelers were not about.

I saw no one at all worthy of exciting my interest, only people of the sort I had been sadly convinced would be living in America. However, Percy quickly became entangled with a ruffian when he bumped into the man, for his nose had been stuck in his book. The man was outraged, throwing Percy's books into the street. He accused Percy of owing him

money, claiming they prospected gold together in Nevada City, Montana—wherever that might be—and boldly stated that he never forgot a face. Though, I think he proved himself quite wrong on that account. Percy tried to diffuse the situation, but when the rowdy figure saw that our group was carrying guns, that was it; He challenged Percy to a duel!

We arrived in town at 11 and Percy already had a duel at noon. Having little to no experience with a gun, but having many trigger happy traveling companions, the poor man was urged to appear at the fight! The entire entourage of Monster Hunters including Sir Hammerhorn, The Mayor, Missus Mister and Brunhilde Bamfield at once offered their support, guidance and choice of weapons! I have to wonder if they do not secretly think so little of him that they wish him killed?

Percy was not a good study in marksmanship. No one wants to be in a shoot-out, even more so in the case of Percy Longville, but if you must be in a shootout, like Percy Longville, you mustn't show any signs of fear! Men cower before the bold! Imagine how the gazelle is paralyzed by fear at the powerful approach of the lion!

I believe the entire populace showed up on the street, then, and I was quite surprised to see the majority were young ladies hardly older than myself!

The ruffian said, "Do you really think you have what it takes to shoot me, boy?"

And Percy replied with more dry sarcasm than I have ever heard him since utter, "You really ought to be asking that of the last man who charged me to a duel."

I am unsure if it was the bravery or simply the English accent that shattered the nerves of the ruffian, but after some intense staring, the villain lost all his courage and fled! All the women lining the streets began laughing, and some even jeered at the passing coward who jumped on his horse and disappeared into the horizon.

The women of the town were quite impressed,



jostling one another to return Percy's books to him as he came down the street, smiling. A robustly-bosomed woman, who appeared to be in danger of bursting her corset seams, and a couple of girls with the nervous, fussy faces, the type one expects to find on rabbits, presented his books to him.

"Oh, sir," they said. "You are soooo very brave!"

And "Oh, sir, I should be quite available to polish the handle of your gun if you need a good cleaning."

But one saw the cover of his book, which read "werewolf", and when the woman gushed, "Are you a werewolf expert?" And Percy replied, "Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say that, but yes, they are a keen interest of mine." Well, then the city was in an uproar, and you couldn't see Percy through the sea of women that thronged upon him! Appalling, I say, to throw oneself so completely at a man you have only just met.

They ushered him to the hotel/pub and I was once again left to drag my own luggage behind. Have none of these Americans ever heard of hiring a staff?



Thursday, June the Twenty-Fourth

I may say that I am pleased beyond all proportion at this turn of events! I could nearly bust my side with laughter! Let me recount it as to not forget.

The town is run by an innkeeper—though I say innkeeper only to be polite. I quite understand that she is a Madame when there are not wealthy foreigners around. Her name is Honey Occularus, and she plied Percy with booze. Her entire harem descended on him, making him giggle dumbly, she gave our entire tour free drinks... but the joke was on them, for Percy was no great werewolf hunter!

"A werewolf has been spotted in the area," she announced to our party. "To think that it managed to find its way onto your train! It has been targeting trains for many long months, but yours is the first it has managed to derail. Now that you are properly in werewolf country, we might at last have a hero to aid our small town."

"A werewolf is no small matter," slurred Percy. "I have read every burk... book... boook... on werewolves that there is, and I can... know it."

"It began by stealing the able-bodied residents of the town. It would carry them, screaming, into the night. Their bones were never found! Most of the men were taken; many others fled. That's when it turned its attention to the trains! It hunts the passengers."

She turned very dark. "It wants us dead!"

And with a few more swigs of the liquor, Percy replied, "I shall do it!", and had agreed to use his bravery to rid their town of the dreaded werewolf!

It was only the next morning that he realized what he had agreed to do and he ran to me in

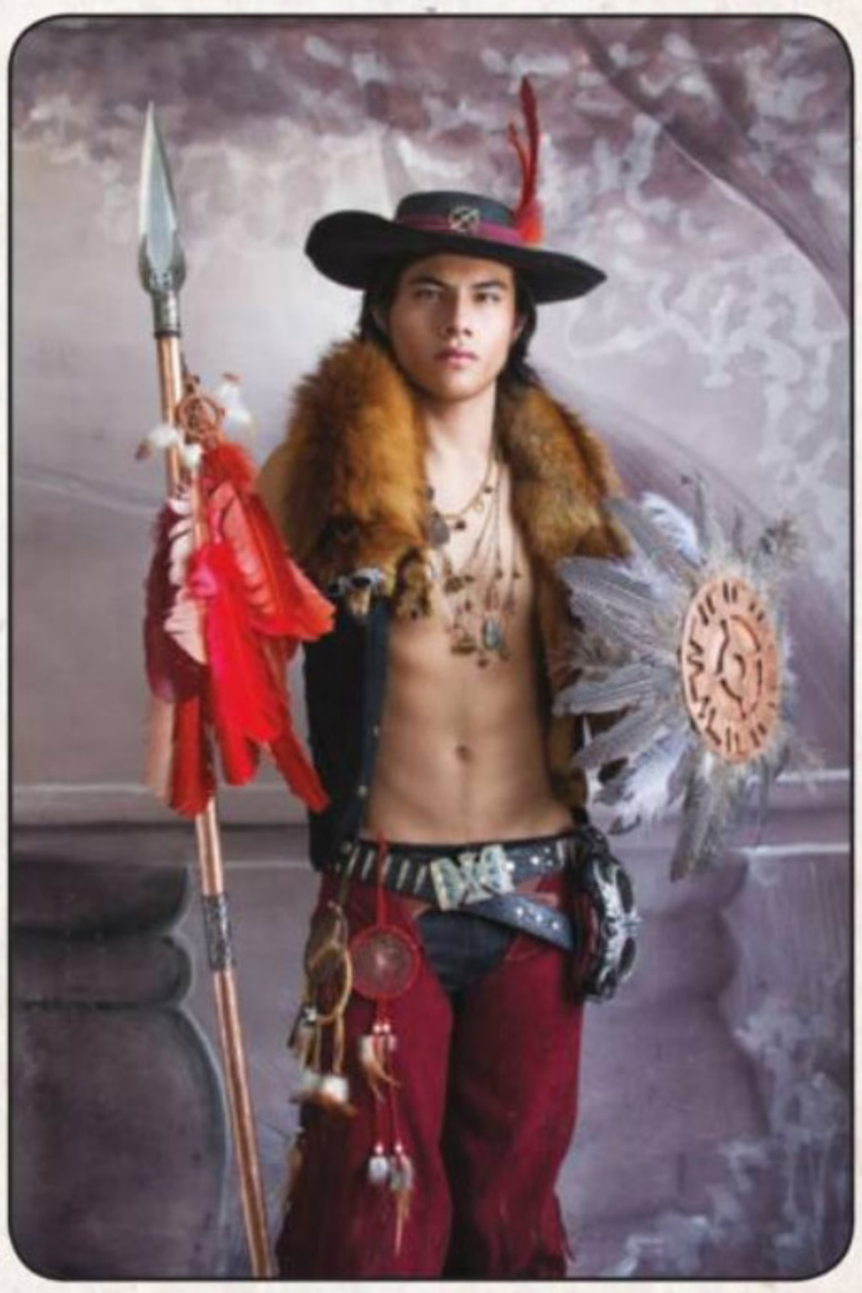



BLACKSMITH

most dire distress asking for help! Ha! Ha! Is it not the funniest turn of events? I shall help him, but only because he has helped me so frequently in the past. Otherwise he should deserve to take on the brunt of this charge for his boldness.

Friday, June the Twenty-Fifth

There are some American Indians who come and go from town! I saw a most fascinating young man accompanied by an old woman. The woman wore a blanket woven of many colors in the most beautiful star-like design, and it had bead-work like I have never seen. It did not suit my aesthetic, perhaps, but there was no doubt it was created by a master of the craft. The boy was also quite exotically handsome! He looked like a regular hero! Perhaps shorter than an Englishman, but with a broad chest and beautiful jet black hair.



I was just doing my best to ignore Percy as he tried to get my attention — I suppose he wanted to make me jealous, but I was not having it. The ladies were all gathered around him, and I took some relief in the fact that he could only attract ladies of a "certain character" — when I was approached by the old Native woman in the beautiful blanket.

"Come," she said to me, in a whisper, and we ducked behind the building. "I must tell you something. There are words that I cannot say. Things I should not speak, but I must tell you."

She stopped speaking suddenly, and looked down the dusty alleyway. On the other side stood a dog. It was watching us. The woman looked at it with the strangest look, but when it began to wag its tail the woman looked relieved. The dog ran off, and the woman continued.

"It is not safe to speak now," she said.

"If it is not a rude question," I began. "Who are you?"

"The white folks call me Old Squaw Frew, but my name is Tala Little Wolf. You must meet me tonight, at the stables. Bring your companion."

Tonight there will be a full moon, which is when the werewolves are said to thrive.

As the old woman and her young native companion left town I saw them being followed by the strangest-looking dog. It was not the one from the alley-way, for something about this animal seemed incorrect. I would swear it was a dog, but somehow it seemed to me to be something more akin to a dog pretending to be a dog. Does such a statement even make sense?

Saturday, June the Twenty-Sixth

After I managed to pry Percy away from his adoring throng, we set out looking for signs of the werewolf, wary of the night's approaching moon cycle. We spoke to many townspeople, trying to



gather more information.

First we spoke to the train conductor about the derailment and learned that there was no monster springing into the Engine room or lingering about, but that someone had piled scrap metal on the track. The railroad detective who perished, it seems, had been investigating some local vandal. We also learned that the small person who disappeared was a bone collector, marketing the commodities of the American Bison.

Things were not lining up. Werewolves were known to behave like beasts—hunting, eating, devouring. What we were dealing with here was calculated. I began to think something was amiss.

The evening came soon enough, and it was time to find the old woman who had said she would meet us by the stables. The air was dry, and the sun was low. You could hear some lay-by fence rattling in the wind. We saw the old woman standing there in the middle of the corral. Her beautiful blanket was like a shroud or darkness in the low light, and the beads filled the darkness with twinkling, like the stars of the sky. She held out her hand to us.

A creature leapt from the shadows and jumped on her. She dropped to her knees struggling, subdued by the figure of a wolf!

"A wolf!" I breathed, barely able to contain myself. It seemed abnormally large. Was it... could it be...? Or, no, it was a man! Or...

I did not expect there to be such difficulty in recognizing a werewolf.

I held my gun to the ready but Percy let out a scream, reaching for his pistol in such a panic that he almost clubbed a nearby horse with the barrel. He fired his gun at the werebeast, and though he came quite prepared for the encounter by equipping his gun with silver bullets, the beast was unmoved. It continued to wrestle that woman to the ground, until it crushed her in its arms.

Then the werebeast fled.

Percy immediately mounted the nearby horse, pulled me up behind him, stood in the stirrups, pointed ahead and shouted, "The werewolf!" There was instantaneous chaos. The horse galloped in circles while Percy fired off several shots in random directions. It was all I could to do regain control of that horse from the second place. Slapping my glove smartly onto my mare's flanks, I charged after the beast. Wind lashed against my face, but I was heedless of any possible injury.

In my wilder fantasies, I had dreamed of something very like this: riding through the dusk of an expansive horizon in the company of a handsome man, our weapons loaded with silver, our nerves teased by danger, until—running up beside us was a pack of wolves! It was, perhaps, less desirable to have that man hanging precariously over my lap like a sack of wet cats.



We were quite in an abandoned expanse of terrain.

"Mr. Longville," I called, "it seems I require your aid in a small matter." I handed him the reigns, then aimed my tiny weapon. The beast was in my sights, but as we galloped, more beasts came from the darkness. They were wolves, but real actual wolves, not werewolves. They began to follow further off, to avoid the weapon. We had lost sight of the large werewolf by that time, and my eyes again began to play tricks on me for one of the following wolves looked rather less like the others, like a marionette, or again, like an animal pretending to be itself.

There was a small gated homestead only a short distance off and we made straight for it. The horse leaped over the small gate, and the fence blocked our pursuers. The night had fallen and rushing out of the house with a lantern came that exotically handsome young native man who had visited the town earlier with Old Squaw Frew — or should I say Mrs. Little Wolf. He steadied our horse and his lantern cast light towards the fence.

Just outside the lantern's cast, strange dark figures appeared. It could not have been the wolves, for every feature seemed suddenly elongated and more human. They seemed to be actively trying to scale the short fence but were weirdly unable to get over the top. I have seen the effect before — in a school of fish vying for a treat in a pond — but never with wolves. But they were shadows, not wolves.

"There is an evil spirit after you," the boy said, helping us off the horse. He led us into his small home and barred the door behind us.

"Thank you for your help," I said most politely. "May I ask what you mean by evil spirit?"

"I can tell you no more," the young man replied, looking out the window. He let us sit down. His home was one room, clean but shabby.

"You are not American?" he asked.

"No, we are travelers. We are on a world tour where our group hunts the most vicious and depraved monsters! I have seen you in town," I mentioned, hoping to sound friendly. "My name is Philomena Dashwood, and this is my traveling companion Percy Longville."

"Around here the folks call me Thunderboy. I was brought into this world on the night of a powerful storm."

I felt that the introduction held some native mystery, and I did not want to offend him with more questions.

"It is a very pretty name," I smiled, observing our surroundings.

"If you are not American, and you intend to destroy monsters, perhaps you have come to the right place."

On the mantle I saw a photograph of a young man and an old woman.

Percy exclaimed, "Oh, no! Missus Dashwood, isn't that the old woman who came to meet us in

the stables? The one that the beast attacked?"

It was no time to mention that he had addressed me incorrectly, for he was correct! I recognized the old woman, and my heart sank.

"Attacked?" Thunderboy asked, darkly.

"I'm afraid the beast may have killed her," Percy said, sadly.

Thunderboy stood silently for a long while, thinking.

"So, it has come to this," he said at last.

"The old woman," I began. "Mrs. Frew? Mrs. Littlewolf?"

"Yes," he said,

"She asked to meet us earlier this evening. She said she had a secret that she dared not speak this morning. But before we could meet her, a werewolf attacked her!"

"Yes," Thunderboy said, perhaps irritated, taking the photo off the mantle. "That is my aunt. She stands with my cousin, Aaron. His father, a white man named Frew, managed construction on the railroad when it was being built. But he is long dead now."



An odd thought struck me: There was much talk of the railroad during our investigation. Maybe a little too much to be a coincidence. When we got back to town I knew that I needed to start inquiring about anyone who might have a grudge against the railroad!

"The spirit will not want to come here, to my home." Thunderboy said. "But perhaps it is time he did. Come, let me show you something."

The young man led us out through the back of the yard. I was worried the wolves might reappear, but the boy was undeterred. He led us towards some gigantic white hills. I have never seen such stark hills set off from the landscape. They glowed in the moonlight… and as we approached, I understood why. They were not hills of white earth, but piles of bones. And as we got closer, to my great horror, I discovered that they were piles of all the same bone, the skull. For what must have been a mile, buffalo skulls stood stacked into the sky.

"What is this?" I asked, appalled. Percy looked on, the gears in his mind grinding.

"This is the legacy of the railroad," Thunderboy said, leading us through the halls of animal remains towards a small group of people around a fire in the distance. "Once my people hunted the buffalo. It gave its life so that we could live."

I had heard that the American Indians drove buffalo off cliffs, killing hundreds and leaving them to rot in the sun. But compared to that, the waste before me seemed unfathomable. But then I stood corrected as he continued, "We used the hide of the buffalo for shelter and warmth, but the railroad made people want it for show. Train cars packed with people would lean out the windows and shoot the buffalo as the train passed. They abandoned the dead animals to rot in the sun, hundreds to a pile. We used the bones of the buffalo for tools, but the trains brought men who gathered the bones in piles as great as these to grind into bone meal. Our source of life was taken away by the railroad. Now, the Indians fight for survival. Now they starve."

Is this what hunting has become? When I set out on this tour I was prepared to encounter death, but here in this hall of wasted life I could not comprehend what purpose it served. And this poor boy saying that this destruction had deprived his people. Percy looked quite sickened by the waste.

"This is why the beast haunts these people," Thunderboy said. "It is the most cursed creature of all. It is a corrupt man who steals the skin of an animal and devours the flesh of humans. He believes he avenges his people."

Thunderboy looked at me in the darkness. The distant campfire lit up his face most mysteriously.

"There is only one people on this earth."

I did not quite know what he meant by that, for I had met many different types of people on my journey, of all sorts of shapes and colors. As we spoke, terror grew at the other end of the path. The men gathered around the distant campfire were screaming and the flames of the fire dashed about most violently. I looked that way, and readied my gun.

Then, rising slowly in the light of the fire, we saw it! It was the beast we were after! It was unlike anything we had ever seen. It was the form of a wolf and a man combined—knitted together like a patchwork quilt! It was tearing the workers limb from limb! Such a sight should not be recounted by a refined lady, such as myself.

We unloaded our silver bullets in its direction, but, once again, there was no reaction, save that the beast saw us and began to approach.

One can see how this creature was the cause of so many deaths! While slightly diminished by the horror of its surroundings, the Beast was fully the size of a phaeton, with a wide muscular chest. The head and jaw were massive, adorned with relics and trinkets, and it displayed, with that mouth gaping open, a feral collection of extremely large and pointed teeth. It was rushing towards us!

When I stood before the oncoming monster, knowing that not even a silver bullet could stand as protection between myself and certain death, I could not restrain the violent quiver that surged through me. I was content merely to stand before it and soak in the majesty of its ferocity, but Mr. Longville immediately grabbed my arm, and I found his presence an odd relief. At least I should not die alone, in a strange land. At least, I had… a friend.

I opened my mouth to tell him so; it seemed as though I needed to speak to him, but at that very moment he began to shake me. It was a very unfriendly action.





Thunderboy

"Philomena!" he shouted, above the sounds of screaming and flames. "I must insist that you listen to me!"

What would he say? Would he feel the same way?

"My - my personal implements are all formed of solid silver," Mr. Longville informed me, aghast. "This beast is not a werewolf!"

No, it is no werewolf," Thunderboy said. "You see before you a skinwalker."

The Beast came closer. It roared with a hundred voices, and the pile of skulls collapsed behind us, preventing any escape! The monster leaped upon Thunderboy, who seemed loathe to fight back!

"How does a person defeat a skinwalker?" I asked Percy, who pulled out one of his pocket manuals on werewolves and began to flip through it. Perhaps it was the anxiety over the approaching monster, or perhaps he couldn't see quite so well in the dark, or perhaps there was no information in that tome, but he could not seem to provide an answer to my question in that moment, which was quite contrary to his nature!



Thunderboy had deflected the beast, and it looked towards Percy.

"It must be given a name," Thunderboy said. "I have been unable to do it for many moons. It weighs on my heart, as it weighed on my auntie. But she was ready to tell you."

Thunderboy looked at me with the most desperate pleading in his intense, and beautifully dark eyes.

Suddenly, the Beast seized upon Percy (knocking aside his physical defense as the feeble thing it was) and, howling in rage, the Beast threw Mr. Longville violently into the pile of wretched skulls.

And here is how my mind thought:

1.) The beast must be named.

2.) The beast hated the railroad.

3.) The beast fled towards the old woman's house.

4.) I saw the old woman followed by a dog that seemed not quite like a dog.

5.) The old woman had a son named Aaron.

6.) Thunderboy was unable to name the creature, which weighed on his heart as it weighed on his aunt.

7.) The old woman was ready to tell us something secret.

8.) The old woman's second name was Frew.

It was my only option, for fate had led us here.

"Aaron Frew!" I called out as the beast turned towards me. "I name you!"

And with that the skin of the beast flew off like a flickering shadow, and the boy underneath started flailing his hatchet at me and Thunderboy, like one possessed. The boy slashed at Thunderboy, giving him a nasty cut.

Percy had managed to grab ahold of the wolf skin as it darted through the sky, and he rushed towards the fire, throwing it in. And then... well... I suppose I felt bad, for my heart dropped as Thunderboy watched his cousin begin to crackle and flake like he was on fire. The skinwalker ran out through the darkness, tormented by pain, turning to ash.

I remembered my previous comments about wishing to have a werewolf skin to display in my parlor. It seems to me now to be a bit of a foolishly light-hearted desire.

Monday, June the Twenty-Eighth

This morning Sir Hammerhorn returned from the hunt for the Skinwalker. They found the corpse of a boy, withered and dried, nestled inside the rotting corpse of a bison. He was holding onto the burnt daguerreotype of a railroad worker. It was a portrait of Mr. Frew, his father.

Percy has been much celebrated by the townswomen since word got round that he threw the wolf pelt on the fire. He did what he was hired to do, noble fellow. The women of the town have named their one street after him, "Longville." There's talk of changing the town's name as well.

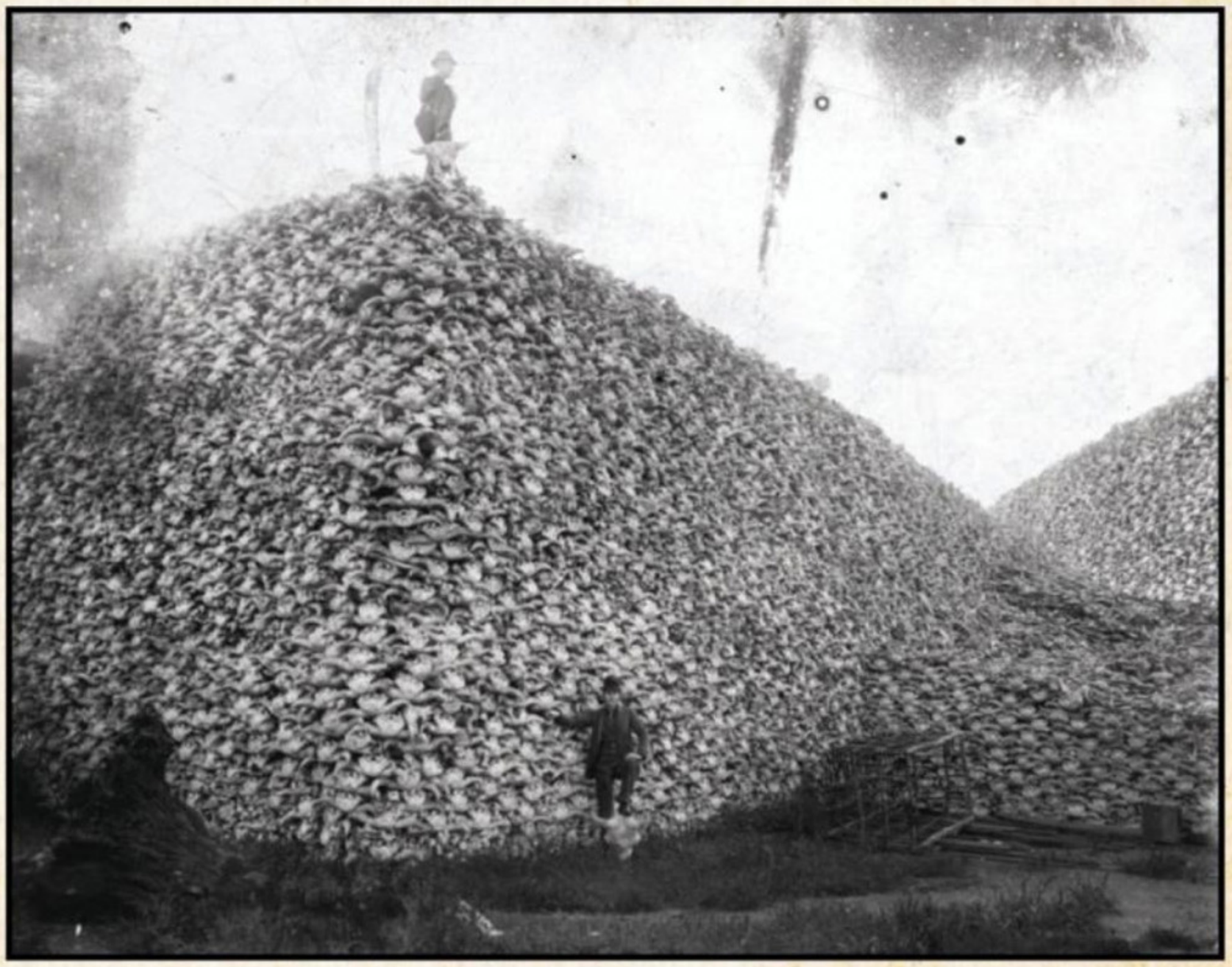
Perhaps the old woman wanted to lead us to her boy to stop his rampage. Thunderboy told me that she truly believed that all life was precious, and her son's plot for revenge must have caused her much distress. All told, he killed over thirty people.

The last I saw her, I wept. She was buried at her small home, where we had met Thunderboy. But I spoke the words that killed her son, and now my legacy is forever connected to this horrible slaughter and that waste of millions of lives—human and buffalo—across the plains of America. I understand why the beast had to be stopped, but I was sorry.

Wednesday, June the Thirtieth

The train has been fixed. Thunderboy has joined our journey. I would not have thought him suited to travel — he did not look like he could afford it, if I may speak plainly. But there is something mysterious about him that I'm certain I must discover!

Percy joined me in the dining car and was insistent on showing me all of the little pictures,





hair clippings and delicate trinkets-of-love the women of the town had given him. Why should he want to share such photos with me? The men gathered around to gawk. There must have been at least a dozen portraits of those brazen women. Oh, it was too offensive.

I left the men behind in the dining car and went to Mrs. Bamfield's cabin. I had not spoken to her for any length since this ordeal began, and I was in need of some advice. I approached her door and gave it a determined tap. Perhaps she would understand how poorly Mr. Longville was behaving towards me.

"I know you are within, Mrs Bamfield, and I must speak with you. An emergency situation has arisen."

She opened her door a crack, and then, to my great surprise, threw it open wide enough to pull me inside.

"Whatever it is," she said. "It cannot be a greater emergency than the one that stands before me! I am at my wits end. My husband is the very devil!"

"Do you mean your sister's husband?" I asked.

"I have no need to conceal it anymore. He is my husband!" she exclaimed. "And whatever am I to do about this?! I must catch some infernal beast before the demon devours me! My liberty — my very life — is at risk if I do not recover something before we arrive in San Francisco! I had hoped to take that blob to his doorstep, but it has sailed away into the sky with that gorgeous pirate captain. Oh, what shall I do with so little time remaining?"

"Mrs. Bamfield," I said. "I know you regret the loss of your specimen, but I really think you must calm your nerves!"

"There is a demon who haunts my dreams!" She exclaimed. "His name it is Ahrimanes, he hides in people's chim-en-ees! He came to England to steal some trade secrets regarding monster hunting routes. He lowered himself into my home one evening, around midnight, and with his evil glances he stole my heart!"

A demon! In chimneys? Brunhilde married to a demon? I wished I could speak of this to Percy... but of course I wished never to speak to that man about anything, ever again.

"We were wed by his infernal devices," she continued. " But he is exceedingly cruel. I have obtained his permission for a divorce, for it would be his pleasure to force me to such a shameful act. Me, a divorcée, and at the tender age of twenty-one!"

I thought the estimate a little low, but I was now realizing that Brunhilde had more than a few of her own, personal, feminine, secrets.



"He will grant my request only if I can procure any rare creature that he most particularly desires for his collection! And you cannot imagine how he laughed at me when I declared my intention to go on this tour to complete the task. He said: 'In that case, my dear, you cannot object if I prepare the Red Room in anticipation of your return. There you will find yourself, should you fail.'"

She would not tell me the significance of this evil sounding "red room", but I feared tortures of every kind and I felt quite resolved to aid her in avoiding it.

"We are scheduled to go on a gremlin hunting excursion at our next stop!" Mrs. Bamfield continued. "You must help me find a beast for that demon's collection, or my fate is surely sealed!"





Tips for Lady Monster Hunters no. 09

Rescuing the Stranded

RESCUING THE STRANDED IS A TIME HONORED TRADITION AMONG ALL FEMALE MONSTER HUNTERS.

Feeling heroic? Monster hunting ladies are constantly driving their motorized omnibuses into snow banks, crashing their balloons into piles of sharp objects, or being thrown from railway cars. Why not take a moment to help fellow ladies in distress before you continue on your further adventures? You may find that the mere process turns into an adventure itself!

Land, Air and Sea





Philomena Dashwood will return in:

a STEAMPUNK GUIDE TO HUNTING MONSTERS

Volume Three

Available for purchase at your favorite online distributors.


a STEAMPUNK
GUIDE TO HUNTING
MONSTERS
VOL 3
TYSON VICK

ALL FOUR VOLUMES OF

A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters

ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN PRINT!



A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters Volume One

The hunt is on! The beautiful and oblivious Philomena Dashwood joins a world-wide Monster Hunting Tour in hopes of finding adventure. However, she refuses to give up any of her finery or opinions. After a seance gone wrong, the angry ghost of Esme Gorey attacks, and Dashwood comes to the rescue, but one adventure leads into the next, and soon Philomena Dashwood is rushing off to save the missing village children from a witch in the wilderness. The thrills continue when she faces off with a cursed mechanical mummy, and later is whisked away into the sky by a mystical Genie. Along with her new friends, Brunhilde Bamfield and Percy Longville, Philomena Dashwood embarks on an epic odyssey through the realms of fairy tales and monsters.



A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters Volume Two

The adventure continues! Philomena Dashwood encounters a series of dangerous shipwrecks, monsters, and threats to her woolen skirts, but perhaps the most terrifying adventure of all is that she must contend with her throng of admiring suitors. If that wasn't bad enough, Dashwood must deal with a revolt of automatons aboard an airship, face the horror of a zombie attack aboard a locomotive of the living dead, encounter pirates who have unwittingly unleashed a blob, infiltrate an insane asylum to save the life of her friend Percy, and prevent the Were-beast of the Wild West from destroying a small American town.

Steampunk Fashion, Photography and Fiction combine in this serialized steampunk fantasy photography magazine by artist Tyson Vick. This illustrated tour de force combines steampunk fairy tales and monster stories with the visual aspect of a graphic novel. Each volume compiles chapters from the free online serial version. Collect all four volumes to read the full story of Miss Philomena Dashwood and her adventures in A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters.



A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters Volume Three

The danger escalates! Our heroine, Philomena Dashwood, is separated from the monster hunting tour when she is kidnapped by slavers in the wild west and sold to a bridge troll. She must use her wits to outsmart the beast so that she can return to her traveling companions. One adventure blends into another, and soon she must fend off an attack of aquatic arachnids, unravel the tragic history of the ghost of a Geisha, and enter the frightening monster prison of the world-famous monster hunter Lu Yan where the tour is stalked by a Werewolf that wanders within! If this wasn't enough, Philomena must learn to grow in her personal relations too, helping Brunhilde deal with her demonic husband and becoming more accustomed to the friendship of the ever-present Percy.



A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters Volume Four

All comes to a head in this exciting finale! Things take a turn for the worse when every monster in Lu Yan's prison is unleashed, but is it too late for Philomena to finally accept her growing feelings for Percy? As the tour finally heads home, she encounters the most elusive of all monsters upon hearing the yowl of the Yeti. When a sea monster from fathoms below Venice threatens to destroy the city, Philomena must find a mate for the monster, and perhaps one for herself as well. Finally, Philomena joins Percy as they contend with a Vampire who has declared his own private war on our brave heroes. This final volume brings Philomena's journey to a satisfying close in this hilarious and action-packed ending.

A STEAMPUNK GUIDE TO HUNTING MONSTERS

2017

CREDITS

PHOTOGRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE NOVEL

TYSON VICK, photo and author BOZEMAN, MONTANA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Monster Hunters

Philomena Dashwood … … … … …	Miss BRIN MERKLEY
Percy Longville, Duc du Longueville … … …	Mr. JEREMY FORNIER HANLON
Captain Sir Huntington Hammerhorn … …	Mr. CAENAAN HATFIELD
Mrs. Brunhilde Bamfield … … … …	Miss LIZZIE WEBB
The Mayor of Venice … … … … …	Mr. DOMENICO CIANCIOTTO
Clothilde Vandenklamp … … … …	Mrs. ANGELA CONRAD
Mrs. Mayfair Mister … … … … …	Mrs. NATASHA OSTREM
Lord Hargrave (The Archeologist) … … …	Mr. MARK AUSTIN
Cyprien Lehman (The thief turned Pirate King) …	Mr. BOWEN KINSEY
Thunderboy … … … … … …	Mr. ALBERTO MALCOM
Drake Winchester (The Cowboy) … … …	Mr. TREVOR KEANAN IVANICH
Lu Yan (Famous Monster Hunter) … … …	Mr. DEVON DIEU
Lu Yan's Wife … … … … … …	Miss SIERRA AMICK
Perdina Meeks … … … … …	Miss SHAWNA L. DURNEY

Supporting Cast

Middle Eastern Maiden … … … … …	Miss MYYAH WINCHELL
Steampunk Horse … … … … …	SOPHIE
Honey Occularus … … … … …	Miss NIKKI ICE
Miss Perkibaum … … … … …	Miss LEAH STEMBLER
Vampire Victim Male… … … … …	Mr. JAYDON BROWN
Vampire Victim Female… … … … …	Miss MEGHAN MELANDER

Monsters

The Ghost of Esme Gorey...	Miss KAT STEPHENS
Baba Yaga (The Witch)	Miss LIZZIE WEBB
Queen Hetepheres (The Mummy)	Miss KAT STEPHENS
Genie	Mr. JACOB FEDERSPIEL-SMITH
Zombies	Miss CATEY LOCKHART Mr. SCOOB DECKER Miss JOSIE BARETTA Mr. BRANDON DAVIS
Pirates	Mr. ALBERTO MALCOM
Mad Doctor	Mr. JACOB FEDERSPIEL-SMITH
Inmates	Mr. TREVIN BAKER Miss CHANTELL BURY Mrs. SADIE CASSAVAUGH Mr. SCOTTIE STEMBLER Mrs. SARAH SUTA
Aaron Frew (The Skinwalker)...	Mr. ALBERTO MALCOM
Ahrimanes (The Demon)	Mr. KOLTEN SCHNELL
The Ghost of the Geisha	Miss MEILYN SAYCHOW
Banshee	Miss AMBER VOWELL
Ghost Sea Witch	Miss NIKKI ICE
Wendigo	Mr. MIKHAIL FARBROOK
Yeti	Mr. JACOB FEDERSPIEL-SMITH
Sir Ruthven Gowrie (The Vampire)	Mr. JUSTEN PHELPS

CREW

"A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters" is written and photographed by Mr. Tyson Vick.

The story is based on an original idea by Miss Alisa Kester and Mr.Tyson Vick.

Hair and Makeup design for the photography was provided by Miss Lizzie Webb. Additional make-up provided by Mr. Sam Kuster.

The Costumes for the photography are created by Mr. Tyson Vick with assistance from Miss Catey Lockhart and Mrs. Twila Rempe in addition to costumes provided by Miss Alisa Kester.

The creatures are from the studio of Mr. Tyson Vick with Zombie FX by Mr. Ryan Lawrence Flynn

All custom Jewelry is designed, created and provided by Mrs. Jen Driver.

SPECIAL THANKS

Anonymous
the author of Lady Pokingham
Marge Antolik
and the Nevada City Museum
Jaydon Brown
Boat Guy Jim
Diana Carey
Brenda Clevenger
Pat Cooper
Celeste Coughlin
Gordon and Anna Dellwo
Cathy and Dennis Dellwo
Elizabeth Dellwo
and Blush
Dhruv Dhawan
Tim and Claudette Dringle
and the Philipsburg Opera
House Theater Company
Jen Driver
Blaise Godbe-Lipman
Marla Goodman
Caenaan Hatfield
Shae Healey
Trevor Ivanich
Camille Jackson
Justine Judge
Sam Kuster
Catey Lockhart
Shawna Lockhart
Frank Manfredi
Virginia Menmuir-Smith
Missoula Community Theater
Debi Moro
and Montana Camp Antiques
Tracie Pelczar
Delores Perry
Twila and Greg Rempe
Sally Sargent
Gina Still Smoking
Amy Vanderbilt
and her Complete Book of Etiquette
Tristan Vick
Wayne L. Vick
Jamie Vowell
Lizzie Webb
Olivia Wellbrook
Curtis Ray Yaz

Jan Luyken / The Gowrie Conspiracy / Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain

Rudy Ayala / Yak near shrine in Nepal / Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain

Shameer Thajudeen / Yak used as tourist travel / Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain

