



a STEAMPUNK
GUIDE TO HUNTING
MONSTERS



TYSON VICK



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VOLUME THREE

BY TYSON VICK

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY ALISA KESTER AND TYSON VICK

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A Steampunk Guide to Hunting Monsters by Tyson Vick

Based on an original idea by Alisa Kester and Tyson Vick

Photography by Tyson Vick

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THE TERROR

OF THE

TROLL TROLL

THURSDAY, JULY THE FIRST

Our first excursion to search the plains for gremlins — who are called by the curious name of Pukwudgies in this area — was delayed by several hours; the winds have been most unfavorable and frequently attempt to upend the train. I did not leave my cabin, for the gusts outside were so strong, but I heard murmurings that the engine had been having mechanical trouble. Why should wind cause an engine mechanical trouble? Only one answer—gremlins.

FRIDAY, JULY THE SECOND

All the tour members were gathering outside a little station, waiting for a carriage to take us down the hill. I was over-eager to help Brunhilde find a gremlin to dissolve her terrible marriage vow with that demon. San Francisco was our next stop. I do not know why we were all gathered like geese around the train station. I believe it is more likely that we will find monsters away from the bustle of a railway station, no matter how inconsequential that station may be, rather than near it. The carriage was taking forever, and

I was tired of waiting, so I told the others I was going to take a little stroll down the lane and they could pick me up on the way if the carriage ever managed to show up.

“Would you like someone to escort you Missus Dashwood?” Mr. Longville asked most boldly.

I am far too angry to do anything with Percy right now. Why, what kind of respectable gentlemen keeps pictures of ladies in their frillies and nightclothes? You'd never see me looking at men, or gawking at men. Can you imagine me, for example, thinking about Thunderboy's athletic body? Or that the Native people, perhaps twinged with a memory of the savage, wore less clothing than we Europeans, allowing his attractive body to be almost perennially on display? Of course I would not notice such things! I'm a respectable English lady!

“My name is Miss Dashwood,” I emphasized the “miss”. “And Thunderboy has already offered to join me.”

I don't know why I thought of Thunderboy. He was more or less my age, and perhaps I thought he would be excited by the prospect of joining a lady on an adventure. Sir Hammerhorn may have thought me inexperienced and the Mayor had



Philonera Daskwood

the terrible luck of never actually encountering monsters. I didn't choose a female companion for the very reason that I wanted to make Percy jealous.

Thunderboy looked between Percy and I and then nodded.

I led the native gentleman off the path and out into the grasslands. We walked some ways off from the group before I took out my binoculars to scan the distance for signs of life. I had not spoken to Thunderboy for some time, and to my surprise his first words were, "You love that boy?"

"I most certainly do not!" I said indignantly.

"He has upset you?"

"Of course not. There may be a respectable friendship between us, but it is more of a work relationship." I made certain to stress this point. I did not want people to start talking about Percy and I being "attached!"

"You like that boy," he said, a little too matter-of-factly.

Well, I was not going to stand for that. Polite questions can be tolerated, but bold declarative statements with no basis in fact? I said, "You are a stranger to our party, so you may not know that it is rude to make such bold statements towards a respectable English lady!"

"You are jealous of the little pictures? The pictures of women?"

"Well, I never!" I said. He may have had some insight, but it was still much too informal of an approach for a mere acquaintance. "If I knew you were going to ask me such invasive questions, I wouldn't have invited you on this..."

And while my attitude was a trifle unladylike, my emotions quite got away from me. I was so busy disagreeing that I hardly noticed the bandits riding their humanoid machines that surrounded us.

Thunderboy produced a spear that he carried, which, at the time, I thought he was threatening me with — for being so vocal. "I daresay!" I cried,



and I spun around to leave his company and was confronted by an onslaught of approaching bandits.

"What spoils!" the bandits cried. "A teepee creeper and his squaw!"

"That ain't no squaw! That one's quite a looker! The boss'll be pleased!"

I have the distinct feeling "squaw" is not so much a noun as a racial slur around these parts. Well, I was in no mood to be accosted on all sides by men, and so I grabbed Thunderboy's hatchet.

"I am a respectable English lady!" I roared.

"Ha! Ha!" A bandit cried. "We'll get a nice ransom for that one!"

We fought back, wildly. I'm certain that Thunderboy alone could have handled the men, if they had not been so well armed, but their steam powered devices made them too powerful. He fought most majestically and though we failed, each one of those bandits suffered from deep bruising, I expect.

However, they gathered us up in a little cage and rode off into the grasslands. I'm not so sure they got as far as they wanted, though. After some miles we came to a set of two bridges, side by side, and hesitated. One was an old, decrepit bridge -- surely made by amateurs, and falling apart. The other was made of ironwork, but unfinished. It only stretched halfway across the expanse.

"There have to be other ways around," said one bandit.

"There's nothing there," said another. "It's gone now. It's day time."

But the men shrank back when a booming voice called from beneath the bridge, "Who's that tapping over my bridge?"

"We are Wesley Kyle's men," one bandit called out, with fear in his voice. "We're taking this woman back for ransom. The injun don't matter as much," he hastily added.

"Mmm," sighed the booming voice. "If you wish to cross the bridge, you must pay the toll."

At that, a monstrous mechanical beast heaved

himself up the side of the embankment. It was so much like an automaton, but so much bigger! The head was iron wrought, and had features like a medieval executioner's hood. A large railing ran around its neck and shoulders, and masses of ironwork armor wrapped its gigantic limbs. Chimneys of smoke rose from its back and it held a massive staff which spat steam and sparks.

The bandits drew closer together.

"We have money," said the boldest, holding out a bundle which he seemed to think would do the trick.

The giant took it between his massive fingers and looked at it. Then with a dainty pinch he tossed it into the flames of his staff.

"I care not for money," the beast replied. "But I am in need of labor."

The beast took a sweeping glance over the men.

"We can sell you the redskin," a bandit said, pulling Thunderboy from the cage and pushing him in front of the monster.

"Mmm," sighed the creature. "Sell?"

"No," replied the bandit quickly. "I mean pay... for the toll."

"Ah!" exclaimed the beast. "Yes. Very well."

The bandits heaved a sigh of relief.

"But that doesn't quite cover the toll."

"Now, see here!" cried the bandit who had given the money. "That's a large enough cost."

The giant made a sweeping movement towards the bandit, pulled him ingloriously from his mechanical augmentation and cast the man aside. The monster then tore the mechanical pieces apart and threw the broken equipment in front of the other bandits.

"You can have the woman, too!" a bandit called out.

They began to argue over me like a piece of property. One claimed, "The money we'll get for the ransom..." and another, "He'll take us instead if we don't give him what he wants!"

And so they pulled me from the cage and



threw me at the feet of the beast.

“Mmm,” said the creature. “That will do nicely. The toll has been paid. Now begone.”

The giant shooed them away with his staff, then he placed shackles around Thunderboy and myself and dragged us over the embankment.

Now, while I write this in retrospect, I did also have occasion to make time for my diary during our enforced restraint. I provide an excerpt here:

DATE MISSING

The others blame me for all the mechanical failures. What do I know about trusses and piers? This bridge work is far too laborious for a lady of my refinements. The beast is in his forge all night, and every morning we are woken at dawn to assemble these pieces into those infernal triangles. The others claim that the triangles that I assemble never come out aright, but I say it has to be the local gremlins, for I am certain I am just as skilled as anyone else in the camp.

The nights are the roughest I have ever spent in all my days. I cannot imagine a worse situation than sleeping seven to a room, with a drab little fire built straight into the floor, threadbare cotton quilts and shabby roof over my head. This

must have been what sleeping was like for the Darwinian man, eating rocks and fighting tigers!

Good Lord, I hope the rest of the tour group finds me soon. I did not come dressed for this. I asked the Chinese migrants for some more suitable attire. I feel that they were making fun of me, for they gave me the most elaborate gown with sleeves that reached the floor. It was clearly some glorious court attire for some resplendent Chinese lady that the beast had no use for, nor the migrant workers, for they kept it in a trunk. They may think it is not suitable for hard labor, but I will show them that a lady of great refinements can accomplish her work in any attire.

DATE MISSING

Thunderboy and I have been digging for days. The others think I am not suited for such work, and say I am too accustomed to leisure. I am not afraid to work. I used to do a little gardening back in London, from time to time. And to say I am too fond of leisure! What do they know? I may come from a well-to-do family, but I am a monster hunter through and through. I could work hard and live off the land as well as anyone else. Why, think of



Josiah Mortimer. He was rich, but he never took a yacht to fight the Serpent of Gaul. He never rode the train right up to the Minotaur of Crete to shoot it. No, he went deep into the woods, armed with nothing but a rifle, a knife, and a copper kettle, and, after weeks of camping on the rocks, undernourished and cold, surrounded by thousands of goblins, he shot them all dead. And the ones he didn't shoot he stabbed. And the ones he didn't stab, he bashed over the head with the kettle. He hit them so hard with that kettle, that whoever ate from it thereafter got indigestion.

That was me. I am Josiah Mortimer. But in the modern times!

And just like that great adventurer, Thunderboy and I uncovered a treasure chest while digging! We did not tell the giant, but spirited it away into the tent with the Chinese. Inside we were quite delighted to find many Indian artefacts! There was a majestic headdress made of feathers, a bow and arrow set, and other assorted weapons! Thunderboy and the migrant workers hid these instruments, and there has been some talk of escape!

DATE MISSING

Thunderboy is quite the strongest gentleman I have ever met. The amount of labor he can accomplish, while I have to take breaks from lifting girders every few minutes, is astonishing. I have often found the strength of men attractive, but seeing his body work, it encourages me, as I'm sure it encourages the others, to maintain our health and fitness.

He worked well into the sunset, but I had to take a break. I snuck out a little ways, clamored up the embankment and looked over the edge of the unfinished bridge. There I saw our captor in the distance. I ducked down a little, for he

had a nasty temper when he woke. He was removing his armor. The giant beast pulled off his helmet in order to bask in the moonlight. He was a troll! A gigantic bridge troll! But what was he doing so far from European shores? Seeing what lay beneath that armor got the gears in my mind thinking.

It is a well known fact that trolls hate the sun! No wonder he always rises in the evening and works through the night!

DATE MISSING

I told Thunderboy about my observation. I explained that European trolls are allergic to the sun. The migrant workers gathered around us to hear what I knew about our slave-driver. I knew quite a lot about trolls compared to them! I wonder if this is how Percy feels when he spouts out all his facts and trivia? Why, it feels less — I don't know — less “supercilious” and more “helpful” than I would have imagined.

We have come up with a plan. As long as the sun comes out tomorrow, we may find ourselves liberated by tea time!

DATE MISSING

In the morning Thunderboy gathered the weapons we had found earlier that week. The workers had spent a little of each night cutting through Thunderboy's restraints, and unbound, he disappeared into the landscape, awaiting the signal to sneak into the troll's tent to gather the keys to our shackles to release all of us captives.

I was in charge of the Chinese workers at the hoisting crane. It was the only weapon we had that was both big enough and that we could also reach while our shackles were still locked. I helped the workers attach the ropes



to the iron truss which we then hoisted into the sky. We rigged the pulleys so that, at a moments notice, we could fling the iron into the troll, knock him down, and pry off his helmet as the sun rose over the embankment!

Being an accomplished student of archery, I took up the bow and arrow and shot it straight into the troll's tent to get his attention. The arrow whipped through the canvas and we heard it hit his armor with a clunk. This did not rouse him, so I fired another and another, until he woke with some agitation. When he saw that it was arrows that were pelting him, he burst out of the tent angrily, staff in hand. He frantically looked around for the attacker.

At that, our group let loose our crane which swung the iron truss into the beast! We intended to capture him under the weight of the bridge, but as the truss swung, the ropes came loose! Only a portion of the iron smashed into his helmet, cracking and tearing a section of it, as the truss fell to the ground. And then the entire crane collapsed! I knew the workers would blame me for this, and they began yelling at me, but it was in Chinese, so I paid it little mind. I can assure you that it was not me that caused the accident, however. I know there was some gremlin out there in that camp haunting me.

The troll glowered through the tear in his helmet. There was no time for Thunderboy to give us the keys! Instead, he used his grace and skill to leap up the back of the beast's armor. The boy's magnificent headdress billowed in the gathering winds! The troll could not reach Thunderboy because the armor limited its movement. Protection from the sun came at a loss of mobility!

Thunderboy thrust his spear into the cracks of the broken helmet and pried a large chunk off, revealing the troll's face to all the enslaved Chinese workers! They all staggered back in horror! However, the force Thunderboy exerted to break the iron apart caused him to fall from the troll and onto the ground.

Light began to fill the valley and the troll looked up into the sky. Just when we thought the rays of the





sun would break over the embankment, a strong gust of wind rushed through the canyon. Instead of sunlight, a storm of clouds blew in, obscuring the light!

The troll began to attack the heroic man, but Thunderboy was quick, and could outmaneuver the beast. I was armed with the bow, and I unloaded my arrow into the troll's back. It made an excellent target, as the troll was turned towards Thunderboy, busily attempting to rip apart his limbs, but although the arrow stuck into the metal, they had no effect upon the beast's vitality.

As the fight drew closer to us, Thunderboy paused to throw me the key to our shackles! I caught it and began to undo the locks of all the workers as quickly as my hands, and gigantic sleeves, would allow!

The pause allowed the beast to seize Thunderboy! It began to whip him about like a rag doll, then tossed him numerous yards, and well over the embankment, where we could not see how he landed.

The workers began to scramble up the embankment, and the troll followed. I ushered all the workers out of harm's way, making sure all were unshackled. The giant was right on my heels as he chased me up the hill! I could feel the weight of his footfalls behind me!

As I leaped over the grassy mound at the top of the canyon, I could feel the beast's fingers wrap around my sleeves, which were dragging behind. I screamed as the Chinese workers rushed forward to pull me free, but they suddenly stopped.

I looked at them. They looked at me. There was no more movement behind me. I rolled over to look.

The rays of the sun cut through the clouds and illuminated the hole in the troll's helmet! The monster had turned to stone with my dress still clasped in his fist! The Chinese workers rejoiced and we gave each other many generous hugs!

Thunderboy came up to me, bruised and

battered, and cut my sleeves free. He took me in his strong arms, his bare chest pressing against my body most firmly. At the moment, I found myself feeling very kindly toward Americans and I gave him a most delicate kiss. I turned away from Thunderboy's rather remarkable chest and joined the others in their rejoicing.

TUESDAY, JULY THE THIRTEENTH

Sir Hammerhorn drove our carriage down the streets of San Francisco, through the deepening fog, straight to the doorstep of the demon Ahrimanes. Sir Hammerhorn was quite pleased by all the looks he received, for in our cart was the massive stone giant, the troll, tied up in a rope and dangling precariously over the edge.

Brunhilde and I stood, linked arm and arm, and knocked on the door. The door opened and the light was swallowed up into a dark, inky mist.

"Have you come at last?" asked the creature inside.

"I present to you," Brunhilde said with a flourish. "An authentic European troll, turned to stone, and unlike any beast you will ever claim as captive!"

Ahrimanes peered into the street, and his face beamed with excitement.

"Aha!" he cried. "He shall make a fine addition to my upcoming attraction, my Bestiary Abode!"

"Now release my friend from your matrimonial bond!" I stated, firmly.

"And what's to stop me from taking you all captive for my collection?" The demon asked, creepily.

"English ladies and gentlemen," I said, stepping forward. "Do not allow their women to fall into the hands of demons. It is entirely according to English tradition that Captain Hammerhorn should cause you to come to a merciful death, first."

Sir Hammerhorn stood behind us, silver bullets at the ready.

"This is an adventure tour, isn't it?" the demon



asked, unmoved by threats. "If you want adventure, you must join my tour!"

He proceeded to hand us all business cards. It seemed, from reading the words on the card stock, that he was starting his own monster hunting tour here in America. I lifted my chin, glaring at him. I had had enough of monsters telling me what to do. "No thank you. I would prefer to perish."

Mrs. Bamfield clutched my arm in a resolute manner.

"I must emphatically assure you I am in no way bluffing. I will shoot you," Captain Hammerhorn said.

"Well, all right then," the demon replied, annoyed. "I guess I have some divorce papers in the back somewhere. All right. Just wait right here."

Ahrimanes shut the door.

After some time, and much rustling and banging within, the doors opened once more. The demon presented some divorce papers to Brunhilde, and they both signed them on Hammerhorn's back.

"Ha! Ha!" cried the demon. "I have haunted your dreams long enough to learn all the routes around the globe which feature the most desirable locations for monster hunting! And now, Brunhilde, you will forever be disgraced to live life as a divorcée!"

And with that, the demon began cackling maniacally and disappeared into a burst of flames, smoke and business cards.

We left the troll and the wagon with Ahrimanes, who, for some reason, crawled out of a trap door under the steps just a moment after his theatrics to pull the wagon into his carriage house.

Brunhilde is now free of the demon, and her spirits have lifted greatly.

The tour group awaits us in the bay, where I am told a gigantic mechanical island — speckled with the most delightful entertainments — will bear us across the Pacific Ocean and all the way to Asia!

Ahrimanes
Destiny
Rhode

Ahrimanes
Destiny
Rhode

Ahrimanes
Destiny
Rhode

Ahrimanes
Destiny
Rhode



Spooky
Halloween
Party

Spooky
Halloween
Party

Spooky
Halloween
Party

Spooky
Halloween
Party

Spooky
Halloween
Party

Spooky
Halloween
Party

Cooperation
during the
HUNT



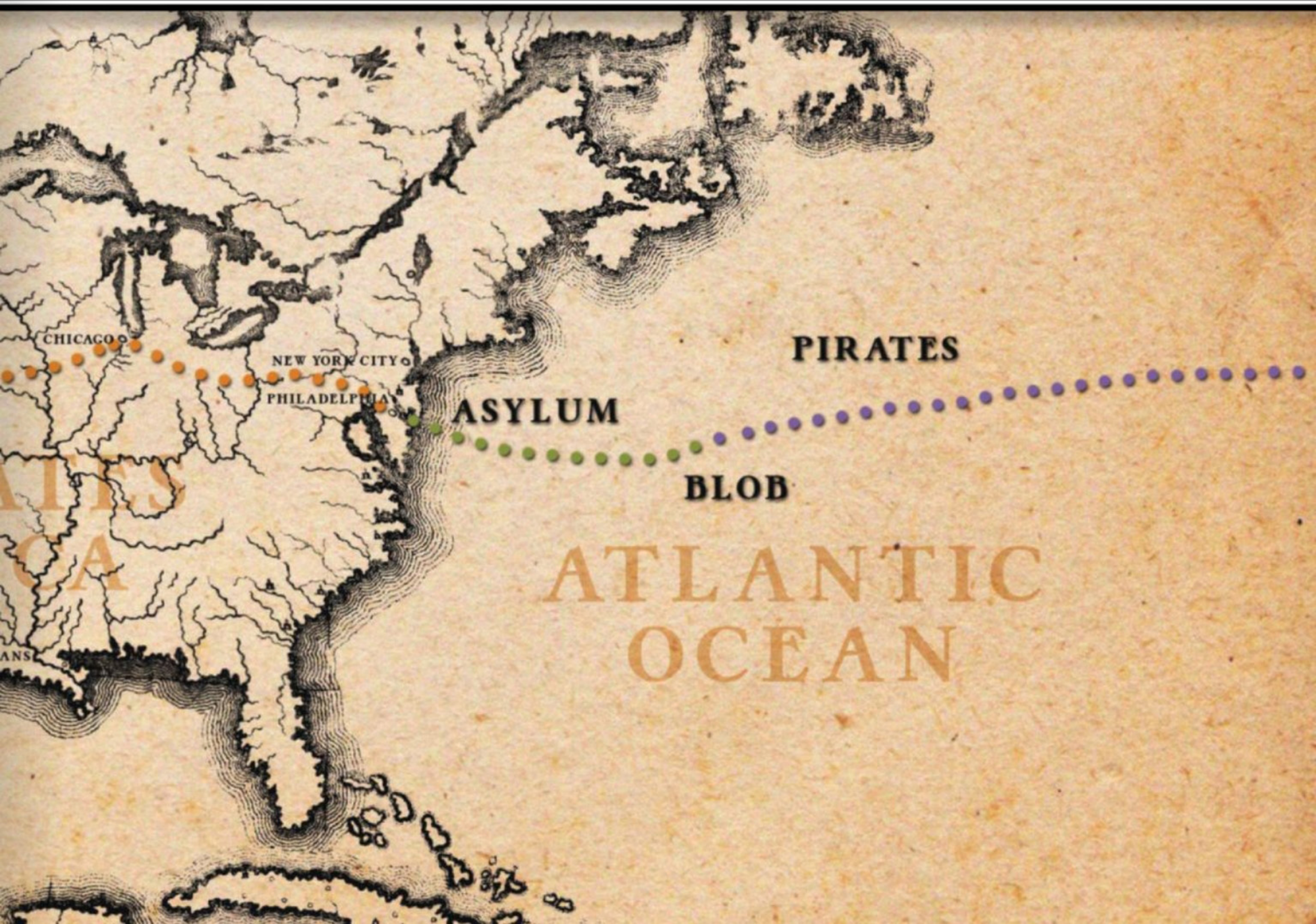
Missus Mister





TIPS FOR LADY MONSTER HUNTERS NO. 10

The lady who has a good time on the hunt is a girl who lives co-operatively. She finds one or more other congenial girls (preferably not more than two, for fear of being suspected as witches) approximately her own age, to accomplish the hunt according to their own individual capabilities. If any men are permitted to join the group, the constant female companionship will dispel any mistaken ideas, and a lady's intentions will never be misunderstood.





ATTACK

OF THE

AQUATIC ARACHNIDS

THURSDAY, JULY THE FIFTEENTH

We are traveling across the Pacific on this magnificent floating island! Built by the Japanese to be the most luxurious hotel and amusement park that ever crossed the ocean, it is roughly the shape of a great whale. There is such an expanse between shores that you need not see the other guests if you choose to spend some time in solitude!

Below decks is a sort of submarine where the worker robots create steam to propel the vehicle through the water. They even have the most modern of conveniences, a telephone!

I sent a telegram to Aunt and Uncle to be ready for a telephone call from across the world! It was so delightful! I merely picked up the receiver and said, "Are you receiving me?" and they replied, "What?" Can you believe that we could hear each other practically a hemisphere away!

"What did you say?" I asked, and they replied, "Can you hear us?" Ah! It was the absolute height of technology!

Suffice it to say, I decided to take a stroll around the island, instead!

I was strolling around the island with Thunderboy, and as we passed through the jungle portion of the island, near the center, there was a giant vent (like a blow-hole on a whale) where

steam was released, and there we saw what looked like giant spider webs spun around the chasm. It would be quite interesting to see so many tiny spiders living together in close proximity, but I dared not venture too close. I was wary of both the spiders and the giant blasts of steam that burst forth from time to time. Those spiders must be attracted to the steam?

Later, I decided to go paddling on the beach. There was a gramophone provided there, and Percy, Thunderboy, and I danced about most gaily. It made me laugh. We decided to play a round of badminton. After hitting the shuttlecock back and forth a few times, Percy managed to launch it wide into the sea. He went to the basket to pick out another, and to his horror he instead pulled out a 12-inch spider!

Startled, the boy tossed the creature in my direction! Why, of all the impulses to have, tossing a spider at a lady has to be quite the most vulgar! I quickly thrust my racket out and hit the giant spider back. He reacted in kind, and there we were, having a badminton round with a giant spider! Neither of us wanted it to stop, for fear of it landing on our persons!

Around that time, swarms of similarly-sized spiders started coming out of the jungle! Large, horrifying spiders with their spindly legs began to crawl all over my bare feet! Oh, how my skin

crawled at their touch, but that was not the worst of it! Looming from the foliage came a gigantic spider nearly 10 feet tall! It was quite the size of an omnibus!

Thunderboy rushed to our aid, axe drawn, and he struck the beast most fiercely! I steeled my nerves, took a hold of my parasol and we began to smack the horrid little creatures as they darted and hopped about.

Percy joined us as we ran down the little lane, and once we made it to the clearing, we saw the Mayor most majestically cutting down the arachnids. Not a hint of monsters for an age for the masculine Mayor with the tousled hair, and here he found himself waist deep in giant spiders. When it rains it pours, I suppose. He fought them quite adeptly, and though I

didn't have time to enquire at that exact moment, I hoped he was taking something away with him that he could apply to the protection of Venice. It seemed his sole goal.

It has since reached my attention that the other hunters and guests had made it safely inside. Therefore, it was we four who remained outside the safety of the island shelters and cabins. We were unable to get to our rooms!

We were gathered close to that giant steam vent, which I mentioned before, though now no steam came from below. It occurred to me, though Percy gave voice to it, that the spiders were pushing us towards their web!

I said, "We must leap into the chasm, for the webs will slow our fall! It is our only escape!" This seemed to horrify Percy, who remained most





Philomena





reluctant, until the large beast of a spider burst through the foliage and knocked him, most impolitely, into the hole. I myself slipped in after with Thunderboy at my side. However, the Mayor was overcome and could not join us.

We found ourselves in a huge underwater corridor with full circular windows looking out over the expanse of the ocean floor. Sea creatures peered in through the large portholes. The chasm loomed above us. The flickering shadows of a thousand spider legs scuttled across the walls of the steam vent.

"I have an idea!" cried Percy, who had often had beneficial ideas during the course of our adventures. "If we can lure those creatures further down, and then release the steam all at once, it may cook those terrible arachnids!"

Thunderboy said, "I will lure them down if you can make the machine work!"

"I have studied these types of ships most diligently during our vacation, as I am most wary of the consistent crashing of every vehicle in which we travel, and I did not want to be caught unawares in yet another instance. In theory, I can..."

"Just go!" cried Thunderboy. And he began to taunt the spiders above, making a display that he thought most suitable to encourage the insect's appetites.

Percy and I ran to the pilot's station where the automaton First Mate stood at the helm. Its head turned to us and said, "The lower decks are currently closed to guests and will be open for visitation from eleven o'clock to noon."

We told the First Mate that giant spiders were attacking the ship, and Percy mentioned his plan, and we were most cordially assured that the problem would be dealt with. Whereupon the First Mate moved down the corridor to an intercom station, picked up the little trumpet,

and its voice rang out through the lower decks, "Will all giant arachnids please report to exhaust vent 3-B for immediate extermination. Your cooperation is much appreciated."

The First Mate then moved to a wall and started turning valves. Percy and I began to help, when indicated. However, I found my valve most rigidly stuck, and even when Percy came to help it remained obdurate. "Can you help us turn this valve?" Percy asked.

"Thank you for asking," replied the First Mate. "Yes, as a licensed Monster Hunting Tour automaton, I am equipped with functional hands which can grasp objects and —"

A giant spider reached in from the top of the doorway, shooting a sticky web over the poor robot. The First Mate spoke "For your

safety, please refrain from approaching the wild spiders. The wild spiders may look tame but can be wild, unpredictable and dangerous. Thank you for your cooperation."

With that, the spider pulled the robot into the steam vent!

Percy and I leaned with all of our might on the valve, and it released! We fell to the ground just in time to see Thunderboy

being overcome by hundreds of spiders. Six great spider limbs wrapped around Percy and dragged him into the vent. The little beasts began to reach for me, and ignoring their waving arms, I reached out my hand to grab ahold of him, but it was too late! The steam released in such a violent manner, that all the spiders and the boys themselves were thrust outward, as a cannonball from a canon, and straight up into the sky!

Fearing the worst, I made my way back to the surface via a tiny, cramped ladder. I used my parasol to ward off a few minor spiderlings, but the automatons were out in full force beating off the remaining menace. It seems the majority of the spiders had been in the vent, and they rained





from the sky, crashing to the ground, which dashed their guts out-right! However, what was to become of Thunderboy and Percy? I was most horrified to imagine their bodies falling from the sky and breaking against the metal surface of the island!

But there at the top of the vent's outer lips were anchored the remains of the Automaton First Mate, arms embedded most thoroughly into the metal. And underneath each arm was one of those beloved boys! It seems the automaton had grabbed ahold of the two men and when the blast of steam was released, it dug its mechanical arms into the metal. The steam blew them upwards, but the arms remained planted, tearing the metal upwards, as a child would take a stick and draw a line in the sand. It never let go, but its body was blown quite apart. The two men were a little worse for wear, wet, slightly steamed, and their hair a frightful mess. But they were safe above ground, relatively unharmed!

"Oh thank you so much!" I said, pulling the automaton's head quite off.

"It is my duty to protect the welfare of this vessel and all on-board." It replied.

I helped Percy and Thunderboy to their feet and gave them as many kisses as propriety would allow. I am pleased to report that the Mayor also survived our separation, and stood triumphantly over a pile of dead arachnid limbs smoking a cigar.

WEDNESDAY, JULY THE TWENTY-FIRST

The rest of our travels on that mechanical island consisted of enjoying the amusements of the park, which included a steam powered camel for riding, a shooting gallery, and carousel, as well as hunting the remaining spiders, at which Missus Mister proved quite adept.



KEEP UNWANTED SPIDERS OUT OF

TIPS FOR LADY MONSTER HUNTERS NO. 11



*The Mayor
of Venice*

THERE IS NOTHING SO TERRIBLE AS FEAR ITSELF, AND ALSO SPIDERS. WHILE TRAVELING ABROAD YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF AT A HOTEL WHERE THE LOCAL CUSTOMS DO NOT MATCH YOUR OWN. PEOPLE IN THE TROPICS MAY FIND A CANOPY OF SPIDERS DRAPED OVER THE BED TO BE MERELY A MINOR INCONVENIENCE, WHEREAS YOU MAY FEEL UTTER CONTEMPT AT THE THOUGHT. THEREFORE, IT IS BEST TO NOTIFY YOUR HOTEL'S STAFF OF A PROBLEM BEFORE YOU CHECK OUT. HOTELS PREFER TO REMEDY UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS AS THEY ARISE, RATHER THAN FACING CUSTOMERS WHO ARE IRATE WHEN THEY HAVE TO PAY THE BILL AFTER SPENDING A HORRIFYING NIGHT COVERED IN SPIDERS.

Spider



YOUR BED WHILE TRAVELING ABROAD!



THE GHOST
OF THE
GEISHA

FRIDAY, JULY THE TWENTY-THIRD

The floating island docked at the port of Kobe in Japan. We unloaded our luggage and travelled into the mountains of the Kyoto area, where a glorious restored bath-house was waiting for tourists such as ourselves. In fact, it was considered one of the most haunted places in the world, called Akuma Sentō. The original building burnt down nearly one hundred years ago. After some length of time the bath house went through a strenuous reconstruction, with a careful mind to preserving the original layout, but spicing it up with exciting new décor, only the finest-quality woods, silks, and spring waters, and featuring a wonderful luxury hotel addition (called a Ryokan) as well as an elaborate tea house.

The guests are not allowed to bring their weapons onto the premises of the hotel, which led the Mayor and Mister to object. However, they reluctantly yielded their weapons. Sir Hammerhorn was stopped at the door with a strange, clock-like instrument. He claimed it was not a weapon, but rather a ghost detector! They let him pass.

The beds are on the floor, which seems to my English sensibilities most workmanlike, but it is my understanding that Easterners are accustomed to this, and I should not like to object to the customs of a hemisphere. The rooms are separated by



Philomena Dashwood

paper or thin, wooden walls, which, again, seem workmanlike. I do wonder if I have not entered a poorhouse but have been charged the price for staying in a luxury establishment?

We all gathered in a certain room and were introduced to a kindly Geisha, who looks very young and beautiful, but claims to be years older! If the world would like a beauty regimen that actually works, they need only consult her, I daresay. She explained that Geisha means Artist, or Artisan, and the Geisha are skilled in music, dance, literature, history, and conversation. They entertain guests with their superior talents.

She was quite entertaining indeed, as she told the story of the Akuma Sentō bathhouse.

The bath house was haunted by an Onryō. This is a powerless victim in life who achieves power in death. She was an onsen geisha, whose name does not bear repeating, we are told, and who once worked in the historical bath-house. Our Geisha explained that these onsen geisha had the bad reputation of selling sexual favors and providing erotic dances. I was quite shocked to hear this! To

think that a true Geisha, with that perfect beauty regime, should ever be compared to a prostitute! The true Geisha do not approve of the onsen geisha, thankfully.

This Onryō was sold into the establishment as a child, where she suffered abuse at the hands of her employers as well as her clients. It is said her flower was taken even before her Mizuage, or coming of age ceremony, where her virginity was sold to the highest bidder! I cannot imagine such a life! I am an Englishwoman, and to hear of such an outrage causes my emotions to spiral inward. I felt that I was boiling like a kettle!

On the night of her Mizuage, the Onryō was savagely violated, and she went mad. She took up a katana, or sword, and killed her patron. She went on to kill her masters, the other geisha and patrons, who were all taken by surprise and could not overpower her rage. The Onryō could not be stopped, and the authorities decided the only way to end the rampage was to set fire to the bath-house and burn the woman alive! (We were presented with some lovely prints of the incident.)



The Onryō was said to haunt the burnt ground for years, and it was told that if any person entered the defiled ground with a weapon, the Onryō would use the visitor's weapon to kill its owner. When the site was rebuilt, this tradition was carried over—though none can say that the ghost has ever truly been sighted on the mountain.

After this, I learned that if one chose to attend the bath waters, one must bathe completely nude, which is right out, for wearing clothing into the waters is considered disrespectful. There were also to be women who scrub the visitors' backs, which is an unpardonable impertinence. I can bathe myself most successfully, and have been doing so for many years! On top of all these shocking mandates is that the bath is not segregated by gender, meaning men and women bathe together!

I excused myself from this immodest entertainment to take some exercise alongside Percy. We wandered around the scenery and observed the fascinating buildings.

At this point it is necessary to take a break in order to explain that numerous things happened and to fully understand what followed, I must explain what was going on in various parts of the hotel, which is only something I learned later.

BRUNHILDE BAMFIELD BRINGS A GHOST

Brunhilde Bamfield had secretly smuggled a sleeve-gun into the hotel, just in case, which she was oiling in her room. She noticed that her spring-loaded gun would not stay fastened, no matter how hard she tightened the screws, and would invariably swing on its hinge and face her own body! She set the gun aside to consult the manual whereupon it fired at her! She continues to this day to swear that she never even loaded the thing.

SIR HAMMERHORN GIVES IT LIFE

Sir Hammerhorn had gone to his room about the time I was headed out on my walk with Percy. A Yuna, or hot water woman, had brought him some water for his tea, and he decided to show her his ghost machine.

They heard the firing of Bamfield's gun through the paper walls, and while I initially objected to the thinness of the walls upon arrival, I can safely say that in this instance it may have saved some lives.

The Yuna took a small break to go and check on the noise. Hammerhorn watched her go and then returned to his ghost machine. He heard the Yuna from the hall saying, "I see nothing. I am returning."

The Yuna entered the room while Hammerhorn was turned. She claimed that she intended to disrobe. He was quite flabbergasted at this, but refused to turn around for fear of appearing improper. He remained facing away and she said things such as, 'I am approaching from behind,' 'Do not look at me,' 'I am standing behind you,' 'Do not turn,' 'I can reach out and touch you,' and 'Do not look!'

This caused him to grow concerned because her movement was accompanied by a strange scraping or dragging, as if she had lost the use of one or more of her limbs. He turned to discover the corpse of the Yuna, eyes bleeding, as it was cast at his feet! The indistinct specter of a woman stepped into his machine, which fitted around her waist like a corset, making her corporeal!

MY OWN ADVENTURE WITH THE GHOST

Percy and I were enjoying our time with the Mayor who told us of the most alarming Japanese custom. It seems there is an annual festival where the people of this nation gather magic beans and scatter them about in order



Percy Longville



to chase off the encroaching demons! I feel a pang of regret we did not arrive during that event! Can you imagine the wealth of demonic activity that could stimulate a young monster hunter like myself!

But perhaps his alarming story was not so alarming as his activity during our conversation, for he began to disrobe and prepare for the bath! His body was becoming most naked, and my discomfort was beginning to bare itself as well!

I was unable to object, for he continued speaking of a sword that he had secretly smuggled in, for his own mysterious reasons, the blade of which was enchanted.

The fine physical specimen of a man reached his hand into the pool to test the waters just as I was planning some excuse to take my leave. A sudden chill filled the room! To our horror we saw the now corporeal specter of the Geisha for the first time! It was approaching The Mayor!

The ghost caused the waters to freeze around his arm, holding him in place. The specter reached around the Mayor's head and thrust the poor man into the waters of the bath below. He was sent crashing through the layer of ice which reformed over the top, encapsulating him within the waters!

The ghost was interested in a sword which

Mayor had smuggled in and it lay amid his personal effects. Now, it is here that I urge any readers of my memoirs to understand that we put rules into place for a reason. Rules are not arbitrary, no matter how they seem to inconvenience us. When a spook is known to kill people if they bring weapons into its domain, and regulations are put into place saying that you should not bring weapons, I urge you all to leave your weapons at home.

But I digress. The Geisha ghost drew the sword and ran towards Percy and myself, slashing a long line in the wall and just narrowly missing us as she swung the weapon wildly over our heads. A hostess appeared at the hole in the wall, complaining most vehemently in her native tongue, possibly about the damage, but upon seeing the ghost, the poor hostess fled.

I rushed to The Mayor's side and began to smash at the

ice around him. There was some nearby hot tea that I tried to throw on the ice to melt it, but it did nothing. I managed to crack the ice revealing his head, and he yelled, "Get the sword back; it's our only hope!"

Percy, being quite intelligent, knew that there was a steam release valve and drain. Seeing this as his only chance to save The Mayor, he ran to the valves and turned them,



which caused the floor of the pool to drain!

Steam began to surge through the ice water, causing the Mayor to slosh back and forth. I grabbed his arm and held on.

The ghost, meanwhile, had proceeded to chase after a squealing Percy. He ran out into the hall as the ghost thrust the sword at him. Percy immediately shut the sliding door in her face, and I was astounded to see that it actually caught the blade of the sword between the wooden slats.

I immediately sprang up, jostled into the ghost, pulled the sword back into the room and sent it sliding across the floor to the Mayor who was emerging from the waters. The Mayor rushed with the sword, slashing through the mechanical obi of the ghost, and at the same time, to my great surprise, the blade absorbed the spirit! The blade itself acted like those bottles of ghost-glass which kept spirits captive! How ingenious!

Now the monster attacks were piling on for that Italian beauty. First a wave of spiders, and now a vengeful ghost! I can only imagine what skills The Mayor has learned to protect his beloved Venice from his encounter with that specter! Perhaps he learned to be mindful of posted rules, at least.

But the blade was contraband, and the Japanese government stepped in to prevent its removal from the premises. It was placed in a prominent display in the entryway. Our tour group was rightfully chastised from bringing weapons into the bathhouse which contributed to the death of one of the employees. It seems one or more of our group did in fact come with the intent to catch the infamous Onryō, and if monster hunting requires such a duplicitous nature, I'm not so sure I could ever be proud to consider myself one of their number.

MONDAY, JULY THE TWENTY-SIXTH

After scouring the Japanese hillside for goblins for a few days, Percy swore he saw a turtle with a

little lake on its head out in the wilderness, but I think this is utter nonsense.

TUESDAY, JULY THE TWENTY-SEVENTH

Our journey took us across a channel to China where we boarded a train to travel inland. The train ran high on a track set in the mountain peaks. I awoke from my happy dreams one morning to hear a commotion outside my berth. I grabbed some accouterments and stepped out into the hallway. The entire car was filled with gasping passengers, staring out the windows. The monster hunters were all moving steadily through the crowd to the dining car, which had the biggest windows.

I followed them.

Outside, high above the cliffs, flying alongside the train was a dragon!

I was filled with wonder that I cannot describe. The power of the creature, encased in some horrible metal shell, body coiling like a streamer on the wind, sparking and fuming. The rays that shone forth from his head! His body seemed made of fire! A group of passengers began to point and gasp. Outside the train, hanging from a ladder, was Thunderboy! I rushed to the window and pounded on it to get his attention, but he leaped into the chasm without hesitation, landing squarely on the dragon's head. Immediately thunder crashed around, lightning flashing and our train entered a tunnel. The darkness cut off my view.

The thunder rumbled low.

I never saw Thunderboy again after that.



IN FOREIGN LANDS one must be respectful of the customs of the people, but moreso one must be polite to the staff, since they are the people you will most likely be dealing with most. You must not, for example, cause a Japanese cook to leave the kitchen in a huff after you invade their sacred domain and highhandedly demonstrate how to make a proper cup of tea. It is not appropriate to be rude to people of a lower station, for it shows a total lack of concern to those not born into privilege. Instead, if you must, always approach the foreign staff in a friendly way, neither condescending, nor over friendly, and tell them what you appreciate about their work. If you are a frequent visitor, perhaps bring a gift -- never liquor for it is the bane of the lower classes -- but mystery novels, oscillating fans, shoe horns, writing paper or a capuchin monkey on a leash (for a woman only) which are all suitable gifts.



TIPS FOR **L**ADY **M**ONSTER **H**UNTERS

NO. 12

Always Respect the



Foreign Staff.

A

WEREWOLF

WANDERS WITHIN

THURSDAY, JULY THE TWENTY-NINTH

Today we arrived at the Monster House! This is the part of the tour I was most looking forward to! We stay at the house of the most famous monster hunter who ever lived, Lu-Yan! I say house, but it is more of a fortress!

The pagoda-style building is overpoweringly beautiful. Part of it, I am told, is a bed-and-breakfast for guests, part is the house of the famous man himself, and the rest is a prison where nearly every monster imaginable has been captured and interred! The rooms on the inside of the building are built around a large pole from which the roof and walls hang. Percy tells me that this prevents structural damage during an earthquake, and keeps the monsters completely interred during natural disasters.

Lu Yan was not available to meet us in person for some reason, though he was scheduled to, and the rumor is that his wife has taken ill.

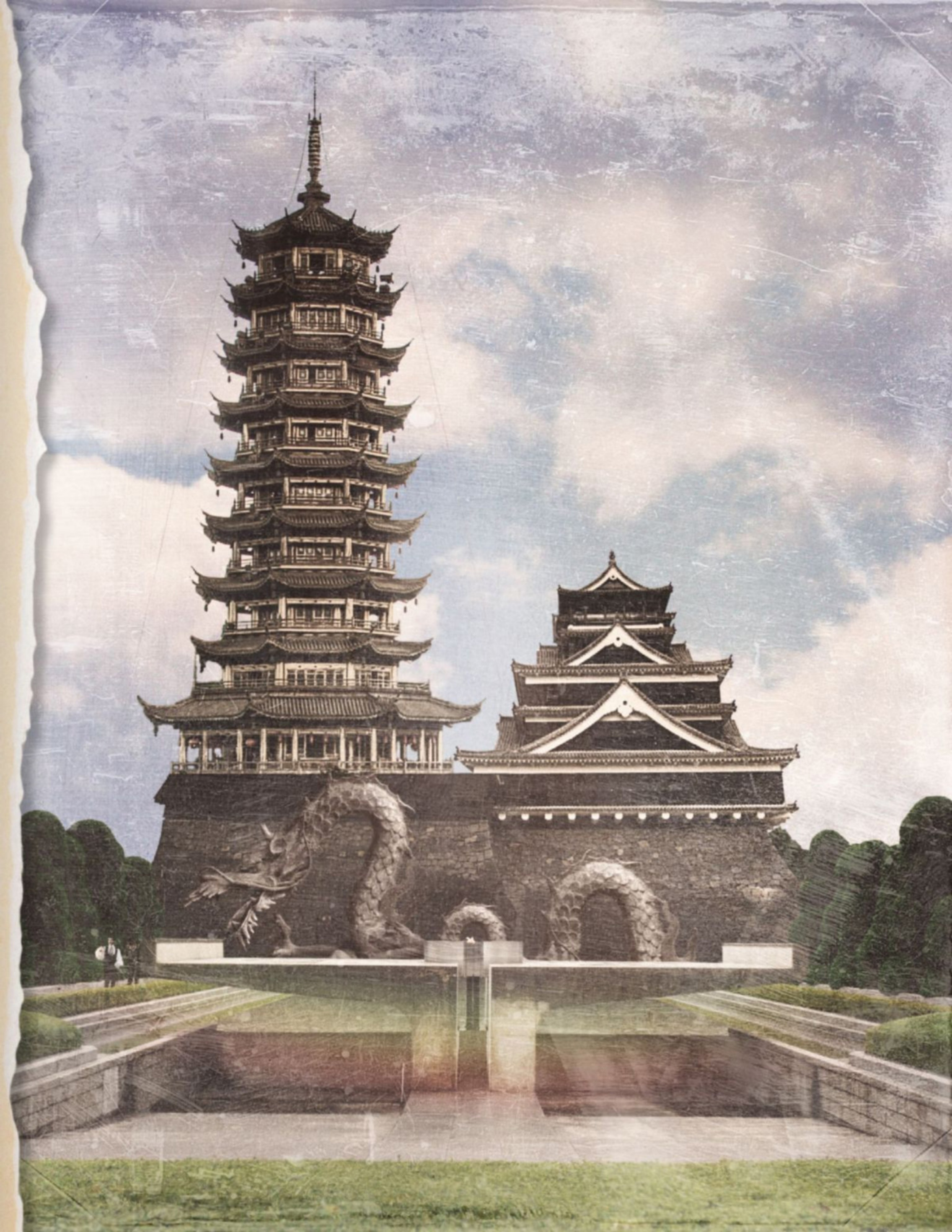
Our tour was joined by a man, who, I daresay, has caught my fancy. His name is Winchester. With a ridiculous American accent and a beautiful smile, he is surely a parvenu, but that in itself is quite exciting! Heavens, he is handsome. I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting too many Americans, and if he is any sample of their quality, the men of England could hardly compare. Sturdy and rugged. I hardly know what he said to me, I

was trying so hard to look interested. Something about striking gold in the Wild West!

He is glad to stay with us at the house—he is a guest of Lu Yan for entirely separate reasons — because it means he will get to know so many accomplished monster hunters! He says he has a keen interest in monster hunting.

Sir Hammerhorn was asked to introduce us to the house since he has been here every year for the better part of a decade guiding these tours, and Winchester stepped in as well, claiming he knew his way around after staying there a few weeks. Winchester has informed me that the famous monster hunter's wife is deathly ill. The conversation turned to the woman's famed beauty. Hammerhorn claims that every time he has met Lu Yan's beautiful wife, he has noticed the same pretty little ribbon around her neck. He praised her modest sensibility as she did not ever change it out to follow fashions and he suspects it is a family heirloom.

Of course, everybody's first interest was scaling the Monster Prison steps. It ascends upward in a circle with secure little rooms with windows looking in every few steps. Every monster imaginable holds a space within! I can hardly write fast enough to describe all the creatures I have seen! And yet there is a sort of pang of guilt within me, for each creature was truly trapped in the truest sense of the word.



Bestiarum Vocabulum Excerpts

The following pages include a few examples of the creatures that are captive within Lu Yan's monster house. These selections were by no means the only beasts that were imprisoned, but were, rather, of particular interest to myself and my companions. I only wish I could provide the entire bestiary complete, but that would take several volumes.

baku

There were two creatures, rare and fabled, captive in this house. The first was the Japanese Baku, the second was the Wendigo. Both are said to be immortal, and their capture is what cemented Lu Yan as the greatest monster hunter alive. The Baku devours dreams and nightmares. If it is near while you sleep, it will rob you of your rest. If you hope or dream near it, all your goals fail you and your heart is left a shell. If you fear the unknown, it devours that darkness and leaves you numb. It is debatable whether the creature is bad or good, or whether it has any intentions at all. Only that it exists.



the banshee

Tethered to the wall as it can float! Its screams are muffled by a face mask. I am told the scream of the banshee can drive men and women insane.



Bangshee



Dryad

This tree-like creature was in a special cage at the bottom of the steps, for it grows like roots or branches, and must be trimmed regularly. It is a rare, ancient beast and this particular one has an insatiable appetite to devour the corpses of children once every season! Lu Yan rescued an orphanage from a very terrible visit one year, thank God!

Hairnago

What a fantastic hag-like presence! This ghoul was found to have complete mastery over her coiffure, and her barbed hair winds around her hapless victims ensnaring them! The hair seems to move of its own accord, winding like snakes. If only civilized ladies had such control over their hair!





ghosts, assorted.

I recall being impressed with Lady Musgrove's collection of ghosts in bottles! And here Lu Yan has nearly a dozen monstrous apparitions, with ages varying across the centuries. They are all on full display, kept corporeal by devices like those on Esme Gorey from all those long months ago. And each with venom and malice in its eyes! Quite spooky!



a vampire

What may have been most interesting to me was to see this unknown vampire bound in a net of holy relics. I am told a young Lu Yan caught this figure in the waters of the Atlantic as it escaped from scotland, if Hammerhorn is to be believed. This monster was kept barely alive and struck me as weirdly unresponsive considering that his mental acuity should be equal to that of any human person, having been one himself. He looked at me once. It was a strange figure, a mix between the beauty of a young man, and the wasting age of an old man dying.



wendigo

The cruelest monster that the world has known, the Wendigo, is a North American creature which comes with the snowstorm, driving people mad, then devouring them alive. It has an insatiable appetite, and must be fed on a careful schedule, for if it eats too much, then it grows, but if it eats too little then it turns to frost and can escape through the cracks. Since it is always starving, it cannot die of hunger. It was, at that point in my life, the most horrifying thing I had ever seen, for when I looked into its eyes, I felt compelled to open the cell door and let it out. ~~that~~ frightened me. I only wish Lu Yan was here to tell the story of its capture.





Drake Winchester

FRIDAY, JULY THE THIRTIETH

Our stay has been most interesting. Percy is in the Monster Library reading about each monster, then observing it in person through the small glass window. He has photographed each monster—at least all the ones that can be photographed. The vampire has proven impossible to see through the reflection of the camera mirror, but Percy rigged some sort of device that made it work.

SATURDAY, AUGUST THE
FIRST

Today we are going on a hunt! Lu Yan keeps a wilderness out back where he can hunt for sport. We have chosen to hunt a were-beast! When a human is bitten by a werewolf, he becomes part man and part wolf. When a beast is bitten by a werewolf it becomes quite an unsettling sort of thing. One can only hunt it to put it out of its misery!

Winchester, the handsome cowboy, seems quite game for some sport! We were divided into hunting parties, and we were each given a partner—one with shooting experience, and one with less or none—and I was very glad to have Mr. Winchester as a partner. He seems so happy to be on the hunt! I admit I was lost in my imagination, fantasizing about us going on many adventures. His strength seems matched with my wits and wiles. When he helped me up onto my horse, my hand took hold of his arm, and

the hair of his arm was soft. I didn't expect to find such a feature attractive on a man, as I have always preferred my men to be rather less hairy. And I must admit, I do want to touch his beard, but I can't imagine it's very lady-like to ask.

I was relieved to see Mr. Longville assigned to Missus Mister. He is not made for shooting, poor dear, and she, as we all know, is quite a crack shot.

As Winchester and I rode through the woods, he said that he was surprised that I was so amiable, as many of the ladies he has met on his adventure have been fools. He wasn't sure if he wanted to talk to me at all for fear of it! I hoped that he found me quite amiable and sensible by comparison.

Winchester heard something shortly after we set out, and he commanded our horses down a little hill. He was so confident and assertive at that moment. "You can control that horse in the woods right? Not many women can. Most Americans like a girl who can ride."

We rode on at quite a clip, and I wanted to impress him, so I tried to keep up, but I was nearly unseated on a few occasions. After a few moments, something or other spooked my horse, and it stopped, and I ingloriously slid from my saddle and landed in the mud. I was not hurt, but Winchester continued on, and I was left alone. I had my pistol, still, for safety, but it was most unmannerly of him to leave me.

I remounted and followed for a little, but my





heart had somewhat gone out of it. There, alone in the woods, I heard a strange and distant growl. I felt that I was not prepared to meet a were-beast alone. As I looked down a small valley cut by a stream, I saw what looked like a wolf leaping across the water some ways out. I had not come to hunt wolves, and so I turned my steed and meandered back to the start.

Winchester came back with the carcass of the were-beast: a bloody body, distorted and horrifying. I do not like to recall it. He was so proud, but I felt that he had steamrolled me to get his way. Maybe emotion and sport should not marry, but I felt a little dejected anyway.

SUNDAY, AUGUST THE SECOND

Tonight while I was wandering through the corridors of the house, I must have entered Lu Yan's wing and left the guest wing behind. I came to a door that was slightly ajar, and therein I saw a man with the most attractive eyes sitting by the bedside of a beautiful and pale young woman with a ribbon wrapped around her neck.

The man heard me at the door, and looked up sharply. "Do I know you?" he asked, which struck me as odd; it seemed he recognized me, but he could not have. I meant to leave him in peace. He had a crushing sadness in his eyes. But I was called in by a doctor and stood in the corner like a silent soldier.

The woman spoke to the man. She said, "It is my time."

And he sobbed, "No."

Which nearly caused me to sob with him. It was one of those moments of emotion that you see, and it is so raw that you become swept up in it.

"When we met," she continued, "I told you that you must never touch the ribbon on my neck.

But now it is the end, my love, and it is time for you to undo it."

He did not move. She guided his hand to her ribbon.

"Please," she said. "It is time."

And, crying, he untied the ribbon. The woman's head fell off.

I collapsed against the wall, as the man collapsed into sadness, sobbing and destroyed. There was no one in the room to comfort him. My eyes welled up with tears and I couldn't stand it. I swept out of the room, and was caught by a doctor who told me, amid my confusion, to take a note to the head of the household. I assume it gave notice of the poor woman's passing.

I learned at dinner that this was indeed Lu Yan. What a terrible way to meet somebody.



THURSDAY, AUGUST THE FIFTH

A few days have passed. A person could spend their entire lives in this house without ever running out of things to look at or learn. It hardly seems worthwhile for the tour to make any other stop, truthfully. I think I could have managed without all the crashing and sinking and near-drownings and pirates. Herein are contained devices, memorabilia, relics, etc. It all hurts my heart, though, for each night I hear the famous monster hunter weeping in the halls. Deep in the night I swear I can hear strange roars and howls coming from the monsters.

One night I saw the man carrying his dead wife through the corridor. I simply cannot let go of the sight of that man's sadness.

FRIDAY, AUGUST THE SIXTH

Last night proved to be awful well after my initial experiences with our host. When the view

of that man's sadness disappeared behind a veil of darkness, I retired to my room.

It appeared the same mood for solitude soon struck the rest of the company; I heard the sounds of doors closing all down the hall. I had partly disrobed, having taken off my outer accoutrements, and was sitting before my mirror brushing my hair, when I first heard the sounds of someone walking very heavily along the corridor outside my room.

I thought perhaps the figure was drunk, for his breathing was heavy as he approached my door. I heard the sound of his breath nearly as fulsome as the panting of some large dog. He stopped outside my door (perhaps he drunkenly mistook it for his) and, leaning his head quite close to the minuscule gap between door and jamb, he appeared to have some sort of asthmatic attack—such snuffling and snorting as I had never wished to hear.

It was a relief when, after a final dismal whimper, he discovered his mistake and moved away down the passage. I returned to my examination of my hair, and was just deciding that it required an extra hundred strokes after its traumatic experience, when I heard the clatter of a door down the hall slamming inward, followed by the most alarming male scream I have ever heard. At once, I knew it to be Percy!

Instantly, I forgot my state of undress. Snatching up my flintlock where it lay, I threw open my own door, quite prepared to do battle with whatever might lay ahead of me.

But I was not prepared for what I saw in the passage: There was Percy Longville, clad in only his nightgown, with a voluminous mass of white foam lathered upon the left side of his face. He half-crouched, facing his open door, a silver straight-razor clenched in his hand. Hearing my approach, he whirled.

“Philomena! Pardon me, I meant to say Missus - ” I remember he tried to correct himself, poor fool.

At that moment a massive black shape burst out of his room, fangs bared in its hideously elongated jaw. It was a werewolf! Here, in the open, within these secure halls!

I raised my flintlock, but Mr. Longville persisted in standing between myself and the monster. Turning his back to me, he brandished the razor as though it were the sword of a samurai.

I was preparing to chastise him for monopolizing the monster with his silver blade, when another door opened directly into my right elbow, knocking my aim askew.

“A hunt at this hour?” called the Mayor.

And Good Lord, the display of male forms I have seen on this adventure. I knew not where to look. One way a monster, the other an undressed man, it seems to be the story of my life! Heaven, forbend. It is not decent. I'd write a letter of complaint if I thought it would help.

During this brief time during which I was distracted, the Beast had cast Mr. Longville aside and, leaning over him with teeth bared, seemed in imminent intent of ending that gentleman's life. They were so entwined that I dared not fire my flintlock.

Instead, I bashed the Beast over the head with it.

I am not sure the Beast felt any pain, but its hand lost its bearing—and when it attempted to seize hold once more, it grabbed the blade of his razor. The silver blade.

Howling in rage, the Beast threw Mr. Longville violently to the ground and whirled upon me, knocking me off my feet, and I felt the flintlock spin out of my grasp. The Mayor charged into the Beast himself, and I dared not look, for (and I should not know this, being a lady of marriageable





age, and innocent as the morning dew) he clearly slept practically in the buff.

I rolled, coming to my knees against the wall, as the Beast, in a paroxysm of rage and silver-laced pain, bolted past me.

Percy held up my gun, and for a moment, we stared into each other's eyes. I saw hesitation, but then he looked down at his hands, and with a thin, close-mouthed smile, he tossed me the weapon.

The howling of the Beast seemed to have roused even the soundest sleepers. All along the corridor, doors opened, and I heard many shouts of alarm and excitement as I pursued the Beast through the hall.

We passed through entire rooms. Drawing rooms, foyers, living rooms. The Beast smashed glass and wood, and in some cases ripped entire doors from their frames! Only as we ran into the Monster Prison wing of the house did I realize that I had somehow misplaced the monster.

I began to move silently through the dark, grabbing a lantern off of a nearby table. It was perplexing that no one, not one servant had been roused. I heard that sound. That heavy breathing, sputtering sound that was outside my door, but now it seemed strange and horrifying.

At some point, near the Wendigo's cell, the noises died. I steeled my nerves. I did not want to see it, not that look in its eyes that compelled me to lose my senses. No. Never again. I managed to rush past, but against my better judgment I looked into the next cell and saw the vampire looking straight at me! Oh, how is it that I could show no fear in chasing a beast, but beasts' captivity in cells could make me lose my wits like this? I dropped my lantern off the edge of the railing and down into the center of the floor below where it broke and went out.

After some time of moving, I fumbled my way to another door. I entered into a strange room filled with low, flickering electricity. Someone sat in a chair at the back of the room, so I called, "Hello! Did you know there is a monster about?"

I moved closer, as there was no answer, and the person clearly couldn't hear me over all the mechanical whirring. I suppose I was also trying to speak quietly. On a table nearby I observed some practical alchemical ingredients, broken plants, and leaves piled with... I know not what.

I touched the figure's chair. It turned to reveal the severed head of Lu Yan's wife, but attached to numerous mechanical components. It was all I could do to hold my horror inside. She looked alive, and I nearly lost my wits when the severed head spoke!

"Let me die," she said. "Untie the ribbon. It hurts. Untie my ribbon. Let me die."

And then the head gurgled, blood poured from its mouth, and I have to stop now to confess something. At that moment, terror struck me for the first time in my life. I was horrified in that way that I hear people talk of. In that way that has never seemed to keep me from adventure. I fight when confronted. And here... I fled.

I ran through the darkness (and am pleased to say I did not trip). I ran past the cells of the monsters. Past the Wendigo, past the broken lantern, through the varied rooms, and straight into Percy's room. I threw myself directly into his arms.

He asked me what was wrong, and I said, "Please, just hold me."

I was comforted then, for a short while, for I did not even have the slightest inkling that every monster was about to break free from its cell.






Lu Yan



Declining an Invitation

TIPS FOR LADY MONSTER HUNTERS NO. 13



When travelling in foreign lands you may find that you have the chance to meet handsome travelers with similar interests who are on similar journeys and would like to join you. However, it is always a woman's prerogative to refuse an invitation from a man. Say a lady is waiting for a certain handsome stranger to offer his services, but the only person willing to join the hunt is the wrong one. Should a lady refuse the offer of the wrong one hoping for the right one, only to discover the right one never asks and she loses her chance altogether? No. She should keep her options open and say, "Thank you very much, Bevin, but I am not quite certain if I will be available to ensorcel that renegade blood orphan tomorrow evening. I hope you shall ask me again soon." A lady is never required to make a detailed explanation as to why she declines a man's invitation, and this technique keeps her options open.

Philomena Dashwood will return in:

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TYSON VICK



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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 CIANCOTTO
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

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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*

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