

## BURIED EVIL

by Paul Landry

Once upon a time, in a hemisphere of one's thoughts, there dwelt an evil. Evil so black it had to be subdued by medication. The body in which it dwelt had to be chained and locked, so the evil could not force it to become a vessel of its vile power. In the end it had to be killed, the body and with it the evil.

How this evil came to be is unknown. Some say it had always been here, but increased in strength the day Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross, gaining still more power when King Tut's Tomb was opened. However it came, it was here. And it must be weakened if mankind is to see the next century.

The body was buried in a small town, Oak Isle; buried deep. So it wouldn't surface again.

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Back on April 4, 1846, Sir Alec Pilar, of the Oak Isle Police Department, was investigating the brutal slaying of one lady of the evening. She had been found behind the tavern: her head had been severed, taken, and smashed on the cobblestone, and looked like a jack-o-lantern smashed on the road. The torso was cut from the belly button to the neck, the insides removed and left in a heap, like spaghetti on a plate. The arms were still intact, and had been smashed with a heavy object, every bone shattered. It was a sight that made the toughest inspector gag.

The remains were bagged and buried beside the other sixteen victims; each one had been done in the same brutal manner.

But, not since the first murder, had the police even a suspect. They figured it to be the work of a real madman. Perhaps a butcher gone mad, or even a doctor filled with the soul of the devil.

All of the victims had been women from different backgrounds, not just whores.

Why would any person do this to another? Are we not of a higher intelligence? That sight is common in the animal kingdom, to see an animal torn to pieces. But in ours? I have come to this conclusion: We are but mere animals, stalking our victims with the cunning and patience of a wolf, creeping along, waiting to pounce and sink claws into the prey and tear at its flesh, like a child would tear into a Christmas present.

I studied for some time the mystery of the brain and found it to be very complex. It has more power than we are to know. We believe what we want. Some can say, without batting an eye: "There is a God." But, some say: "How could God let this stuff take place?" How could we? After all, it is we who kill, not God. Or is it an evil that enters us, taking root like a tree, weaving its way until it has a strong hold?

There is a mystery that I've heard about, a small town that is said to have a buried treasure on it: My town, Oak Isle. Many have tried to dig it up, none have been successful, plenty have died trying.

My great, great grandfather was the first to try, back in 1892. It was he who was found laying, six feet down, in a hole he had dug with a shovel. His hair was white as a sheet of blank paper. His eyes wide with fright.

Some say the treasure was cursed, that anyone who tried to dig it up would die trying. And they all did.

There were plenty of others after my great, great grandfather, myself included. And I was the only one who was successful. Or was I?

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I was brought up in a very religious home, Baptist. My father was a preacher in a little church, just outside the city of Mille-Rock. A town called, Oak Isle. I was the middle kid of a family of three, all boys. My oldest brother Donny, was killed when he was only twelve. He had been playing in the woods behind our house. I found his body. It had been torn to pieces.

The police said it must have been a coyote, or wolf. Until eight more kids were found murdered, all torn apart and left for the crows (which were the size of cats) to pick at.

But then a knife was found by the body of the fourth victim. A massive investigation was launched. No longer was it the work of a coyote; now it was the work of a crazed lunatic. Like Norman Bates. I was ten when all of this took place, and I remember reading about it in the paper, even did an essay on it for school.

I had always been fascinated with death. Hitler had become a sort of idol of mine. And I loved to read about murders and death. To me, it was the most mysterious thing on this Earth, death that is. Something every man fears, because they don't know what lays on the other side. I never feared it. I worshipped it.

The whole town was gripped by fear, and no one would leave their house after dark until the police caught the killer.

When the police finally did catch him (he was found at the scene of his eighteenth murder, chewing on the arm of his victim), they breathed a sigh of relief.

I remember that the town didn't even give him a trial; instead, they hanged him that night, in the town square. Every one was there, and they cheered like spectators at a hockey game. Some threw rocks, sticks, rotten vegetables, and bottles as they tied the rope around his neck. I'll never forget these words he said: "You can't kill me. I am raw evil. Kill me and I will multiply, come back even stronger."

I had nightmares for weeks after that. I woke up and walked to where he had been hanged. The rope had worked its way into the skin of his throat; dry, hardened blood caked on his neck. His eyes were shut, his tongue hung slightly out the corner of his mouth. Blue, purple, and black mixed to colour his thin face. I looked at him, turning my head at the sight. "JOIN US, COME JOIN US," he rumbled. That's when I woke, covered in sweat, shaking with horror.

His body was buried about four feet from the hole — the hole that had been dug over the last one hundred years. The hole my great, great grandfather started. It was about a hundred feet deep now.

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As a kid, I'd sit and watch them digging, trying with all the machinery to get to the treasure,

but none did. Maybe that's because the only way in is to have a soul stained with evil.

I'd sit with my metal "Batman" lunch box at my side. It had a colourful picture of Batman and Robin on the side; inside was a matching thermos, filled with cherry "Kool Aid." The color of gelled blood.

What makes them dig — digging, burrowing, like rabbits digging out a home — I would think to myself, as I'd take a big bite of my peanut-butter sandwich. I loved peanut butter. Jif was the only kind I could eat.

Some nights I would awaken, hearing a ghostly voice cutting through the darkness: \_Edward, want to come out and play? Edward. Edward Aikins, get me out of here.\_ I'd get up from my bed, peer out the window, pushing my nose against it. Saw nothing, but still the voice called to me. Who was it?

Why did they call me? At times I thought it was the spirit of my dead brother.

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On my 21st birthday, I decided to try and dig up the treasure.

I went to 'Jone's Hardware Store.' Mr. Jones was about 72, but looked 50; said the Lord kept him young. He had lost all his sons to the hole.

"Hello, Mr. Jones. How you feeling today?" I picked up a shovel, studied it.

"Not too bad." He walked toward me, hands pushed deep into his pockets, hunching slightly. "How about you?"

Still looking at the shovel, I said, "Not bad. How much is this shovel?" I held it up. Mr. Jones took it from my hands, looked it over.

"That all depends on what ya want it fer," he said, then handed me the shovel.

"Thought I would go and try to dig up the treasure. Someone is bound to get there sooner or later." My eyes searched his face. His eyes became serious, his eyebrows dropped.

"STAY AWAY FROM THAT HOLE!" he screamed at me, spraying my face with spit. He rested his wrinkled, calloused hand on my shoulders.

"There's evil in that hole, pure evil. So evil that God has locked it up, and he sits and guards it." He took his hands off my shoulders and sat in a chair in the corner. An old red chair, tattered and torn. It was his son Dana's favourite chair. He just sat there, looking off into space.

"So, how much is the shovel?" I asked, standing there with my shovel in hand. Mr. Jones stood and walked toward me, like a sheriff in one of those Westerns on the late show.

"Edward. You won't ever get to it. To get to it one must look into the eyes of God." He looked me straight in the eyes. I watched as his pupil dialated. He stood so close I could

feel his hot breath as it left his lungs. His nose touched mine. "NO ONE can look into the eyes of God...And live to tell about it." He sat back in his chair. I stood.

"That's fine...But...HOW...MUCH...IS...THE...SHOVEL," I said slowly, thinking maybe he didn't hear me.

"Take it." He swatted a hand at the air. "It's on the house. I'll get it back when they pull your dead body from the hole.... That shovel always comes back," he said, on his way back to the counter.

I took the shovel and left.

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I had been digging for a week when the hole caved in, covering me him with heavy soil that slowly thrust the air from my lungs. Then, I saw him: God. Quickly, I shut my eyes to shield my soul.

NO ONE can look into the eyes of God and live to tell about it; that shovel always comes back. Mr. Jones' words stung my eardrums.

I felt my body burning inside, my mind filled with all the horrors of hell.

I felt at peace — felt like I had found my niche in life. Like a writer finding he loves to write. I loved death.

Slowly, I began to dig my way out of the hole. My powerful arms, filled with rage, tore at the soil, cutting through it like a hot knife through butter. I reached the top, smiled. I had been reborn.

I breathed in the cool October air as I looked around.

I bent down and picked up the shovel.

"The shovel always comes back," I said. "Always." •

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