

# "THE RIGHT HAND OF DOOM"

AND HE HANGS  
AT DAWN, THE  
PITIFUL FOOL!

ROGER SIMON--  
THE NECROMANCER--  
DEALER IN DIABOLIC ARTS  
AND WORKER OF BLACK  
MAGICKS. HAH!

NOT ALL HIS FOUL  
POWER COULD SAVE HIM  
WHEN THE KING'S SOLDIERS  
SURROUNDED HIS CAVE AND  
TOOK HIM PRISONER--!

from the story by ROBERT E. HOWARD

A FOOL HE IS-- NAUGHT BUT A PITIFUL FOOL--!  
FLEEING WHEN THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO FLING COBBLE-  
STONES AT HIS WINDOW-- THINKING HE COULD HIDE  
HIMSELF IN THAT CAVE AND ESCAPE TO FRANCE--!

AND HERE IS THE  
PRICE OF A MAGICIAN'S  
LIFE!

A GOOD  
DAY'S WORK,  
SAY I--!

HAH! HIS  
ONLY ESCAPE SHALL  
BE AT THE END OF  
A NOOSE!

**THE SPEAKER**-- A SHORT, STOUT, EVIL-FACED MAN--  
GULPED HIS WINE...

...BUT THAT HIS BOASTING HAD BEEN **IGNORED** DID NOT  
ESCAPE HIS NOTICE...



**THE MAN, TALL, GAUNT, POWERFUL, AND SOMBERLY  
ATTIRED,** TURNED HIS COLDLY PALLID FACE TOWARD  
THE EXPECTANT **SPEAKER**...



...AND **FIXED** UPON HIM WITH A PAIR OF DEEP ICY  
**EYES.**

I SAY...

...THAT YOU  
HAVE THIS DAY DONE  
A **DAMNABLE**  
DEED!



YOU NECROMANCER WAS  
**WORTHY** OF DEATH, BELIKE,  
BUT HE TRUSTED YOU, NAMING  
YOU HIS **ONE FRIEND**...


...AND YOU  
**BETRAYED** HIM  
FOR A FEW  
**FILTHY COINS!**



METHINKS  
YOU WILL MEET  
HIM **AGAIN**  
SOME DAY--

--IN HELL!





AND SO SAYING, THE TALL GAUNT  
MAN CLAD IN BLACK ROSE FROM  
HIS PLACE AT THE FIRE AND STOOD  
FOR A MOMENT IN **SILENCE**, HIS  
FACE SEEMING TO REFLECT A  
THOUSAND EXPERIENCES BEYOND  
THE KEN OF NORMAL MEN...

HIS EYES WERE **SOMBER**, YET  
COLDLY **GRIM**, AND IN THEIR  
DARK DEPTHS ONE COULD  
SENSE THAT THIS WAS A MAN  
OF DETERMINATION AND  
**DEED**...

...A MAN WHO HAD  
OFTEN LOOKED  
INTO THE **HIDEOUS**  
FACE OF **TERROR**  
AND **DEATH**, A  
MAN WHO HAD  
CONFRONTED  
FOES BOTH  
EARTHLY AND  
**PHANTASMA-**  
**GORICAL**... AND  
WHO HAD LIVED  
THROUGH IT **ALL**.

OR ELSE  
**WOULD**,  
ONE DAY.

HE GRUNTED SOFTLY, AS IF RECALLING SOME PAST  
EXPLOIT WHICH MIGHT APPLY TO THE MATTER AT  
HAND. IT WAS NOT A **GRUNT OF APPROVAL**, AND  
NOT JOHN REPLY... NOR ANY **OTHER** IN THE **TAVERN**...  
PARSED TO **INTRUDE** UPON THAT RECOLLECTION.

SAYING NOTHING FURTHER, THE TALL MAN DRESSED IN BLACK STRODE AWAY WITH A RAJID CAT-LIKE MOTION THAT ALLOWED OF NO SOUND...

WHO IS THAT, TAVERN-KEEP? WHO IS HE TO UPHOLD MAGICIAN'S AGAINST HONEST MEN--?

BY GOD, HE IS LUCKY TO CROSS WORDS WITH JOHN REDLY AND 'TILL KEEP HIS HEART IN HIS BOSOM.

AND YOU BE LUCKY TOO, JOHN...

...FOR KEEPIN' THY WORDS SOFT UNTIL HE DEPARTER.

THAT BE SOLOMON KANE-- THE PURITAN...

...AND A MAN MORE DANGEROUS THAN A WOLF!

WMPH! EVEN WOLVES HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO COME AGAINST DEATH!

AYE, BUT MERE GRUMBLIN' NEVER TURNED THE TRICK!

ARE YE STAYIN' TH'NIGHT, JOHN...?

AYE, AND I'D MUCH LIKE TO STAY BEYOND AND WATCH SIMEON HANG IN TORKERTOWN TOMORROW... BUT I'M BOUND FOR LONDON AT DAWN!

WELL, HERE'S TO SIMEON'S SOUL, THEN! GOD HA' MERCY ON THE WRETCH...

...AND MAY HE FAIL IN THE VENGEANCE HE SWORE UPON YE.

UPON HEARING THE TAVERN-KEEP'S WORDS, JOHN REDLY LAUGHED WITH RECKLESS BRAVADO.

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

BUT THE LAUGHTER ROSE EMPTY...

...AND BROKE ON A FALSE NOTE.



SOLOMON KANE AWOKES SUDDENLY HE WAS A LIGHT SLEEPER AS BEFITS A MAN WHO CARRIES HIS LIFE IN HIS HAND AND IN HIS SWORD.

AND SOMEWHERE IN THE INN HAD SOUNDED A SOFT NOISE TO ROUSE HIM.

THE SOUND CAME AGAIN, FAINTLY AS IF A CAT WERE CLAWING ITS WAY UP THE WALL OUTSIDE.



SWORD IN HAND, THE PURITAN CROSSED THE ROOM AND FLUNG THEM DOWN BUT THE WORLD BEYOND HIS WINDOW LAY SLUMBERING IN THE PRE-DAWN...



NO MARAUDER LURKED WITHOUT...

... BUT AS HE LEANED OUT TO GAZE AT THE WINDOW OF THE CHAMBER NEXT TO HIS, HE SAW THAT HIS EARS HAD NOT DECEIVED HIM...



THE SHUTTERS WERE OPEN.

THEN CAME A DIFFERENT SOUND, PERHAPS OF SOMEONE FUMBLING AT THE SHUTTERS...

KANE LEFT HIS ROOM FOR THE CORRIDOR, ACTING ON IMPULSE AS HE USUALLY DID. THESE WERE WILD TIMES; BANDITS WERE COMMON.



SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HAD ENTERED THE CHAMBER NEXT TO HIS, AND ITS SLEEPING OCCUPANT MIGHT BE IN DANGER.



KANE WENT STRAIGHT TO THIS CHAMBER DOOR..

--AND OPENED IT...



THROUGH THE OPENED WINDOW, THE DAWNING LIGHT ILLUMINED THE ROOM, YET MADE IT SEEM TO SWIM IN A GHOSTLY HAZE.

KANE RECOGNIZED THE MAN SNORING ON THE BED AS JOHN REEPLY HE WHO HAD BETRAYED THE NECROMANCER TO THE SOLDIERS...



THEN, THE DOOR PURITAN'S GAZE WAS DRAWN TO THE WINDOW.

ON THE SILL SQUATTED WHAT LOOKED LIKE A HUGE SPIDER...



...AND AS KANE WATCHED, IT DROPPED TO THE FLOOR--



...AND BEGAN TO CRAWL TOWARD THE BED.

THE THING WAS BROAD AND HAIRY AND DARK, AND KANE NOTED THAT IT HAD LEFT A STAIN ON THE WINDOWSILL.



ALTOGETHER, IT HAD SUCH AN EERIE APPEARANCE ABOUT IT THAT KANE WAS SPELLBOUND FOR THE MOMENT...

...AND COULD ONLY WATCH AS IT MOVED ACROSS THE FLOOR ON ITS CURIOUSLY JOINTED LEGS.



NOW IT HAD REACHED THE BED AND WAS CLAMBERING UP THE POST...



... AND WHEN IT POISED DIRECTLY ABOVE THE SLEEPING MAN'S FACE--

AWAKEN, MAN-- / ON YOUR LIFE-- AWAKEN!!



JOHN REDLY'S EYES FLARED WIDE IN TERROR...



YAAAHHH!!



...AS THE SPIDER-THING DROPPED.

IT LANDED FULL ON REDLY'S NECK, AND EVEN AS KANE REACHED THE BED, HE SAW THE LEGS LOCK...



AGHH-K-I!

...AND HEARD THE SPLINTERING OF NECK-BONES.

THE MAN STIFFENED AND LAY STILL, HIS HEAD LOLLING SCOTCHQUELY ON ITS BROKEN NECK.



THE THING HAD FALLEN FROM HIM, AND NOW LAY LIMPLY ON THE BED.

BUT WHEN KANE BENT TO STUDY THE GRIM SPECTACLE, HE COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE HIS EYES.



--WAS A HUMAN HAND.



FOR, THE THING WHICH HAD OPENED THE SHUTTERS, CRAWLED ACROSS THE FLOOR, AND MURDERED JOHN REDLY IN HIS BED--



WHAT HAS HAPPENED--? WHO SCREAMED FROM HERE--?!

KANE TURNED, AND WHEN THE TAVERN-KEEPER SAW WHAT WAS HELD SCRITTED ON THE PURITAN'S RAPIER, HIS FACE WHEN WHITE...

IN GOD'S NAME SIR--LET THAT THING NOT LIVE!

THERE BE A *FIRES* IN THE TAP ROOM--!



BURN IT, SIR--!

BURN IT--LEST IT CLUTCH US DOWN INTO HELL!!

KANE CAME INTO TORKERTOWN BEFORE THE MORNING HAD WAXED. AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE HE WAS MET BY A GARRULOUS YOUTH...



NAH SIR-- THERE IS GOOD WORD I WOULD TELL YOU--!



LIKE ALL HONEST MEN, SIR, YOU WILL BE PLEASURED TO LEARN THAT ROGER SIMEON, THE BLACK MAGICIAN, WAS HANGED THIS DAWN--JUST AS THE SUN CAME UP!

AND WAS HIS PASSING MANLY?



AYE, SIR-- HE FLINCHED NOT A BIT! BUT A WEIRD DEED IT WAS--FOR ROGER SIMEON WENT TO THE GALLOWES WITH BUT ONE HAND TO HIS ARMS!

AND HOW CAME THAT TO PASS?

WELL, SIR...LATE LAST NIGHT--

Y--AS THE NECROMANCER SAT IN HIS CELL LIKE A GREAT BLACK SPIDER, HE CALLED ONE OF HIS GUARDS AND, ASKING A FAVOR--





"...BADE THE SOLDIER TO STRIKE OFF HIS RIGHT HAND AT THE WRIST--!"



"THEN, TAKING IT IN HIS LEFT HAND AND UTTERING MANY STRANGE AND FOUL WORDS OF MAGIC--"



"...SIMEON FLUNG THE SEVERED HAND FAR THROUGH THE BARS OF HIS CELL WINDOW."



"ALL THE REST OF THE NIGHT HE SAT AS IN A TRANCE, AND AT TIMES WOULD MUMBLE TO HIMSELF, TO THE RIGHT, HE WOULD WHISPER, AND 'BEAR LEFT,' AND 'OH, ON.'"



"OH, SIR, IT WAS GRISLY TO HEAR HIM, THEY SAY, AND TO SEE HIM CROUCHING OVER THE BLOODY STUMP OF HIS WRIST--!"

"THE GUARDS WERE SORE AFRAID, BUT ROBER OFFERED NOT TO HARM THEM--HAVING VOWED HE HATED ONLY JOHN REDLY, WHO BETRAYED HIM."



"AND FINALLY, WHEN DAWN WAS GREY, THEY CAME AND TOOK HIM FORTH TO THE GALLOWS..."



"...AND AS THEY PLACED THE NOOSE ABOUT HIS NECK, SUDDENLY HE WRITHED AND STRAINED AS WITH TERRIBLE EFFORT--"



"...AND THE MUSCLES IN HIS RIGHT ARM, WHICH LACKED THE HAND, BULGED AND CREAKED..."



"...AS THOUGH HE WERE BREAKING SOME MORTAL'S NECK!"

"THEN AS THE GUARDS SPRANG TO SEIZE HIM, HE CEASED AND BEGAN TO LAUGH.



"TERRIBLE AND HIDEOUS HIS BELLOWING LAUGHTER WAS...

"...UNTIL THE NOOSE BROKE IT SHORT..."



"...AND HE HUNG BLACK AND SILENT IN THE RED EYE OF THE RISING SUN."



AND WAS THE SEVERED HAND EVER FOUND?



NO, SIR, WHERE IT HAD BEEN FLUNG FROM THE CELL, MEN FOUND NAUGHT BUT A TRAIL OF RED LEADING INTO THE FOREST! DOUBTLESS IT WAS DEVOUR'D BY A WOLF!

DOUBTLESS, AND WERE ROGER SIMEON'S HANDS GREAT AND HAIRY WITH A RING ON THE SECOND FINGER OF THE RIGHT?

AYE, SIR! A SILVER RING--COILED LIKE UNTO A SERPENT!



THEN YOUR GOOD WORD DOES INDEED PLEASE ME, LAD...

...AND FOR IT, THIS GIFT!



SEE THAT YOU RETAIN IT FOR A LONGER SPELL THAN DID ITS FIRST OWNER!

