

The Mystery of the Graveyard

**OR, A Dead Man's Revenge
A Detective Story**

by Howard Phillips Lovecraft, 1890-1937

Written: 1898

Published: 1959

in »The Shuttered Room and Other Pieces«,
Arkham House, Sauk City, WI



Table of Contents

Chapter I ...	The Burns' Tomb.
Chapter II ...	Mysterious Mr. Bell.
Chapter III ...	At the Police Station.
Chapter IV ...	The West Window.

Chapter V ...	The Secret of the Grave.
Chapter VI ...	The Chase for Bell.
Chapter VII ...	The Negro Hackman.
Chapter VIII ...	Bell's Surprise.
Chapter IX ...	The Trial.
Chapter X ...	Dobson's Story.
Chapter XI ...	The Mystery unveiled.
Chapter XII ...	Conclusion.



Chapter I

The Burns' Tomb.

It was noon in the little village of Mainville, and a sorrowful group of people were standing around the Burns's Tomb. Joseph Burns was dead. (When dying, he had given the following strange orders:—„Before you put my body in the tomb, drop this ball onto the floor, at a spot marked **A**.“ He then handed a small golden ball to the rector. The people greatly regretted his death. After the funeral services were finished, Mr Dobson (the rector) said, „My friends, I will now gratify the last wishes of the deceased. So saying, he descended into the tomb (to lay the ball on the spot marked **A**) Soon the funeral party began to be impatient, and after a time Mr. Cha's. Greene (the Lawyer) descended to make a search. Soon he came up with a frightened face, and said, „Mr Dobson is not there!“

Chapter II

Mysterious Mr. Bell.

It was 3.10 o'clock in ye afternoone whenne the door bell of the Dobson mansion rang loudly, and the servant on going to the door, found an elderly man, with black hair, and side whiskers. He asked to see Miss Dobson. Upon arriving in her presence he said, „Miss Dobson, I know where your father is, and for £10,000 I will restore him. My name is Mr. Bell.“ „Mr. Bell“ said Miss Dobson, „will you excuse me from the room a moment?“ „Certainly,“ replied Mr Bell. In a short time she returned, and said, „Mr. Bell, I understand you. You have abducted my father, and hold him for a ransom.“

Chapter III

At the Police Station.

It was 3.20 o'clock in the afternoon when the telephone bell at the North End Police Station rang furiously, and Gibson, (the telephone Man) inquired what was the matter.

„Have found out about fathers disappearance!“ a womans voice said. „I'm Miss Dobson, and father has been abducted. Send King John!“ King John was a famous western detective. Just then a man rushed in, and shouted, „Oh! Terrors! Come to the graveyard!“

Chapter IV

The West Window.

Now let us return to the Dobson Mansion. Mr Bell was rather taken aback by Miss Dobson's plain speaking, but when he recovered his speech he said, „Don't put it quite so plain, Miss Dobson, for I—“ He was interrupted by the entrance of King John, who with a brace of revolvers in his hands, barred all egress by the doorway. But quicker than thought Bell sprang to a west window—and jumped.

Chapter V

The Secret of the Grave.

Now let us return to the station house. After the exited visitor had calmed somewhat, he could tell his story straighter. He had seen three men in the graveyard shouting „Bell! Bell! where are you old man!?“ and acting very suspiciously. He then followed them, and they entered the Burns's Tomb! He then followed them in and they touched a spring at a point marked **A** and then disappeared.“ „I wish king John were here,“ said Gibson, „What's your name?“ „John Spratt.“ replied the visitor.

Chapter VI

The Chase for Bell.

Now let us return to the Dobson Mansion again:—King John was utterly confounded at the sudden movement of Bell, but when he recovered from his surprise, his first thought was of chase. Accordingly, he started in pursuit of the abductor. He tracked him down to the R. R. Station and found to his dismay that he had taken the train for Kent, a large city toward the south, and between which and Mainville there existed no telegraph or telephone. The train had Just Started!

Chapter VII

The Negro Hackman.

The Kent train started at 10.35, and about 10.36 an excited, dusty, and tired man⁽⁷⁻¹⁾ rushed into the Mainville hack. office and said to a negro hackman who was standing by the door—„If you can take me to Kent in 15 minutes I will give you a dollar.“ „I doan‘ see how I‘m ter git there,“ said the negro. „I hab‘n‘t got a decent pair of hosses an‘ I hab—“ „Two Dollars!“ shouted the Traveller. „All right,“ said the Hackman.

Chapter VIII

Bell’s Surprise.

It was 11 o‘clock at Kent, all of the stores were closed but one, a dingy, dirty, little shop, down at the west end. It lay between Kent Harbour, & the Kent & Mainville R.R. In the front room a shabbily dressed person of doubtful age was conversing with a middle aged woman with gray haire, „I have agreed to do the job, Lindy,“ he said, „Bell will arrive at 11.30 and the carraige is ready to take him down to the wharf, where a ship for Africa sails to-nighte.“

„But If King John were to come?“ queried „Lindy.“ „Then we‘d get nabbed, an‘ Bell would be hung,“ replied the man. Just then a rap sounded at the door. „Are you Bell?“ inquired Lindy. „Yes,“ was the response, „and I caught the 10.35 and King John got left, so we are all right.“ At 11.40 the party reached The Landing, and saw a ship loom up in the darkness. »The Kehdive of Africa« was painted on the hull, and just as they were to step on board, a man stepped forward in the darkness and said, „John Bell, I arrest you in the Queen’s name!“ It was King John.

Chapter IX

The Trial.

The day of The Trial had arrived, and a crowd of people had gathered around the Little Grove (which served for a court house in summer), to hear the trial of John Bell on the charge of kid-napping. „Mr. Bell,“ said the judge „what is the secret of the Burns’s tomb.“ „I well tell you this much,“ said Bell. „If you go into the tomb and touch a certain spot marked **A** you will find out.“ „Now where is Mr Dobson?“ queried the judge. „Here!“ said a voice behind them, and the figure of Mr Dobson HIMSELF loomed up in the doorway. „How did you get here! &c“ was chorused. „Tis a long story,“ said Dobson.

Chapter X

Dobson’s Story.

„When I went down into the tomb,“ said Dobson, „everything was darkness, I could see nothing. but finally I discerned the letter **A** printed in white on the onyx floor, I dropped the ball on the letter, and immediately a trap-door opened and a man sprang up. It was this man, here“ (he said, pointing at Bell, who stood trembling on the prisoner’s dock), „and he pulled me down into a brilliantly lighted, and palatial apartment where I have lived until to-day. One day a young man rushed in and exclaimed, „the secret is revealed!“ and was gone. He did not see me. Once Bell left his key behind, and I took the impression in wax, and the next day was spent in filing keys to fit the Lock. The next day my key fitted. and the next day (which is to-day) I escaped.“

Chapter XI

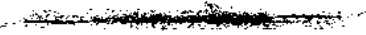
The Mystery unveiled.

„Why did the late J. Burns, ask you to put the ball there?“ (at **A**?) queried the Judge? „To get me into trouble,“ replied Dobson. „He, and Francis Burns, (his brother) have plotted against me for years, and I knew not, in what way they would harm me.“ „Seize Francis Burns!“ yelled the Judge.

Chapter XII

Conclusion.

Francis Burns, and John Bell, were sent to prison for life. Mr Dobson was cordially welcomed by his daughter, who, by the way had become Mrs King John. „Lindy“ and her accomplice were sent to Newgate for 30 days as aidors and abettors of a criminal escape.



(7-1) King John.