

# **The Severed Hand**

## **Horriſying Tales From The Dead II**

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“I don't know what I thought when I got so involved with my experiments. My poor Josette, she was the love of my life and to throw it all away over an experiment was inconceivable, but I did. Now I must live the rest of my days as a lonely old man down in a dusty old lab with my assistant Gregor” said Dr. Van Lewton.

“It's been ten lonely years with a bunch of botched experiments that seem to go nowhere. I'd give it one more shot. Then all of a sudden, there was a knock on the door. I said to Gregor, "Who could that be? No one has been at my castle since my beautiful wife Josette left me on that stormy night. I pleaded with her to stay, but she had all she could take and slammed the door behind her and left without

saying goodbye. I know she was very hurt by me neglecting her, but I thought this experiment would bring us wealth beyond our wildest dreams. Enough self-pity, I better see who is at the door. I wish you could talk to me Gregor, but you always do as I ask, and I am grateful for your loyalty," said Dr. Van Lewton.

Dr. Van Lewton was somewhat hesitant to answer the door, but he was excited to have a visitor. He opened the door, and tears flowed down his cheeks. He tried his best to hold back the tears, but they just kept flowing. Dr. Van Lewton said to his visitor, "Is that you Josette? Is that you? Please come in. I must be dreaming." The visitor placed her hands on his cheeks, wiping away his tears, saying, "It is I, Josette, your wife, I'm coming home."

They embraced, and their lips touched, and the tears flowed down their cheeks. Dr. Van Lewton said to Josette, "Please forgive me for what I have done. If you decide to stay, I promise things will be different, I won't neglect you as I did in the past." They embraced and kissed one more time.

Dr. Van Lewton yelled out Gregor's name, saying, "Gregor! Gregor! Come here. I want you to meet our visitor." He asked Josette, "Wait right here, Josette; I'll go get Gregor, my caretaker, an assistant. I want you to meet him." Dr. Van Lewton went down in the laboratory to get Gregor to come upstairs to meet his beautiful wife, Josette. Dr. Van Lewton wrote down on paper what he wanted to tell Gregor as he has always done. Gregor was so excited for Dr. Van Lewton. He knew this would make the doctor a thrilled man. Dr. Van Lewton wrote on a piece of paper introducing his lovely wife Josette to Gregor. The note said, "Gregor, this is my beautiful wife, Josette, she has come back to me, and she wants to stay," said Dr. Van Lewton.

Gregor bowed in front of Josette, showing that it was an honor to meet her.

"Why isn't Gregor speaking?" asked Josette.

"Gregor was born a deaf-mute, but he has been a great help with my experiments," explained Dr. Van Lewton.

"That's a shame, does he have any family?" asked Josette.

"No, he just showed up cleaning one day at the grounds of the castle, and I asked him his name, but got no response. He made hand gestures and pointed at his mouth, that's when I knew he couldn't talk, so I pointed at the castle for him to follow me inside. Gregor followed me to the castle, and we went inside my study. I had Gregor sit down at my desk and write his name and everything about him and why he was cleaning the castle grounds. He wrote on the piece of paper, my name is Gregor, and I live in the forest behind the castle and feed off the land. I have no family, but I've always dreamed of living in a castle, but I was afraid to ask if you needed a caretaker for the castle grounds. I just kept to myself until that terrible day when Josette left on that stormy night. The next morning, I got the courage to come to your castle in hopes you could use me as your caretaker.

"I felt sorry for Gregor and gladly took him in and haven't regretted it for one moment," explained Dr. Lewton.

"Now that I've introduced Gregor to you, Josette, I don't know about you both, but I'm famished. Why don't we go into the dining room, and I'll have my butler Geston fix up a lovely meal with some wine to celebrate your return," said Dr. Lewton.

They all sat down at the table and had a feast, and Dr. Van Lewton and Josette talked about their lost ten years of being apart from one another and how it affected each other's lives. Dr. Van Lewton and Josette agreed on one thing that they were both unhappy being apart from each other for so long.

"Josette if you're finished with your meal, I would like to get you settled into your room, and when we both feel comfortable with each other's company, we can share a room and even start a family of our own. How does that sound to you, Josette?" asked Dr. Van Lewton.

"That sounds wonderful to me and best we start things slow since we've been apart for so long," said a happy Josette.

Josette asked Dr. Van Lewton to be excused from the dinner table to freshen up before they took a stroll through the castle's grounds and do some catching up on lost time.

"Josette, I'll be in my study finishing up some paperwork. When you're ready to meet me in the study, I'll drop what I'm doing, and we'll go for a long stroll through the castle grounds," said Dr. Van Lewton.

Josette kissed Dr. Van Lewton, and Josette said, "I'll see you shortly, my darling."

Dr. Van Lewton went to his study to write down his latest notes on his recent experiment. Josette arrived in his study about twenty minutes later in a stunning black dress.

"Darling, are you ready?" asked Josette.

"Josette, you take my breath away in that dress," said Dr. Van Lewton.

Dr. Van Lewton got up from his desk, went over to Josette, and put his arm around her and said, "Let's go for a long walk and catch up on things."

Dr. Van Lewton wrote on a piece of paper telling Gregor to keep an eye on the castle while Josette and I go for a walk.

Gregor wrote on a piece of paper "Okay, Doctor! It will be my pleasure. You and Josette take your time, and I'll be down in the lab preparing for the next experiment."

Dr. Van Lewton and Josette were enjoying each other's company and catching up on lost time. Dr. Van Lewton suggested they go for a ride in his carriage. As they were sharing a long-awaited kiss, a strong wind came by, and the driver of the carriage lost control sending the carriage down a ravine. When Josette and Dr. Van Lewton regained consciousness, Josette screamed out, "Darling your hand! Your hand it's gone!" She came over and held him in her arms, screaming for help. The driver rushed over and was able to get one of the horses off the harness. The driver ripped off a piece of his shirt and used it as a tourniquet to stop Dr. Van Lewton's bleeding. Josette and the driver got Dr. Van Lewton off the ground and onto the horse, and the driver got the other horse off the harness. The driver helped Dr. Van Lewton and Josette onto the horse and then jumped on the other horse, and they rode back to the castle to call the nearest doctor in town.

The only doctor in the city was Dr. Lister, who is an alcoholic but was still an excellent doctor regardless of his drinking.

Dr. Lister gathered his doctor's bag and of course, his flask full of liquor. Dr. Lister said, "Looks like it's going to be a long night at Dr. Van Lewton's castle." Dr.

Lister opened the top of the flask and took a swig or two and wiped his mouth and said, "It's time to go see what I can do for this poor old chap with no hand."

Dr. Lister got into his carriage, and his driver took him safely to Dr. Van Lewton's castle. Dr. Lister took another swig from his flask and stepped out of his carriage with his doctor's bag in hand and staggered to Dr. Van Lewton's castle door. Dr. Lister gave three knocks on the front door of the castle with his flask and mumbled: "Dr. Van Lewton let me in." Gregor opened the door and let Dr. Lister in to see Dr. Van Lewton. Gregor motioned for Dr. Lister to follow him down to Dr. Van Lewton's laboratory. Dr. Lister stumbled down the stairs drinking from his flask and mumbling, "Where's the doctor?" Gregor steered Dr. Lister in the right direction towards the door of the laboratory. Dr. Lister stepped inside the door of the laboratory and said in a slurred voice, "Dr. Van Lewton, I'm here to provide my services and see that you have a new hand."

Dr. Van Lewton grabbed Dr. Lister by the arm and pulled him closer so he could tell him something. "Doctor, I need a new hand so Josette won't see me as a disfigured man."

Dr. Lister's response was, "Now don't you worry, I'll fix you up as good as new, or my name isn't Dr. Blister, I mean Dr. Lister."

Dr. Lister was rummaging through his doctor's bag to get out his scalpel when he noticed another table with a body covered with a white sheet. Dr. Lister went over to examine the body underneath the sheet and examined the hands.

"Dr. Van Lewton, I believe I've got a hand that will work, but we'll have to operate immediately. Are you ready?" asked Dr. Lister.

"Yes, I'm ready," replied Dr. Van Lewton.

"I'm going to put you under now, in just a few hours you'll have a new hand," said Dr. Lister.

Even though Dr. Lister had a hand that would work in operation, he was unaware that the dead body on Dr. Van Lewton's examining table was executed by hanging because he murdered fifteen people in their town by strangulation.

If Dr. Van Lewton knew of this information, that body lying on that examining table would have been burned, but Gregor was told by Dr. Van Lewton to bring in a new body from the morgue to experiment. Gregor had no idea the body he took from the morgue was a serial-killers.

Dr. Lister removed the hand from the killer's body and reattached it to Dr. Van Lewton's hand, and after a few hours of recovery, everything seemed to go well with the surgery and with no complications. Dr. Van Lewton thanked Dr. Lister for giving him a new hand. Dr. Lister gathered his instruments and placed them back in his doctor's bag, and Josette saw Dr. Lister to the door and said, "Thank you for everything, I can't thank you enough. Goodbye, Dr. Lister."

Dr. Lister boarded his carriage and headed back home. Dr. Van Lewton's hand was doing well for the first three months until he woke up in a cold sweat from a nightmare about strangling a young woman. He looked over at Josette who was lying by his side, and the new hand was around her neck choking her. Josette woke up screaming and tried to release Dr. Van Lewton's grip around her neck, but it was too late. Dr. Van Lewton tried his best to free his hand, but Josette was already dead.

Dr. Van Lewton yelled, "What have I done to my poor Josette?"

In a fit of rage, Dr. Van Lewton got out of his bed and ran to the kitchen, grabbed a butcher's knife out of the drawer then ran downstairs to his laboratory. Dr. Van Lewton poured alcohol on the hand and with one solid whack, he cut the hand off and it rolled off the table onto the floor. Dr. Van Lewton immediately wrapped bandages around the bloody stump where his new hand was, to stop the bleeding. Dr. Van Lewton got a bottle of hydrochloric acid and poured over the hand, then burned it in the fireplace but when he opened the bottle of acid to pour onto the hand, the hand started moving at a fast pace across the laboratory floor. No matter how hard Dr. Van Lewton tried to capture the hand, the hand got away. The hand eventually made its way out the front door ready to kill again. Dr. Van Lewton ran up the stairs of his laboratory with the butcher knife in hand hoping to stop the hand from killing again, but when he ran outside it was too dark, and there was no sign of the hand.

The severed hand made its way onto a coach that was parked just a hundred yards down from Dr. Van Lewton's castle. The coach had stopped because the driver had to empty his bladder while a man and woman were sitting inside the coach patiently waiting for the drivers return, but he never made it back to the coach. The severed hand got its first victim and headed back to the coach to kill again. The couple in the coach started kissing while the severed hand crawled onto the man's shoulder and with a tight squeeze, the man collapsed dead. His lover started screaming for the driver, but there was no response. She jumped out of the coach lost her balance and fell to the ground. The severed hand was on the back of her dress crawling up her back, and as she tried to get up to run for her life the hand squeezed her neck so tight, her head was severed all the way through and just rolled off her shoulders onto the ground.

As Dr. Van Lewton was outside looking around the grounds of the castle for the severed hand he heard a woman's scream, so he headed in the direction of the screams, and by the time Dr. Van Lewton arrived at the coach there was no sound, just dead bodies lying on the ground where the severed hand had been. Dr. Van Lewton shined his lantern on the bodies to see if anyone was still alive but found no pulse, just red hand marks around the driver's neck and the man that was dead in the coach. Dr. Van Lewton tripped over the woman's body and fell to the ground as he looked eye level to the ground his lantern was shining directly on the woman's head. Dr. Van Lewton got up and ran behind the carriage and threw up from the grotesque scene and then ran over to where the lantern was and ran back to his castle to board his carriage and head into town to tell the Constable of his findings.

"Constable, Constable! Josette is dead, and three other people down the road from my castle are dead. Hurry! Hurry! Constable!" said a distraught Dr. Van Lewton.

"Settle down, Dr. Van Lewton, you're talking too fast. Why don't you sit down and tell me all about it from the beginning?" said the Constable York.

"The terror began when I awoke from a terrible dream about strangling a woman somewhere in the woods, but the woman I was strangling was my beautiful wife, Josette. I glanced over at Josette, lying next to me, and I froze in terror of what I had just done. It was an accident I tell you. I would never harm Josette. I loved her with all my heart. The hand that strangled the life out of Josette was the one that

was attached by Dr. Lister. You see Josette and I were taking a quiet ride in my carriage when all of a sudden, the driver lost control of the carriage. All I remember was hearing Josette screaming for help and as I was fading in and out of consciousness. I asked Josette what happened, and she said that I lost my hand during the accident. The next thing I remember was lying on an examining table in my laboratory and this doctor by the name of Dr. Lister telling me he would give me a new hand and not to worry. Months went by without any sign of any complications from the surgery, so I assumed everything with my new hand was okay, but I was dead wrong. Now four people are dead, and my new hand is to blame for all this. I don't expect you to believe a word I'm saying, but I fear more people will die unless you destroy the severed hand. You got to help me, Constable York," explained Dr. Van Lewton.

The Constable York said, "I would like to see the body you got this hand from."

"Let's go," said Dr. Van Lewton.

Dr. Van Lewton and Constable York headed to the morgue to find out what body was taken from the morgue by Dr. Van Lewton's assistant Gregor.

"Just as I thought, the body that your assistant took from the morgue was the town's strangler," said Constable York.

"It's my fault I made Gregor go to the morgue so that I could continue my experiments. If I wouldn't have been so absorbed in myself, Josette and the other innocent people would still be alive, and Josette and I could have had something special, but for selfish reasons, she's out of my life now forever. I could never love another woman like I did my sweet Josette. She came back into my life, and I destroyed everything that she meant to me. Constable, I can't go on without her. There wasn't a day that went by that she wasn't on my mind. If you must take me, Constable, please give me the death penalty. My life is useless now since she's out of my life," said Dr. Van Lewton.

"I'll have to finish my investigation before I can take you in and you will have to stand trial for all the murders. Right now, my men and I will search for the severed hand. I'll send someone from the morgue over to the castle to pick up Josette's body," said the Constable.

"Thank you, Constable York, you've been so helpful to me. I hope you can find the severed hand and destroy it before it kills again," said Dr. Van Lewton.

Not long after Constable York's visit to the morgue with Dr. Van Lewton, the severed hand strikes again. The severed hand killed an elderly couple relaxing by the fireplace in their cottage. It didn't take long for word to get back to Constable York about the elderly couple's death.

Dr. Van Lewton didn't have to worry about standing trial for all the murders because while Constable York and his men were busy looking for the severed hand, Dr. Van Lewton was busy working on some notes in his study from his experiment when the severed hand crawled up the back of his chair latching onto the doctor's throat, choking the life out of him until the doctor was found slumped over in his chair by Gregor.

Gregor got a horse from Dr. Van Lewton's stable and road into town to tell the Constable about Dr. Van Lewton's death. Gregor wrote down what he had witnessed and said the Constable that he has the hand secured in the study with

a knife stabbed right through the middle of the hand into the floor. I nailed a strap over the hand to reassure it wouldn't escape and kill again.

The Constable and Gregor rode back to the Castle Van Lewton to destroy the severed hand. As the Constable and Gregor entered the study the severed hand broke free from the strap and knife and crawled away but the severed hand was too damaged to escape, and the Constable gave the severed hand one whack with his, and the severed hand was destroyed.

"It looks like the severed hand's strangling days are over," said the Constable.

The Constable went down into the laboratory and took the body along with the severed hand to the crematory and had them cremated to stop the evil forces.

Josette along with her husband Dr. Van Lewton was buried on the castle grounds. Geston, the butler and Gregor, remained at Castle Van Lewton to attend to the castle's needs till their dying day.

