

THE MONSTER OF THE LOCH *by* W. J. Makin

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We slid away from the shore and I rowed quietly. Presently I felt the steel-like grip of Jonathan Jow's hand on mine.

"Ship your oars!" he whispered. "Here comes another boat."

WE waited, tense shadows in our little boat. Then the first shaft of moonlight slid across the water. And as it did so, the lone rower in the moving boat crossed its path. I caught a quick glimpse of a completely bald head. A second later he had passed into the darkness again.

"David Norway!" muttered Jonathan Jow, a strange gleam in his eyes. "The old scientist has lost no time."

It was at that moment that the awful possibility of there

being a real monster in the loch suddenly clanged through my mind. Why should this mad scientist with a Frankenstein vision of breeding monsters to overcome the world of men enter upon the scene? So far I had treated the suggestion of a monster with contempt. Jonathan Jow had convinced me that a gang of criminals were merely using a legend to cover their own dark deeds. But supposing there was a real monster?

The thought paralyzed me. I stopped rowing. Fearfully I gazed at the black waters. A swirl out of those awful depths and we should be completely at the mercy of the beast.

"What's the matter?" asked Jonathan Jow quietly.

"Suppose there is a monster after all," I said.

He made no reply. He leaned forward and made a brief gesture for me to change seats. As I moved to the stern of the little boat, I realized with a chilling of my spine that I had merely spoken aloud the thought that had always been present in the mind of Jonathan Jow.

There was a monster in the loch!

Jonathan Jow rowed quietly towards that beetling mass of cliffs in which he had shown much curiosity ever since we came to Loch Lare. We made a wide circle and, in a few minutes, our boat bumped gently against the sandstone cliffs. They seemed to descend sheer into the black waters. There was no possible landing place.

As we bumped gently against the cliff and I put out a hand

against the slimy wall, Jonathan Jow pointed. Moonlight was silvering the surface of the water, but within the shadow of the cliffs we were safe from being seen.

But it was possible to glimpse something that looked like a raft floating on the surface and two figures standing on it. A motor-launch was tied to the raft. One of the figures on the raft was Martin Benson. The other was Finch. They were taking turns at a wheel on the floating platform.

"They've got a diver down below," whispered Jonathan Jow. "They're working the air-pump. Old-fashioned, but useful enough."

"But the diver below," I questioned, "how can he see?"

"Electric torch!" was the reply.

ONCE AGAIN the creak of rowlocks was heard. I shifted

my gaze. So did the two figures on the floating platform. I expected to see the bald-headed scientist again. Instead, there slid on to the scene a long, low craft with three men in it. And a crouching figure in the bows lifted his voice so that the words were carried clearly over the water.

"Put up your hands, Mr. Martin Benson!"

I recognized the voice at once. Sam Oppermann. I could almost see the sneer on that fallow face as he continued suavely:

"A long-deferred meeting, Mr. Benson. But you didn't think you could get away with that loot and murder as well, did you?"

"Look here, Sam—" began Benson.

"Keep your hands up," warned Oppermann.

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THE STAR WITNESS *by* H. H. Kroll

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tinued, "And Judge Jesse's decision forty years ago, in School Board versus Sally Williams, that a teacher could not be dismissed from her position simply because she went to a square dance with her promised husband, is one of only five decisions to become incorporated in the state's jurisprudence."

THIS FLOW of pulchritudinal rhetoric made Gid's jaw hang lax. Nanette concluded, "When Mr. Hicks got that wagon of logs out of the creek and sold them, he carried \$10 worth of groceries and meal and hams to the Widow Buskirk and her three children who live on your place, Mr. Huckleby, and you've been threatening to have them thrown out by the sheriff because they didn't pay their rent, and—"

Gid leaped to his feet, face red as a fried tomato. "It ain't so—"

Judge Jesse jumped up and gave his decision. "It air the opinion of this here court that the star witness is a durn liar and the truth ain't in him, and he never seen nothing, and even if he had it wasn't none of his

tarnation nosey business—" "Throw him out!" Hank Hicks yelled. Hank jumped up and made toward Gid. Gid started to whine, "You lay off me, Hank Hicks—" But forty years of logging hadn't made Hicks' muscles puny. Hank grabbed a leg and threw Gid down. "Snatch the other shank, Je'miah—" he panted.

The school board toted Gid to the door, counted one-two-three, and Gid rose, did a bucking but graceful arc, and hit the ground fifteen feet outside like a sack of frozen turnips falling off a barn roof. He lay there a moment moaning in outrage, swearing he would law them, shoot them all on sight. After a while he collected his bruised but otherwise undamaged tonnage, and, with a last wild look at the lighted door of the schoolhouse, moved off in the darkness.

JESSE LEVERAGE went home to reread his famous decision in School Board versus Sally Williams; Je'miah Bean dragged out the two bags of commercial fertilizer that same night and put the truck on his beans, and

a warm mild rain in the night soaked the stuff in nicely; Hank Hicks, a widower, sat up a good while deciding that he had as well go ask Mis' Buskirk to marry him.

But it was the first big broadcast that Joey made which jelled the whole matter. The boy was a wizard on the air. Je'miah sat before the radio, listening with a transfixed look. When it was known that Joey had signed a fat contract with the farm machinery people, Je'miah's pride knew no bounds.

"I'll give the biggest square dance ever was knowed in these parts in honor of my son Joey and Miss Nanette's engagement, and by durns, I'll fiddle at the dance myself!" he vowed.

The night of the dance the cabin was packed. Even Gid Huckleby, unable to treasure a grudge where excitement was going on, was among the guests. Je'miah took down his fiddle, strung and tuned it, leaned back, closed his eyes, and played as he had never fiddled in all his time, while the dance swept past him, around him in a weave of the years. Sally, his faithless wife, was forgotten. After all, another young woman had come into Je'miah's life. When you are old, he wondered, why must you grudge love and kisses to the young? He opened his eyes, and Joey and Nanette swung past him on the promenade. Je'miah could stand it no longer. He put his fiddle in Hank Hicks' hands.

"Bub, you fiddle! Me, I aims to tear something loose!" He cut in, shoving Joey aside, and took Nanette. Shangling like a loose clapboard in a gale, Je'miah lifted the light, graceful girl fairly off the floor on the swings. When the set ended with a bang he pulled Nanette to the middle of the room and gave her a loud bus. He said fervently, wiping his mouth:

"Cripes, I don't blame Joey! I'm star witness to the fact that his taste in wimmin is shore dependable and modern. Did I tell ye, honey, that the school board elected ye to teach next year, and I'm giving Joey the old Bean place in the forks of Bold Creek and building a new house for you to spend your honeymoon; and you can collect Gid's note, with interest, to furnish the place? As fur me," he emitted a dry cackle, "I aims to go ahead raising prize pole beans for the little Beans!"

PETER AND SUE

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"A set of musical toys," said Mrs. Stewart as she picked up the one-man band and began to play on it.

"Why," Susan cried, "Albert would like that, wouldn't he? Or maybe it would be better for Tom."

"It's a bit young for them, Susan, but it surely will find a place under many a Christmas tree this year. It's nice for a family in which there are several children. Here is something Albert would like. A wood burning set. It works by electricity and burns the pictures in colors."

"He'd like that too, Momie." Susan rang a bell, beat upon some radio chimes and picked up a whistle.

"For goodness sake!" Mrs. Stewart exclaimed. "What in the world have you found there?"

A saleswoman stepped up smiling. "Our radio sound effects box. It's a wonderful gift for boys. With it they can make all the sounds that are heard over radio networks."

"They can?" Mrs. Stewart

bent over and read: "Galloping horses; thunder-lightning crash; wind, rain, hail, sleet, trains, radio chimes, whistles; sirens; creaking doors; fire and G-men." A boy can imitate all those different sounds?" she asked.

"Yes, madam, and each sound has been tested and approved by one of the coast-to-coast networks. There's a booklet in there that tells you all about it.

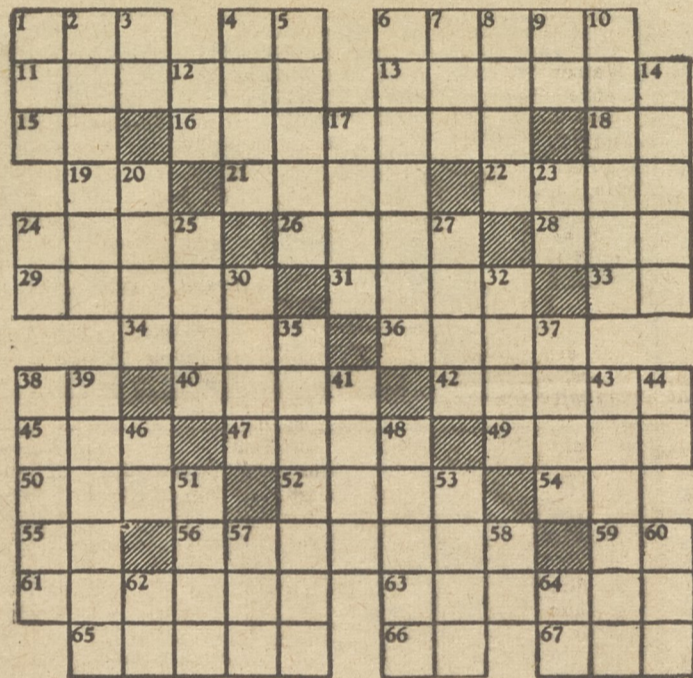
"And here's a very fine item. It's a rotary printing press. For boys or for girls in school this press is perfectly splendid. Whole newspapers can be printed on it, you see."

"Yes," said Mrs. Stewart. "That would be splendid for children older than mine. I am sure it will be a popular gift for Christmas."

"But we are not buying anything today. We are looking around to see what we should ask Santa Claus to bring. I think it is wise to make selections early."

"That's right," the saleswoman agreed. "It helps a great deal to know ahead of time what's new in the toy world."

CROSS WORD PUZZLE



SOLUTION NEXT WEEK

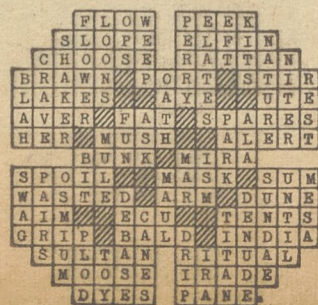
HORIZONTAL

- 1—Greek letter
- 4—Type measure
- 6—Specks
- 11—Judge
- 13—Lasso
- 15—French article
- 16—Easily broken
- 18—French for "the"
- 19—Negative
- 21—To cease
- 22—To fly
- 24—Betting quotations
- 26—Clan
- 28—Aeriform fluid
- 29—Deceptive move
- 31—Servant
- 33—Pronoun
- 34—Authoritative standard
- 36—Spanish for "rivers"
- 38—Plural suffix
- 40—Security for prisoner's appearance
- 42—Expression of principle
- 45—Offspring
- 47—Support
- 49—Settlement
- 50—Loyal
- 52—To wander
- 54—Jumbled type
- 55—Conjunction
- 56—Congested
- 59—Negative
- 61—Bustle
- 63—One who boasts
- 65—Forest
- 66—Pronoun
- 67—Compass point

VERTICAL

- 7—Chum
- 8—Minerals
- 9—Musical note (var.)
- 10—Oriental greeting
- 12—Whether
- 14—Brief
- 17—Departs
- 20—Norse god
- 23—King of Bashan
- 24—Belonging to
- 25—One of affected superiority.
- 27—Neat
- 30—To snare
- 32—Measure of length
- 35—Looking-glasses
- 37—To cease
- 38—To stop legally
- 39—Grief
- 41—Plunder
- 43—Winds around
- 44—Concerning
- 46—Greek letter
- 48—To repair
- 51—To resound
- 53—Simple
- 57—Conducted
- 58—To act
- 60—Basic metallic compound
- 62—Toward
- 64—Pronoun

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



VERTICAL

- 1—Basin
- 2—A reparation
- 3—Above
- 4—Blunders
- 5—Foods
- 6—Cinderella lost it