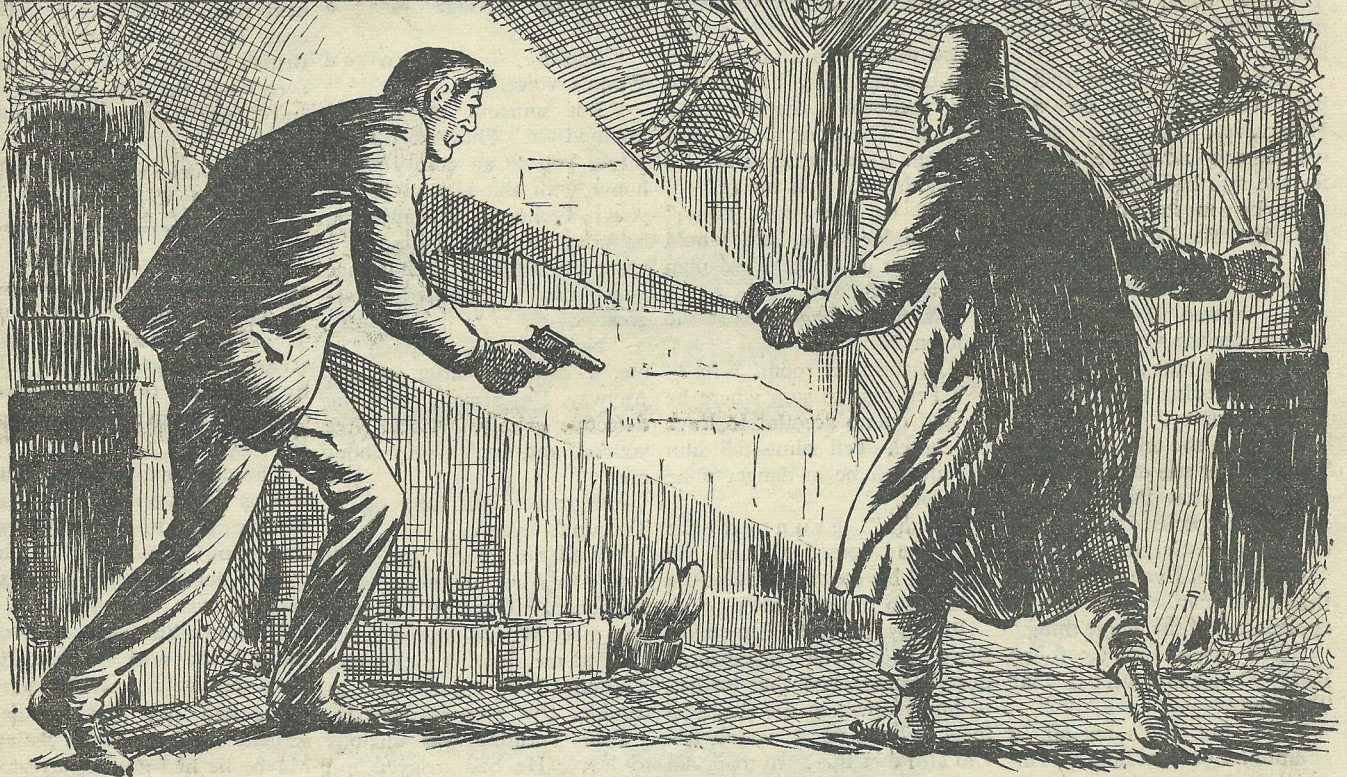


Terhune was looking for Detective Sergeant Woods who had solved the mystery of the Strangler—but the Strangler had made sure that Woods wouldn't talk!

THE UNSEEN STRANGLER



THE whole of the police force in Bristol had been warned to look out for a man called Larry Bailey, and Paul Terhune, the famous private detective, was now anxiously waiting for the result of the warning.

He believed that Bailey could throw some light on one of the most baffling cases he had ever investigated, in which more than six people had been murdered by an unknown criminal.

Several weeks earlier he had received a letter asking him to visit a house in Surrey. There, he had met for the first time, Max Hargreaves, an authority on Egyptian matters, and the writer of several books on that country.

Hargreaves had begged for personal protection, declaring that within the past month three attempts had been made on his life.

He had explained that he had been a member of the Fothergill Expedition to the Nubian Desert in 1962, when the Temple of Mempho had been discovered.

When the expedition had broken up, he had remained in Egypt. He had, however, received warning that the descendants of the ancient priests of Mempho meant to murder him, and he had fled to Britain.

Now, after three years, these attempts had been made on his life, and after each attempt he had received one of the Egyptian

death scarabs which had ten legs.

Paul Terhune had decided to interview Sir Andrew Fothergill, the head of the 1962 expedition, but when he reached Sir Andrew's house in the West End of London the following morning, he found that Sir Andrew had been strangled to death a few hours previously, although he had been sleeping in a locked room, with no opening more than two inches wide.

Neither Terhune nor his Scotland Yard friend, Detective-Sergeant Woods, had been able to find any clues.

Since then, two other members of the same expedition—Warren Demster, a wealthy stockbroker, and Keith Burton, a young adventurer—had been strangled in the same uncanny fashion, while several policemen and others who had barred the killer's way had also been murdered.

Larry Bailey, who had been Warren Demster's valet, was

the only other white member of the expedition, besides Hargreaves, who was still living.

He had fled for some unknown reason just before the killing of his employer, and the police had been unable to find him since he had been almost caught when attempting to book a passage to America from Bristol.

The owner of the lodging-house where Bailey had stayed for some days, was the latest victim. He had been found strangled in Bailey's room, and again the ex-valet had vanished.

It was in Bristol that Paul Terhune first got the idea that the killer might not be a human being at all, but some kind of animal or creature of unknown species.

What puzzled him was the kind of animal which had strength enough to crush a man's neck until the bones were actually broken.

He had passed a sleepless night thinking over this idea, and got in touch with Woods early the next morning, to ask if there was any news of Larry Bailey.

"None," growled the voice at the other end. "He seems to have disappeared right off the face of the earth. We're having

all ports and aerodromes watched. I'd give a lot to lay my hands on him."

Terhune outlined his new theory that it might not be a human being who had committed all these murders, but Woods was not impressed.

"Give me Bailey, and we'll have a good idea of how it was done," he said. "I'll see you at midday, Terhune, and give you my report. I'm going to spend the morning searching the docks. I've an idea that Bailey is still in Bristol."

Terhune spent the morning going over his notes, and trying to link up the various disconnected incidents which had occurred at the various murders.

One thing which was outstanding was the faint and eerie music which had been heard before several of the killings.

Terhune had heard it himself only the previous night, when his door had been opened and someone or something had entered his bedroom.

That music puzzled the detective more than anything else in the case, and he had a feeling it was of vital importance.

Another point was the faint, musty odour which he had detected on several of the victims. That might prove a clue to the identity of the killer,