

Trabato
The
Magician

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Franz Bardon

Frabato The Magician

About the Author

Franz Bardon was born on December 1, 1909, in Katherein, near Opava in the present-day Czech Republic. He died on July 10, 1958, in Brno, also in the Czech Republic. He attended public school in Opava, and after that apprenticed as a mechanic. His stage name was “Frabato,” which is an abbreviation of **Franz-Bardon-Troppau-Opava**.¹

The special nature of this work required serious consideration before I published it under the name of Franz Bardon; the importance of the subject matter finally decided the issue. To pay tribute to truth, I should not like to conceal from the reader the fact that, in actuality, Franz Bardon supplied only the framework of facts for this book. Being pressed for time, he left its entire completion and embellishment to his secretary, Otti Votavova. Unfortunately, Bardon’s posthumous manuscript was not ready for print, and therefore I had to revise it.

I would like to pass on some of the information which, according to Otti Votavova, she received directly from Franz Bardon. According to her, Adolf Hitler was a member of a 99 Lodge. Besides this, Hitler and some of his confidants were members of the Thule Order, which was simply the external instrument of a group of powerful Tibetan black magicians which used the members of the Thule Order for their own purposes. Hitler also employed a number of doubles on various occasions as camouflage.

¹ Troppau is the German name for the Czech city of Opava; because of the particulars of the region’s history, many locations in the present-day Czech Republic have both Czech and German names.

Franz Bardon was brought to the Nazis' attention through the negligence of his student and friend, Wilhelm Quintscher (Rah Omir Quintscher). Quintscher had not destroyed his correspondence with Bardon, although he had been asked by Bardon to do so; that is how the National Socialists became aware of him.

While they were being flogged, Quintscher lost his self-control. He uttered a Kabbalistic formula, whereupon the torturers were immediately paralyzed completely. When he later neutralized the effect of the formula, he was shot in revenge.

Franz Bardon was offered high positions in the Third Reich by Adolf Hitler, but only in exchange for his help in winning the war with his magical abilities. Furthermore, Franz Bardon was expected to reveal to Hitler the location of the other ninety-eight lodges throughout the world. When he refused to help, he was exposed to the cruelest torture. Among other things, they performed operations on him without anesthetizing him. They forged iron rings around his ankles and fixed heavy iron balls to them.

Franz Bardon shared the fate of his fellow prisoners in Nazi concentration camps for three and a half years. In 1945, shortly before the war ended, he was sentenced to death. However, before the sentence could be carried out the prison in which he was being held was bombed. He was rescued from the heavily damaged building by some Russian fellow prisoners and succeeded in hiding from the police in his native country until the end of the war. He then worked his way back to his home town.

After the war, Franz Bardon used his magical abilities to determine that Adolf Hitler had escaped abroad, and that he had undergone a number of surgical operations on his face so as not to be recognized.

The photographs of Hermes Trismegistos, Lao-tse, Mahum Tah-Ta and Shambalah presented in this volume were originally published in the book *Das Buch vom Buddha das Westens*, by Hans Albert Müller (*Verlag des Ordens der*

Weltvollendung, 1930). This fact became known to me only recently; the photos were first painted by a mediumistic artist from the magic mirror of Franz Bardon.

This is the end of Ottilie Votavova's recital of facts. In the many years of my acquaintance with her I was able to convince myself of her love of truth.

In his book *The Practice of Magical Evocation*, Franz Bardon has written in some detail concerning the fact that certain disadvantages must always be taken into account when any kind of pact is made. Anyone who has thoroughly studied the occult sciences will not find it difficult to judge lodges, orders, sects and groups. One should always be on one's utmost guard wherever money or oaths are demanded in exchange for spiritual instruction, and wherever the secrets are kept by the higher degrees and concealed from the lower ones.

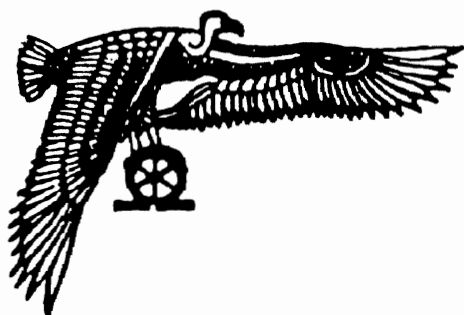
Evidence regarding the events related in this book will be reserved for people trained and developed in magic. Humankind will have to resign itself to the fact that a great deal of evidence concerning the workings of our cosmos can only be furnished through spiritual means.

Wuppertal, June 1979
Dieter Rüggeberg

Franz Bardon

Frabato The Magician

An Occult Novel



2002

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Chapter I

The overcrowded lecture room of the clubhouse was full of excitement, for the suspense aroused in the first part of the program had caused a heated discussion among the members of the audience.

“Who is this Frabato?”

“Here are the facts at last!”

“It is all just tricks and illusion!”

Could anyone trust his own senses? A mixture of delight and enthusiasm filled everyone’s mind.

The sound of a bell signaled the end of the intermission. The rows quickly filled again; all conversation subsided and, as the lights dimmed in the lecture hall, the curtain slowly rose.

The setting of the stage gave no impression whatsoever that a magician was about to begin his performance, for the usual paraphernalia of a magic show was nowhere to be seen. A large crystal chandelier illuminated the stage, in the center of which stood a round table covered with a dark-blue brocade tablecloth. Ten chairs had been placed behind the table in a semi-circle, while to the right of the table the audience could see a single armchair.

Frabato entered with an easy stride; he greeted the audience with a casual bow. Although his tuxedo added a serious tone, his friendly smile placed at ease those who would typically be quite terrified by the notion of magical experiments. As the applause subsided, Frabato addressed the audience:

“Ladies and gentlemen — having explained to you the fundamentals of suggestion and autosuggestion during the first part of the program, and having demonstrated those

principles, I would now like to move on to a different theme. Animal magnetism is of great importance to the very existence of humankind, and therefore I should not like to neglect the opportunity to introduce this power to you.

“Everything in this world is controlled by electric and magnetic forces. However, the ability of particular substances to accumulate and conduct such electrical and magnetic forces varies a great deal. This knowledge is of great importance when fashioning amulets — but we shall not go into detail about such matters at the moment. Instead, I will now explain the essence of magnetism and prove its existence with practical demonstrations.

“Animal magnetism is the most perfect element of life. It is the vital energy and the vital matter that forms the basis of all life on earth. This vital magnetism connects the earth with the zone which girdles the earth; this zone is often called the astral world or simply ‘the beyond.’ Vital magnetism also connects people to one another. A human being radiates an energy that is purely animal, and the power and purity of that energy are dependent upon the person’s will, his characteristics and his mental maturity. His health depends upon these three qualities in turn.

“This magnetism is especially strong in people who consciously train their spirits and souls, who possess self-control and who understand how to master their fates. Through this vital energy they are able to strengthen their thoughts and the impulses of their will, and consequently to perform extraordinary deeds.

“Since animal magnetism is an objective force, it may be used for both positive and negative purposes. The saying ‘As you sow, so shall you reap’ is an expression of karmic law and justice; therefore, the true magician pursues only positive goals. A trained magician can be very successful in healing people with vital magnetism, and therefore I have always had a great personal interest in this phenomenon.

“Through a number of demonstrations, I intend to show you other secret qualities and forces connected with animal magnetism. For this purpose, I ask that three people from the audience join me on stage.”

As Frabato waited, a murmur could be heard throughout the hall. Then, to encourage the audience, he said with a smile, “You need not be afraid. No one will be harmed. Just join me on the stage.”

An attractive blonde stood up and, with hesitation, approached the stage. “Just look,” Frabato said jokingly. “People always say that women are the weaker sex, but this lady has proved the contrary to all those gentlemen present in this hall.” The audience laughed and instantly a young man hurried on stage, followed by an elderly woman.

“I am very grateful to you for your help,” Frabato said to the volunteers. “Now, if you would be so kind, please place one of your personal belongings at my disposal for a short time on the table.”

The blonde woman was the first; she put her silver wrist watch on the table. The young gentleman, a somewhat easy-going character, set his wallet beside the wrist watch. After an encouraging smile from Frabato, the elderly woman removed her necklace and added it to the two objects already on the table.

“By way of introduction,” Frabato said, again addressing the audience, “I will now give you a brief demonstration of psychometry. This will prove to you that every human being leaves traces of his essence on those objects which have come into contact with his body. The age of the object is of no consequence. Even if an object were several thousand years old, everything imprinted upon it would be clearly revealed to my clairvoyant eyes. With the help of these three objects, I shall now prove to you the validity of this statement.”

Frabato approached the table, took the silver wrist watch, and walked slowly to and fro a few times, deeply absorbed

in thought. Suddenly he stopped, put the wrist watch to his forehead, and for a few moments remained completely still, a distant expression in his eyes. Then, as if awakening from a dream, he turned towards the blonde.

“You seem to seriously doubt my abilities, otherwise you would certainly not have come on stage with a watch that you borrowed from your sister. I am able to see that you wear it quite often without her knowledge since she works in Berlin. This watch was a confirmation gift from an aunt who died in an accident, and that is why your sister herself does not wear it anymore. It would certainly cause some ill feelings if she knew that you wear the watch.”

One could plainly see the embarrassment and shame reflected on the woman’s face, making it clear that Frabato was indeed correct.

Suddenly the young man tried to take his wallet from the table. Frabato was quicker than he and picked up the wallet, weighing it carefully.

“You do not seem to have a clear conscience, sir. Therefore, I will ascertain the cause.”

After studying the wallet closely for some seconds, he continued:

“You are still young — but you go a bit too far in deceiving two girls. The one whose photograph you carry in your wallet only began to favor you with her affections after you built imaginary castles in the air for her — she considers them real. Besides this, I see a love letter to another girl whom you met recently at some event, and who aroused your attention with her flirtatious behavior. Your private affairs are not my concern, but I can assure you that you will not be happy with either of the two ladies.”

The young man became quite embarrassed, realizing he had been exposed. With an obvious sense of insecurity, he said, “I should not like to live near you. I should not feel safe with my most intimate thoughts.”

Frabato put the wallet back on the table. Next, he picked up the necklace and let it glide through his fingers as if he were examining it.

"I could write a whole novel about this piece of jewelry," he said to its owner, "for it carries the imprint of both good and bad times. Its first owners were wealthy French aristocrats who went to the guillotine during the revolution. This necklace has brought each of its owners a certain measure of misfortune — after your husband was killed in the Great War, you had to live on a small military pension for a very long time. I see the necklace at the pawnbroker's twice, but you always managed to get it back."

Frabato was silent now, for the woman began to weep. The audience sat motionless after this heavy account of fate. Frabato put the necklace back on the table and again addressed the audience:

"Ladies and gentlemen, as I have just proven to you, every object carries its own history with it. Moreover, you have had an opportunity to convince yourselves of the various applications of clairvoyance."

Enthusiastic applause from the audience relieved the heightened tension. When all was quiet again, Frabato continued, "I should now like to ask the three volunteers to leave the hall, accompanied by two neutral observers."

A gentleman wearing glasses and a woman in a dark dress agreed to accompany the volunteers.

"To demonstrate to you the effects of magnetism in connection with will power, I shall now charge these objects with very particular effects which will occur immediately once someone touches them. I should like to hear from you what sort of effects you would like them to be. Please tell me which responses these three objects on the table ought to evoke upon the first person who touches them."

A gentleman in the middle of the hall suggested that the silver watch should cause loud laughter. Frabato agreed. The

second suggestion, too, was agreed upon by all: that the wallet should cause weeping and tears.

It remained to make a suggestion regarding the necklace. A woman in the first row spoke up:

“Since this necklace has brought misfortune to a number of people already, I suggest that it be prepared in a manner whereby the first person who touches it will be forced to throw it away in antipathy.”

Prolonged applause made further discussion unnecessary.

Frabato arranged the three objects on the table, leaving a well defined space between each. He stood completely motionless before each item and, with intense concentration, made a few gestures with his right hand over them. Then he addressed the audience again.

“Ladies and gentlemen, my work is done. In order that no one may claim that I work with hypnosis, I shall now go to the refreshment room. Two independent observers from the audience will accompany me there, and then bring back the volunteers, asking them to take their possessions. I will return to the stage in exactly ten minutes.”

Frabato left the hall accompanied by two gentlemen, who returned with the volunteers and their escorts shortly thereafter. Somewhat doubtful, the blonde woman, the young man and the elderly woman approached the table. The audience grew tense with anticipation.

Arriving on the stage, the volunteers were informed by the gentlemen accompanying them that they could now reclaim their possessions and return to their seats.

The blonde was in a hurry. With a quick motion she grasped her wrist watch and, in the next moment, broke into an infectious laugh which quickly spread throughout the entire audience.

As she walked back to her seat, the other two volunteers stood there hesitantly, somewhat astonished. Then the young man reached for his wallet. He had not finished putting it

back into his pocket before tears began to roll down his cheeks and, shaken by a sob, he hid his face in his hands. He recovered after a few moments and left the stage accompanied by applause.

Because of the strange things her fellow volunteers had just experienced, the elderly lady stood before her necklace completely at a loss. At last she reached out bravely for it, but then flung it immediately into a corner of the stage. As, still astonished by her own reaction, she accepted the return of the necklace from a helpful gentleman, cheers rang out from the audience.

As there was no one left on stage, the door to the hall opened and Frabato reappeared, welcomed enthusiastically by the audience. With a spring in his step he made his way to the stage, and said with a smile, "What a great atmosphere here! You seem to have enjoyed the performance. Now I would like to ask ten people who are afflicted with some kind of illness to come onto the stage."

Quite a number of spectators hurried to the stage. The ten chairs behind the table were quickly taken, and there were many who were forced to return to their seats.

Frabato went from one to the next, pausing before each person for a few seconds, and then, using the appropriate medical terminology, described each individual's illness. The afflicted showed surprise at his quick and correct diagnoses. He then addressed them:

"My dear visitors, I can see from your expressions that you have a great deal of confidence in me and that you expect a complete recovery, or at least relief, from your illness. With the help of my trained will power, I shall try to help everyone as much as possible. Although a complete cure may not be possible immediately for severe cases, I can at least promise everyone a noticeable relief. Please remain seated calmly and in a relaxed and comfortable position."

He requested silence from the audience, too, and sat down

on a chair so that everyone could see him clearly. Frabato closed his eyes, and in a few seconds seemed to have gone completely rigid. After a minute had passed, he opened his eyes again, jumped up from his chair, and asked his patients how they felt.

“Excellent! Wonderful! What a relief!” were the responses. The patients’ faces had brightened under the influence of increased vitality, and each of them expressed his personal thanks before leaving the stage.

“This is the end of today’s show,” Frabato announced. “However, I should not neglect to invite everyone to my next performance, which will take place the day after tomorrow. Good night to you all.”

He went to his dressing room while the applause continued. Shortly afterwards, he left the auditorium through a side door and took a taxi to his hotel. Arriving there, he ordered a refreshment and then locked the door to his room.

He had just completed the meditations he performed every night before going to bed when someone knocked on his door. The bellboy apologized for such a late disturbance, and informed him that a gentleman who urgently wanted to speak with him was waiting in the hotel lobby.

Thoughtfully, Frabato read the peculiar business card the bellboy had brought him. In the center of the card was a large circle; within this was a smaller circle, above which was a triangle with two intersecting lines. On either side of the large circle there were two dragons; on the back of the card there was only the name “Hermes.” The card was printed in gold.

After a short consideration, Frabato instructed the young man to escort the late visitor up to his room. A few moments later he welcomed a well-dressed gentleman with graying hair.

It was almost morning when the visitor left the hotel. His distraught face seemed to suggest that he had experienced something quite extraordinary.

Chapter II

The members of the secret F.O.G.C. Lodge, greatly feared in occult circles, had gathered for a general meeting in Dresden. The meeting hall was in a large villa, hidden in the midst of a private park behind a tall hedge and large trees. The Grand Master of the lodge had invited ninety-eight of the ninety-nine members to attend. Long before the meeting commenced, the members had taken their places at two long tables.

All conversation in the hall became muted when the Grand Master entered accompanied by his second-in-command, who also acted as Secretary. There was a platform opposite the hall's entrance where the Grand Master sat down behind a desk. He rang a bell and at once there was complete silence. He addressed the brethren of the lodge in an intense, penetrating voice:

“My dear brothers, I hereby open today's meeting, and I am pleased that you have all accepted my invitation. As you know, according to the laws of the lodge a general meeting such as this is only declared in very special cases. You may have already noticed that Brother Silesius is not present. Unfortunately, he has been found guilty of betraying lodge secrets and, as Point Number One of the agenda, we will discuss his sentence. Point Number Two concerns Frabato the Magician, who is becoming so well-known here in Dresden.

“My dear brothers, you all know that Brother Silesius has reached the twenty-fifth degree of initiation in our lodge, and therefore must have been fully aware of his offences. His excessive zeal seduced him to reveal to one of his friends the rituals we use to invoke the elemental beings. According to the laws of our lodge, the breaking of an oath and the

disclosure of secrets are punishable by death. However, the sentence will only become final after a secret vote by all members present. Although the person in question is my friend, I cannot excuse his behavior, and therefore I leave him to your judgment.”

A nervous tension swiftly overwhelmed the brotherhood; the members whispered excitedly among themselves. Some displayed anger, others sat as if paralyzed. The Secretary handed out envelopes with a blank piece of paper to everyone present. A simple “yes” or “no” would determine the life or death of their lodge brother. “Yes” would mean death by psychic assault, “no” would mean freedom and life.

Many wrote down their judgments quickly, others hesitated for a moment, and a few were unable even to control their trembling hands as they wrote down their verdicts. Despite the fact that Silesius had been well-liked by many of them, a false sense of compassion would be misplaced, for the betrayal of lodge secrets could be very dangerous for all concerned.

At last the Secretary collected all the envelopes in a small wooden box, took out the slips of paper, and divided them into two small piles according to the answers given. The brethren watched silently.

The Secretary counted the slips of paper very carefully and made a note of the result. His normally rosy face grew pale as he verified the result once again. He then submitted his note to the Grand Master, who stared at the numbers, his face reflecting shock — a good friend had just been sentenced to death. He rose, quite disturbed.

“My dear brothers,” he said in a trembling voice, “unfortunately the voting has gone against Silesius, who has been irrevocably sentenced to death by a margin of fifty-one to forty-seven. According to our laws, this sentence must be executed within a month, but since, by using his occult faculties, Brother Silesius will learn what is in store for him

and will probably try to evade death, we shall execute the sentence within twenty-four hours. The friend to whom he betrayed the secrets of the lodge will suffer the same fate. I ask the twenty-one brethren who are masters in telepathic combat to remain here after the meeting and assist me in the psychic attack.”

Although the verdict had deeply shaken the Grand Master, he quickly regained his composure and continued in a calmer voice.

“Since Point Number One of the agenda has been settled, let us now deal with the case of Frabato. Some of the brethren present attended his performances and were able to convince themselves of his abilities at close range. It has been proven that he works without the aid of conventional tricks. His experiments succeeded beyond all expectation; yes, they were even better than what many of our own brethren would be able to accomplish. Hermes, one of our more versatile brothers, paid a visit to Frabato in order to test him. He will now tell you of his experience.”

The distinguished gentleman who had visited Frabato late at night now rose from amongst the brethren.

“I chose the best astrological hour for my visit to Frabato. I also took into account the correspondences of the elements in order to place myself in a strong initial position. Besides this, I hoped he would be exhausted after the performance he had just given; that would have been to my advantage. I explained the unusual time of my visit by telling him I had a journey to make which could not be postponed. Upon hearing this, Frabato looked at me sharply and then smiled faintly without uttering a word.

“I then painted a very colorful picture of our lodge membership, pointed out its many advantages, and promised him a large sum of money from our funds should he decide to join. But Frabato completely ignored my proposals and started to talk about his journeys, his performances and

successes in many cities and towns. He was able to arouse my curiosity so strongly that I almost forgot the reason for my visit.

“In time I interrupted him and tried to direct his attention to my offer. He rose and pulled a suitcase out from under his bed saying, ‘Now let us have a look at what the Akashic records have to say about your lodge.’

“As you know, my dear brothers, I am well acquainted with occult methods and practices; therefore I was determined to use all my powers to prevent Frabato’s experiment. But as soon as the notion entered my mind, he said to me, as if by chance, ‘Dear Mr. Hermes, my experiments depend purely upon my will power and cannot be influenced or prevented by you. They will succeed whether you actively oppose them or not.’

“I felt that Frabato could see right through me, and surmised that I would have no chance against him, so I watched his preparations intently. First he cleaned his hands carefully, took a small bottle out of his suitcase, and applied a few drops to his hands. No doubt it was prepared from the essences of certain plants, for a pleasant fragrance permeated the room. He then took a small lamp out of a little box and put it on the table. Then, from a second box, he brought forth a glass ball about twenty centimeters in diameter and placed it on a stand on the table. When I asked him what purpose this glass ball served, Frabato laughed and replied, ‘If there were any clairvoyants in your lodge, and if they really possessed the knowledge which you attempt or pretend to have, then they would know that this is a magic mirror. This sphere contains a liquid, the particular composition of which requires not only patient work but excellent magical abilities as well.’

“I realized my knowledge was no match for Frabato’s, and therefore thought it better to wait in silence. We were about a meter away from the sphere. Frabato then lit the lamp

and switched off the electric lights, asking that I remain quiet under all circumstances. All the colors of the spectrum emanated from the reflecting light of the sphere. The little flame illuminated the sphere and the space around it, and also emitted a certain fragrance. I thought at once that the fuel of the lamp must be impregnated with a special essence, but I said nothing. However, Frabato read my mind and said, 'I can perceive your thoughts as clearly as if you were speaking them aloud, so just tell me if you have a question. Is the quick reading of thoughts not one of the exercises in your lodge?'

"I was enraged; but I tried to control myself, for I felt that nothing remained hidden from this man.

"I am going to show you a film, and then you can judge for yourself whether it is really advantageous to be a member of your lodge,' he continued.

"I watched each of his movements attentively, to be sure that he was not employing any tricks. He rolled up the sleeves of his shirt and sat down beside me in front of the sphere. Then he stretched both his hands towards the glass ball, his fingers slightly splayed. A grayish-white light escaped from the tips of his fingers and was absorbed by the sphere which, a few moments later, began to illuminate everything with a fluorescent ball of light the color of a fiery opal. Frabato then brought the transmission of light to an end and remarked that it would even be possible to photograph the images in this magic ball. I was by that time in some suspense as he said:

"Next we shall look behind the scenes of your esteemed Grand Master's life. This will offer you the opportunity to become acquainted with both the positive and negative aspects of his character. I hope you will be able to withstand what you see, and that you will not fall asleep.'

"Although my nerves were taut with curiosity, the wonderful light of the sphere seemed, in fact, to have already

had a tiring effect on me. I had no wish to appear foolish and, by gathering all my will power, I succeeded in staying awake for the entire demonstration.

“The opalescent light illuminated the entire room; however, it gradually began to vaporize inside the sphere. There were multi-colored clouds floating within, but they soon dissolved and were replaced by a violet hue. Then the image of our Grand Master condensed, as in a panorama. The pictures moved swiftly from his early childhood to the present day. Many of the events I saw shocked me; a shiver ran down my spine. The most incredible pictures were unveiled there, and I could not evade them for I was unable to move.”

The color of the Grand Master’s face changed a few times. When Hermes began to describe some of the more startling events of the Grand Master’s life as revealed to him in the magic mirror, the Grand Master discreetly gave him to understand that this was not desirable. Hermes understood, and skillfully moved on to more general topics.

“After I had been given the opportunity to follow in this magical manner the destiny of our Grand Master and that of our lodge up until the present, Frabato made a circle over the sphere with his right hand and, with his right forefinger, drew a figure which I did not recognize. The images disappeared.

“Somewhat relieved, I wanted to turn away from the sphere, when suddenly the shape of our Secretary condensed inside of it. His life, too, rolled off like a film in front of my eyes. Every crime of the lodge was revealed without mercy. In this manner, Frabato continued to disclose to me the lives of the seven eldest members of our lodge. When he wanted to show me my own life, I felt so ill at ease and ashamed that he refrained. After he had drawn another figure over the sphere and murmured a formula, the light finally faded.

“Frabato rose, switched on the electric light and extinguished the lamp. Silently, he replaced the sphere and the lamp in their boxes and locked everything away in the

suitcase. When he had finished, he asked me with a scornful air, 'Now, sir, do you still wish to recommend something like that to me?'

"I was completely confused by the magical power of the man, and hence incapable of uttering a word. I grabbed my hat and coat and hurried to the door without daring to make any comment. I did not even put my things on until I reached the corridor, and then I left the hotel in haste. My belief in the power of our lodge was strongly shaken, and I could find no rest that night."

The account of this experience with Frabato made a great impression on everyone present. No one dared to move; a dead quiet weighed upon them heavily. The Grand Master rose hurriedly and broke the depressive silence with a sharp voice.

"Dear brother Hermes, in the name of our brotherhood I thank you for your efforts during this difficult mission. I consider Frabato's revelations of the activities of our lodge, and of some of its highest and eldest members, a great insult. I swear by the name of the Lord of Darkness that we shall release all the furies of hell on Frabato, so that he will learn what he is dealing with! I shall not allow our lodge to be insulted! He shall be subjected to the fatal power of our vibrations until he perishes most miserably! May he be damned in the name of Satan, in the name of Ashtaroth, and in the name of Belial!"

The enraged Grand Master shouted his terrible curse; it was the most severe malediction he had ever been driven to utter in public. No victim could escape such a curse, or evade the persecutions of the Order.

After requesting that the twenty-one executioners of the lodge remain, he thanked the assembly for their co-operation and closed the session by ringing the bell. Some took their leave after giving the lodge's secret sign, then disappeared into the city traffic. Inconspicuous behavior was one of the

strictest rules of the lodge, and necessary in order not to arouse the attention of the general public or the curious.

The Grand Master took his seat again, a smile of contentment on his face. He felt instinctively that this Frabato was a powerful opponent, but there was no turning back after uttering his curse. This battle would have to be fought to the end, even if it endangered his own life. Under no circumstances could he allow his authority over the brethren to be lost or even undermined.

The remaining brethren discussed at length how Frabato could best be attacked. Many different suggestions were made and recorded in shorthand by the Secretary in order to be put to a vote at the next meeting.

The case of Brother Silesius was to be settled in the traditional manner, and thus it was not necessary to discuss the matter further. Upon a signal from the Grand Master, the Secretary left the hall and went into a room situated at the back of the house. This room, which had no windows and the doors of which were equipped with special safety locks, contained oddly-shaped cupboards in which various magical equipment was stored.

The black magician opened an iron trunk and removed a medium-sized coffin. Contained therein was the wax figure of a man. Then, from a safe in the wall, he took a large brown bottle sealed with a glass stopper. He placed the objects on a table in the middle of the room. With a pocket knife, he loosened a little plate from the skull-pan of the wax figure, revealing a small opening. A canal the width of a finger ran down the length of the figure's back.

The Secretary then unsealed and opened the brown bottle and carefully poured as much liquid into the opening of the figure as was necessary to fill it to the head. Then he covered the opening again with the plate and fastened it with liquid wax. He shaped and smoothed the wax, thus concealing any

trace of the opening. He closed the bottle and sealed it with the help of his signet ring.

There was a smooth circle on the figure's chest, in which the Secretary now wrote the victim's lodge name. He took a diary from the cupboard and, in the lodge's secret code, entered the day's date and the name of the man to be executed, then put it back in its place. Following this, he opened the drawer of a desk in which were daggers of various lengths, shapes, and strengths. From this collection he selected a dagger which was small and sharp. After ascertaining that he had not forgotten anything, he placed both the wax figure and the dagger in the coffin, then left the room.

With the coffin under his arm, the Secretary carefully locked the door and went back to the assembly hall. The Grand Master took the coffin. He made certain the figure had been correctly prepared, then placed the coffin upright on the floor. Three large candles were lit, and the electric lights were turned off.

The twenty-one executioners now formed a circle around the figure, the Grand Master remaining outside the ring to function as an observer. The brethren joined hands and walked slowly around the figure seven times, staring at it intently without interruption. They began to breathe rhythmically in unison, raising and lowering their arms. Each time they exhaled and lowered their arms, they repeated a formula, louder and louder each time.

The entire ceremony was repeated and the pace quickened. Patches of fog were beginning to form around the figure, condensing into clouds, and eventually solidifying to a spherical shape which completely engulfed the wax figure. The grayish color which had been visible at the beginning now turned to red. Dark figures seemed to be condensing therein, and, after a few moments, the cloud formation took on a fiery red color. The Grand Master approached it, making a sign in the air with his right hand. Then he broke the chain

formed by the brethren. Slowly, the red cloud disappeared into the wax figure. The exhausted brethren sat down at the table.

The Grand Master seized the figure and placed it in the open coffin. Solemnly, he lit the candles in the candlestick holders which stood at either end of the casket. There was complete silence in the hall. The twenty-one brothers were rigid with suspense; they dared not move.

The Grand Master's face froze into a mask. His eyes were cold and fixed as he reached for the waiting dagger. His hand rose slowly, his eyes riveted upon their object — the circle with the victim's name. Then the blade flashed in the candle-light and pierced the figure's chest. A crash of thunder shook the hall to its foundations; an enormous roar filled the air, as though a storm were about to erupt. This lasted for a few moments, then faded gradually to a distant rumble and finally subsided altogether, giving way to an uncanny stillness.

The Grand Master's face mirrored triumph, for he felt that he was master over life and death. Relieved, he let himself fall back into a nearby chair.

Although all those present were familiar with such phenomena, they were nevertheless stricken with terror every time they performed rituals of this kind. The Secretary was the first to recover. He switched on the light, extinguished the candles, and removed the coffin.

The other brethren also regained their composure. The phenomenon they had experienced was proof that the purpose of their efforts had been achieved. They talked quietly among themselves as their Master entered the particulars of the magical operation in the diary. He then rose and addressed them.

"My dear brothers, I thank you all for your successful participation. Our Brother Silesius died of a heart attack at precisely 10:00 P.M. We have executed the sentence in accordance with the regulations of our holy order, and have

thus taken revenge for the treason he committed. His friend has been sentenced to death as well, but his execution will take place at a later date. We shall discuss the reasons for this at our next meeting. The admission of a new member to replace Brother Silesius can be combined with the St. John's Day meeting. I expect to see you here tomorrow evening at eight o'clock. The case of Frabato is on the agenda. Today's session is now closed. Good night."

One after the other, the brethren left the lodge and disappeared inconspicuously into the night.

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The minute hand on the large electric clock in the railroad station was slowly moving towards 10:00. In the station concourse a number of travelers were waiting for the express train from Bad Schandau to Berlin. A voice on the loud-speaker announced the train's arrival, and those who were waiting went up to the platform quickly, for the train would stop in Dresden for only a few minutes.

Frabato was standing in front of the list of train schedules, making a few notes. Just as the express train arrived, he put his notebook back in his pocket. A compartment door opened directly in front of him and a young man in a traveling suit jumped out and hurried to the refreshment stand. He paid for a packet of biscuits and was on his way back to the train when, after a few steps, he suddenly reached for his chest with both hands and collapsed with a groan. He writhed in pain for just a few seconds, his face contorted in a spasm; then his body lay motionless.

Curious onlookers immediately gathered around him. The police arrived quickly and took the lifeless body to the station office. Someone called a doctor on the telephone and the eyewitnesses gave their statements.

Standing nearby, Frabato silently watched the course of

events. He knew instinctively that the unknown man had not died a natural death, and, as a magician, he knew as well that it was too late for help. Slowly, he left the station and walked towards the Leipzigerstrasse. After a stroll of about an hour he stopped in a little grove on the outskirts of the city and sat down to rest.

The night was wonderfully mild and the moon and stars were shining from a clear sky. Absorbed in meditation, he stayed there a while before starting to walk back to his hotel. He stopped a taxi near the Elbe harbor and got a ride the rest of the way.

It was two o'clock in the morning when he entered his room. He locked the door, pulled out his suitcase and set up his magic sphere. What he saw there confirmed his suspicion that the young man's death had been caused by a violent action on the part of the F.O.G.C. Lodge. Frabato locked the ball away in the suitcase and retired for the night.

Next morning he bought a copy of Dresden's largest daily newspaper and found what he was looking for on the front page. The following account was given under the headline "Death At Dresden Central Station":

"The popular author Dr. Alfred M. died suddenly at Central Station at ten o'clock last night. Our city mourns the sudden end of this young and promising talent whose works have been greeted with so much enthusiasm. His latest drama, *The Testament*, has only recently been printed. We shall keep this ambitious and talented man in our hearts in loyal remembrance."

Chapter III

As agreed upon, the twenty-one specialists in the art of psychic attack met with the Grand Master of the F.O.G.C. Lodge once again. First they dealt with the issue of Director Z., the president of a large bank who had received some important secrets of the twenty-eight degrees of the Lodge from Silesius. Since the director was not a member, he either had to become one or else forfeit his life. But his personality did not seem to fit in with the lodge, and consequently he was sentenced to death. As president of a large financial institution, Z. commanded a great deal of authority — hence it was decided that he should first be used as an instrument to procure large sums of money.

The lodge consisted primarily of powerful capitalists who had amassed their considerable possessions and wealth through occult means — which also allowed them to access major sources of capital even during hard times. They were prepared to employ any means to achieve their goals. A man's life meant little to them, and they were proficient at exploiting the legal machinery of the land for their own purposes. Their complex methods, training, and experience enabled them to carry on their criminal trade right under the public's nose without arousing any suspicion. Their work was facilitated by the fact that the German public paid no attention to research in the field of mental laws and powers.

The lodge gave public performances on the subject of occultism which were intended to convince the public that it was all just tricks and deception — for they knew full well that a general knowledge of occult philosophy would create a new social order that could greatly hinder their own goals. Besides this, their performances also functioned as a hedge against the

possibility that they might be recognized by genuine, high-minded occultists who, if believed, might expose them to the world.

The work accomplished by Frabato, who was able so convincingly to demonstrate the existence of spiritual laws and powers, naturally aroused their hostility. If he had simply been one of the many pseudo-occultists who were then so popular, the lodge would have had no reason to intervene. The Grand Master in particular was full of hatred for Frabato, whom he could not forgive for revealing his own past to Brother Hermes. Therefore, the lodge members decided to use every means possible to prevent Frabato from continuing his lectures.

First, however, they made the necessary preparations for the death of Director Z. The Secretary went to the basement apartment to fetch Elli, the caretaker's daughter, who acted as their clairvoyant medium in various experiments. The girl lived there with her father, her mother having died several years before. Elli was eighteen and slender, with wavy brown hair and dark blue eyes. Although she did not like being a medium, she dared not refuse, for that would have cost her father his job.

After a few minutes, Elli appeared in the conference room accompanied by the Secretary. A signal was given and a sofa was placed in the center of the room, draped with a white silk cover. A second silk cover was kept ready nearby in case it became necessary to insulate the medium during the experiment.

The Grand Master gave the signal to begin the operation. Elli lay down on the sofa and the Secretary sat beside her on a chair. He looked into her eyes with a penetrating stare and whispered a few powerful suggestions. Within a few minutes Elli was in the first stages of hypnosis; with a number of magnetic strokes the magician succeeded in placing her into

the deepest possible state. A few more strokes over her throat enabled her to speak during hypnosis.

Elli was so well trained in hypnotic states that she was able to carry out any command without difficulty. First she was ordered to find out, through a mental visit, what Frabato was doing at that very moment; she immediately reported that he was performing magical experiments on a stage. The Secretary hurriedly called her spirit back, afraid that Frabato would notice her and thus become aware of their present activities.

Elli was then ordered to report on the activities of Director Z. She responded at once that he was home reading the newspaper. Asked about other members of the director's family, the medium answered that there was no one else in the house.

Armed with this knowledge, the Grand Master made a sign and the brethren formed a circle around Elli and the Secretary. They charged the medium with magnetic fluid and, when the magnetic tension became strong enough, ordered her to make the director sleep and then to watch him constantly.

Through the medium's influence, Z. was seized by an overwhelming need for slumber. He had scarcely placed his head on the pillow before he fell fast asleep. Elli then did as she had been asked and informed the lodge members of the director's condition; she was then ordered to maintain contact with him. Through this magical assault, Z. had become a powerless instrument of the lodge.

The Secretary now engraved Z.'s name into a small wax disc prepared for that purpose. He placed it on the medium's solar plexus, thus forming a close spiritual connection with the victim. Next, the disc was placed on the girl's forehead for a few minutes in order to make the director's spirit susceptible to receiving orders by long-distance hypnosis. The Secretary touched the medium's ears and heart with the disc and then set it aside.

The circle formed by the brethren opened for a moment, the sofa with the medium on it was pushed aside, and the Grand Master now seated himself in the center of the ring. Next, the small wax disc was heated slightly, and then molded into the shape of a shell. Chanting a magic formula over and over again, the Grand Master placed himself in a state of trance so as to establish better psychic contact with the receiver, while he himself received the power to transmit energy from the circle formed by his brethren. In a voice filled with the power of suggestion he spoke into the small wax shell:

“A young man will come to your office tomorrow morning, promptly at 11:45. He will be wearing a dark suit and a red tie. This man will request a loan of a million marks for a building project in Switzerland. Being unable to resist, you will comply with his request. After he has stroked his forehead with his right hand three times, you will draw him a check for one million marks. Immediately after giving him the check, you will become irresistibly weary and fall asleep for exactly five minutes. When you awaken again, you will have forgotten everything that happened during the preceding hour. On no account will you be able to remember what the young man looked like. Every detail of the incident will have disappeared from your memory. From that moment on, you will begin to feel ill; you will even look sick, and you will be haunted with bad nerves. Your thoughts will be completely disordered for hours at a time, and you will become increasingly tired and depressed with each new day. You will get annoyed at every little thing and, consequently, you will find no rest. Nothing in this world will bring you joy. Finally, everyone who comes near you will find you unbearable, and after exactly fourteen days you will shoot yourself with your revolver.”

Director Z. was regarded as a man of honor, well-known for his expertise in his field. Once, in London, he had been

robbed; since then he had become very cautious and always kept a pistol ready at his bedside.

After the Grand Master concluded his hypnotic suggestions, he stared at the wax shell for a few more minutes, made a ritual sign, and wrapped the shell in a violet-colored silk cloth which the Secretary had given him.

The brethren's magic circle dissolved and they took their seats in the middle of the room. The sofa with the medium still in trance upon it was rolled back to the center of the room. The Secretary called her spirit back from the director's house and sent it to Frabato.

Frabato had by this time finished his performance and was visiting a good friend. The medium gave the brethren the exact address, and reported that the friend's family had already gone to bed and that the two men were talking about occult problems. Their talk was so lively that Frabato did not notice Elli watching him.

Having received this information, the Secretary called back the medium's spirit and, with a few magnetic strokes and the corresponding formula, brought Elli back to consciousness. She had no idea what she had achieved for the lodge — it was the extra income that appealed to her, although she found the peculiar circumstances of these meetings, on the whole, uncanny. The Secretary gently led her out of the room and gave her a few banknotes as a reward.

One of the secrets of the F.O.G.C. lodge members lay in their ability to put anyone to sleep, wake him up again, make him sick or healthy, and invigorate or kill him whenever they liked. The leading members of the lodge, however, had only acquired this knowledge by entering into a pact with a prince of demons. With their magical methods, they were able to influence any untrained person, who had no way of discovering the source of the influences at work upon him.

Frabato was a special case for the lodge, because he was acquainted with occult practices of every kind and, in addition

to this, he was under the protection of the Brothers of Light. The F.O.G.C. Lodge knew about the Brothers of Light, but had no clear idea concerning the genuine extent of their powers. They decided to dispose of Frabato with a magical onslaught. After a short discussion, the Secretary went to the equipment room for the piece of apparatus they called the tepaphone. This device was placed in the center of the room. It was the lodge's most strictly guarded secret: a magical vibratory instrument which could emit fatal vibrations across any distance and constituted the deadliest weapon in the arsenal of the lodge.

If the picture or *mumia*² of any human being or animal were placed at the focal point of the tepaphone's vibrations, both the astral and physical bodies of that entity would be affected. Substances of any kind could be destroyed by this instrument from any distance. Furthermore, it served as a wireless transmitter of energy — something modern science could only dream about. Any kind of thought could be transmitted by the tepaphone as well. Finally, the device made it possible to cause nervous diseases and poisonings which puzzled the medical establishment. Typically, a picture or personal object was sufficient to establish contact with the intended victim — and remember, distance was of no consequence.

Since Frabato was a well-known personality, his picture was published in the newspapers from time to time, and it was easy for the F.O.G.C. Lodge to obtain a photograph for their purpose. The Grand Master now secured Frabato's photo to the focal point of the tepaphone's ray and ignited the fuel, a specially prepared mixture of high-percentage alcohol. At the same time, the other brethren formed a magic circle

² Any part of a person's body, such as nails, hair, bodily fluids, etc.

around the apparatus to begin combat telepathy by condensing the element of fire to the physical plane.

Black magicians usually resorted to this method of annihilation in cases where the victim possessed great occult abilities. The tepaphone was also frequently used for executions within the lodge. Thus far, the apparatus had never failed. Victims of the tepaphone were always diagnosed as having died from a stroke.

Frabato was still with his friend and their lively conversation continued. Both were so absorbed in their discussion that at first they did not notice the attack waged by the F.O.G.C. Lodge. Only when Frabato broke into a sudden excess of perspiration did he notice the extraordinary conditions around him. He walked up and down the room restlessly, seeking the cause of this unusual heat. He had never experienced anything like it before. The temperature in the room began to rise, affecting his friend as well.

Frabato quickly ascertained that the cause of the heat was not in his own physical body. His wrist watch and his ring burnt like fire on his skin. There was no doubt that some alien power was attempting to destroy him. He wanted to confront and fight this power, but the heat had already penetrated his body so severely that he was no longer able to concentrate. He sank helplessly into a chair.

His friend too was powerless against the projected force. What could one do in a case like this? To seek medical help would be senseless; what could doctors do against magical attacks?

The blood was almost boiling in Frabato's veins and, although he tried to resist, he could not effectively influence his body with his spirit. Desperate, Frabato called upon God for help and inspiration. He was convinced that, if he were not destined to end his incarnation this very hour, he would gain the help he needed.

Frabato's friend tried to magnetize him but had to retreat

because the extreme heat in the room had become almost unbearable. Suddenly, Frabato heard a voice within him calling, "Divert with water!"

He opened his lips and whispered, "Water! Plenty of water!"

His friend hurried out of the room, got a bucket and filled it with water. He quickly brought it back to Frabato, who listlessly dropped his left hand into it. Instantly he was relieved, and after a few minutes the clarity and power of his thoughts were restored.

The water was getting warmer and warmer; the friend had to get another bucket. The heat was thus conducted into the water for a long time, for the attack by the lodge continued unabated. But as the destructive vibrations were now passing through his body without any effect, Frabato soon felt strong enough to employ his clairvoyance. Spiritually, he pursued the destructive rays and discovered that they had their origin in the F.O.G.C. Lodge.

"You will regret having attacked me in this way," he thought. "As far as spiritual law permits, I shall work to defeat all your future plans."

As the tepaphone continued to emit its vibrations, Frabato continued to divert them into the water. Clairvoyantly, he observed without interruption the lodge's meeting until, after another hour, they broke their magic circle, removed his photo from the focal point, and extinguished the flame. He then watched as the Secretary locked the dangerous weapon back in the equipment room.

Afterwards, the lodge brethren talked among themselves for a short while, expressing their satisfaction that Frabato would no longer be able to do them any harm. They were already looking forward to the reports in the following day's newspapers informing the public of the well-known magician's sudden death and the cancellation of his performances. Another meeting was arranged for the next evening

to celebrate the victory over their hated enemy. Then the sinister brotherhood disbanded for the day.

At that moment Frabato ended his observations. Since he had no acquaintances at his hotel, he accepted his friend's invitation to stay the night. Before retiring for the evening, though, he asked for a long piece of copper or iron wire and a sharp kitchen knife. His friend complied with Frabato's strange request; Frabato pulled the wire round his bed, connected both ends to the knife, and thrust it into the floor. Concentrating intently for a short while, he charged the wire with the power of protection in all three worlds. By so doing, he insulated himself securely against any injurious spiritual influences.

Then he went to bed. Frabato thanked God for his wonderful rescue and was soon sound asleep.

Chapter IV

The Grand Master of the F.O.G.C. Lodge sat in an elegant café on Pragerstrasse drinking a cup of coffee and perusing the pages of the Dresden papers.

“No notice of Frabato’s death? It cannot be true! The tepaphone has never failed. Why else did we make a pact with the Prince of Demons?”

These were the thoughts that pounded through his mind.

Rage and disappointment strained his nerves. The brethren of the lodge wanted to celebrate their success that evening — and now this disgrace! Such a failure would no doubt shake some members’ confidence in the power of the lodge. And above all, the Grand Master also realized that his own authority was greatly endangered.

He called to cancel the meeting for that evening and went to the lodge alone. As soon as he arrived, he went to a temple room used only for special magical operations carried out by the Grand Master himself.

The room had a single window that could be blacked out with a curtain. Near the east wall, a tetragonal column ornamented with magical signs served as an altar; the magical equipment had already been placed there. Above was a picture of Baphomet, the supreme god of black magicians. The walls were covered with dark-blue velvet. A large chandelier hung from the center of the light-blue ceiling. On the altar was a small magic lamp of the type called *lanterna magica* by occultists, shining with the seven colors of the rainbow and symbolizing an alliance with the spheres of the seven planets. In each corner of the room there were two very large candles in magnificent silver candlesticks. Although the

room could be lit by electricity, only candles or spirit lamps were used for magical operations.

The Grand Master removed a dark-blue silk coat and a head scarf of the same color from a wardrobe. He closed the door to the temple, undressed, and put on the silk coat and scarf. The part of the scarf which covered his forehead was ornamented with an inverted pentagram embroidered in silver. A pair of violet silk slippers adorned his feet.

He opened a wall safe and took out an enormous white cover which he placed on the floor. The cover was embroidered with a multi-colored magical circle shaped like a snake whose back was ornamented with various names. There was a triangle just above the embroidered magic circle; it pointed upwards and there were letters at its corners. The center of the circle contained an inverted pentagram, embroidered in reddish-purple. Each corner of the pentagram was ornamented with a letter; taken altogether, they spelled out the word "Satan."

The Grand Master placed a dish of incense above the triangle and five flat candles round the circle. Then he carefully examined each piece of magical equipment again, for nothing must be forgotten during the invocations he intended to perform. Despite the protection he had acquired through his demonic pact, the least inattention could have severe consequences.

After adding incense powder, he lit the charcoal in the censer and a strong odor filled the room. Then he lit the candles and switched off the electric lights. The curtains kept out the daylight.

The Grand Master stepped majestically into the magic circle. His left hand gripped his magic sword, his right hand

his magic wand. From his neck hung a *lamen*³ engraved with the seal of the being he was about to invoke. Facing east, he recited the invocation formula with fervor:

“I am linked to you, salamanders and fire spirits of Hell. Your element is subject to me in all three worlds. I call upon you and invoke you, prince of the hellish fire spirits! I invoke you in the name of Satan, your holy master, who is your lord and ruler! As an ally of your master, I order you in his name to succumb to my will and to support my purposes through your element. I bind you to my magic sword and force you to absolute obedience. I demand from you that your fierce fire spirits be subjected to my will and that they assist me with my plans at whatsoever time. In the name of your highest lord and ruler, with whom I am joined by pact, I command you to persecute and destroy Frabato. Prince of the fire spirits of Hell! Appear here now, visibly before my circle, to confirm the reception of my orders!”

After the Grand Master had passionately recited this invocation, the flames of the candles rose high and the floor began to vibrate. A brightly shining ray appeared in the magic triangle and a shrill voice was heard:

“I have heard your request, great magician! We must serve you, for our most supreme lord is obligated to you. Therefore my subjects and I shall persecute Frabato wherever the influence of our element makes it possible. However, I cannot guarantee full success — because Frabato must fulfill a special mission on earth. His fate is not that of ordinary mortals!”

The shape of the being had become increasingly visible, and tongues of fire were dancing round it. An unbearable heat emanated from the apparition, whose power was so piercing

³ For a detailed description of *lamens*, see Bardon’s *Practice of Magical Evocation*, p. 66-9.

that the Grand Master himself felt he was in danger. He lifted his sword and directed its tip towards the entity. The fire-being vanished with the crackling of a thunderbolt, causing the ground beneath his feet to vibrate.

After resting and concentrating quietly for a few moments, the black magician faced south:

“You, forces of the element of air! My whole being is now in contact with your element. King of the demonic beings of the air, heed my call and obey my will. As an ally of your highest lord, I invoke you in his name! You and your hurricane-spirits that pass through the atmosphere at tremendous speeds must obey my orders. I invoke you, king of the demonic spirits of the air! Appear visibly here before my circle and confirm the reception of my request. Do not hesitate, for if you do, I will torture and torment you in your master’s name! King of the air, appear before me now!”

Amidst ear-splitting howls, an air spirit became visible in the magic triangle.

“You earthworm! If you were not our most supreme lord’s ally, I would tear you to pieces with my element. You dare threaten me in such a manner? It is only due to your pact that I owe you my obedience. Now, express your request!”

“I demand the destruction of Frabato,” the Grand Master called out authoritatively. “Your spirits of the air shall persecute him continuously and thwart his every deed. Make him a powerless weakling.”

“I will do what is within my power, but I cannot promise success, for the Brothers of Light are behind Frabato,” the king of the air replied scornfully — and then he too disappeared.

The mention of Frabato’s special position, his power and the source of his protection, caused hatred and rage to surge anew in the Grand Master’s soul. In such a mood he turned westward:

“Forces of water, I conjure you! Listen to my demand, beings of the watery element! Mighty demon prince of the waters, I invoke you. I am linked with your element and I speak your language. I call you in the name of Satan, your lord. I, the ally of your ruler, must be obeyed at once; ascend from the roaring ocean and appear visibly here before my circle to confirm the reception of my requests. Do not refuse to come or I shall persecute you in your infernal ruler’s name with the element of fire! Prince of the waters, appear to me!”

With an immense roar, a peculiar being, half human and half fish, materialized in the magic triangle and addressed the magician in a hoarse voice:

“You have called me from my element, even though you know that I detest large cities. If you were not my master’s ally I would have you plagued by my element because of your threats. Now, tell me what you want and do it quickly!”

Seething with anger and hate, the Grand Master cried out, “I have not called you from the depths of the sea without reason. In the name of your lord and master, I demand the persecution and destruction of Frabato. He is the first to resist our lodge, and therefore I want him exterminated!”

“I will try to fulfill your wish. What is in my power will be done, but success cannot be guaranteed. Much will depend on whether we can seize Frabato in a weak hour.”

The magician dismissed the being with his magic wand; it vanished.

He was enraged that the princes of the elements had not promised him full success; he began to realize the great difficulties that were to come. In order to complete his magic square, he had to invoke the prince of the earth element as well. He faced north.

“Mighty prince of the hellish element of earth, your master’s ally is calling you in his name. In the name of Satan, leave the underworld and appear visibly before my circle and confirm to me that you have received my request. Obey my

commands immediately, otherwise I will torment you in the name of your master. Prince of the earth, appear to me now!"

The ground beneath the Grand Master's feet quaked and, with a crashing roar, a small man with gray hair and a long chin appeared in the magic triangle. His large, dark, deep-set eyes flashed at the black magician. In his right hand he held a lantern which emitted a light that was strangely dim and yet intense. The earth spirit stared at the magician with a penetrating look and said:

"Reluctantly I have left my realm to obey your will. According to the spiritual laws and by virtue of your pact I owe you obedience until you die. What is your wish?"

The deep voice and the powerfully icy stare of the being caused a cold shudder to run down the magician's spine. It suddenly occurred to him that at his death he would become a servant to this creature.

The prince of gnomes waited quietly in the magic triangle. He could read the magician's thoughts and feelings quite easily, and it seemed to fill him with great pleasure that this power-mad man would be his subject in the future.

Though almost paralyzed, the Grand Master composed himself, saying, "I know what is in store for me; but in the present I cannot remain inactive and watch an outsider celebrate his success and ridicule our lodge. I therefore demand that you persecute and destroy Frabato with all your powers. Pull him down into the depths of your realm and surround him with a veil of darkness so that he cannot escape. This is my will! The extermination of Frabato will serve the image of your master and our brotherhood."

"I will do what is in my power," answered the spirit of earth softly, "but I cannot guarantee full success in the case of a man like Frabato."

The earth spirit disappeared and the entire building suddenly became as silent as a graveyard. The invocation of the elemental beings had so exhausted the Grand Master that

he stood in the magic circle as if physically beaten. He was breathing heavily and an emptiness pervaded his mind. He saw the demon spirit which served him every day standing in a corner of the room. This entity had been at his side for many years, helping him fulfill his wishes; he had become completely dependent upon the creature. He was aware that he no longer had the power to loosen himself from his chains; the spiritual laws gave him no chance to annul his pact with the rulers of demonic powers. The power which he had gained through his pact would not last forever, and, just as he was a master today, he would be a slave tomorrow. He had been unable to satisfy his lust for material power and wealth with his occult abilities; therefore he had succumbed to the temptation of a magical pact. A feeling of dependency weighed upon him like a nightmare in this very hour; he suffered hellish torments he had never before experienced in his life. His hatred for Frabato was immense, though, and it was fueled by the failure of the princes of the four elements to guarantee him success.

The question, "What powerful authority is behind this Frabato?" hammered in his mind. "I want him destroyed even if I have to risk my own life!"

Driven by these thoughts, the Grand Master decided to invoke the master of demonic powers himself, and ask him to fulfill his wish. The black magician laid his sword upon the floor inside the circle and placed his left foot upon it. He raised the magic wand with his right hand and drew the seal of darkness in the air, the agreed-upon sign which would invoke the very master of demons.

He had scarcely completed the seal when a glaring ray ascended from the ground and illumined the entire room. The Grand Master stood there as if struck by lightning and struggled to retain consciousness, for the room had been filled with a deadly paralyzing vibration. No ordinary mortal would

have been able to survive this terrible energy, and only the Grand Master's pact saved him from instant annihilation.

A very peculiar figure slowly condensed in the triangle, sporting the horned head of a he-goat and a hairy human body with breasts. Its hands had freakish, talon-like fingers, and its feet were like the hooves of a bull. A long, thick tail completed the figure.

After the apparition became completely visible, the ray of light disappeared into the ground. Only rarely had the magician seen this spirit, for this was Baphomet himself, the master of demons!

Baphomet spoke sneeringly to the trembling Grand Master:

"Well, great magician, I know of your wish to destroy Frabato. It is a good idea and I will support it with all my power. However, it will not be easy, for this Frabato is a man with a special spiritual mission. This is why our proven methods have failed thus far. If you insist on your request, we face a difficult task. Perhaps you should spend the rest of your days enjoying other pleasures in life."

A battle raged between the Grand Master's conscience, his fear, and his hate. In the end his hatred was victorious and in a blind rage he mumbled, "What have I made this pact for? You are obligated to assist me until the end of my life. You may triumph over me after my death, but now I demand your assistance in the extermination of Frabato. I shall have no pleasure in life otherwise. May he be eternally damned!"

After the magician had uttered his curse, the uncanny visitor vanished into the ground without replying. The paralyzing tension dissolved at once. Completely exhausted, the Grand Master uttered the dismissal formula for all the beings he had invoked, whilst adding a few protective formulas just to be sure. He hurriedly locked all the magical aids in their respective cabinets and left the temple.

He fell onto a sofa in an adjacent room, unable for some

time to formulate a clear thought. After a cup of strong coffee he felt somewhat revived, but he was unable to cast off the dramatic events of the day.

The sun was shining brightly in the blue sky, but the Grand Master was sullen as he left the lodge and hastily made his way home.

Chapter V

On the evening of that same day, the lecture room of the Eccentric Club was sold out. Frabato was giving a private seance for reporters and scientists, and only invited guests were permitted. There were, however, some F.O.G.C. members among those present, for the lodge had its representatives among every social class.

When the session was over, the reporters surrounded Frabato, plaguing him with questions. After their first onslaught, and when their curiosity had been sufficiently satisfied, Frabato withdrew into a separate room for further discussion with a smaller group. When the subject of hypnosis was raised, Frabato explained with regret that he would henceforth be unable to perform hypnotic demonstrations upon members of his audience. A police inspector had informed him of a new law regarding hypnosis; Frabato had promised to obey it.

The new law caused a sudden stirring in the group. A reporter shouted to Frabato, "I will wager five hundred marks that you will not dare to carry out a demonstration of hypnosis in your next performance!"

Frabato felt cornered. It was not his practice to transgress against civil law. On the other hand, it was beneath his dignity to allow himself to be called a coward — especially as he had been strongly harassed by the devotees of sensationalism. Confident that some saving idea would occur to him, he accepted the wager.

He left the club soon afterwards and drove back to the hotel in his car.

Next morning, he reflected once more on the events of the previous day. He became suspicious that the wager was

in fact an attempt at entrapment by the F.O.G.C. Lodge. Suddenly, he had a good idea how to evade the trap without losing the wager.

He dressed quickly and went for a walk, perfecting each detail of his plan. After breakfast he posted his mail and then drove into the city.

He entered a large music shop on Wilhelmstrasse and asked a saleswoman whether it were possible to record his voice and then take the disc with him immediately thereafter. The woman said yes and took Frabato to the studio.

Frabato did not leave the music shop till afternoon. Heavily laden with a number of records, he merrily made his way back to the hotel.

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The grand hall in the art gallery was lively. Reporters from the Dresden papers were anxious not to miss the evening. A steady stream of people pushed its way into the already crowded hall to witness the demonstrations of the mysterious Frabato.

Smiling, Frabato appeared on the stage. After the welcoming applause had subsided, he addressed the audience:

“Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for such a warm welcome, and for your great interest in my performances. In one of my former lectures I pointed out that there are many things between heaven and earth which ordinary mortals cannot easily understand or master. I was permitted to present you with evidence of the power of magnetism, the influence of the human will over any distance, and of clairvoyance and telepathy.

“As in previous performances, I would like to ask you once again to assist me in my demonstrations. To begin with, I want to introduce you to the world of the departed, and to show you that man’s existence does not end with what we

call death; on the contrary, true life begins. Life in the physical body is to be regarded as a sort of preparation for this.

“I will refrain from turning tables and the like, as these are the methods traditionally employed by charlatans. I do hope to provide you with a more impressive show by calling some of the spirits of the dead to this stage.”

A murmur rushed throughout the hall after Frabato’s astonishing proclamation, finally giving way to an expectant silence when a gentleman left his seat and stepped onto the stage.

“My name is Schneider,” he said, introducing himself to Frabato, “and I am a professor of chemistry. You are talking, and quite convincingly, about spiritual powers and entities whose existence is, at this time, denied by orthodox science. I would be grateful to you if you could give me any evidence of the spiritual powers you describe. Being a scientist and a skeptic, I shall not be easily convinced.”

Frabato asked the audience whether he had their permission to address the professor’s question with the relevant evidence. The answer was a unanimous “yes” and an enthusiastic round of applause. Everyone was eager and curious to learn what sort of experiment Frabato would perform in order to convince the skeptic.

Frabato offered the professor a seat at the edge of the stage and asked him to be patient for a few moments; he wanted to say a few words about the teachings of spiritualism first. He had spoken only a few sentences, however, when there was a sudden visible change in the professor. The man became quite obviously pale; his eyes stared into space. Then he slipped from his chair, fell in a heap, and lay motionless.

Some members of the audience cried out. Others rose from their seats, craning their necks to see what had happened.

Throughout the commotion, Frabato did not bat an eyelid.

He did not even look at the professor. Eventually, he raised his hand and asked for silence, saying:

“Ladies and gentlemen, please remain quiet. No harm will come to the professor. To surprise you, I have detached a portion of my personality during the course of my lecture and sent it to extract the greater part of the professor’s astral vitality. By so doing, I have induced in him a state similar to that of death. He is no longer breathing and his heartbeat has ceased. A medical diagnosis would probably be heart failure.”

Frabato was thinking of the F.O.G.C. brethren, some of whom were certainly present. They would be seething inwardly, for here he was publicly demonstrating that heart failure could be caused by occult means.

Frabato then turned towards the professor, placed his feet together and propped him up like a rigid wooden marionette. Two assistants then laid him across two chairs which had been placed sufficiently far apart so that his body was supported solely by his neck and heels.

After a blanket had been placed over the professor, Frabato stepped onto a chair and then onto the professor’s abdomen. He asked his assistants to join him; now there were three people standing on the professor’s motionless body which bore the weight of the three men as if made of steel.

After the three of them stepped down, the tension in the audience exploded into applause. At a signal from Frabato, the assistants brought the professor to his feet again and supported him with their arms.

The magician now asked for silence and stared into one of the far corners of the stage. Almost unnoticed by the audience, the professor’s appearance underwent yet another complete transformation. The mask-like rigidity of his face disappeared; he started breathing again and his cheeks flushed with color. Frabato faced the professor, who, after Frabato had focused his gaze upon him for a short time, began to breathe freely and blink his eyelids.

As though awakening from a deep sleep, he stretched his limbs and looked at his surroundings in astonishment. But it was not until he caught sight of Frabato that he was restored to full consciousness.

Frabato smiled at him, saying, "Well, professor, I am most certain that you could tell the audience a very interesting story about your experiences."

As he was still a bit shaky on his legs, the professor seated himself on a chair with the help of an assistant. Frabato looked intently at him again for a few seconds, thus restoring him to the state in which he had first taken the stage. The professor rose, pushed the chair aside, and shook Frabato's hand with enthusiasm.

"I was not expecting anything like that! I shall remember this event until the end of my days. But I am still completely at a loss as to how you could influence me to such a degree during your performance."

With a laugh, Frabato answered. "This ability is the result of many years worth of meditation and training. You have experienced for yourself how effective it is. But you really should not keep the audience waiting any longer for your report."

"As I was attentively listening to Frabato's words," the professor began, "I did not notice at all that I was under any foreign influence. But suddenly I felt that my head was completely empty and that I was unable to move. To my horror, I saw my body fall to the floor of the stage in front of me. The feeling of rigidity soon left me and gave way to a sensation of tranquility, freedom and lightness which I have never experienced before. I was able to move about the stage freely, connected to my body solely by a fine silvery thread. In that manner, I was able to witness what Frabato and his assistants did with my body, and I was extremely relieved when it survived the experiment without harm. During the experiment, one of the assistants walked right through me in

a very remarkable way, and I noticed I had no shadow on the stage, despite the fact that I felt like a physical being. After the assistants had propped my body up again, Frabato looked at me with his penetrating eyes and I moved towards my body as if attracted by a powerful magnet. Although I tried to resist this force, my efforts were in vain and I lost consciousness. When I awoke, I found myself back in my physical body.

“There is no longer any doubt in my mind that the human spirit survives the death of the physical body, and that this spirit moves in the way described by Frabato in his lecture.”

Having rendered Frabato his exuberant thanks, the professor returned to his seat, accompanied by delighted applause. An expectant silence spread again, and Frabato continued:

“Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased that the professor, as a neutral party, has confirmed the existence of the human spirit independent of the physical body. I should like to mention that an individual without any training in magic will, after his death, be unable to perceive any sensory impressions from the physical world. I should like to stress that experiments like these should never be attempted by the layman. For if the operator lacks complete power over the elements, the harmony of spirit, soul, and body may remain disturbed and the volunteer end up in a mental institution. Let this be a warning!

“But now let us turn our attention to further experiments. Who among you would like to contact a deceased acquaintance or relative?”

At first, no one was courageous enough to break the suspense with a response to Frabato’s question. Finally, a gentleman volunteered for the experiment; the audience gave him their relieved applause. Once on stage, he introduced himself as Mr. Müller and said that he was the director of a bank. Rather emotionally, he said he wished to see his

deceased sister and learn something of her present fate.

In order to put the man at ease, Frabato asked him to be seated in a chair on the stage, saying, "Please tell me the name of the deceased and the date she died."

"Her name was Elisabeth Müller, and she died on May 16th, 1929, in the local sanatorium."

Frabato asked the audience if anyone else had known this person, whereupon an elderly woman in Mr. Müller's row quickly rose and identified herself as the mother of the deceased. Two men from the same row said that they, too, were relatives of the deceased, and a woman from the audience said that Elisabeth Müller had been her friend and schoolmate.

"That is enough," said Frabato. "I prefer to have a number of people who can identify the deceased individual upon whom I call. And now I kindly ask for your attention."

Frabato sat in a corner of the stage so that he could be seen by everyone. His movements were greeted with a sense of silent expectation from the audience. A few moments passed; the magician became pale and rigid. In time his color returned, but his face had changed so dramatically that it no longer bore any resemblance to that of Frabato.

The deceased's mother cried out, "Liese!"

Frabato stood up gracefully. His elegant movements and his transformed features were those of a young woman. Clearly, he had loaned his own body to the dead woman's spirit so that she could speak to her brother.

Director Müller, who had recognized his sister's movements and features, was trembling all over. He shook his head as if unable to believe his senses, until the familiar soft voice of his sister spoke through Frabato's body.

"Willi, I never thought I would be able to speak to you again. How is our family? I know our father has died, for I am in contact with him often."

Spellbound, the director stared at Frabato, through whom

his deceased sister was actually speaking. "She" took a chair and sat down near him; they had a short conversation about private matters, then she asked for a pencil and paper with which to write a note to Robert, her former fiancé. She gave the note to her brother and asked him to give her love to all of her relatives. After saying good-bye, she shook hands with him and then sat down in the corner chair again. Frabato's body went rigid once more, as at the beginning of the experiment. After a few seconds the rigidity gave way and Frabato's familiar features returned.

Frabato now rose and turned to the teary-eyed bank director who was studying the note in his hand.

"Impossible. And yet possible," he whispered. "And it truly is my sister's handwriting."

"I hope you are now convinced that your sister still exists. Or do you doubt that she has just spoken to you through me?"

"No, I am no longer in doubt," Mr. Müller answered. "And I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your mediation."

Still bewildered by his miraculous experience, Mr. Müller left the stage and returned to his seat.

Frabato declared the first part of the performance at an end and promised a few humorous scenes after intermission.

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Accompanied by applause, Frabato reappeared on stage after the intermission.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "In my previous performance I promised to show you a few examples of suggestion and hypnosis. Unfortunately, the practice of hypnosis is now forbidden by the police. This is rather untimely, but I have made some preparations to entertain and amuse you through other means.

"I shall now leave the hall for approximately half an hour. If two people from the audience would kindly accompany me to the refreshment room, I will then have reliable witnesses later on. Enjoy the program!"

A policeman and a gentleman from the audience volunteered to go with Frabato. The three made their way to the lounge.

A certain anticipation spread throughout the hall, and all eyes were focused on the stage; everyone was convinced that Frabato must have left something interesting behind. And they were not mistaken, for they suddenly heard his voice come forth over the loudspeaker.

"Ladies and gentlemen, although I am not in the hall, my spirit is still with you, for we do not want to interrupt the performance. Please follow my instructions exactly.

"Look to the center of the stage without interruption, as though I were there personally. Those who can do so will be able to envision my person there. Now I am spreading an invisible fluid over everyone present, which will bring about complete tranquility and harmony.

"You are so quiet now that it even makes you tired. Your fatigue is increasing constantly, as if you had been doing heavy work. With every breath you become more and more tired. The desire for sleep dominates your thinking altogether. Your eyelids are closing and you are now in a deep, dreamless sleep. Your sleep is so deep that nothing can awaken you. No noise can disturb you or awaken you. You will awaken only when I give the command.

"Those ladies and gentlemen who have not fallen asleep should now clap their hands loudly, whistle or shout to try and awaken their sleeping neighbors. But they will not succeed!"

Many in the audience had fallen into a deep sleep; the hall became quite noisy as those who were still awake tried in any number of ways to wake up the sleeping people.

However, this proved to be impossible. A few minutes later, Frabato's voice was heard again.

"Even if you were shooting off cannons, you would be unable to awaken the sleeping, for they are in a state of deep trance and will respond only to my specific orders.

"I am now gathering all you sleepers under my will power. You will listen only to my words and do precisely as I say. After I count to three, everyone will awaken. You will feel refreshed and healthy, and you will be unable to remember what transpired.

"One! Weariness and drowsiness are fading, contentment and happiness fill your whole being.

"Two! Your health is strengthened. You feel extremely well and all unpleasantness has vanished.

"Three! Everyone awake!"

Upon awakening, all those who had slept looked around in astonishment at the general merriment in the hall; they could not believe they had been so fast asleep. But before a detailed explanation could take place, the voice from the loudspeaker asked ten ladies and ten gentlemen to take seats on the chairs which had been arranged onstage. They were to sit in pairs, a gentleman next to a lady. After some minor confusion the volunteers managed to seat themselves correctly, and Frabato gave further instructions.

"Ladies and gentlemen on the stage, you will now listen to music. A waltz will be played for you. You will feel an urge to dance with one another. Each of the gentlemen on the stage will dance with the woman on his right. Nothing will disturb you, for there is an invisible wall between the audience and the stage and you are not able to see the spectators."

Although no music was heard, some pairs engaged themselves in a formal dance, spinning round to the rhythm of a waltz. Other pairs moved more comically, and the

audience laughed. But it did not seem to disturb the dancers in the least.

“Stop!” the voice said from the loudspeaker. “The dance has ended. The ladies and gentlemen on the stage will be served some refreshments before saying goodbye to one another. There is a basket with apples, pears and peaches at the edge of the stage and you may serve yourselves. You will wake up immediately after the first bite without having swallowed anything, and you will return to your seats in the hall with a feeling of happiness. Please come for me and my escorts in the refreshment room now.”

The hypnotized people on the stage reached out for the putative fruit. But as soon as they had taken a bite, they awoke and, with sour expressions on their faces, began to grumble. “Damn, this is not a peach at all. It is an onion!” one of the afflicted said with tears in his eyes. Someone else said, “Yuck! This is a raw potato!” The surprises continued.

After the last person had left the stage, a spectator went to the refreshment room to bring back Frabato and his escorts.

Greeted by applause, Frabato stepped onto the stage and addressed the audience with a smile. “I can tell from your faces that you have enjoyed yourselves. I am pleased that you have liked this part of the performance too, although I myself was not present in the hall. I am deeply indebted to my two excellent witnesses. This is the end of today’s program. All of you are invited to my next performance, which will take place the day after tomorrow. Good night to you all.”

As the curtain slowly fell, Frabato went to his dressing room. He had just changed his clothes when two gentlemen entered unannounced.

“You are Frabato, are you not?” one of the men asked.

When Frabato nodded, the man produced his identification. “Criminal Police. You are under arrest. Please, come along with us.”

A waiting car took them to the police station where Frabato was taken into custody.

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On the following day, the newspapers featured a detailed report of Frabato's sensational experiments and his arrest by the police. Early the same morning Frabato was taken to the chief of police, who was clearly annoyed and launched an immediate verbal attack upon him.

"You have violated the new law and continued to experiment with hypnosis. Witnesses report that more than a hundred people were hypnotized. You will have to pay dearly for this. And it will not go easy for you in court."

The chief was furious, pacing up and down the room nervously.

"This is so shameful," he exploded again. "Did you have to do it here, of all places? What kind of a public image do I have now?"

Frabato sat without saying a word and allowed the chief of police to vent his frustration; he only began to speak when he saw the other man's anger subsiding.

"You have certainly been given false information, for I did not hypnotize anyone yesterday," Frabato replied. "One of your own officers can bear witness to the fact that I was in the refreshment room at the time in question. The audience spent half an hour with my phonograph records, it is true, but I can scarcely be held responsible for that: after all, there was nothing to prevent your officers from turning off the record player. Since I was not present in the hall personally, I do not feel the least bit guilty."

The chief looked at Frabato suspiciously, then called for the officer who had accompanied Frabato to the refreshment room. He confirmed Frabato's account. The chief was satisfied and shook hands with Frabato, saying:

“You should have become a diplomat instead of a magician. You certainly have a knack for looking at matters from a different perspective. You are free to go, and I apologize for the zeal of my people.”

Frabato said goodbye and went back to his hotel at once. He needed a good rest, for his night in jail had not been especially comfortable.

The next day the newspapers reported Frabato’s release, together with the announcement that his next performance would take place that evening as scheduled.

Chapter VI

The Grand Master of the F.O.G.C. Lodge was the owner of a very beautiful villa in the city's most elegant district, exquisitely furnished and surrounded by a well-tended garden. He was highly regarded in business circles, a great man in his profession with an enormous financial income.

But today he sat gloomily behind his desk at home, playing distractedly with a golden fountain pen. He was in the grips of an unrest which could not be soothed even by his harmonious surroundings.

He got up and began pacing the room thoughtfully. His servants were under strict orders not to disturb him or admit any visitors.

For the first time in many years, the chain of his success had been broken. Until now, all his plans had been carried out successfully, but Frabato was a difficult matter which weighed heavily on his soul. He felt somehow that there was a much greater power behind this mysterious man than that which lay behind his own lodge, whose members were only able to realize their plans with the assistance of negative forces.

A man more powerful than he! The idea fed the Grand Master's inexorable hatred, incessantly driving him to seek to persecute and harm Frabato by whatever means.

And though it was difficult for him, he had to admit that Frabato had foiled all his attacks. No one had ever violated the laws of the lodge, been punished for it, and escaped to tell the tale. And all those who had been sentenced to death by the tepaphone had, until now, been destroyed.

Every person has a weak point where he can be easily wounded. The Grand Master had been looking in vain for a

weakness in Frabato; his failure to discover one overwhelmed him with hatred and rage. He had already been informed that the police action against Frabato for breach of the prohibition on hypnosis had been ineffective. This new failure heightened his ill-temper; thoughts of revenge flashed through his mind. Under ordinary circumstances he was a master of self-control, but now his face mirrored just how badly his nerves had suffered from recent events. Even the ticking of his exquisite clock provoked his uneasiness, mixed with a feeling of fear and horror that he had never experienced before.

The Grand Master had been nourishing his dark thoughts for a long time when he came up with what he thought was a good idea. He sat down at his desk and wrote a letter to a government official who was also a member of the F.O.G.C. Lodge.

- Dear brother and supporter:

As you know, Frabato has thwarted many of our plans. We have tried in vain to make him a member of our lodge and to convince him of our goodwill. Because of his magical abilities, he has been able to discover all our lodge's secrets. He not only knows our initiation rites, but is also well versed in our most secret plans. These facts clearly show that this man remains a permanent danger to our lodge.

As you also know, we have not yet been able to eliminate him. Even the tepaphone failed, and our allied King of Demons has been unable to guarantee success.

With his magical abilities, this Frabato naturally has access to the most secret plans of the government and the military as well. If a hostile government were to succeed in employing him as a spy, immeasurable damage could

be done to you, dear brother, as well as to the entire nation. As my own means are now exhausted, I here request your assistance in annihilating this dangerous man. The brotherhood is greatly interested in settling this matter and I hope that you will not disappoint me.

I look forward to consulting with you personally and remain:

Yours faithfully,
S.

The Grand Master placed the letter in an envelope, pressed the lodge's insignia into the sealing wax, then called his servant and ordered him to take the letter to the post office at once.

Now his countenance reflected delight, and he rubbed his hands together in satisfaction. He was convinced that this plan could be carried out successfully, for political dissidents were dealt with quickly in those days. The secret police would see to the matter.

The recent events had strongly affected the Grand Master's health. He had lost a lot of weight and his hands trembled. His unresolved problems had placed him in a constant state of agitation, and he felt that he had aged.

Quite involuntarily, he stepped in front of a large mirror. As he thoughtlessly studied his reflection, he noticed, with increasing terror, that a phosphorescent glow had suddenly appeared between his eyebrows. With wide eyes he stared at his own trembling image, for he was fully aware of the meaning of this sign. It was known to the lodge as the sign of death.

Paralyzed with shock, the Grand Master was unable to avert his eyes from the flame which gradually became bigger, eventually covering the entire surface of the mirror. Behind

the flame a grotesque face with penetrating eyes slowly appeared, and an inner voice spoke as if from the depths of a grave:

“Brother, your last hour is near!”

The Grand Master was now perspiring profusely, and he felt surrounded by an icy coldness.

Slowly, the demon's face faded away and the flame dwindled, the mirror finally reflecting only the ash-gray face of the black magician.

Although he still felt paralyzed, he managed to tear himself away from his image in the mirror, fall into a chair, and stay there for some time, quite motionless. He cradled his head in his hands despairingly.

“This damned Frabato,” he murmured. “I must not think of him anymore or else I shall go mad!”

The Grand Master energetically chased away his negative thoughts, lit a cigar and walked up and down his study, trying to calm himself. It occurred to him that he had yet more aggravation in store today. The astrological position of the Sun reminded him, however, that he would soon have to set forth, for it was the twenty-third of June, the day of the lodge's general meeting. It was important that he, as the president, should appear calm and collected in order to set an example for the other brethren.

He ordered his servant to prepare his supper. At the end of the meal he drank a cup of strong coffee, changed his clothes and ordered his driver to take him to the lodge buildings.

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The twenty-third of June is a special day of the year for people all over the world; it is then that the sun reaches its highest point, the longest day and shortest night of the year.

To celebrate the summer solstice, many European peoples

have traditionally lit a great bonfire. The Brothers of Light, especially those of the lower degrees, carry out the so-called St. John's evocations on this particular night. During this rite, as many as three wishes may be sent into the invisible astral world. These wishes are then fulfilled during the coming year, as long as they do not violate the laws of karma. This ritual of the St. John's Mystery is a strictly kept secret among the Brothers of the Light.

Although the twenty-third of June was also a special day for the F.O.G.C. Lodge, it was by no means a happy one for them. Quite the contrary: it was a fatal day, for one of the lodge's brethren must sacrifice his life to the demon he served. All members, regardless of rank or grade, were subject to this law.

The lodge has ninety-nine members. The hundredth member is the demon who presides over the lodge and who, in turn, delegates a subordinate demon to each lodge member for the realization of that member's wishes. Each demon has its own special name and sign of invocation known only to the lodge brother it serves. The demon's name and sign are never entrusted to anyone else; the penalty for breaking silence is death.

The sacrificial victim is chosen by lot. A new member is then admitted to replace the victim and the demon of his predecessor is normally allotted to him. With ill luck, a new member might be put to death in his very first year.

It was not surprising that the lodge members, by virtue of this exchange, were enabled to pursue solid material goals and were wealthy and influential people. Someone from the lower or poorer classes was only admitted to the membership if he possessed special talents and abilities that could serve the purposes of the lodge. Large sums of money were immediately placed at the disposal of such a member, until, with the help of his demon, he had learned to stand on his own feet.

The summer weather was marvelous on this particular June 23rd. The warm, still air of the day lingered over the countryside, but fear hovered like an invisible cloud in the minds of the F.O.G.C. brethren. Only at this time every year did they choose to remember that sacrifice hung like Damocles' sword over their heads.

The great hall of the lodge house was ceremoniously illuminated. There were ninety-eight numbered chairs standing on a small platform facing the Grand Master's place. Each member of the lodge had received a number and had to take his seat accordingly. No one was permitted to be absent from this most important meeting of the year. Each brother was expected to arrange his private affairs in such a way as to allow him to be present that evening.

Although the meeting was to commence at 8:00 P.M., most of the members had already gathered by 7:30 and were talking animatedly to one another in small groups. As the minute hand of the clock moved inexorably towards the appointed hour, the lodge brethren took their seats on the numbered chairs. The Vice President, who was also the Secretary, had already taken his seat.

Precisely at eight o'clock, the Grand Master entered the hall. Everyone rose silently to greet their superior. The Grand Master, still in shock due to the events of the afternoon, gathered his strength and opened the meeting by striking a large gong three times with a special mallet, its sound resonating throughout the hall. Then he addressed the brethren:

"My dear brothers, I thank you for your welcome and ask that you be seated. I am very pleased that you have all come. As you know, today is an historic and traditional day for our lodge, for one of our members must leave us and another must be admitted. Only after we have drawn lots will we know who is to go. I realize that you are anticipating the balloting with dread; however, you were told during your

admission to the lodge that the procedure is written in our regulations and is compulsory.

“Our order has existed for many centuries and is represented throughout the world with the same laws. Ninety-nine is a holy number for us and has a special meaning, for there are ninety-nine of our lodges in the world and each of these lodges again has exactly ninety-nine members. All these lodges adhere to the same laws as we do. The Master of Darkness, our god, whom we honor and worship, has provided each lodge with a demonic entity of high rank. This presiding entity is obliged to provide a demon servant for each lodge brother. Since the Grand Master of each lodge is to carry the greatest responsibility, the presiding entity is assigned to him.

“On this historic day I should like to remind each of you of the enormous advantages you have obtained by becoming members of our lodge. I am certain that not one of you can name an Order in which riches and power can be gained more quickly. Who can destroy his enemies quicker than we? Who is better protected against all of life’s dangers than our own brethren? No one! These advantages can only be achieved with the support of the spiritual forces of whom I have just spoken. We have all chosen these advantages for ourselves and, in return, we are required to support evil and fight against good wherever possible. Surely none of you have ever found this to be terribly difficult. The greatest risk in all of this is the present evening’s event — but your chances of remaining in the lodge are great.

“Nonetheless, I am fully convinced, my dear brothers, that none of you has ever regretted taking this step, that each of you is financially affluent, and that you have been able to realize your goals with the assistance of your spiritual servant.”

The Grand Master interrupted his speech to observe the effect of his words on the other brethren. Many expressed their satisfaction with a slight nod.

The Grand Master drank some water and was about to continue praising the advantages of the lodge when he suddenly remembered his unsuccessful battle against Frabato. Rage consumed him and, controlling himself with great effort, he continued:

“Fellow members, as you know, a powerful enemy has been trying to oppose our lodge’s aims. It is the magician Frabato. Unfortunately, our attacks against him have thus far been unsuccessful, and he has even been able to defend himself against the tepaphone. I therefore encourage you to remain united in this matter. This man can be dangerous to all of us, and we must adhere to the slogan: ‘All for one and one for all!’”

The Grand Master was almost in a state of ecstasy now, but many of the members remained reserved, not wishing to interfere in his personal vendetta. Others felt shivers run down their spines; there was fear in their faces. It became clear to many that here was a man whose might was greater than that of the lodge. Who had ever resisted the tepaphone, the instrument which could bring death to anyone, no matter where on earth he might be? The Grand Master must have a special reason to deal with this matter personally, or even to discuss his difficulties with the brotherhood. The thought of such a powerful enemy caused extreme uneasiness among the brethren. This was all clear to the Grand Master when he cried out with triumphant and scornful laughter:

“As I can see, many of you have become terribly frightened at the mere mention of Frabato’s name. It should not remain a secret to you that this man has caused me many distressing hours.

“But our lodge has many ways to annihilate such an enemy; you all know that the Master of Darkness is at my

side whenever I have need of his assistance and advice. You may therefore rest assured, my dear brothers, that, thanks to my advantageous connections, I have been able to cast suspicion on Frabato on political grounds. I do know, of course, that he is in no way politically engaged, but in spite of this it will take no longer than a week before he is incarcerated. From there it is only one short step to his death, for with the right amount of money it is easy to find people who will aid in such a task. At any rate, I can promise you that soon Frabato will no longer be among the living!”

The Grand Master’s last words caused a sigh of relief, for Frabato was already a nightmare to many of the lodge members. The Grand Master realized with satisfaction that the unity of the lodge had been restored. Relieved, he gave the chair to the Secretary and sat down.

The Secretary thanked the Grand Master for his speech, then addressed the assembly:

“My dear brothers, as you know, today you are to submit your reports, written in secret code and covering the work accomplished during the past year with the help of your demon servant. This allows us a certain amount of control in examining whether the conditions of our contract with the demonic powers have been met. Those of you who have had specific problems or difficulties with your spirit servants may discuss the matter with the Grand Master after tonight’s meeting. He will then clear the matter with the relevant spiritual entity. Now, my dear brothers, I ask you to give me your reports, and I remind you once again that your report must be marked with your allotted number.”

Two of the members were asked to gather the papers and submit them to the Secretary, who counted and examined them carefully.

There was a richly ornamented cabinet behind the Grand Master’s chair and, moving slowly (as if wanting to stop time), the Secretary locked the reports in the drawer, opened

another drawer, removed a wooden chest and set it on the table next to the cabinet. Then, quite serious, he faced the assembly and opened the fateful box. It contained ninety-nine small envelopes. Concealed therein were the members' numbers, which would determine the fate of one of them. An oppressive silence took hold of the assembly, for this was the darkest and most terrible hour of the year for each and every one of them.

The Secretary now obtained a drum from an adjacent room. This was mounted on a frame which enabled it to be turned round its axle by a handle. It was placed in the center of the hall by the Secretary, who then opened a small door on its side. After setting Brother Silesius' number aside, he solemnly dropped one envelope after the other into the drum under the watchful eyes of the brethren. When he was finished, he closed the door to the drum.

One of the lodge brethren escorted the caretaker's daughter into the room. Elli knew what she had to do, for she had performed this same service on St. John's Eve for many years. She knew absolutely nothing of the true seriousness of the hour; she had always been satisfied with the explanation that a member was to be chosen for a "special mission." The generous sum of money she received for this small task quelled any further curiosity — and she knew quite well that too much curiosity on her part could result in her father losing his position.

The Secretary blindfolded the young lady and led her carefully to the drum. Then he took the handle and spun the drum, ten turns to the left and ten to the right. Then he opened the lid, led Elli's hand above it, and asked her to pull out an envelope. Without hesitation, Elli extracted an envelope which the Secretary took from her and laid on the table for everyone to see.

Forcing himself to remain calm, the Secretary removed the blindfold from Elli's eyes, gave her her customary

gratuity and accompanied her out of the building with a few friendly words. He then returned to the hall, where the brethren were waiting for him with pale faces. He reached for the fateful envelope and pulled out the number.

In a loud and trembling voice he said: "It is Number One, the number of our Grand Master!"

The tension was released, though with varied reactions. Some members began, with excitement, to discuss the result, while others simply remained silent, chins propped on their hands.

The Grand Master, who had been standing, carefully observing the entire procedure, fell into his chair, deathly pale. Muttering unintelligibly, he stared at the ceiling. A demon's grimace took shape before his inner vision. A death sweat poured from his forehead and he called out in despair, "Frabato!"

The Grand Master's reaction filled the special gathering with an uncanny horror, for never before had anyone faced his death in such a cowardly manner. Although all the sacrificial victims had been hit hard by their fate, they had made a great effort to retain, at least externally, some degree of composure. In contrast, the Grand Master, who should have been an example for the whole lodge, was a pitiful sight. It took some time before he could regain his self-control.

Finally, his facial muscles twitching visibly, he addressed the assembly in a broken voice:

"My dear brothers, as you all know, I have recently been struggling with the case of Frabato. I have attempted to annihilate him in several ways but have not yet succeeded. As I have told you, he even survived the tepaphone, our most powerful weapon. It may be concluded from this that Frabato is allied with powerful forces. Because I am Frabato's greatest enemy, there is no doubt in my mind that he influenced this draw with his magical powers and arranged matters so that my number would be drawn. Many of you

were present at his public demonstrations, where he proved his influence over people, and his ability to make them compliant to his will from any distance."

The Grand Master stopped and looked around expectantly. Many approved by nodding their heads, for they had witnessed the demonstrations. When the Grand Master noticed that these individuals seemed sympathetic towards him, he was encouraged to go on, saying: "My dear brothers, please consider that I am the only one among you who has unremittingly tried to annihilate this enemy. Therefore, I declare that he has influenced Elli to draw my number from the drum. For this reason I cannot acknowledge the draw!"

With these words, a subdued grumble spread through the hall, for everyone would willingly have foregone another draw. The lodge brethren knew that cowardice and mortal fear had driven their Grand Master to take this step; however, it was impossible to contradict him openly, for it was laid down in the lodge's laws that the Grand Master could twice demand another draw if he so wished. This was something that rarely ever happened and, in all ninety-nine lodges combined, had only occurred twice during the last two centuries.

Having been marked as a candidate for death, the Grand Master was required to forfeit his right to govern the lodge. According to regulations, the Secretary would be promoted to the position of Grand Master and President. But the old Grand Master could at least cling to the hope that he might evade his ultimate fate.

The Secretary addressed the members:

"My dear brothers, to our regret, it is our esteemed Grand Master who has been chosen by this draw. He has been leading our lodge conscientiously for many years and has gained our respect and, as you know, he has the right to request two additional draws. His argument that Frabato has used his magical powers to transmit the death sentence to him is quite

