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THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

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Think fish, Indiana Jones told himself sternly. This is a vacation, remember?

The moist stillness of a typical Highland afternoon closed in around the trim young man in worn leather jacket and slouch hat.

With a look of determination, he cast his line yet once again out over the rushing stream. A vacation is for rest, he lectured reasonably, a time of relaxation, a time to do those things one hasn't time for the rest of the year, especially if one is a busy professor of archaeology at a fair sized American college.

Nothing was happening out in the stream. He reeled in his line and tried again. It began to rain.

Face it, Jones, the Professor thought with resignation. You don't really give a hang about landing a trout. You're indulging in that most unwise of pastimes: You're fooling yourself.

Another cast. The Cup of Carmaeg. His thoughts refused to linger on the misty trout stream, but perversely drifted back through the mists of time. Dark Ages, to be sure, but illuminated here and there with the golden light of magnificently crafted treasure. The Cup of Carmaeg. Legend described a thing of rare beauty, a gem-laden, two-handed chalice, wrought and graven at the height of the Caledonian goldsmiths' skill, and passed from king to king as the warring Gaelic clans plundered one another.

Out of the depths of time it shone like a beckoning candle, and Indiana felt himself drawn to it as a moth might be to a flame.

You could have fished in the Adirondaks, he chided. Or taken your spring holiday at the dig outside Trinidad. But here you stand, pretending that you like to fish and pretending to yourself, which is even worse! And all because that prize which by all accounts and they are fragmentary and mythic to be sure should be nearby. Somewhere in these heathery hills where the great northern warlords were laid in barrows with their treasure.

Jones shook his head. Cast again. The rain came steadily down like a gray curtain. I'm hooked worse than any fish, he thought. The Carmaegillion. Admit it, Jones, Indiana demanded, continuing his one-sided argument. You came here because of the Cup. That's what you get, reading that potpourri of history and legend you steep yourself in. You better either go dig, or go home. But whatever you do, don't keep standing here in the damn rain!

With a rueful shake of the head, Jones retrieved his empty line and gathered his angling gear. His handsome face held a thoughtful expression as he turned to follow the stream's course for his trudge down the hill, oblivious to a pair of green eyes which, from the shelter of a birch grove, marked his departure with interest.

Aberstilth's only hostelry was a convivial place, a stone and thatch anachronism loaded with rustic charm and simple, toothsome comforts. It sat solidly upon the "main road" as this gravelled track wound its way among the hills and passed through town.

There was a cluster of homes, each with its small fenced garden, a few shops, and a garage dispensing petrol gathered about the inn, then only the wide, rolling heath that sloped for several miles to the precipitous cliffs which towered in rugged beauty above the long, dark Firth of Murilan.

It was a wild and inspiring country, swept with the rush of the sky and slashed by start stone, but it was cold and unwelcoming on a rainy afternoon, and as he crossed the stone bridge spanning the stream, Jones was glad to see the warm light of candles lit against the quickly gathering dusk shining from several windows.

"Professor! Did ye hae any luck?" Indiana was greeted by his jovial host as he made the shelter of the inn and shut out the wet chill behind him just as a particularly strong blow sent a spattering of rain against the panes.

Jones dumped his gear in a corner and pulled off his damp hat and jacket. "Not a bit, Mr McDougall," he replied. "Either your trout weren't hungry today or I don't have the feel of the stream yet."

The host nodded in commiseration. "Well, you've only been here a day or two. Gi' it time, lad."

"I'll do that," Indy promised, "tomorrow. Now, I want a double whisky and a fire. Can you manage that, Mr McDougall?"

"Oh, aye! Nothin' to it. Fiona!" he called over his shoulder. "Fix up Professor Jones and see to it he dries out. He's wetter than a ditch rat!"

There was a noisy, rough-looking bunch standing at the bar. Indiana didn't recognise their accents which jarred against the soft Highland lilt of the villagers, but it didn't occur to him to wonder what they were doing in a remote hamlet. He was all for a lounge in front of the hearth.

Stretching out in a well-worn chair before the generous fire, Indiana leaned back happily. There was a distinct pleasure in not having to think about fish. He enjoyed it with relish. Pleasure of a different sort arrived momentarily as Fiona the barmaid set a glass at his elbow.

Mellow, smoky, never the suggestion of ice. He downed half the Scotch and let the liquid fire do its work. Holding the glass before him, he watched the firelight tremble and leap at its edges almost like the halo of light shimmering about a golden cup ... like the jewelled flame of the Carmaegillion.

You're hopeless, he told himself. He knocked back the rest of the Scotch and closed his eyes to contemplate golden things.

A voice, very close to his ear, said, "Doctor Jones?"

It was a lovely, soft voice, rich with the Highland burr. Indy looked sideways into a pair of very green eyes. There was just the suggestion of laughter in them.

"I'm Indiana Jones," he confirmed.

"My name is Sidonie Andrews. May I have a few words with you?"

"Of course," replied Jones. "Sit down. Can I get you a drink?"

"I have one, thank you," the woman replied, crossing before him to curl up on one end of the couch and raising her glass in a small toast.

She was attractive, handsome, he might have said. Her hair was unfashionably long, a reddish gold that caught the firelight and seemed to glow as it hovered like a cloud about her face and shoulders. And though her eyes and lips held that hint of amusement, all else about her appeared composed.

She was modestly gowned in a black bodice and long brown overtunic, and Jones noted a laced leather belt defining her slender waist. The whole appearance was that of a costume, but, he reminded himself, small villages in north-west Scotland were not likely to be hotbeds of haute couture.

He gave her a politely interested look and waited a moment for her to continue.

"You are, if I am not mistaken, a professor of archaeology from America?"

Jones nodded.

"And I might assume you have something of a reverence for the past?"

"It's my life's work," he answered simply.

"Good," said Sidonie. "I need the help of a man who cares about such things."

Jones recoiled inwardly just a bit from the suggestion that his help was needed. "I'm just here on a holiday, Miss Andrews," he said. "I don't know how much help I could be."

She thought a moment, examining his face intently as though wondering how much to tell him at once. "You and I together," she said carefully, "could stop a terrible desecration of a very ... sacred place."

Indiana felt the rush begin, that visceral thrill he invariably experienced when confronted with visions of the past. He sat up

straighter and leaned toward the woman. "You just got my curiosity going. What are we talking about here?" he asked.

She leaned forward confidentially. "It is the tomb of my ancestor, Kennet M'Ardoch of Camas. They're going to dig it up and steal all his treasure. You see, Kennet M'Ardoch was a great witch."

Indiana very nearly smiled. "You mean as in pentagrams, black sabbats, that sort of thing?"

"Ach, no! That's pure propaganda!" Sidonie dismissed an entire body of mythic literature with a contemptuous wave of her hand. "'Tis altogether too subtle a thing for poor old Lucifer. 'Tis more like a sensitivity to things ... unseen a feeling for making the natural rhythms of the universe work for you, and the powers that shun the light. It runs in families." She eyed him carefully. "I'm a witch."

Indy looked into his glass. No, he'd only had the one drink. Could hardly be hallucinating on that. He shifted position, leaned back to assess her in the firelight. "You're joking, of course," he said.

"Not at all. Oh, I know 'tis the year of Our Lord 1931 and you're thinking all the old ways went out with the invention of the electric light and the motor car. You think I'm daft. But you're wrong."

The gang at the bar had quieted a bit and one or two of their number were keeping a covert surveillance of the American professor and his lady companion.

Indy continued to regard her curiously. He was intrigued but unconvinced. Always the pragmatist, he tried another subject. "Just who are these desecrators of tombs? And how do you propose we stop them?"

"As to the first question, most of them are right here in this room. Yon ruffians at the bar, scum from London who'd do anything for hire. They are the ones doing the digging. But the real desecrator is the Frenchman for whom they work."

That raised Jones' eyebrows. "Frenchman? Short? Brisk?"

"Aye, that's the one. An evil man, Dr Jones. He must be stopped."

Everything at once realigned itself in Indy's facile brain. He thought of the many times the wily French archaeologist had cheated him

out of one thing or another, from an artefact to hard-won accolades. And here before him was an opportunity to turn the tables. It made the prospect of helping Sidonie stop the excavation of Kennet M'Ardoch's tomb one distinctly full of pleasure. Dropping a monkey wrench into Belloq's plans to unearth a trove, he thought cheerfully, took on the aspect of a challenging enterprise. That's one thing, he decided, that beat hell out of fishing.

Indiana turned to the fire for a moment, chuckling appreciatively, then back to Sidonie, still grinning. "For what it's worth, you've got a partner," he declared. "What puzzles me, though, is how you think I fit into all this. Why me?"

She beckoned him closer. "First, there is no aid to be had from the law. He has a permit from the Crown to dig there. But you are a man who cares about the past, as you've said. Secondly, as I told you, I am a witch. I think to use my knowledge and ... powers in that area to foil their plans, but I need male partner to reinforce the ... strength of the ... magic. And there must be very puissant magic to summon the forces necessary to stop the desecrators and to wield them to our will. They, the powers, they were stronger long ago," she said wistfully. "Alone I haven't the strength of command, but with a warlock at my side ..." She seemed to feel the need to choose her words carefully, searching for just such phrases as might catch at his imagination without coming right out with a truth she was not sure he was ready to accept. Indiana listened carefully.

Sidonie spread her hands, palms up. "I can share my powers with another for a limited time with YOU, if you're willing. It is very difficult to explain, Dr Jones. Would you understand if I told you that the process by which these powers can be shared with another is one in which intimate contact is involved?"

Jones thought he understood and the comprehension provided him with a pleasant little rush of sexual anticipation. Make that two things that beat hell out of fishing, he thought. "You mean you and I, together, and then I'd have some of your ... ah ... powers?"

"That is essentially the process, yes. Though there is some ritual involved. Nothing which you would find distasteful," she assured him quickly. "It is a pleasant experience, and the power most easy to wield once it is transferred, but you must see why I could not enlist the aid of any local lad." She looked around as though her glance might encompass the whole hamlet of Aberstilth. "I have to live here," she reminded him. "I had almost given up hope when you arrived. You will

help me, won't you?" Her eyes were pools of green-gold light, her hair a shimmering nimbus.

Behind them the gang at the bar trooped out, and into the silence which flooded their wake, Indiana said softly, "Uh ... yes, Miss Andrews. I think you can count on me."

She closed her eyes in relief. "Ah, bless you, Dr Jones!" she said, and oddly enough, it didn't sound at all strange coming from a witch. "Well, then," she continued, "will you perhaps come to my home for supper? Spring lamb. And other things besides."

"Thanks, I think I'd like that very much," Jones replied. He rose and gave Sidonie a hand.

As they were leaving and Indy was pulling on his jacket, McDougall poked his head around the door. "Will you be takin' your supper in or out, Professor?"

"Out tonight, Mr McDougall."

The ostler glanced at Sidonie then grinned and winked conspiratorially at the tall scholar. "Our Sidonie's a fine cook. Good evenin' to ye!"

Ushering the woman through the outer door before him, Jones asked. "No one knows ... ah ... about you? No one suspects?"

"Oh, they think me a bit eccentric," she agreed. "But I'm well tolerated. I'm the village physician, you see."

The rain had stopped and the clouds had rolled inland. Above their dark mass crouching on the hills, an early moon had risen, an enormous pearl among the tiny diamonds of the star field.

Indiana took in a lung-full of sea-salt air and thought it good indeed. The drink, the vibrant tang of the air, the moonlight so bright their shadows preceded them down the lane, and not least the woman at his side with her promise of ardent pleasures, all contrived to put Indiana Jones in an exhilarated mood. He slipped an arm around Sidonie's waist and felt her yield to his touch, pressing close against his side, away from the whip coiled inconspicuously up his left hip.

They slowed, then halted, each quite aware of what the other was thinking.

"Sidonie," he whispered, turning her chin up with the tips of his fingers. Their lips parted, eager and intimate as he drew her close against his body. Her tongue slid out the barest fraction to run lightly over his full lower lip, then she dissolved into the warm captivity of his mouth, sighing softly as they responded to each other's need.

"Hey, lover boy!" A grating voice from the shadows caused Jones to end the kiss rather abruptly. He looked around for the source of the rude intrusion.

"Found yourself a little tart, now did you?" said another voice. At least two, in the dark between two houses on his right. He registered the unfamiliar accent as belonging to the crew at the bar. Belloq's men.

"She's too much of a woman for you, Yank! We'll take her off your hands for you." Laughter, and none of it pleasant.

Indy was unarmed. Who would have thought he'd need a gun to go fishing? But there was his old bullwhip, companion of many years. He slowly freed its heavy coils from their hasp.

"Have they offered you trouble before?" he asked her softly.

"No, but there have been a few rude suggestions. I'm thinking they're just drunker tonight than usual, full of fool's courage," she replied.

"Well, get behind me," Indy told the woman.

"I believe they're behind you, too," she said in a small voice.

"Then, when the fun starts, run for your home. I'll handle them."

"Nonsense! You don't have a witch with you for nothing."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Jones demanded.

"You'll see," was her enigmatic reply.

Suddenly the taunters in the shadows became quite corporeal menaces as three of them converged on the seemingly hapless pair.

Jones moved into a defensive semi-crouch and snaked his whip out in front of him, letting it speak for him with an eloquent whistle and crack.

"Ho-Ho! Got a whip, does he?" jeered one of the toughs. "Come on, Simp! Let's get him!" Two moved in from opposite directions, the dangerous glitter of metal flashing in their hands.

Indiana sent the bullwhip curving in a wicked arc toward the one on his right. The man swore loudly as the tip cut a ragged gash across his face. Jones' arm snapped back again. He swung left and lashed out at the second assailant. The whip caught the man's arm, wrenching the knife from his grasp.

With a jerk, Indy pulled the man to him, still imprisoned in the leather coils, and drove a powerful left into his throat. Spitting blood, the man collapsed.

"Behind you!" Sidonie cried, and Jones wheeled, whip at the ready, only to take a hard shot in the teeth from a third ambusher.

He staggered back, tasting blood, and curled the whip at the attacker's ankles, pulling hard.

The fellow let out a yell and went down flailing. Sidonie jumped back, right into the clutches of a fourth man who laughed triumphantly. "Look what I landed, hey!" he called. "Look at this little bit!"

And, as Indiana went sprawling under the weight of yet two more assailants, he heard Sidonie yell something that sounded like, "Tishik!"

Jones slugged and clawed his way up into the cool evening air again, taking a couple of punishing blows to the midsection and managing to double one opponent over with a well-placed knee.

Grappling the remaining foe, he struggled to haul him to his feet, just as still another (how goddamn many WERE there?) tackled him, and down they all went into the gravelly way.

Somewhere above him Sidonie yelled the strange word again, and following swiftly on the heels of that, there came a rush of wind and the startled, angry shouts of the foreigners.

"Bloody Jesus! Larkey! I can't see a thing!" The snarl was swallowed up in the uncanny thickness.

"Ho! Griner! Where the hell are you?"

"Damn!"

"Bleeding fog!"

"Ouch!"

"Well, watch where the hell you're going!"

Indiana stood up, turning in the impenetrable gray pall, hopelessly disoriented.

"Dr Jones," Sidonie whispered from somewhere very close by, and her slender hand slid into his. "This way."

He followed blindly, barely able to focus on any object more distant than the pale hand clasped within his own darker one.

Behind them, the sounds of a very angry group of assailants colliding with one another receded, and quite suddenly Indiana and Sidonie broke free of the fog and the crystal night was about them once more.

Jones looked back. Like a wall, the fog hung across the road ten paces behind them. He looked back at Sidonie.

"My house," she said, pointing to a neat cottage at the rear of a small garden behind the obligatory white fence.

"Sidonie," Jones began. "The fog ..."

"It's a thing I can do," she said simply, and gave the professor a slow smile. Then she made a welcoming gesture. "Will you come inside?" Once inside, she closed and barred the door behind them.

The woman lit an oil lamp. As a warm glow began to illuminate the corners of the comfortably rustic room, she asked, "Can you lay a peat fire?"

Jones eyed the stacked earthen bricks dubiously.

"If you aren't handy, there's wood in the box," she offered.

Indy knelt to the task and in several minutes had a passably pleasing blaze leaping beyond the stone hearth. He nodded with satisfaction. One thing Jones enjoyed was his ability to rise to an occasion, no matter how mundane.

"Ah, now, that's a proper fire," Sidonie said softly, coming up behind him.

Still kneeling, staring into the flame, Indiana asked, "Do you suppose those men of Belloq's recognized me, or were they just looking for trouble?"

"I think they were looking for me and you just happened to be between us." She put a hand on his arm. "Are you all right? They didn't hurt you, did they? You look fair touselled, but it becomes you."

"Oh, I'm fine. A bruise or two. Nothing serious. But, Sidonie, don't you imagine they're sure to tell their boss about the American with the whip?"

"Not necessarily. We made them look such fools, likely they'll try to forget the whole thing. Here, Dr Jones, have a drink." Sidonie curled beside him and held out a glazed cup « full of a fragrant liquid.

"What's this?" He sniffed. "A love potion?"

"Ha!" She tossed back her head in a hoot of mirth. "No love potion. You hardly appear to be the sort of man who'd require an aphrodisiac to perform admirably. No, it's only a honey mead I make, flavoured with this and that."

Jones tasted it, nodded and smiled at her over the rim of the cup. "It's good," he said.

Sidonie returned to a quiet contemplation of the fire while they finished the sweet-scented mead.

Smoother than the best Scotch, it slid down his throat with a warm sensualness like silk, yet it had a subtle edge to its savor, an indefinable touch of heat beyond the liquor's own fire.

He felt wonderful. Even the soreness from the beating he'd taken was fading into a gentle, all-over incandescence. The flames began to take on a special clarity and his awareness of the woman beside him trebled in intensity.

"Yes," she said softly, as though reading his thoughts. "It is time ... if you are still willing."

"I'm willing." Jones replied.

"Watch, then," she told him and stood, moving to the center of the room.

"As Jones sat on the hearth, Sidonie removed her outer tunic and tossed it aside. She stood before him clad in the snug black undertunic and, one by one, began to unfasten the long row of buttons that began at the throat.

Her flesh was pale copper, reflecting the firelight, and every button undone exposed more of the beautiful view to Indiana's fascinated gaze.

A deep V from her shoulders to below the shadowy dip of her navel separated the black fabric. Sidonie hooked her slender fingers around the placket and slowly pulled it all the way apart.

Her breasts were fine, generous hemispheres, dark tipped and delicious.

"You're beautiful, beautiful, Sidonie," Jones said at the end of a deep sigh. He was well aware that this was one occasion he was quite able to rise to.

She stepped out of the dark garment and tossed it away to join the other. Looking up at her bathed in firelight, Indy thought she was perhaps the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen. Ghosties and ghoulies and long-legged ... Oh, yes!

Like a vision, she knelt beside him. Her scent was warm and musky, her eyes aglow. She reached out and began to unfasten the buttons of his shirt.

Indy took a deep, unsteady breath. Every nerve in his body was alerted and eager for each sensation. She slid off his jacket, along with the shirt. The room was still cool, but the fire at his back and the heady heat of the woman before him made Indiana oblivious to the damp Highland chill.

"Now," she said with a hungry little smile. "I'm going to have my way with you." She fended off his attempts to embrace her and gently manoeuvred him into a reclining position on the thick hearth rug.

"Sidonie, you ARE a witch," Jones agreed as her fingers went to the fastenings of his trousers.

In a moment, he lay naked on the rug, watching her intently through a lust-coloured haze such as he'd seldom experienced, thinking that this went so far beyond fishing, the two subjects weren't even in the same game.

She brought out a curiously carved jar and removed its ornate lid. A seductive aroma filled the warming room.

"This will aid the ... process," she explained.

Dipping her fingers into the jar's contents, she began to draw a line from the exact centre of his forehead down the plane of his face.

"Your nose is crooked," she noted.

"Does it matter?"

"Not in the least. Albeth."

"What?"

She shook her head. "Albeth gomorn."

Indiana was suddenly aware that whatever it was she was anointing him with was creating a trail of super sensitivity, greater even than the all-over flush of receptivity left by the mead. He wondered if she were going to ... Oh, God, yes! He groaned quite involuntarily as Sidonie's fingers trailed over his belly.

She dipped her fingers into the jar once again and stroked a generous amount of the contents onto his receptive flesh. It was all he could do to keep from taking her forcibly, the intensity of the sensation was so great.

But she took pity. Or perhaps her own libido was demanding things from her as well, for her breathing was shallow and uneven as she intoned, "Gomorn amprittani osto," and joined their bodies with a smooth motion.

The first flash of ecstasy was excruciating and they both moaned together as much in relief as pleasure. She leaned forward, his hands slipping around her hips, her mouth close to his. "Feel the power," she whispered. "Feel the power flow."

But at first, all Indiana could feel was the luxurious pulsing sensations of lovemaking. Then, as she continued to coax him, and as his body gained knowledge of hers, he did begin to feel something beyond the heat of passion, something almost like an electric current, strong and vibrant emanating from her body. It did not detract from but seemed to complement and enhance the other experience.

"Feel the power. The power is yours," Sidonie chanted as they moved rhythmically in the firelight.

The electric current grew stronger. Indy felt it begin to spread from her body to his.

"Yes! Yes! Feel the power!"

As it took and enveloped him, humming into his flesh and bones, their passion reached a critical point. Jones suddenly grasped her, pulling her hand down against his chest and shifted his weight so that he had her on her back beneath him.

"Yes, yes ..." A trail of gasping affirmatives escaped her lips as he took her. The power was definitely his.

He felt the tremors of incipient ecstasy run through his body. NOW! he willed her. And Sidonie cried out joyfully as her body capitulated to his demands.

The shuddered violently. Actinic flashes coruscated about them and the light grew as bright as the sun, then became a black night where lightning bolts danced. Had either of them cared to notice, a sharp smell of ozone suddenly filled the room and a gray cloud flaring with multi-colored explosions hovered in the air above them.

But for Indy and Sidonie, nothing mattered at that moment but the pulsing within their own and each other's bodies. They gasped and clutched one another, slowing down, sighing out their wondrous fulfilment. By the time they were aware of anything beyond each other, the room had reverted to normal.

Indy lay heavily in her arms.

"The fire's dying," she said.

"That's apt," he muttered.

Sidonie chuckled softly.

He wasn't sure exactly what had happened over and above a marvelous act of love, and he wasn't in any great hurry to explore it either, content for the moment with a simple satiation and the company of its provider.

"Let me up to tend the fire, Dr Jones" Sidonie said, beginning to wriggle out from beneath his weight.

"Don't you think under the circumstances you might call me Indy?"

"Indy? That's nice." She stopped wriggling and stroked his mussed hair, smiling with a far-off look in her eyes. "It sounds like the name of a great Highland Farisee with glowing eyes who stalks the weirderly night."

"It's short for Indiana," he told her almost apologetically.

"Still, it may fit you better than you know."

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Dinner was a late affair, but neither complained. There was the promised lamb and vegetables Sidonie told him were from her own garden, thick slices of homemade bread with butter and honey and strong tea liberally laced with whisky.

All the while he ate, Indiana had only half a mind on the meal, excellent as it was. The other half was engaged in a teasing speculation as to what actually had taken place with Sidonie before the fire. Something certainly had passed between them, more than simply the vibrations of a man and woman trading pleasure. His curiosity was tantalized by the exact nature of the "something".

"Is all to your liking?" the witch inquired.

Jones gestured with his fork and declared around a mouthful of lamb, "'s great. Wonderful." Had it been a physical hallucination such as he'd heard certain drugs could produce?

He stopped eating to stare contemplatively from beneath lowered brows at the woman across the table. "Sidonie, are you really a witch?"

She looked up smiling. "Of course. And now, so are you. Well, a warlock really."

"Can you prove it to me?"

"Ah! I was wondering when you'd ask that." Sidonie seemed pleased. "You can prove it yourself, Indy," she answered.

He leaned back from the table. "How?" The sound of his own voice asking the crucial question was like an irrevocable verdict being pronounced. As curious as Jones was by nature, he felt an obscure ambivalence when confronted with this particular moment of truth.

"I'll give you the words," she said slowly. "You'll say the words and cast the spell yourself."

He didn't much want to intrude this sort of skepticism into their relationship, but, damnit! He was a man of science. A thing had to be proven. He asked her, "How will I know it's not you manipulating the ... outcome?"

"Oh, then you DO acknowledge I could?" she grinned.

Hoist on my own petard, thought Indy. "Well, yeah, I guess I do," he admitted.

"All right, then. I'll give you the words for levitation. YOU, in your own mind, all private, may choose the object to be raised."

Jones' lips curved in a small but eloquent smile.

"Surely you don't need an incantation for that!" Sidonie laughed.

"No, just testing. Okay. Give me the words."

"Right." She looked him directly in the eyes. "Can-trek," she pronounced distinctly. "Lakmonar bel-ta'en."

Indiana followed her through it twice.

"Do I need your accent?" he asked.

"It's mostly up here." She gestured to her forehead. "The words are to focus your attention so that the forces you'll summon are most receptive to your will. Now, repeat the words and think of an object in the room. Concentrate on it and will it to rise."

Adrenalin tugging at the last vestige of his resistance, Jones felt himself either bewitched, seduced or both. Where Sidonie was concerned, he seemed to have very little to say about what he was or was not going to do.

He drew a deep breath and closed his eyes. "Can-trek lakmonar bel-ta'en," he said softly, thinking of his half-eaten lambchop.

There was a moment of silence, then Sidonie's voice, lilting with laughter intruded gently. "Open your eyes, Indy."

There it was, bobbing a bit on the air currents, rich brown on the outside and succulent pink within: his main course suspended two feet off the table.

"Holy shit," whispered Indy with considerable reverence.

"Levitated lambchop?" Sidonie offered. She laughed lightly and happily. "Now do you believe me?"

Indy turned rather wide eyes on his dinner partner. "How do I get it down?" he asked.

Leaning across the table, she whispered a word in his ear. He repeated it and watched in fascination as the cold comestible sank slowly and settled on his plate with a slight "click" just left of his buttered carrots.

"Goddamn!" Indiana exclaimed quietly.

"No such thing!" Sidonie was adamant.

"No, I meant ... you know what I meant."

"Perhaps I do." There was a moment of quiet between them, then, Indy, will you go back to the inn tonight? Or," and her voice dropped as though it were an unaccustomed phrase she was about to utter, "will you stay the night with me?"

Jones looked at the lamb chop, then back at Sidonie. "I'd like to stay," he said.

"... and they have a camp down by the water, though the diggers do come into the village for supplies and to drink. They go out in boats to Kennet's isle every day.

"And you say they're close to uncovering the doorway to the tomb?"

"Aye. I believe they'll find it this night as is."

Though the spring skies were heavy with dark clouds, the rain had so far held off. Following a worn track that went down beside a little creek, Indiana and Sidonie made their way toward the cliffs that towered above the long Firth of Murilan.

It was still and cool under the threatening clouds, but Indy found it oddly pleasant to be out in the rugged beauty of the highlands. The sound of sheep bleating, an occasional sea bird and the lilt and burble of the water to one side were all that broke the calm.

Indiana walked with shoulders forward, hands deep in his pockets and hat pulled low as though making his way into the wind. The last 18 hours had been eye-openers and he was not at all sure he had quite come to terms with the sequence of events. But he was still game to continue as long as there was a chance of beating Belloq at his own game.

"I wish you'd tell me more about exactly what it is we're going to DO, Sidonie. I mean, avenging spirits and so forth ..."

"Lambchops?" she suggested. "We're going to call upon forces unseen. A witch alone can summon them, but it takes a warlock for control." She hooked an arm through his, letting the tails of her shawl trail behind. "We'll raise hell, you and I," she told him.

Jones chuckled.

"But that's for tonight. Today I want to show you the lay of the land. You must see our battlefield in daylight. Turn here. We go down now."

They left the track and descended into a hollow that sloped steeply seaward. Ahead they could see the massive shoulders of rock that boarded the Firth, standing hard and dark against the omnipresent gray. Sea tang was strong in the air.

"Down this way," Sidonie directed, and they turned into a narrow defile still following the stream on its way to the sea.

The hills rose around them as they descended, picking their way over stones and slipping here and there on moss. Indiana took her hand, guiding Sidonie over the tricky terrain.

When they had dropped perhaps a hundred feet toward the level of the Firth, she tugged him to a halt. "Here," she whispered, "we can see them from here," and led him about a great slab of stone nearly barring their path. The stream splashed on over glistening rocks.

It was dark and then suddenly light again, as they emerged onto a narrow shelf cut into the cliff face.

Beside them, the stream sprung out over a stony lip and fell like a silver ribbon another hundred feet through the empty air and into the placid, reflecting surface of the loch.

"That's some drop," was Indy's laconic nod to the awesome spectacle.

"Aye, but it's the best place to observe," Sidonie replied.

Indy studied the scene before him. The Firth of Murilan, an arm of the sea, had cut its way into the rocky ghylls, and at the head of the great rift, directly beneath them, cupped by the cliffs, spread its water into the oval Loch Storthi. Perhaps a quarter mile out into the loch, an island rose out of the still water, its shoals bare and rocky. But upon its crest was a grassy sward no more than an acre wide and, upon that, a mound.

"'Tis Kennet's Isle you see there and his tomb beneath the mound," the woman said softly.

Indy could see several boats hauled up on the shore and what looked to be definite signs of archaeological activity about the mound.

He brought out his field glasses. Yes, freshly turned earth and digging equipment. And several figures working.

"His burial place is in the mound?"

"No. 'Tis a true vault. Beneath the earth. I've seen it in my dreams," said Sidonie. "The dreams that warned me that harm would come. The shade of M'Ardoch, perhaps, calling for me."

Jones turned to regard her thoughtfully. He said nothing, though, and when she continued to stare at the island, he too returned to his binocular scrutiny.

She went on, "They would not have him in the Church, of course, but he was a great man in his day. Rich and generous, a lord and a friend of kings. When he died, his folk laid him on yon isle with his gold about him, though it was long, long ago. And they say he put a curse upon all who would plunder his bones or his treasure."

Well, that fit, Indiana thought. A golden treasure with a curse on it would be just the thing to intrigue a man like Belloq. He put the glasses down.

"And tonight we summon the powers, the forces unseen to stop them, is that it?" he said quietly.

"Yes, tonight. They will broach the tomb by torchlight, but we will be there." She suddenly squeezed his hand and smiled up at him. "Tonight is Walpurgis Night. The forces will be strong. And at midnight it is the great Druid holy day, the May Day." Her eyes shone.

"Are you a Druid, too?" Jones asked.

"No, of course not." She seemed a bit shocked at the idea.

The unmistakable sound of a bolt-action levering a bullet into place alerted them, but not quickly enough.

"Well, if it ain't the Yank and his little piece!" came an unpleasantly familiar voice. "Spyin' out the land now, were you?"

Indiana looked around and into an ugly face, helped not at all in its quest for comeliness by a fresh whip-scar running aslant from eye to jaw.

His assailant of the night before stood braced against the hillside above the stream bed, his approach masked by the water, a carbine slung upon his shoulder and now trained at a mid-point between the archaeologist and the witch.

"It don't do to come nosin' around where you're not wanted, Yank," he drawled. "'Course the lady's welcome to stay, but I'm afraid," and he shook his head in mock pity, "I'll have to blow you ..."

"I wouldn't try that," Indiana warned. Great bluff, Jones, he thought with disgust. But there seemed nothing else to do, and something definitely had to be done. And quickly.

"Are you gonna put your whip up against my gun?" the man taunted.

Suddenly the witch clutched her breast and moaned, dropping to the ground. The Londoner's eyes darted to her for the briefest flicker and the barrel of the rifle wavered just a fraction, but it was enough.

Almost faster than the eye could register, faster certainly than his opponent could react, Indiana lashed the gun from his grip, jerking him off balance as the shoulder strap rasped across his chest.

Indy charged in, allowing him no opportunity to get another purchase on the rifle as he tackled the gunman and they reeled back cursing into the stream bed.

Jones' first thought was to get the carbine out of its owner's reach. Struggling among the stones he turned his head briefly. "Sidonie!" he demanded of the woman who had leapt to her feet at the first sound of his whip. "Get his gun!"

He turned back, only to be met with a shattering blow to the jaw. Indy staggered, light and darkness alternating red and black, but he held on, desperate for a grip on the gun they vied for.

Their feet slipping on the treacherous stones, the combatants went down heavily into the chill water.

"Indy! The cliff!"

Jones heard her frightened voice close behind him and the cold knowledge that another yard or two would see him over the edge into oblivion roused him to a greater effort.

Desperately, he drove an elbow into his attacker's face, twisting, twisting away from the icy carbine pressed against his chest.

His boot heel turned on the slippery stones. With a suppressed cry, Indiana stumbled back, open, vulnerable.

The gunman's eyes went wide. His hands, free at last, gripped the rifle. A leer pulled at his bloody lips.

Behind him, Sidonie grasped the rifle's strap and jerked.

Expecting to die, Indy watched uncomprehendingly as the rifle barrel slammed tight against the Londoner's chest, wedged in under his chin, and

wet fingers clawing as the magazine hit the trigger. It was not a pleasant sight.

The body slowly crumpled to the stream bed, head toward the lip of the fall, the clear waters carrying away the blood far down into the loch.

"Uh, thanks, Sidonie. That was inspired," Jones said as he got a bit unsteadily to his feet. He retrieved his hat and cast her an unreadable sideways glance as he bent for his whip, recoiling it at his hip. A remarkable woman, he thought. Remarkable and a bit startling.

"Every situation has its practical side," she replied quietly. "I didn't mean for him to die. Not like this, at least."

They eyed the dead man. "Just leave him here?" Jones asked.

Sidonie shrugged. "'Twas a hunting accident. He came hunting us and he had an accident."

"You really have a style all your own, witch lady," Indy murmured appreciatively.

"Come on, my new warlock friend. Not even witch-magic's protection against a cold, and there you stand, wet again. Seems as if you were drying out the first time I met you. The damp doctor." Her green eyes began to light with laughter and Indy felt a faint thrill of electric energy humming in his bones.

"I've spells to teach you before it's dark," she said. "We'll dry you out before the fire."

The oars creaked and water lapped against the sides of the skiff as Indiana Jones rowed the small craft across the still waters of the loch.

The early moon was westering now, shining fitfully out from the clouds over the sea. With his whip beside him and a head full of arcane spells he was only half-way sure of, Jones was as confident as a man could be under the circumstances.

Across from him, Sidonie sat, gathered into herself repeating the summoning phrase. About her neck she had hung a triskelion brooch, and she was dressed all in white, a-glow in the moonlight.

Well, your foot's in it now, Jones, the young professor told himself. You've seen her bring forth the Fire, and you've done it yourself, though how it works is anybody's guess. You better hope it's enough, or you're going to wish you'd curbed your retaliatory nature and left Belloq to his dig, charming witch or no charming witch.

He watched her as he pulled at the oars of one of Belloq's own boats and wondered what she dreamed of in the watches of the night.

"Fish," she said softly.

"Huh?"

"Shhh. There's big fish under the boat. I can feel them."

Jones looked ahead to the approaching island and saw torches flickering near the summit. Over the water came the sound of brisk commands issued in a voice he recognised well. Indiana's mouth tightened and the look in his deep-set eyes became hard and cold.

"We'd better hurry with that magic," he cautioned.

"All in good time," she assured him. "None shall leave this island alive tonight, save by the Power" own will. The summons is given.""

Her soft voice speaking calmly of imminent death gave Indy a chill or was it the electric charge tingling in his limbs, the feeling of barely suppressed force?

The keel ground against stone. Jones inboarded the oars and stepped out to give Sidonie a hand. "Come, Mistress," he said, and immediately wondered why.

They gained the grassy promontory high above the loch and keeping well out of the ring of torchlight, they watched as the final yards of earth were removed and the ancient stone door to Kennet M'Ardoch's tomb was revealed.

It stood at the foot of the mound at the end of a narrow ramp cut into the earth a slab of granite with a triskelion graven on its face.

"Ah! Magnificent!" exclaimed Rene Belloq. He gestured for the torches to be brought closer and Indiana could see him fingering the design on the door.

The vibrations in his body grew stronger. Beside him Sidonie sighed as though she, too, felt the inexorable approach of supernatural force.

Belloq and his henchmen, unaware, continued to work at the door.

Slowly it began to open and their torches wavered in the icy blast which escaped Kennet M'Ardoch's tomb. There were chattered oaths and several of the looters began to back away, only to be halted by Belloq's sharp rebuke. "Follow me with the torches!" he ordered and stepped into the darkness beyond the door.

"Now, Demon Master," said Sidonie, and Jones at last gave himself up to the moment and exerted the force which she had given him for this night.

"I summon thee, wraiths and spirits of the void. Arkan ta-rath'en!" intoned the witch.

"I command you, wraiths and spirits of the void. Arkan ta-voss'en!"

Steadily Indiana and Sidonie walked toward the ramp and the glowing rectangle of the doorway; and as they did, the earth began to tremble and a host of shadows, red-flickering, arose from the ground and swirled about them like smokes.

Jones felt a rush throughout his body that both possessed him and was his to command. He felt invulnerable and invincible, a Demon Master, indeed.

"Arkan ta-voss'en!" he chanted again and more red shadows burst from the earth at his feet. The trembling in the ground escalated.

Despite their employer's furious imprecations, several of Belloq's men dropped their torches and dashed for the door to the tomb only to cry out in terror and reel back into the dank stone chamber as the army of shadows rushed past Indy and Sidonie and drove them down.

"The Blackness hold thee, no more! Fang and claw and tooth and eye, come forth!" Sidonie commanded. "Kanseket-ran!"

"Kanseket-baradnor!" A crash of thunder accented Indy's words, and even he was astonished at what manner of creatures began to emerge from the swirling smokes.

"Sidonie," he began, but she stopped him with a touch of her hand.

"They'll avenge now," she whispered.

They'd reached the entrance to the tomb. The interior was lit with fire and a sinister luminescence which seemed to ooze down the walls like seepage; and the light showed them a scene of breath-taking splendor and carnage amid all.

The stuff of nightmares was rampaging about Kennet M'Ardoch's burial vault over piles of gold and heaps of jeweled things. A fleshless skull with eyes of flame hovered in the center of the room, shrieking at the top of its absent lungs, and a score of rat-like beings with huge fangs ran up and down the walls chittering and drooling. Things of bone and hair with single lidless eyes moaned and reeled crazily in the wavering light. Something with tentacles rolled nastily in one corner, emitting a terrible stench while bats and spiders seemed to multiply out of nothing into clusters and phalanxes of hairy legs and wings.

"My God! It's Halloween!" Jones shouted above the clamour.

"No. Just Walpurgis Night!"

The London mob Belloq had recruited were dissolving into gibbering terror as each one's private nightmare materialized before his eyes and reached greedy fingers for his face. Their screams were to no avail as the ghosties and ghoulies lived up to their reputation. As a child, Indiana had heard the cautionary charge, "The goblins will get you if you don't watch out and take you underground." He'd assumed the subterranean reference was to tunnels or caves, but he discovered otherwise as the demons retreated with their captives beneath the earth. He was rather glad he and Sidonie had skipped supper.

Belloq, however, looked harried but self-possessed. "Jones!" He cursed and his eyes glinted in the fire. "I might have known it would be you!"

"I came with a friend, Rene."

"Oh, yes, the little witch." He regarded Sidonie briefly as though she were of small consequence.

"Not too little, desecrator!" the witch retorted. "I have stopped your evil here."

"Hah!" he sneered. "You think these ... theatrics can stop me from taking what I came for?" And they saw then what he held a magnificent

gold chalice, two-handed, carved and inset with precious stones. A royal treasure.

"The Cup of Carmaeg," Indy said softly.

"Yes, Dr Jones, the legendary Carmaegillion. And I'm leaving with it now. Try to stop me if you think you can." Belloq laughed arrogantly and headed for the door.

"Kanseket baradnor!" Indy said sharply, almost before he realized what he was doing. At once, Belloq was surrounded with wraiths of flame and all manner of grotesqueries.

Then from out of the midst of the horror, he laughed again and shouted, "Angrim!"

Sidonie gasped.

"What is it?" Indy whispered.

"He's got the Ring of Angrim the Demon Quencher. It's the only thing that even slows them down! Oh, damnit, I'm going to fail!"

Even as she spoke, the demonic host parted, raging but warded off by the power of the ring Belloq now held aloft upon his left hand.

"Do you think me stupid enough to enter a tomb on Walpurgis Night without protection? You, Dr Jones, are the cynic, not I! Adieu!" And he began to back out, the Carmaegillion tucked under one arm, his other fist extended before him as a man might cover his retreat from snakes with a burning brand.

He had reached the doorway when a tremendous convulsion wracked the earth and a searing bolt of lightning struck downward through the tomb, cleaving the still-howling skull, which exploded with a thunderous boom.

Belloq halted, startled, as though he could not move.

Sidonie gasped again. "Quickly! The time! The time!"

A look at Indy's watch showed them it was a few seconds past midnight.

"Oh, I never knew," the witch whispered. "I never knew."

"Knew what? Knew what?" Jones was rapidly losing his grasp on the context of their situation. He was even a bit dizzy.

But whatever explanation, if any, Sidonie would have offered him was cut short by a voice which seemed to echo off the walls and out of the earth.

"By the Oak!" it roared. "Grave robbers!"

"Only one of us." Sidonie put it bravely in a voice which sounded small indeed in the reverberations of Kennet M'Ardoch's shout from beyond the grave.

There was silence. The ghouls and demons were wavering in and out of corporality.

"I never knew he was a Druid," the witch whispered.

"Well, what did you think he was a Presbyterian?"

Sidonie shot him a half-lidded glance.

"Which one?" roared the voice again.

"I am Sidonie, your thirty-seventh great granddaughter," she spoke up. "Beside me is the Demon Master, Indy."

"And the short one with the Carmaegillion?"

For the first time in years, Rene Belloq had absolutely nothing to say.

"TRANSGRESSOR!" M'Ardoch's furious shout was so loud the walls trembled. The Cup of Carmaeg fell to the floor with a clank as Belloq keeled over unconscious.

"Now, girl," the voice continued in a less strident tone, "you've finished your task, you and the warlock. Begone!"

"Kennet!"

Jones pulled at her arm but she continued, "Indy the Demon Master deserves something of you for his efforts!"

The archaeologist groaned at her impetuosity. He was almost beyond shock now and weary, and all he wanted in the whole world was to be away. And here she was, begging recompense for him from a Scots witch dead over twelve hundred years ...

"... the Carmaegillion," he heard her saying through a fog of weariness. "The Cup of Carmaeg for Indy."

"My Cup? I saved that, lassie, not yon warlock!" rumbled the sepulchral voice.

"Your generosity is legendary, Lord! 'Tis a trinket set beside all your hoard. A High Priest of the Druids maun show his true spirit on the highest of days!"

The dizziness was becoming worse. Indy felt the room begin to swing around him and his knees buckled. He staggered. Would she never shut up?

"My Cup, eh ..." he heard and either the voice was getting much softer or he was more than halfway to unconsciousness. And then it didn't matter anymore, because it dawned and the sun was streaming through Sidonie's bedroom window.

Indiana rolled over, muzzy, warm and comfortable in the mammoth feather bed. Two feet away, catching the oblique morning light and giving it back in a thousand rich reflections was the Carmaegillion.

Indy's eyes opened all the way and he lay there for a long moment trying to remember and, failing that, imagine how the glorious thing had come to be there.

"Sidonie," he said experimentally.

"Yes," came the soft reply from behind his shoulder.

"Sidonie, where did this thing come from?"

"What, this?" she said innocently, tossing an arm over his hip. "Why, that's a very natural consequence of sleeping soundly all night ..."

"The Cup, Sidonie."

"Oh, that? We won that last night in the all-village Foxtrot Marathon, don't you remember? Now, this other intriguing thing ..."

Indy gave up. He turned to face the witch beside him, all disheveled hair and teasing green eyes, and they traded smug grins.

"I've got something you want," she said, glancing at the Cup over his shoulder.

"And I've got something you want," he replied with appropriate emphasis. "Suppose we could work out a trade?"

"Oh, I'm sure something could be arranged," Sidonie agreed, snuggling closer.

"... the tomb was sealed before dawn and my ancestor sleeps again in peace. We rode home on the wind, you and I." Indiana looked up at that but Sidonie only smiled. "And the Frenchman was taken down to Lyle by van to the hospital there. He suffered a bad bump on the head when he fell. It's likely he won't recall much."

Indiana shook his head. He was still quite unclear as to exactly what had transpired when he and Sidonie had entered the burial vault, though he recalled well enough the "sharing of power" on the hearthrug and the dead hunter high up by the waterfall, not to mention the spells and incantations.

He held up his hand for silence. "Cantrek," he said. "Lakmonar bel-ta'en." Then he concentrated on the hem of Sidonie's plain umber tunic.

Bees hummed above the early spring flowers and a butterfly danced lightly over the forsynthia and larkspur. Aside from those, nothing move at all in Sidonie's back garden moved.

He looked up, puzzled.

Sidonie smiled gently. "It was only for a short time. Like a perfume, it wears off."

"But it all happened ... the ghosts, the demons. Why can't I remember?"

She shrugged, hands spread across her lap. "It's like great exercise it wears you out if you're not used to it. But I promise you, it all took place just as I've said. And the Carmaegillion is yours with Kennet M'Ardoch's compliments and mine."

That, at least, was solid and substantial. Indiana smiled at her with easy affection. "This has been one hell of a holiday."

"How soon must you go back to America?"

"I've got a week, maybe ten days, before I have to be back."

"And you don't care to fish."

The professor shook his head.

"Well," Sidonie said, "there's a fine Spring Festival over at Helmscross, caber-tosses and large woolly sheep, homemade cheeses and mince tarts and not a care in the world. Spring wine." The sun was deliciously warm and her eyes were merry and edged with gold.

"I think I'd like that," Jones decided.

"Good, my tall and handsome Farisee!" Sidonie laughed. "And how do you suppose," she eyed him speculatively, "how do you suppose you'd look in kilts?"

END

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