# THE HOUND

IN MY TORTURED EARS THERE SOUNDS UNCEASINGLY A NIGHTMARE WHIRRING AND FLAPPING, AND A FAINT, DISTANT BAYING AS OF SOME GIGANTIC HOUND.



ST. JOHN IS A MANGLED CORPSE; I ALONE KNOW WHY...



ST. JOHN AND I HAD FOLLOWED ENTHUSIASTICALLY EVERY AESTHETIC AND INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT WHICH PROMISED RESPITE FROM OUR DEVASTATING ENNUI.



...THE ABHORRED PRACTICE OF GRAVE-ROBBING.



IT WAS A SECRET ROOM, FAR, FAR UNDERGROUND; WHERE HUGE WINGED DAEMONS CARVEN OF BASALT AND ONYX VOMITED FROM WIDE GRINNING MOUTHS WEIRD GREEN AND ORANGE LIGHT...



...IN A MULTITUDE OF INLAID EBONY CABINETS REPOSED THE MOST INCREDIBLE AND UNIMAGINABLE VARIETY OF TOMB-LOOT...



...THE TALES OF ONE BURIED FOR FIVE CENTURIES, WHO HAD HIMSELF BEEN A GHOUL IN HIS TIME AND HAD STOLEN A POTENT THING FROM A MIGHTY SEPULCHRE.



...THE FAINT DEEP-TONED BAYING OF SOME GIGANTIC HOUND WHICH WE COULD NEITHER SEE NOR DEFINITELY PLACE.



...A ROTTING OBLONG BOX CRUSTED WITH MINERAL DEPOSITS FROM THE LONG UNDISTURBED GROUND.



THE SKELETON, THOUGH CRUSHED IN PLACES BY THE JAWS OF THE THING THAT HAD KILLED IT, HELD TOGETHER WITH SURPRISING FIRMNESS...



IT WAS THE ODDLY CONVENTIONALISED FIGURE OF A CROUCHING WINGED HOUND, OR SPHINX WITH A SEMI-CANINE FACE...



...ON THE BOTTOM, LIKE A MAKER'S SEAL, WAS GRAVEN A GROTESQUE AND FORMIDABLE SKULL.



...THE GHASTLY SOUL-SYMBOL OF THE CORPSE-EATING CULT OF INACCESSIBLE LENG, IN CENTRAL ASIA.



SEIZING THE GREEN JADE OBJECT, WE GAVE A LAST GLANCE AT THE BLEACHED AND CAVERN-EYED FACE OF ITS OWNER AND CLOSED UP THE GRAVE AS WE FOUND IT.



...AS WE SAILED THE NEXT DAY AWAY FROM HOLLAND TO OUR HOME, WE THOUGHT WE HEARD THE FAINT DISTANT BAYING...



LESS THAN A WEEK AFTER OUR RETURN TO ENGLAND, STRANGE THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN.



WE READ MUCH IN ALHAZRED'S NECRONOMICON ABOUT ITS PROPERTIES... AND WERE DISTURBED BY WHAT WE READ. THEN TERROR CAME.



...I BADE THE KNOCKER ENTER, BUT WAS ANSWERED ONLY BY A SHRILL LAUGH. THERE WAS NO ONE IN THE CORRIDOR.



IT WAS THAT NIGHT THAT THE FAINT, DISTANT BAYING OVER THE MOOR BECAME TO US A CERTAIN AND DREADED REALITY.



FOUR DAYS LATER, WHILST WE WERE BOTH IN THE HIDDEN MUSEUM, THERE CAME A LOW, CAUTIOUS SCRATCHING AT THE SINGLE DOOR...



...THE APPARENTLY DISEMBODIED CHATTER WAS BEYOND A DOUBT IN THE DUTCH LANGUAGE.



ON OCTOBER 29 WE FOUND IN THE SOFT EARTH UNDERNEATH THE LIBRARY WINDOW A SERIES OF FOOTPRINTS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE.



...THE HORDES OF GREAT BATS WHICH HAUNTED THE OLD MANOR-HOUSE IN UNPRECEDENTED AND INCREASING NUMBERS.



...A WHIR OF WINGS AND... A VAGUE BLACK CLOUDY THING SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE RISING MOON.



THE AMULET—THAT DAMNED THING—.



I BURIED HIM THE NEXT MIDNIGHT IN ONE OF OUR NEGLECTED GARDENS...



...A WIDE NEBULOUS SHADOW SWEEPING FROM MOUND TO MOUND...



...MADE SHOCKING OBEISANCES BEFORE THE ENSHRINED AMULET OF GREEN JADE.



...TAKING WITH ME THE AMULET AFTER DESTROYING BY FIRE AND BURIAL THE REST OF THE IMPIOUS COLLECTION...



BUT AFTER THREE NIGHTS I HEARD THE BAYING AGAIN...



...I SAW A BLACK SHAPE OBSCURE ONE OF THE REFLECTIONS OF THE LAMPS IN THE WATER.



THE NEXT DAY I CAREFULLY WRAPPED THE GREEN JADE AMULET AND SAILED FOR HOLLAND. WHAT MERCY I MIGHT GAIN BY RETURNING THE THING TO ITS SILENT, SLEEPING OWNER I KNEW NOT...



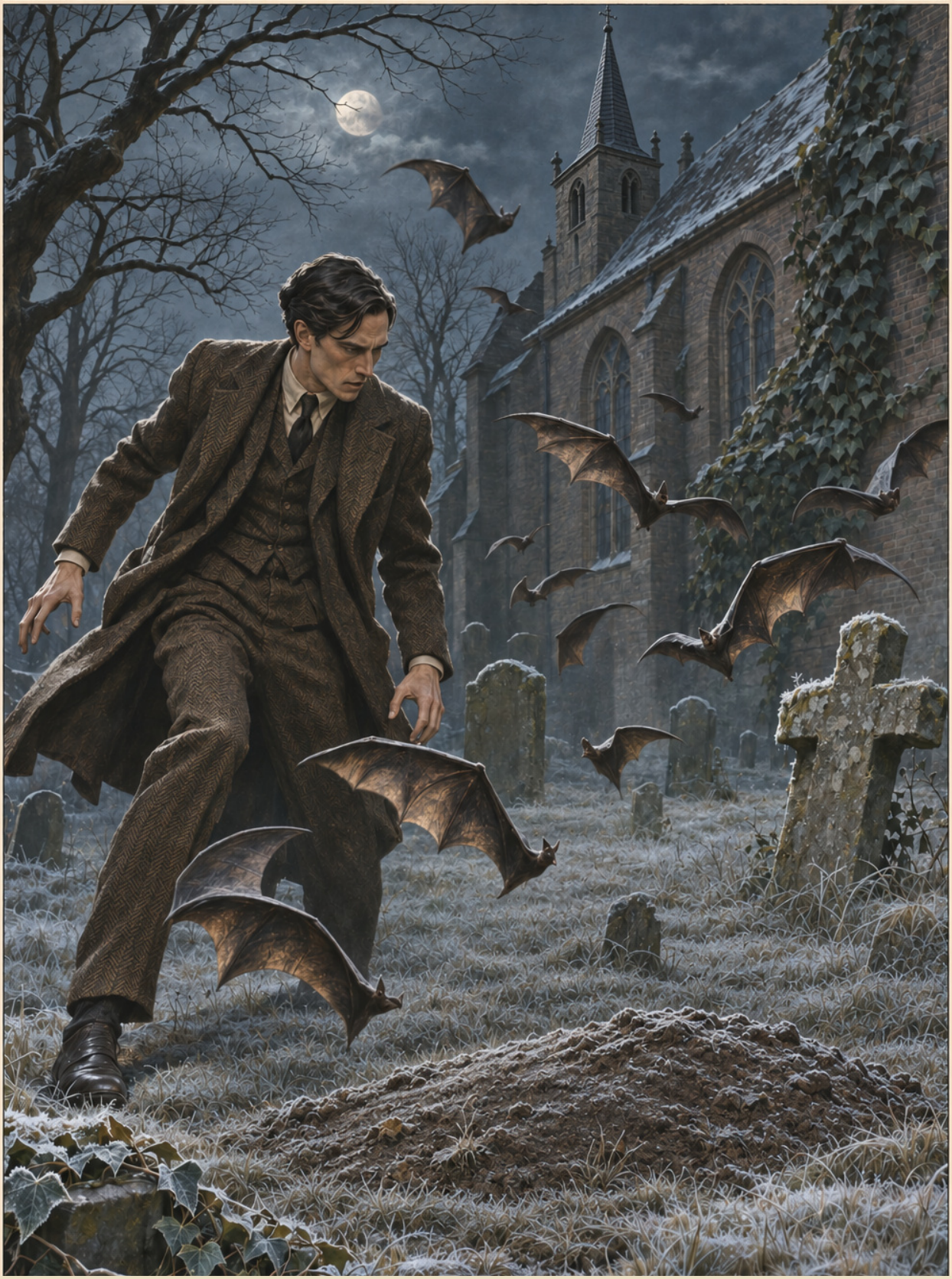
...AT AN INN IN ROTTERDAM, I DISCOVERED THAT THIEVES HAD DESPOILED ME OF THIS SOLE MEANS OF SALVATION.



IN A SQUALID THIEVES' DEN AN ENTIRE FAMILY HAD BEEN TORN TO SHREDS BY AN UNKNOWN THING WHICH LEFT NO TRACE...



THE BAYING WAS VERY FAINT NOW, AND IT CEASED ALTOGETHER AS I APPROACHED THE ANCIENT GRAVE I HAD ONCE VIOLATED...



...I ATTACKED THE HALF-FROZEN SOD WITH A DESPERATION PARTLY MINE AND PARTLY THAT OF A DOMINATING WILL OUTSIDE MYSELF.



...A LEAN VULTURE DARTED DOWN OUT OF THE COLD SKY... UNTIL I KILLED HIM WITH A BLOW OF MY SPADE.



FINALLY I REACHED THE ROTTING OBLONG BOX AND REMOVED THE DAMP NITROUS COVER. THIS IS THE LAST RATIONAL ACT I EVER PERFORMED.



...THE BONY THING MY FRIEND AND I HAD ROBBED; NOT CLEAN AND PLACID AS WE HAD SEEN IT THEN... LEERING SENTIENTLY AT ME WITH PHOSPHORESCENT SOCKETS...



...IT GAVE FROM THOSE GRINNING JAWS A DEEP, SARDONIC BAY AS OF SOME GIGANTIC HOUND... IT HELD IN ITS GORY, FILTHY CLAW THE LOST AND FATEFUL AMULET OF GREEN JADE...



...I MERELY SCREAMED AND RAN AWAY IDIOTICALLY, MY SCREAMS SOON DISSOLVING INTO PEALS OF HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER.



...THE STEALTHY WHIRRING AND FLAPPING OF THOSE ACCURSED WEB-WINGS CIRCLES CLOSER AND CLOSER... I SHALL SEEK WITH MY REVOLVER THE OBLIVION WHICH IS MY ONLY REFUGE FROM THE UNNAMED AND UNNAMABLE.

