

The Devil's Revenge

William Lewis Lockwood

Written by founder Lockwood and read before the Miami Chapter on June 3, 1856, *The Devil's Revenge* recalls tongue-in-cheek the stealing of the earlier ritual and the culprits who perpetuated the crime. In the first volume of his *History*, Joseph Nate notes that the characters were easily identifiable: Lockwood was W. LeRoy, Caldwell was J. Montgomery, Runkle was Fillibuster, and Jordan was Stumpy; the Rev. Dr. John W. Hall, president of Miami from 1854-66 was Dr. S.E.L.F. Importance.¹

The play focuses on the stealing of documents from students by Cameleon and Snake, and the punishment they then had coming to them.

THE DEVIL'S REVENGE A Mock-Heroic Tragedy

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Satanus, *Prince of Darkness*

J. W. S.Cameleon, *Minister Plenipotentiary to Earth*

J. Snake, Jr., *Minister Plenipotentiary to Earth*

W. LeRoy, *Student*

J. Montgomery, *Student*

Ben Fillibuster, *Student*

Walter Stumpy, *Student*

Mrs. Widow, *Boardinghouse Keeper*

Rosa Smith, *her sister*

Dr. S.E.L.F. Importance, *President of College*

Prof. Borous, *Professor of same*

ACT I

SCENE I

(College campus)

(Enter Snake and Cameleon arm in arm)

Cameleon:

Within my laboring breast, there long has sat
Confined by fear, and like to some wild beast
Bound down by chains, yet raging at its own
Impotency to harm, a monster hate, which
Ever and anon disturbs my rest and
Loudly calls for food. I am like him of
Whom the poet speaks—this bitter hate is as

¹ Nate, *History*, Vol. I, pp. 239-253

It were consuming me. From out my fertile
Brain comes many a scheme, by following which
I can obtain the food, wherewith this monster
Passion might be soothed; but then, alas, they're
Fraught with danger great; which ever does
Rise up before mine eyes, as some gaunt spectre
Stalks into the sight of midnight reveller
And fills his coward heart with fear.
But, my dear Snake! Has't not within thy
Heart some fondled hate, which thou would'st
Fain let loose, to work its harmful path ?
What ? Dost hesitate ? Come! Unfold thyself
That I may read thy thoughts as in a book.

Snake:

Are we alone ? I almost fear to ope my
Mouth, lest e'en the trees which now do lift
Their leafless branches in the chilly breeze,
Should list the words I speak, and with
Exaggeration great repeat them unto others.
But since you ask, I now will speak
What long I've wished to tell. An enemy I have
Within these college walls, who, if he be not stopp'd
Will circumvent the many plans I've laid
And by appearance fair, will rob me of mine
Heritage and here for ever he will blast
Mine honored name and cause my power
To wane and pass away, not like the Moon
To come again. Can we but manufacture
With invention rare, some plot, by which this
Interloper we may harm, I'll brave the flames
Of Pluto's hottest hell and make this earth
To serve instead of Heaven. Can I
But steal that bond which now he holds,
I think myself secure from further harm.

Cameleon:

Thy tongue doth speak an answer to my wish
And since we both are of the same intent possess'd
With ready hands to work whate'er we will,
In the confusion we may triumph still.
And now to them we'll give a grasping hand
And seem most friendly to this hated band.
Then when they least expect the blow and

Look upon us with a kindly eye, we'll work
 Revenge, and while they groan in agony
 Or curse in anger wild, we'll sit in secret
 Close beside, and o'er their misery gloat, as
 Does the miser o'er his hoarded pile. (*College bell rings.*)
 But now the bell does ring. When next we meet
 I, some wise plan will unto thee impart.

Snake:

And so will I. Now let us part, in hopes
 That we may soon our full desires appease.

SCENE II

(*Street near Mrs. Widow's*)

(*Enter Cameleon and Snake*)

Snake:

Friend John hast thou with certainty found out
 The whereabouts of this LeRoy, who unto us
 Has done such deeds of monstrous wrong, and
 That infernal boy, who once did spurn an
 Invitation, which my brother unto him
 Did give, to close unite with us in those
 Strong bonds, which make a college life
 A life of pleasantness?

Cameleon:

I know where they now are.
 Montgomery, who seeks himself to raise into
 The good opinion of the Hall—e'en if my tongue
 Does speak these words, which come reluctant
 From my mouth—does follow out a course
 Of regular attendance and performance prompt.
 And by this means he will so firmly fix
 Himself in the esteem of all old foggy men,
 That soon he will advance so far beyond
 The limits of my power, as to o'erthrow my
 Influence, and make my hopes to be as things of air.
 In good old Union Hall, this dog does ope
 His mouth, to utter words of senseless meaning.
 His chum LeRoy, now sleeps in Glendale's room
 And dreams of happiness and joy to come.
 But yet to make assurance doubly sure
 I have, to watch their motions, set two youths,

Whose very fear will lend them wings
To bear us tidings of their coming here.

Snake:

Knowest thou
The house wherein they room ?

Cameleon:

In truth
I do not, but 'tis somewhere near.
Do thou unto yon house betake thyself
And there find out where Mrs. Widow lives.

Snake:

That is the Foster house, where I am known.
Dame Foster's daughter knows full well
My face for she a member is of that
Humbugging yet mysterious clan to which
You know that I belong.

Cameleon:

Well I will go. Now stand thou here
Enveloped in my shawl, while I thy
Cloak will take to hide my face from
Too close scrutiny—I will inquire.

(Crosses street to Mrs. Foster's, and after a moment comes back)

Snake:

What success?

Cameleon:

I find that Mrs. Widow in the house above
Does live, while on the comer opposite
Dwells Capt. Bluff where rooms Walt Stumpy.
Where dost thou think is to be found
The document we seek?

Snake:

The other night
I did espy LeRoy with this much prized
Paper, firmly held beneath his arm.
So let us first unto Mrs. Widow's go
When we without a doubt shall find
That which we seek ?

The Founding of Sigma Chi

SCENE II

*(Mrs. Widow's home)**(Mrs. W. and her sister, Rosa Smith, sitting before fire)*

Mrs. Widow:

My sister dear, oft have wondered why thou
 Still doth live in single blessedness.
 If thou could'st know the joys of wedded life,
 How well it is, in cold and storm of life,
 To know the protection which there is in some
 Good man, and pass the hours in joy
 And pleasure sweet; to have someone
 Who would relieve you of the cares and
 Troubles of the world; methinks that thou
 Would'st soon desert thy present state
 And by submission gain a better fate—
 But hark! Someone is knocking at the door.
 I'll go and see who waits without.
(Opens door discovering Cameleon and Snake standing)

Cameleon:

I would inquire if Will LeRoy is in?

Mrs. W.:

I think he is not.

Cameleon:

Then we will go
 Into his room and wait until he comes
 For much we wish to see him.
(Open the door and go upstairs)

Rosa Smith:

There are many reasons which do all conspire
 To make me what I am. I will not
 (For the sake of truth) conceal the least from you.
 But never yet has a man to me unclosed
 The portals of his heart. And, therefore
 Am I thus compelled
 To "waste 'my' sweetness on the desert air."
 I oft have looked upon those two young men
 Who room above, and thought that I should like
 To have them whisper me of love.

Mrs. W.:

And so have I. A secret now I will
 To thee impart, and never must thou slip

It to a soul. A thin partition as thou know'st
Full well, divides my room from theirs.
In it there is a hole, through which loft
Have gazed, with swifter beat of blood
Within my veins, as they did study or converse,
And wondering must wooden walls forever be
Between my widowed self and longed companionship.
This place, indeed, I henceforth mean
With thee to share, that we may together
Keep our silent tryst with love.—
But now methinks those youths have waxed
Impatient for, lo, here they come!

(Door opens and C. and S, appear)

Cameleon:

We have concluded not to longer wait
If thou wilt say to them that Mr.Jones
Did call, we will be much obliged. *(Exeunt omnes.)*

ACT II

SCENE I

(Main Street, night)

(Enter LeRoy and Montgomery)

LeRoy:

Well John, how didst thou do at Hall ?
Dids't thou unto the students of this place
Speak words of mighty power, or tickle
Their keen fancies with thy dullest puns ?

Montgomery:

Of course, I did, but sorry am to say
That when I made a pun, I pun-ished was,
But I did that which none but smartest wit
Could do. A member unto me did come, and
Ask the recipe by which I made my whisky punch
No sooner had he asked, than I, a punch
Did give him in the ribs; with that he left.

(LeRoy chases and strikes him)

Stop! Roomey, stop! For I did nothing mean
In it. I think that really it was clever.
But come! Let's to our room perambulate
And seek our virtuous couch, for I confess
That I, for one, am sleepy. *(They enter room.)*

LeRoy:

And now I will unlock my trunk and from
It take those horrid sums, which so perplex our brains.

(Opens trunk.)

By Jove, some person has by means, or fair, or foul,
Had entrance to my trunk and with a prying
Eye, has read my letters. See! they are all jumbled
Carelessly together, as if thrown down in haste.

Montgomery:

Look! Look! I pray you for that precious bond! -

LeRoy *(unlocking a box)*:

All gone by God! Now d---d be he who has
This deed of villainy committed. Great God!
Are all men thieves? E'en here in learning's halls
Where honor, virtue and integrity should rule supreme
Shall base crime come and with foul
Plague spots stamp this classic soil ?

Montgomery:

By heavens I swear never to rest content,
Nor cease my efforts to find out the man
Who has the deed of darkness done, until
I find him out, and fill my soul
With vengeance sweet. And when I find him out
I will his black hair grasp, and then if
He gets loose, he well may say that his
Escape most hairbreadth was. *(LeRoy hits him.)*
And now I beg
That you will cease to strike me on the head
For know you not that 'tis a *Caput*-al offence.
But come, let's go and find Walt Stumpy
And also tell the great Ben Fillibuster.

SCENE II

(Fillibuster's Room. Fillibuster and Stumpy eating oysters)

(Enter Montgomery and LeRoy)

Montgomery:

My good and much respected friend. I pray you
Now to bottle up your wrath-nor put it in such
Bottles as the Scriptures say men put not their wine,
Which burst from very age. Now bottle it I say, and
So that you may stop its further vent I pray
You place a stop-per in the neck. This very

Night some one did come and open break the
Box, wherein did lie our dearest property.

Stumpy:

Now, you do lie!

Montgomery:

Yet if I lie, that precious bond lies not
Within the box. It and all else is gone.

Fillbuster (*starting up and cocking a pistol*) :

Heavens! Is it truth you tell? My God!
I cannot speak. My brain feels dizzy—Vengeance!
Ah yes! Vengeance is sweet! Sweet! Sweet
As the first dawn of love's bright morn.
Sweet! as the brief kiss, that's snatched
From the unguarded maid. By Jove, I swear
That 'tis as sweet as life itself. I feel
That James Snake, Jr., did the deed, and-
If he even dares to hint a word to me, I'll
Send a bullet to his craven heart.
This is my oath!

LeRoy:

Come, Ben,
Restrain thy loud expressed rage
Or else you'll all but aid the sacred cause.
We must not tell our loss to all, until we
Sure have found the cursed one who has
This deed of villainy devised and done.

Stumpy:

Now, Ben, do stop this foolishness. Thy looks
Betoken thee not well. Thine eyes are red as if
Thy read-y Inn had full incited you to
Seek red-ress.

Fitlibuster:

Ha! Ha! Like when with anger filled
Thou soughtest red-ress from that red-outable
Red-headed music man.
Now let us call upon the other boys and
Tell them of this strange calamity.

SCENE III

*(President's room)**(Montgomery, Fillibuster, LeRoy, President, and Borous)*

Dr. Importance:

With pain and anguish deep my heart was filled
 When thou didst tell me of the wrong which hath
 Been done. I since have thought that provocation
 Great may have been given to some, the which has
 Raised a cherished hate and longing for revenge.
 Is it not so ?

Prof. Borous *(aside)*:

Oh, hypocrite!

LeRoy:

'Tis not!

Prof. Borous:

I long have thought that some did linger
 Here whose presence we could well excuse. And
 Now that thought has grown into a certainty.
 Is there not some whom thou dost suspect ?

LeRoy:

There is.

Prof. Borous:

Then tell us whom and wherefore

Dr. Importance *(interrupting)*:

I think—with all due deference to thy learn'd
 Opinion—that it is wrong to mention names
 Till circumstances shall have proved the crime.

Prof. Borous:

But knowing whom to watch, we may find
 Out the perpetrators of the robbery.

Montgomery:

We know of things that do point out the
 Ones who did this!

Fillibuster:

They do to me. For few there are who would
 Engage in such a task, and evidence
 Does point to them with almost certainty.

Prof. Borous:

Then tell us!

LeRoy:

Since you desire it, I will state that I suspect
 As principal Jas. Snake and aiding him

Cameleon. To me with great minuteness
Mrs. Foster gave description of the two, who on
That night did ask where Mrs. Widow lived.
With this the story of the Widow corresponds exact.

Dr. Importance:

You see we can do naught from this.

Prof. Borous:

'Tis true, and much I fear that they've
Escaped the punishment which is their due
But rest assured, though they do 'scape it here
They'll suffer it—beyond the grave. (Exeunt omnes.)

ACT III

SCENE I

(Room handsomely furnished)

(Cameleon dying)

Cameleon:

Who tells me this is death *(looking around)*. Ye lie!
I will not die. Ah ye may shake your
Claws at me, for I do heed ye not.
Off! Off! Ye fiends. I will not
Come to ye. I did not steal a bond!
Who says I did—None saw me—Ye cannot
Prove it. Why do you stand and grin
With hellish glee—Keep off—your hot
Breath strangles me.—Off!—off! (Dies.)

SCENE II

(Pandemonium)

Karnx *(appears)* :

To you, oh mighty King of Hell, I would announce
That as I kept my watch, beside the gates
I heard a feeble knock, and looking forth
Did see a soul, that had such downcast
Look, as if he had committed some
Great harm unto thy sway.
His name Cameleon is. Shall I unlock
The solid gates and welcome him to Hell ?

Satanus:

We long have waited for his coming.
Swing wide the gates upon their hinges
And in strong irons lead him hither .

(In a moment spirit of Cameleon appears in chains, surrounded by guards)

Right welcome art thou, minister. Now
Tell us why thou has so long delayed
Thy coming home, where warmest friends
Await thee. Thou sayest naught ? Then
Will I judge thee/ Thou knowest that when
I sent thee upon earth to work my will
I did command thee so to do, that thou
Should'st make me many friends.
Hast thou done this ? I answer, No,
A careless servant thou hast been.
Thou once did steal a bond and by
That act did turn to virtue many men
Who else, would have been my friends.
But not alone; with him who helped thee
Thou shalt suffer punishment.
Ejected from this place, ye both
Shall wander on through all Eternity
Nor ever find a resting place.
And all alone in boundless silence
Of the realms of space, ye both
With prayer shall supplicate the
Lord of Hell, to open wide his doors
And let you in. *But all in vain!*

END

