



## *Stags' Leap*

### THE MONKEY IN HIS BOUDOIR

The monkey lived for a number of years inside and outside like a cat. He wasn't housetrained but that's the way it was in the world of Fred Grange as a child growing up in the manor house at Stags' Leap.

One of the imp's favorite places was the kitchen because of the long pull chains which served to open and close vents in the ceiling. A half a dozen such chains proved irresistible for swinging, which is of course what the monkey loved to do. One day a chain broke and he fell, butt down, into a frying pan on the stove. Fred's grandmother had to chase the mortified animal about the house until she could coax him into her lap and apply butter to the offended parts.

But these were things that happened when Fred was young. His family left Stags' Leap when he turned fourteen. During the era of the monkey he was only a toddler of five, and the monkey stories were favorites that he often heard repeated.

What he does remember is King Tut. King Tut was the biggest Great Dane you ever saw, the size of a house to the young and adoring Fred. The massive beast was gentle, but his bark was like a lion roaring. Fred remembers the odd way he used to lie in front of the fireplace in the living room, with his feet tucked underneath his body in imitation of a massively alert cat. Fred would crawl all over his soft animal warmth, and when he was teething, he would chew on the dog's ears. King Tut treated the boy as tenderly as a nanny, and would never bite back, merely whimpering as the boy gummed.

During his daily rounds of the living quarters, the monkey would often sit outside the upstairs window in a tree that used to be there, fascinated by the activities of the people inside. He would remain there for hours at a time. It was the guest room, first left at the top of the stairs, and probably had the most variety of human specimens with the steady



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stream of guests the Granges hosted, both personally and professionally. The bed was against the east wall. A dressing table and mirror faced south, away from the window.

Her name was Emabel Kaine, as best Fred can remember. Or was it Alice Laird, he wonders. Anyway, she was a family friend who was staying the night. She was at the dressing table when the monkey must have caught sight of her from his perch outside the opened window.

When she left to go down to dinner, the monkey entered the room and seated himself at the mirror and proceeded to apply to his handsome face the powder, lipstick, and rouge. Upon her return, after dining well, followed by a boisterous game of Mah Jong which the Granges often played, she was greeted in her own bedroom by a being with an amateur paint job, a clumsy clown or a mocking devil at first glance.

We can surmise that she screamed or laughed roundly, depending on her nature, which would have brought the household to see her charming visitor, now himself alarmed by all the wide eyes and looking for the lap of grandmother to protect him from all this startling attention and restore him to his natural state. We need look no further for the original inspiration in a tradition of elaborate Mardi Gras and Halloween festivities which are hosted in the manor house to this day.

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Stags' Leap Winery 6150 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94556

<http://www.stagsleap.com> [stagsinfo@BeringerBlass.com](mailto:stagsinfo@BeringerBlass.com)

(800) 640-LEAP (5327) (707) 944-1303 Fax: (707) 944-9433