

Index

1. Evil's Fingers
2. High Tension
3. Madelaine
4. Trickery
5. The devil's Curse
6. Octavia's Obsession
7. The House
8. The Rivals
9. The Man Who Walked Unseen
10. Murder By The Numbers
11. Deathchant Macabre
12. War of the Writers

The following collection was spawned by my love for what I refer to as "classic" horror fiction: The poetry and prose of such masters of the macabre as Poe and Lovecraft, as well as 20th century masters Stephen King and Clive Barker. And, the ever enjoyable and versatile Ramsey campbell.

I hope I did them justice, and I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I enjoyed writing them.

Love to all,
D.B.

Classical:

Describing a kind of fiction that is not simple in form and requires much study to write.

Horror:

Very frightening and terrible.

Horrical:

Very frightening fiction written in classic form.

Evil's Fingers

By
David Byron

That abomination, that quintessence of impurity, that extravagant showcase of grotesqueness that lingers up and up into hideous formations unthinkable near the heart of Blackberry Forest is sometimes called by the neighboring residents Evil's Fingers. At other times it has been remarked as The Tree of Death, The Gate to Limbo, Evil's Treehouse, and many more phrases designed to stimulate the imagination. These titles are, we regret to say, deserving, and there is much evidence in support of the fact. Consider the greenish mist that literally hangs around and about the immediate vicinity of the thing. Such a strange occurrence as it is could perhaps be blamed on a pollutant of some sort, though that is highly unlikely considering that the inhabitants of Blackberry Village and its neighbors have yet to reach a comparable industrial age. More likely to be adopted is the notion that the mist carries with it some sort of supernatural influence, a notion that many of the surrounding and established communities have subscribed to. Then, too, there is the unusual amount of disappearances that have been taking place in Blackberry Forest in relation to this tree. It has been said that if a person was to come in close contact with the aberration they'd be lost in limbo forever. This is something that many a Blackberry villager, as well as other inhabitants of foreign lands, has taken to heart.

But there is a group of people that don't take heed to the warnings and cries of the elder folk: the children. The children of Blackberry Village and the other surrounding communities occasionally find themselves romping through Blackberry Forest. And it just so happens that little Timmy Hutchinson is one of those children. It was around midday during an early October period. Timmy's recreation for the day began when he spotted a little gray rabbit near the threshold of Blackberry Forest. The little gray rabbit was a fast and maneuverable one, but Timmy managed to keep up with him most of the way. The little boy chased after the little rabbit for about five minutes time, hair blowing in the wind while weeding through the onslaught of plant life. Finally, and quite unexpectedly, little Timmy found himself tumbling feet first into a pit of some kind. Looking down at his leg the boy perceived that he'd sprained his ankle. With an effort, he managed to stand on his healthy leg, the other being reduced to laying limp on the ground. He then cried desperately for help, hoping that anyone passing by would come to his rescue, but none came during that first hour. In fact, none came during that first day.

Night had fallen and a chill was in the air. Little Timmy Hutchinson sat huddled in a corner of the pit, trying to stay warm. The pit was muddy from recent rainfall and Timmy had gotten mud all over his shoes and legs. He wondered what must be going on in the heads of his parents. He wished that he could somehow reassure them that he was okay, and that he just needed a little assistance in making it out of this pit. The boy had long since given up calling for help for the day. Instead, he purposed in his mind to get some rest. But then something happened.

Timmy thought he could see the form of two misshapen figures standing over him and the pit. It was too dark to get a good view of either one of them, but there was no mistaking it; someone

had found him. Quickly, the boy stood and shouted at the pair for assistance. The boy was answered with silence at first, but then he could here a sort of grunting. Timmy's curiosity was peaked, but he was also very frightened. What kind of creatures would make the noises like the ones above him? Despite his fear and apprehensions, Timmy managed to summon up enough courage to listen to the creatures standing above him. After a short while, it seemed to the young Timmy that the two were conversing. While he could not make out anything that they were saying, the boy was still quite intrigued. He continued listening. After another short while, it seemed like the two had begun arguing. The two creatures were in a heated debate, at least this is what little Timmy perceived. Finally, one creature's voice drowned out the others and the two stood in silence for a short while. They grunted toward one another again, and left. Timmy, standing inside the pit with his mouth gaped wide open, was at a loss to explain what had transpired.

Little Timmy Hutchinson was resigned to sleep his grief away, hoping that another day's cries would carry on to the ears of any passersby. The boy woke to the sun shining down upon him, and immediately reinstated his cries for help. As the day wore on, hunger began to plague him. He suddenly realized that he hadn't had anything to eat for at least twenty-four hours time. He tried to sidestep his need for food and focus only on his desire to make it out of the pit, but it was an arduous task to say the least. Around midday, he began to notice that he was losing his voice, as it began to appear much more raspy as the day wore on. He was at a crossroads. Should he continue on, hoping that someone somewhere would here this raspy voice of his, or should he instead reserve his voice for another time, hoping that it would begin to come back? He decided on the former, still trusting in his deep seated belief that someone would find him.

Timmy cried on, raspy voice and all, the feeling of hunger constantly being pushed to the back of his mind. And now (can you believe it?) he began to feel thirsty. It seemed as if all these misfortunes were mounting up against him in an effort to further dampen his already sunken spirit. Poor little Timmy Hutchinson began to cry, literally, to go along with his calls for help. But he would not have to wait too much longer for that help. A man, a giant of a man really, was making his way through Blackberry Forest with an axe in his hand. He was looking for the right spot to cut for firewood, when he chanced upon the cries of little Timmy Hutchinson. His interest was piqued. He sought out the voice and found Timmy at the bottom of a pit.

"Mr! Mr!" cried Timmy. "I need help! Can you please help me?"

"Just hold on a second there, young lad," said the giant of a man with a motion of his hand. "I'll be right back."

The man made his way to his cabin and immediately went to a shed where he kept some rope. He ran all the way back to the spot where Timmy Hutchinson had the misfortune of tumbling in and lowered the rope so the little boy could make it out of the pit. Timmy grabbed hold of the rope and the man lifted him out of his despair.

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much!" said Timmy hoarsely. The man noticed the limp in Timmy's walk.

"I see you hurt your ankle. Why don't you come back to my place and I'll bind up your wounds?"
"Oh--I don't know," said a hesitant little Timmy Hutchinson. "I've been away from home for more than a day. My parents must be worried about me."

"It won't take long," said the man. "I've got soup cooking over an open fire. What do you say?"
The man's last comment was too big of an enticement for little Timmy Hutchinson and he agreed to go along with the man. As he was leaving, Timmy noticed that he had come remarkably close to Evil's Fingers. He saw the apparition standing tall and mightily above the other trees, that characteristic green mist floating, hovering about it. The giant of a man was nice enough to carry little Timmy Hutchinson all the way to his cabin. When they got there, the man bound Timmy's ankle up with cloth and tape and then he removed a pot of soup from the fireplace and poured little Timmy Hutchinson a nice helping of it. He then brought the young lad an appetizing cup of apple cider. Little Timmy Hutchinson said thank you. The giant of a man said that he was more than welcome. The man, for a short while, watched him eat his soup and drink his cider.

"Aren't," began little Timmy Hutchinson, "aren't you going to eat anything, Mr?"

"Oh, I can eat later. But you can go ahead and eat without me." The man was just then reminded of what he had originally went out to the forest to do. "There's something that I have to do in the forest. Will you be waiting here when I get back?" Timmy nodded.

"I'll still be here," said little Timmy Hutchinson with the spoon to his mouth.

"Good," said the giant of a man, who was now smiling. "I'll be back." The man left Timmy to himself. It didn't take long for Timmy to finish his meal and when he did he thought a midday nap would be best. He scampered around in the man's cabin, taking note of all of his possessions. He noticed a bookshelf that was placed against a wall in the living room. He immediately made his way to it and saw books dealing with the fantastic, such as pixies, elves, dwarves, and all manner of fantastical things. After that he found the bedroom and jumped on the bed. He fell asleep speedily and had one of the quaintest, queerest dreams in recent memory. He dreamt he was in the forest, standing before Evil's Fingers and that he was having a conversation with the tree!

"All of them," said the tree.

"All of them?" was little Timmy Hutchinson's reply.

"Yes," said the tree. "All of them. Bring them all to me."

"And then what?"

"Then things will be made clear."

"But the grown ups, they'll try to stop me."

"Sneak and do it."

"Sneak? You want me to sneak and do it?"

"Yes. Sneak and do it. Bring them all to me, little Timmy Hutchinson."

The boy awoke in the middle of the night, wondering what was real and what wasn't. The dream seemed so true, so life-like. He was now intrigued. He also knew what the tree wanted of him and he suddenly, very strongly mind you, wanted to see what would happen because of that desire. He then noticed that the giant of a man was standing in the doorway with his arms folded, looking at him.

"Are you ready to go home now, little Timmy Hutchinson?" Timmy said nothing at first. He was still concerned about the dream that he had. Finally he spoke.

"Yes sir, Mr. man. I'm ready to go home now."

Mr. Theodore Hutchinson and Mrs. Marie Hutchinson were in a state of stupor. Their son was missing. He had been missing for a little more than a day. Mrs. Hutchinson asked the nanny, Granny Weatherall, when was the last time she'd seen little Timmy Hutchinson and she said that she had seen him early Monday morning.

"I last seen little Timmy, if I recall correctly, yesterday morning. He said he was going outside to play and I didn't pay too much attention to it. I just told him to be safe, and he said he would."

Mrs. Hutchinson had trekked to all of her close friends and associates homes (and even some who weren't close to her) and neither of them had any idea where little Timmy Hutchinson was. Granny Weatherall was tasked with questioning all of the children of Blackberry Village in an effort to see if they knew where little Timmy Hutchinson was, but none were able to give an account of his whereabouts. And so Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson sat in the parlor of their estate, worry encapsulating their thoughts.

"I'm telling you something's not right, Marie," said Theodore Hutchinson. "Timmy knew it was getting late last night and he still didn't come home. Something's happened to him, I feel it in my stomach."

"But what can we do but pray?" said Marie Hutchinson. "He may have went frolicking in the forest, as he is wont to do. He may have gotten lost out there. All we can do is hope that he somehow finds his way home. Or--at the very least--we can hope that somebody finds him."

"I just want to hold him in my arms again," said Theodore Hutchinson, who was now shedding tears. "I know it's only been a little over a day, but parents shouldn't have to fret over missing children." Marie went over to her husband and the two embraced. They then heard a knock at the door. Who could it be? The Mrs. left her spot and went to answer and was thrilled when she saw little Timmy Hutchinson but was a little put off to see the man who had, apparently, brought

her to them.

"I'm home," said little Timmy Hutchinson.

"Oh Timmy, Timmy, Timmy, don't you ever, ever, ever do anything like that again! You had us losing our minds over you." She then embraced her son. The father then came and did the same, kissing his cheek in the process.

"I fell ma, but this man here rescued me," said little Timmy Hutchinson hoarsely.

"I see," said Mrs. Hutchinson, who was now looking at the giant of a man.

"Perhaps you could explain to us what happened, Timmy?" said Theodore Hutchinson. "I'd very much like to know. And what's wrong with your voice?" Timmy then went on to explain how he was chasing after a little gray rabbit in the forest, and how he had found himself tumbling feet first into a pit of some kind. He explained to his parents how he called endlessly for help during that first day, but no one showed up (he had forgotten about the creatures who stood over his pit but much had happened to him and surely he could be forgiven in that regard). He then explained to them how he began to lose his voice, and how hunger and thirst snuck up on him to add even more to his plate at the Table of Woe (these were not his exact words mind you, but that is the gist of what he said). He then went on to explain how he was rescued by the "giant man in the forest", as little Timmy Hutchinson put it. The man then took over the story and explained how he fed Timmy, and waited for him to awake from his midday nap before he brought him home.

"Well I must thank you," said Theodore Hutchinson. "Mr.--Mr.--"

"Oh, you can just call me Paul."

"Well, we're certainly indebted to you. Would you like to stay for dinner? Granny Weatherall, our nanny, is preparing a scrumptious dinner. Roast lamb I hear. Would you like to join us?" Little Timmy Hutchinson tugged at Paul's slacks but he wouldn't have any of it.

"No. I have to get back to my cabin. But thank you for your offer." Theodore Hutchinson nodded and Paul said goodbye to Timmy and his parents.

The next few days for the Hutchinson house seemed normal enough. Theodore went back to work (he had taken that one day off in hopes that his son would come home). The Hutchinson's owned a tremendous amount of farm land of which Theodore oversaw. This is what he busied himself with day in and day out. A good many Blackberry villagers (and others mind you) food could be traced back to Theodore Hutchinson's operation. Mrs. Marie Hutchinson, on the other hand, ran a clothing manufacturing company. She--like her husband--oversaw the entire operation. After her marriage, she changed the name of the company to Hutchinson Apparel (it was previously simply known as The Marie Barentine Clothing Company). There were many retail outlets throughout the world that carried Hutchinson Apparel, as well as two or three that

resided in Blackberry Village and its surrounding neighbors.

As time went on, however, Granny Weatherall (specifically) began to notice odd happenings with little Timmy Hutchinson. She approached Marie Hutchinson one pleasant afternoon and spoke her concern.

"Madame, have you noticed anything, how can I put this--" she paused for a brief moment. "--odd about Timmy?" Marie Hutchinson looked at Granny Weatherall wide eyed for a short while. She was sitting on the front porch, taking in the bright and warm summer day.

"Why? Is there something wrong that I don't know about? I mean, he seems perfectly fine to me."

"Well, Madame Hutchinson, it's just that he seems rather exuberant, or jovial, especially with the other children."

"The children?" began Marie Hutchinson. "Interesting. That doesn't sound like little Timmy at all."

"Yes, it doesn't. He's always been the type of boy that plays by himself. But now he seems more inclined to play with the other children of the village."

"How long have you noticed this?" said Marie Hutchinson.

"Oh," began Granny Weatherall, "I think it started right after he came back from falling in that pit. Yes, I'm almost sure of it. Ever since that fateful day he's been associating with the other children of Blackberry Village more and more." Mrs. Hutchinson thought on this rather strange occurrence for some time. Finally, she decided on what she would do.

"I'll have a talk with him," said Mrs. Hutchinson. "I'll find out what's going on."

That night, when little Timmy Hutchinson came home from play, Mrs. Hutchinson called him into the parlor and questioned him. She asked him what was going on. He looked at her for a short while and confessed that he didn't know what she was talking about. She then asked him why it was that he had become what she termed "social". His answer came out much faster than what she anticipated, giving her the impression that he knew what she was going to ask before she even spoke it.

"We're playing, mother. It's a game called forest pirates. Do you wanna know how to play?"

"I told you before, Timmy, that I didn't want you going out in the forest, particularly near that tree. The thing is evil." Timmy shrugged his shoulders and said, "If you say so. Can I go now?" Mrs. Hutchinson was at a loss for words so she said that it was ok for Timmy to leave. Timmy went to his bedroom. Mrs. Marie Hutchinson determined within herself that she would talk the matter over with her husband and then they would go from there.

Theodore Hutchinson came home at or around 8:30's time. He questioned Granny Weatherall about what they had to eat for the day and she said chicken. He went into the kitchen and ate his meal. The Mrs. knew that he was home, but decided to wait until he came up for bed. She was reading through a rather tumultuous romance novel. The male in the novel was a serial killer and he begins to develop feelings with his next target. But he's conflicted because he may be having feelings for this woman but he also wants to continue with committing his murders. She was really enjoying it.

Theodore came into the bedroom and began changing into his night wear. "How's it going, sweetie? You enjoying that novel?"

"Oh yes, it's very enthralling. I'm at a very critical juncture at the moment. The woman has discovered that her boyfriend is a murderer, and now she's actually conflicted over whether she should tell the police, because the relationship has been so good."

"Really? That sounds interesting." Theodore headed toward the bed and placed himself under the covers. Granny Weatherall had already told him that Marie wanted to talk to him about Timmy and so he questioned her.

"Granny Weatherall tells me that you had something on your mind concerning Timmy."

"Yes," said Marie as she put her book in her lap. "There was something I wanted to talk about. But I'm worried that you might not take it as seriously as she and I feel it should be." She knew that her husband cared a great deal for their son. That became more than evident when he shed tears over his disappearance. But she felt that he'd downplay what she and Granny Weatherall felt were tremendous changes of character. She remained silent for a short while until Theodore pressed the matter even further.

"Aren't you going to share it with me? It's obvious to me that it concerns you. What makes you think that it won't concern me?"

"Ok. Fine. Granny Weatherall noticed that Timmy has been acting a little strange."

"Define strange."

"Well--he's become social."

"Social? With whom?"

"The other children, Teddy." Theodore thought on this for some time. He then voiced his perspective on the matter, saying that was unlike Timmy, which Marie agreed wholeheartedly.

"Maybe I'll have a talk with him," said Mr. Hutchinson.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

