

True Stories
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Stories

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Weird, Gruesome Tragedies Result After the Rub of Madam Schriver's Four Black Cats

*Are Black Cats a Sign of Bad Luck?
Well, Here is a Blood-chilling
Story that will Make
You Think So.*

By Paul Bryant

THE strangest case in the history of crime in the state of Missouri, perhaps, was the case of the woman with the black cats. It was rather difficult to catalogue the strange fortune teller as a criminal merely because her four huge black cats brought misfortune to all those people against whom they lazily rubbed themselves. Those enormous black cats appeared sinister in the orange reflections from the fire of the crude stone fireplace in Madam Schriver's consultation room.

Perhaps it wasn't the aged clairvoyant's fault that Mabel Fisher, pretty and twenty, shot herself in the left breast because her sweetheart took an automobile ride with another woman. . . . Regardless of the guilty person, the four black cats, once during the reading the clairvoyant accorded to Mabel Fisher, emerged surreptitiously from the low kitchen of the frame house, passed through the orange reflections, and ceremoniously paused to rub themselves against Miss Fisher's shapely limbs. . . . Then and there, the energetic and nervous little lady knew that the presence of those four black cats and the fact that they had repeatedly rubbed themselves against her meant that dire misfortune was not far away.

Pretty little Miss Fisher knew well this omen so she did not need Madam Schriver to tell her. Perhaps, Madam Schriver would not have told her, anyway if the girl had not already known. She was



VICTIM OF BLACK CAT "MAGIC"
Miss Fayette Frame, whose mother was a victim of the woman with the black cats.

considered the cleverest fortune teller on the Mississippi River, and there had never been a time when she had failed to give complete satisfaction.

Madam Schriver was a very stately colored woman. At the time of her death she was sixty years old. Her white clients numbered as many as the colored, who believed in her strange powers; she charged five dollars for a simple clairvoyant reading, and got it. Some days, she gave as many as twenty readings. It was said when she died, that she left a fortune hidden somewhere about the ancient frame house in which she had spent the last fifteen years of her life, although no trace of the money has ever been unearthed.

Just how the rumor spread that the presence of Madam Schriver's four black cats meant disaster, is hard to say, but that sort of rumor began years ago and once it had started, there was absolutely no way of stopping it.

Madam Schriver occasionally kept her four black cats locked securely in the kitchen. She was well aware, without having to be told, that

many of her patrons were superstitious and that they were firm believers in the so-called, unlucky sign of the black cat; moreover, she was aware that the presence of her four black cats made her customers nervous. This situation hindered her ability to concentrate on the fates of her numerous clients. It soon grew to be unusual to see one of Madam Schriver's black cats. When one appeared, it was time for serious and quick thinking.

This was the belief of many people and no doubt they had ample ground upon which to base their opinions. In the first place, there were many dire misfortunes that befell those women, both colored and white, who though reluctantly, had visited Madam Schriver's five-room frame house on dark nights. It is true that many of Madam Schriver's clients went to her place virtually against their own wills; because, the misfortune of those who encountered the four black cats was notorious in that section of the country.

Pretty Miss Fisher was not superstitious, but she knew when the black cats emerged from the kitchen,

"Her nerves were so badly shattered when the black cats emerged from the kitchen, and rubbed themselves against her leg in Madam Schriver's consultation room, that she screamed out in terror, and fainted."



BEWITCHED

A TRUE STORY
Of An
AGE OLD
SUPERSTITION



WHERE MADAM SCHRIVER PERFORMED
The White Dove, where Madam Schriver's old frame house once stood.

en, pushing the door slightly ajar, that something dreadful was going to happen to her. She didn't know what, nor when, but she felt a presentiment of approaching doom, and could not escape the unnerving emotion that kept a stern clutch on her.

Of course she had heard all the strange hair-raising stories regarding the bad sign of the notorious four black cats. The moment they pushed the kitchen door slightly open and paraded in single file from the warm kitchen, from whence came the aroma of cooking cabbages, the Fisher girl clutched spasmodically at her throat, whitened under Madam Schriver's steady stare, and exclaimed: "Oh, my God, drive those terrible creatures out of here!"

But Madam Schriver feigned surprise that anyone should be so terrified by four black cats. Convincedly she tried to explain that four black cats were no different from four white cats. Anybody with sufficient intelligence to capture and



TAYLOR DUNKIN

He recalls the woman with the black cats, having lived near her many years. He is also a firm believer in this account of her exploits.

hold a brave man's love, as Miss Fisher had done; was intelligent enough to forget all about the nonsense commonly heard about black cats.

This sort of talk reassured Miss Fisher, who knew all about the cats, consequently, she thought that everything would be all right. Madam Schriver had given her several hints about how to make good headway with Captain Rupert, the married man whose attentions she wished to win; and after Madam Schriver had penetrated her secrets to this depth, there was no possibility of ill-feeling. Moreover, who was supposed to know more about black cats than fortune tellers? Was there any indisputable evidence that those cats had ever brought hard luck to their owner? This appeared to be so much bunk, and the strange stories of Madam Schriver's patrons dying and being tragically disappointed in love, proved to be the figments of highly imaginative minds.

Pretty Miss Fisher went home that evening, after the clairvoyant had enlightened her as to certain proceed-



GRANDSON OF MADAM SCHRIVER
Tom Schriver, grandson of Madam Schriver, who has inherited his grandmother's strange fondness for black cats.

Mr. Paul Bryant, the author of the above story, was attracted to the scene of these strange tragedies by the unusual and extraordinary facts surrounding the clairvoyant powers of the mysterious Madame Schriver.

The reputation of this woman was known throughout the state of Missouri. Many people have witnessed the wild and gruesome deaths that have followed the spiritualistic readings of Madame Schriver.

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