

picked my steps cautiously until I came to the narrow ledge by the bottomless pit. Here the darkness was so intense that I almost repented of my temerity. But I groped slowly along until I caught sight of the opening into the large room, and by the light which came in I saw not only you and the Scoutmaster, but much nearer to me, and doubtless invisible to you, was the insane hermit, Father Triscadal himself, alternately shrieking and laughing in horrible levity."

My heart began to beat again. What was this revelation that was coming?

"Fearing to attempt to pass him through the narrow aperture," my wife proceeded, "I drew back to the narrow ledge. Then, as he suddenly turned and came toward me, I shrieked wildly, hoping to attract your attention. The Scoutmaster came through the opening, and Triscadal stopped when he found himself pursued. He waited for the Scoutmaster to draw near him and then sprang upon him, and a deadly battle ensued. I heard them both cry out, and the Scoutmaster seemed to run his sword through Triscadal. Then the hermit drew it out and threw it on the ledge near where I crouched in terror. I seized it intending to defend myself with it if necessary. But just then the two men grappled each other in a desperate embrace, and, doubtless by force of the superior strength of the wounded madman, they were plunged headlong down the frightful chasm together, the poor Scoutmaster joining his cry of agony to the triumphant laugh of the maniac. I made my way to the opening more dead than alive, still holding the sword; and I know not now whether I am awake or dreaming, so horrible are the impressions which fill my mind."