

3 BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

One day, about two weeks after a significant discovery that promised to expedite their mysterious work, Professor Maxon and von Horn were deeply engaged in their laboratory within the so-called court of mystery. Their recent breakthrough seemed poised to revolutionize their experiments, though von Horn, always cautious, armed himself against potential dangers their creations posed.

Meanwhile, Sing Lee, tasked with preparing meals, decided to engage in catching gulls, venturing silently through the jungle. His acute senses caught sight of Bududreen and the tall Malay, Rajah Muda Saffir, plotting in hushed tones on the beach—a discussion centered around seizing a white girl for the Rajah, hinting at treachery and rewards, and the ominous suggestion of using a kris (dagger) for silence.

Back in the workshop, a discussion unfolded between the professor and von Horn regarding the ethical and moral ramifications of their experiments—artificial beings showing signs of physical prowess yet lacking in mental faculty. Von Horn sees them merely as things, suggesting their destruction, while Maxon, despite acknowledging their imperfection, sees it as murder to eliminate them. An intense commitment to his plan for these beings to substantively prove his theories emerges, passionately conveyed by Maxon.

That night, under cover of darkness, Sing Lee stealthily gains entry into the laboratory, resulting in the shattering of a vat—Number Thirteen—which was particularly significant to Maxon's experiments. The next morning reveals the consequence of Sing's actions: a seemingly perfect creation, physically ideal, but with a dazed and questioning demeanor, evoking a mix of pride and paternal care in Maxon.

Amidst these scientific endeavors, Virginia Maxon, feeling neglected and pondering over her feelings for von Horn, ventures beyond the safety of their compound. Unknown to her, the escape of Number One—a misshapen experiment—sets a dangerous chain of events in motion. The creature, driven by a newfound desire upon seeing Virginia, attempts a clumsy abduction, prompted by a grotesque fascination and the wish to possess her beauty for himself.

As Virginia's scream pierces the jungle, von Horn and Maxon rush towards the source, only to find the camp deserted. Virginia's encounter with the aberration confronts her with the stark horror and reality of her father's experiments—a chilling testament to ambition's unintended consequences.