

HERBERT WEST - REANIMATOR
PART VI, THE TOMB-LEGIONS

Written by

Anthony Clark Vines
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Based on H. P. Lovecraft's
Herbert West - Reanimator
The Tomb-Legions

FADE IN:

INT. BOSTON GENERAL HOSPITAL - SUNSET (1925)

A typical hospital ward of the day. A few NURSES in old style white cloaked gowns and traditional hat move up and down the ward, giving aid and comfort to the PATIENTS of varying natures.

SUPER: "DECEMBER 1925"

Combs (early 40s) rests in his bed. Howard (late 20s) continues to take furious notes.

COMBS

As the end of the Great War closed,
West and I mustarded out of service
and returned to Boston.

EXT. NORTH END DISTRICT/WEST & COMBS MED. OFFICE - DAY (1919)

SUPER: "FEBRUARY 1919"

West and Combs stand before a rather old, but freshly painted house in a rundown area. Several nearby structures appear abandoned and boarded.

A GROUP OF PEOPLE of varied genders, ages, and ethnicities stand outside. A MALE (50s), portly, bald, happy, in business attire hands West a set of keys. The two shake hands. APPLAUSE from the gathered crowd.

West opens the door. He, Combs, and Mary Sheldon (now early 30s), welcome individuals who file in.

COMBS (V.O.)

We reestablish ourselves in a North End location. He, of course, chose it for our practice under the guise of helping the poor.

(Beat)

But at night, we were little more than mad scientist and faithful assistant. He, Frankenstein. I, his Igor.

EXT. NORTH END DISTRICT/WEST MANOR - NIGHT

A venerable house. Large. Elegant. Looming. It overlooks North End, a rundown, heavily industrialized area. To the rear, it watches over a vast, ancient cemetery.

COMBS (V.O.)

As for our place of residence, he chose it for purely symbolic reasons, since most of the interments were of the colonial period and therefore of little use to him.

INT. WEST MANOR/BASEMENT LABORATORY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A large area brightly lit by electric lights illuminates West's tools of his dark trade. Work tables with restraints. Others with equipment. Cold storage unit with two bay doors. To one side, a large, cast-iron incinerator.

West closes an incinerator door and turns a switch. The low CHURNING of FIRE rustles through the space, bouncing off the thick masonry walls. Combs watches silently. West then walks over to one wall and pats it..

COMBS

Solid enough now. A double cavity build up with no perspiring moisture. Required no holding cement.

Combs gestures to a large metal door to one side.

COMBS (CONT'D)

The old masonry walls also serve the cold room, regulating the temperatures to a somewhat naturally lower degree.

West nods along, studying the area.

COMBS (CONT'D)

Hiring shifts of foreign laborers to do the work was insightful.

West acknowledges with a bob of the head.

WEST

And what of the tunnel?

COMBS

I paid two of the men to follow it winding out a string like Daedalus. It ended in the Averill's mausoleum in the cemetery. Their last interment was in 1768. Another offshoot trailed away but the men refused to follow it. As best I could fathom, they reported hearing noise deeper in. Likely rats.

(Beat)

Large ones.

West turns quickly to face Combs. Unsettled, he nonetheless remains silent.

COMBS (CONT'D)

But it's closed off now...

Combs strikes the wall with a balled fist.

COMBS (CONT'D)

At both ends and all junctures. We'll have no back door raiders, if there was even the possibility of such a thing.

A look of uncertainty comes over West.

WEST

Anything is possible.

INT. BOSTON GENERAL HOSPITAL - SUNSET (1925)

Combs continues with his story as Howard scribbles down notes.

COMBS

West, in reality, was more afraid than I. His nervousness was deeper and more nebulous than being caught by the police. No. He feared the indescribable things into which he injected life, and from which he had not seen that life depart.

FLASHBACK TO:

MONTAGE

Over a number of years. Experiments gone wrong.

-ST. ELOI HOUSE/LAB (1917): A writhing CORPSE (30s), male, grey faced, GRUNTING, in British military combat uniform struggles against its restraints on a table. West calmly approaches with a revolver and places it to the thing's head.

COMBS (V.O.)

He usually finished his experiments with a revolver, but a few times he had not been quick enough.

BOOM.

He ends the entity's life for a second time. Combs winces some.

West turns away. The corpse again burst to life. West again shoots it in the head. It writhes still, though less. West takes up a large cleaver and splits the head in two.

Blood spurts across both West and Combs's faces and body. Both watch. Nothing. They turn away. A finger on the corpse twitches.

- BOLTON, MA/POTTER'S FIELD (1907): A grave with claw marks digging outward.

- SEFTON ASYLUM/PSYCHIATRID CELL (1905): Halsey repeatedly BUMPS his head against the padded wall.

END MONTAGE/END FLASHBACK/BACK TO SCENE

Combs shakes his head and drags a tired hand across his face. His voice struggles.

COMBS

Most of the other possibly surviving results were things less easy to speak of.

Combs focuses in on Howard.

COMBS (CONT'D)

In later years West's scientific zeal had degenerated. He spent his chief skill in vitalizing not entire human bodies but isolated parts of bodies, or parts joined to organic matter other than human.

FLASHBACK TO:

SERIES OF SCENES

West's experiments...

- INT. WEST MANOR/CELLAR LAB - NIGHT: West injects an arm cut off at the bicep. Seconds pass. Fingers twitch then pull the arm along 'walking' the digits. West LAUGHS in great amusement. Combs draws up disgust on his face.

Catching sight, West shakes his head and turns back to his new toy. West takes up a clever and cuts off the digits. The fingers, like individual worms, wiggle away. Several scramble to the tables edge and drop to the floor.

West and Combs attempt to retrieve the wriggling things with little success.

- INT. WEST MANOR/CELLAR LAB - NIGHT: Combs covers his mouth in vile rejection. Before him, an ABOMINATION (undefinable), male human torso with four arms sewn in twos to either side of the hips. Four arms, two per, sewn to the shoulders.

Where one head should be, two split halves now reside, sewn together side by side. Wearing a malicious smirk, West injects the body at the bicameral union of the neck. He steps back.

A finger on the Abomination moves. Then a leg/hand. After a few seconds, the hideousness erects itself onto its leg/hands. It waves about madly with its upper limbs.

Its multi-eyes dart around in panic. It claws at its faces, feeling at the madness. An agonizing SHRIEK escapes West's creation. Its eyes turn on West, whose own face falls some. It hurls itself to West, who staggers back and falls down.

The Abomination pounces onto the downed West and flails at him with four curled fists.

WEST

Jeffrey!

West falls unconscious from the blows.

Combs, drawn from a stunned stillness, grabs a large surgical bone-saw from a table, swings, and strikes at one of the arms. The blade cleaves the limb clean from the forearm, and sends the hand flying away.

The Abomination HOWLS in agony. It turns its mass toward Combs, flailing away. Combs falls back to the ground. The creation draws back a fist and lands a blow to Combs's temple. He falls unconscious.

INT. WEST MANOR/CELLAR LAB - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER): West awakens along with Combs. They scramble back as they sit up. They scan the room. Their eyes follow a blood trail up the cellar stairs. They stare out into the night's open darkness.

- INT. WEST MANOR/CELLAR LAB - NIGHT: A massive, dead CANINE body lies on the table. Two additional heads, one to either side, show sewn into the corpse. West injects it. Combs stands to the rear, looking on in pure vehement disgust.

The thing jerks and twist, the struggles up. He turns to glare at West with ravenous, rabid intent. Both West and Combs step back. It leaps from the table, and slowly approach the two. They back up the steps, one at a time.

Reaching the door, the push through.

EXT. WEST MANOR/CELLAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT: The men stumble to either side of the entrance. The Cerbusian hound bolts past into the night. Each head HOWLS, SNARLS, or GROWLS. Both men watch as it disappears toward the cemetery.

- INT. WEST MANOR/CELLAR LAB - NIGHT: A hideous combination of a MALE (20s), fit torso stitched to the lower body of goat - a SATYR by any other name - lies on the table. It's legs have been altered along the spine to allow it to stand erect.

West injects it. Moments pass before it comes to life and struggles to its feet. West smirks and gestures to it. He moves toward the table, picks up his revolver, and turns.

The Thing bolts toward him unexpectedly, knocking the gun away. It heads up the cellar steps and pushes through the door. West retrieves his weapon, and follow after along with Combs.

INT./EXT. CELLAR LAB ENTRANCE - NIGHT: At the entrance, West fires blindly into the night.

West throws his hands into the air and turns to Combs. He shakes his head and moves past, back into the lab.

END SERIES/END FLASHBACK/BACK TO SCENE

Howard eyes Combs with disturbance.

COMBS

It had become fiendishly disgusting
by the time he disappeared.

INT. WEST MANOR/STUDY - NIGHT (1923)

Before a blazing fireplace...

West sits in a large overstuffed chair. He leans forward, elbows on his knees, hands clasped before his mouth. His brow furrows deep holding in place an intense focus as he adjusts a dial fixed on a 1923 Silvertone tabletop radio.

SUPER: "NOVEMBER 1923"

A static ridden broadcast comes into play and issues a voice deep, steady, professional and near emotionless.

VOICE (V.O.)

And now for the eight o'clock report. Something fearsome and incredible happened today at Sefton Asylum just fifty miles from old bean town. The event has stunned the neighborhood and baffled the police.

West divides a curious glance between the radio and Combs, who sits reading a newspaper. Combs stops and studies him curiously.

EXT. SEFTON ASYLUM - PRE-DAWN (EARLIER)

Atop a brick posted entry gate, flanked by brick extensions, in large letters read, "SEFTON ASYLUM". Slumped across the open window at the entry station, a GUARD (40s), aged, balding, dead. His face stuck in horror. His eyes bulging.

Behind the entry gate a paved road leads to a large, multistory, expansive brick structure. It appears as a cross-hybridization of a factory and an apartment complex.

A group of seven SHADOWY FORMS and an four pedal ANIMAL lumber silently down the road past the open gate and toward the building.

INT. SEFTON ASYLUM/RECEPTION AREA - PRE-DAWN (EARLIER)

Minimal lighting in a large, presently room filled with several chairs. Four of the Shadowy Forms push their way in through the doorway, lingering in the shadows.

CLAPHAM-LEE (40s), physically powerful, large, looming, in his British military uniform with the rank of major, steps slightly out of shadow, but only enough so that his head remains darkened. He holds a large, covered case to his side.

FIEND (20s), female, average sized, once beautiful, now living dead, lingers to one side of Clapham-Lee.

BUCK Robinson (30s), powerful, large, looming, ugly and rigid in movement guides Clapham-Lee forward. His skin shows blueish and decomposing. His face, vaguely human with yellowish, pupil-less eyes. He wears only torn, dirty pants.

Buck lets go of his charge and grabs a nearby chair. He hurls it through the air. BOOM. It strikes the wall and shatters.

CORPSE (20s), likewise greyish, average build, burnt body and missing one arm, in dirty, torn, clothing joins in. It takes up a metal trash can and BANGS it against the wall.

Seconds pass then...

A cluster of quick paced FOOTFALLS sound. An ATTENDANT (30s), tall, large, well muscled and SUPERINTENDANT (50s), average, balding, bespectacled, hastily enter the room. Both come to a halt upon seeing the shadowed gathering.

The Attendant moves to a light switch and spins it on. Clapham-Lee steps forward, revealing himself. The Attendant and Superintend-ant step back in shock.

Clapham-Lee's expressionless face proves radiant, handsome, but unnaturally waxy. His eyes are of painted glass. His voice sounds almost ventriloquially, coming from the black case he carries.

CLAPHAM-LEE

My legions and I will be relieving
you of the one you refer to as The
Plague Demon.

INT. SEFTON ASYLUM/SEVERE PYSCHOSIS WARD - PRE-DAWN (EARLIER)

WAILING, WEEPING, MUMBLING, MOANING, SCREECHES of the mad fill the air.

WUMP. WUMP. WUMP. WUMP.

It all plays out amid a steady and continuous THUMPING.

Three MALES (varied ages) in attendant uniforms, lie strewn about the long passage that separates two rows of cells.

Several show chunks of ripped away flesh as if bitten by rabid, ravenous dogs.

Bloodied, bruised, and trampled, all remain motionless.

An ATTENDANT (20s), large, burly, muscled, stares down horrified into the soulless eyes of the female Fiend.

She holds the Attendant against the wall by his neck, lifted several inches off the ground with one hand. Slowly, she turns his neck to one side.

CRICK. SNAP.

The Attendant's eyes widen, then dull. She drops him to the ground. The other figures in her party move past. She follows after.

Buck guides Clapham-Lee to before a psychiatric cell. Clapham-Lee raises the box to the window. Buck's hand lifts the cover from the box.

POV - THE BOX

Interior cell. Padded walls. Halsey, in hospital patient wear and a straight jacket, pounds his head against the wall repeatedly.

END POV

Buck drops the cover back down. Clapham-Lee lowers the box and gestures. Buck guides him back a pace, then turns to the door. BAM. With two open palm hands, he slams into the door. It gives way.

HALSEY (60s), grey-faced, thin, gaunt, turns to face them dull eyed.

INT. WEST MANOR/STUDY - NIGHT (MIDNIGHT)

West continues to be entranced as the static ridden broadcast continues.

VOICE (V.O.)

Those victims who could recall the event without hysteria swore that the creatures had acted less like men than like unthinkable automata guided by the wax-faced leader.

(MORE)

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

By the time help could be summoned,
every trace of the men and of their
mad charge had vanished.

(Beat)

Well ladies and gentlemen, it's
12:00 midnight and that concludes
this days airing. Tune in tomorrow
for another WNAC broadcast starting
at...

West abruptly reaches over and shuts the radio off. Combs
shakes his head. He folds his paper.

COMBS

I don't know why you listen to that
device when you could have simply
read it.

He tosses the paper on the table.

COMBS (CONT'D)

Same as he was doing.

WEST

I did. Earlier today. I wondered if
there was more information to be
served.

West give Combs a cold glare.

WEST (CONT'D)

Don't you understand, man? Do you
know who they freed?

COMBS

They didn't say exactly. Just that
there was a raid and some of the
patients were freed.

WEST

Yes. On Sefton. Where he was kept.

Combs frowns.

COMBS

Surely you don't think...

West shoots him a hard look.

COMBS (CONT'D)

It's not like you to ponder on such
things. What about this particular
item bothers you so?

West SIGHS and pushes himself back into his chair.

WEST

The details you overlook. They referred to the intruders as creatures, not men. One had a waxy countenance.

Combs shrugs it off.

COMBS

A war victim with extensive scarring likely.

West rises and moves to the mantle. He takes up a poker and prods the fire.

WEST

One would dare to hope.

DING DONG.

The doorbell sounds. West, startled by the noise, jerks around. Combs rises, but stops as a Night MAID (50s), average, girthy, sleepy, in a nightgown and housecoat, stumbles past the study entry.

Combs resettles into his chair. Both men sit, listening.

CREAK.

The sound of the door opening calls out.

MAID (V.O.)

Yes?

The responding voice holds an unnatural quality.

VOICE (V.O.)

Express-prepaid.

Sound of two sets of SHUFFLIN FOOTFALLS follow.

THUD.

The sound of something heavy hits the floor. The SHUFFLIN FOOTFALLS reseed.

MAID (V.O.)

Thank you. Goodnight.

The door CREAKS shut.

West and Combs exchange anxious looks. The Maid appears at the study door.

MAID

Sirs, there's a package at the door. Odd, it coming so late.

Combs moves to a study window and peers out to the street.

POV - COMBS

On an otherwise, quiet and empty street, three figures jerkily tread out the yard entry and turn toward the distant graveyard.

END POV

Combs looks back to see West exiting the room and follows after.

INT. WEST MANOR/FOYER - NIGHT

Combs approaches West and the Maid, who stare at a box two feet square sitting on the floor. West gestures the woman away. She nods and exits back down the hall.

West bends over to look at the address. It reads, "From Eric Moreland Clapham-Lee, St. Eloi, Flanders". His face ashens. He HALF-MUMBLES to himself.

WEST

It's the finish...

He looks up to Combs.

WEST (CONT'D)

Let's incinerated... this.

INT. WEST MANORIAL HOME/BASEMENT LABORATORY - NIGHT

West and Combs settle the box onto the incinerator push railing. West closes the door, and twists a knob. The HUM of electricity calls out. They watch in silence.

SKRITTTT. SKRITTTT.

West turns to Combs, mouth in preparation to speak but issuing only silence. His eyes grow wide. He draws his finger up and points. Combs turns to where he peers.

To the metal doorway leading into the cold room.

SKRITTTT. SKRITTTT. THUMP. THUMP.

With hesitation, West approaches the door. Combs follows behind with noted reluctance.

SKRITTTT. SKRITTTT. THUMP. THUMP.

West leans in to listen, placing his head on the door. Combs follows suit.

SKRITTTT. SKRITTTT. THUMP. THUMP.

West steps back, as does Combs. West takes hold of the door handle and yanks it back. A bursting breeze rushes out, running through the two men's hair and driving them back. The light's flicker then go out. Pitch dark ensues.

WEST

Hold still.

A few seconds pass in the uninterrupted darkness, the light. West holds a flashlight and finds Combs in the pitch. Both move forward and step inside. They halt in abject horror.

POV WEST AND COMBS

In the back of the cold room, a large gaping hole shows in the stone masonry wall. A block slides back and away, removed by the Fiend. Then another by the Satyr. Another by the Abomination.

Both West and Combs step back. A large rotting arm locks onto Combs neck. West turns the light on him.

ROBINSON lifts Combs and throws him to one side.

BLAM.

Combs slams into the metal wall and crumples in a heap to the ground. Blood pours from a head wound. West follows the action with his light. He moves toward the door but the Corpse grabs him by the neck.

As with Combs, the one armed Corpse lifts West into the air and holds him. Robinson moves in to take hold of one arm. The Fiend grabs another. The Abomination and the Satyr take a leg each. West does not struggle.

Combs shakes his head as he stares on at the horror playing out before him. He pushes himself back against the wall.

POV - COMBS

Clapham-Lee emerges from the hole. The wax head stares unblinking as he lifts the cloth covered box he carries with one hand.

With his free hand, he unveils the box to reveal his true head, pale, gaunt, mummified. The eyes latch first onto Combs then latch onto West. The head grins. West glares back with no emotion.

Clapham-Lee gestures with his free hand. The quad of terrors pull at West. West's mouth opens to scream but no sound escapes.

SNAP. CRACKLE. POP.

West's body separates at it's joints. West's headed torso drops to the ground as blood sprays about.

After a moment, Clapham-Lee moves to the torso. He kneels, setting his head to one side to look on. His body then takes hold of West's headed torso. He places one hand around West's neck facing West's chin, the other the torso.

SKRITTTTCH.

With terrifying strength, he separates the two. Clapham-Lee reaches into his pocket and removes something out of view from Combs.

As Clapham-Lee rises, he takes with him his head in one hand and that of West in the other. He spins around and gives Combs one final glance before moving toward the hole followed by all. Each carry portions of West's body.

Combs watches through blood filled eyes from his wound as the figures file into the darkness. As his eyes bob toward unconsciousness, Combs sees the Abomination picks up a block and resettles it into place.

END POV

Combs falls unconscious.

EXT. BOSTON POLICE DEPT. PRECINCT - DAY

A brick building per the day. Large black letters above the entry read, "BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT". Just below, DIVISION A-4".

SUPER: "DECEMBER, 1924"

INT. BPD PRECINCT/DIVISION A-4 - DAY

A small, faded white walled room. One overhanging lamp looming down. A small table with two chairs, one on either side of the breadth. Combs sits to one side, hands crossed on the table top. Opposite him sits...

Superintendent BATTLE (late 40s), average height, fit, impressively mustached. His eyes gleam with intelligence as he questions Combs. Behind him stands Inspector John Raymond LEGRASSE (40s), commonplace face, intense, average otherwise.

Battle gestures to Legrasse.

BATTLE

I'm Superintendent Battle. This is Inspector Legrasse up from New Orleans. We're inquiring into your missing partner, Dr. Herbert West.

(Beat)

He's been missing a year now.

COMBS

I've already given my statement on the matter. I have no idea where he is. Nor could I speculate to where he may have gone. He was always prone to eccentric behaviors.

Battle pushes back into his chair. He folds his arms across his chest.

BATTLE

You were his... companion

(Beat)

And partner for over seventeen years. You'll forgive me if I feel that you are holding something back.

The superintendent leans back in, moving threatening toward Combs. Combs does not budge.

BATTLE (CONT'D)

His procurements for his work in that private lab on his estate have not gone unnoticed. The question is, how much did you know of it?

LEGRASSE

I suspect a lot given you two shared the space in residence.

(Beat)

What else did you share?

Combs brow hardens on Legrasse.

COMBS

Very little in the way of companionship, if that is your implication. Ours was a working relation. We shared a practice in Hyde Park and a home. He as owner, I as renter.

BATTLE

And now that is your practice as well as your residence.

COMBS

I bear the burden of expense now, solely for both. When he returns... Which I am sure he will do, our arrangements will rectify as before. What are you suggesting?

BATTLE

We arrested a man. Name is of no consequence. But he sang a pretty tune to curry himself some favor. Spoke of selling corpses of the homeless and delivering them to West's cellar door. You weren't mentioned by name but he did say there was always another man there with great fear in his eyes when deliveries were made.

Combs scowls hard. His eyes slowly move between the two officers but he remains tight lipped.

BATTLE (CONT'D)

We think that man may have been acting in duress. We'd like to speak to him. Hoping he could clear up a few things.

Battle eyes Combs over. Legrasse intercedes.

LEGRASSE

A band of brigands has been terrorizing my turf.

(MORE)

LEGRASSE (CONT'D)

One mentioned your partner's name several times when we caught... him. In fact, that is the only words he'll speak, echoing it day in and day out. Herbert West. Herbert West. Herbert West. He is in a peculiar state of being I am told. Perhaps you could enlighten us some. His identification named him as Robert Leavitt from St. Louis.

Combs eyes widen slightly then fall back to normal.

LEGRASSE (CONT'D)

We tracked him to Bolton where he was headed several years ago. Imagine my surprise to find that he supposedly died there in the medical office of one Herbert West...

He gestures to Combs.

LEGRASSE (CONT'D)

And his partner. Care to enlighten us?

Ever calm, Combs shakes his head.

COMBS

I am sorry, gentlemen, but I cannot help you.

LEGRASSE

Can't... or won't?

Combs rises.

COMB

If there is nothing further, I have patients to attend.

Battle considers. Legrasse releases a frustrated HUFF.

INT. BOSTON GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT (1925)

The hospital ward. Combs and Howard still sit together.

COMBS

Servants found me unconscious in the morning. West was gone.

(MORE)

COMBS (CONT'D)

Detectives searched the incinerator but found only unidentifiable ashes. They have questioned me to no avail and made no connection between West and the Sefton tragedy.

Combs looks to Howard with a disturbed, distance look.

COMBS (CONT'D)

Simply, there is no proof for my story. I told the detectives of the blocks and the tunnel leading to the vault. They studied the well-crafted, unbroken masonry, pointed, and laughed. So I told them no more. They imply that I am a madman or a murderer... probably I am mad. But I might not be mad if those accursed tomb-legions had not been so silent.

MARY enters and comes beside the two. She eyes Combs over and then looks to Howard in silence. Without a word, he caps his pen, closes his notebook and rises. Combs looks the two over.

COMBS (CONT'D)

Come again tomorrow if you are in need of more. I have given only the faintest of details and would be pleased to provide more should you deem them necessary.

Howard nods. He smiles at Mary turns and exits. Both she and Combs watch as he disappears down the hall.

INT. BOSTON GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT (MIDNIGHT)

A distant clock tower CHIMES TWELVE TIMES.

Moonlight pools into the room amid patients sectioned off by pull around curtains. Combs awakens, violently COUGHING. He opens his eyes which widen with horror. Before him surrounding his bed...

Clapham-Lee's Legions with Clapham-Lee holding his uncovered head forward, more decayed than ever. To one side stands a hideous creation...

WEST'S HEAD held aloft by a form: Four human legs attached to a human hip structure. Six arms stand erect upward from the top. Two of the hands hold the head of West. Another holds a syringe. Spectacled eyes stare from behind a decaying nose.

WEST
Hello old friend. Are we ready to
begin?

FADE TO:

Pitch blackness and the endless SCREAM of Dr. Jeffrey Combs.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END