

left leg and right arm were shorter than their respective counterparts—like each had been twisted and malformed by ghastly physical torture—and the fingers and toes were all connected by thick webbing. But its face set it apart from humanity most of all, for it was long and drawn, the bones of its cheeks jutting out so far as to indicate deformity, and its nose was the length of its middle finger and curled downwards like a bailing hook. A pair of sharp, elongated canine teeth stretched down over its lower lip, and protruding from its forehead above its eyes was a kind of horn shaped from a mass of hair.

"Do you not know what wondrous glory is about to be yours?" it asked with apparent sincerity.

"All we wish is to be gone from here, creature," I spat out.

"Time has indeed obscured the memory of your kind then, beast," it responded.

"You have forgotten the mastery of the Prime Ones. Even in the time centuries before this temple was built from the face of the plains, did the half-apes of your ancestors come to this spot, to the entrance to the Prime Ones' holy lair beneath the earth, come to grovel on their bellies at the feet of Volgad-Alchychud and His Kindred, offering up their own flesh and blood that the world would continue. But They hunger unceasingly, and after so long a sleep They shall be ravenous indeed."

*But what fate lies in store for those who would face
the unimaginable?*

And what of the man whose dreams share the destinies of heroes?

Indeed, such stirring, vigorous life do I lead in these guises that this world to which we give the paltry name of "reality" has become so drab and shallow to me that I now spend my waking hours in the mechanical performance of mindless, trifling tasks, always yearning for the day to end that I can sleep and dream again.

Don't miss the full adventure of "The Ruin of the Gods" by James Stuart Anderson, appearing only in the Summer 2018 issue of Startling Visions Magazine.