

The Odd Plant

By Faith Ellis

My close friend Captain Edward McCullen was a respectable gentleman of about forty-five years. He earned his title in the British Navy serving time for over thirty years. Upon retiring, Edward returned home to his mansion in Brocksbury. Immediately after settling there, he called me over to observe a peculiar plant he'd discovered while traversing the jungles of the island Parenon.

I hurried on my way, bidding my wife and son goodbye. I found Captain Edward in his study buried in a book apparently taking notes on the so-called "plant" on his desk. I use the term lightly because, as the tall green figure turned around in its pot sporting a sinister grin, it occurred to me that I'd never seen a plant or beast that radiated such an evil aura from a simple expression. I had also never seen a plant with a face.

"McCullen!" I cried. "What is this?" Edward glanced up from his notes and nodded. "This is what I've been waiting to show you. This is—I've named it—a Narcy. I found it in a smaller form, and took it on board with me, thinking it was an edible shrub. You can imagine my surprise when the Narcy itself began to ask for food!"

"Yes," I agreed, "but why did you decide to humor it? You did not think it could be dangerous?" Edward laughed lightly. "Why, then it was just a tiny thing! It could not hurt a fly. And besides, I needed something to distract me from the responsibilities of service. I've never refused it a meal. Often it almost upsets my desk, wailing and screaming for food. Take a look now, see? It is a charming shrub is it not?"

I could see the doubt on my friend's face. The Narcy was writhing its pot with a disgusted scowl on its face. I understood the Narcy's disposition fully, then. But how could I convince Edward McCullen he was sealing his own doom? I glanced at the creature once again and shuddered. It seemed to have grown even larger since we talked. It looked as if it might upset the ceiling—ah! And in an instant I understood what I had to do. I excused myself and hurried home. I snatched an axe from my shed. I suppose I should have hesitated before chopping it down.

Sir Edward was appalled. I knew how dear the thing was to him, yet I killed it suddenly and without permission. To comfort him, I invited him to supper that night. My son Billy was up to his old tricks at the table. Soon after we blessed the meal, he flung the bread basket to the floor, laughing. Angrily I took the bread from his plate and put it on Edward's. Billy began to scream and cry in protest. I thought of scolding him, but the guilt from destroying the Narcy lingered in my conscious. I soothed my son. "I understand you, Billy," I nodded reassuringly at Edward, replacing Billy's bread on his own plate. "I won't take food from you again."