



The Haunted Aquarium Castle

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From the old Freshwater and Marine Aquarium magazine. Freshwater and Marine Aquarium is publishing Robert Scott McKinnon's fifth novel, *The Haunted Aquarium Castle*, in thirteen serialized installments, Halloween 2004 to Halloween 2005. Two retired schoolteachers, Mini Ann Harper and Jane Mary Emerson, a couple of "Arsenic and Old Lace" types, have for years been attending to a monster state of the art aquarium. The riveting centerpiece is a gigantic, mixed bag castle, a gift from Mini Ann's brother, long lost years ago in Germany. At the local pet store on Halloween eve Mini Ann runs into a couple of scary strangers inquiring into the status of the castle. It isn't long before the castle starts acting up, and it isn't long before Mini Ann and Jane Mary are convinced the thing is haunted. But by what? Good question. Professor Service, a professor from the University, is called in, and he takes an interest in the weird aquarium inhabitant and determines to "get to the bottom" of it all. Mr. Proteus, owner of the local pet store, swears he never saw anything like it before, and it certainly did not come from his establishment. In the meantime, month-by-month, the anthropomorphic sights and sounds in the aquarium are getting raucous, and all the lights and sounds aren't coming from the constant parade of gorgeous fishes swimming back and forth through creative, showy plant arrangements. In addition to the obviously goofy aquarium castle, the sporadic visits of the two weirdo strangers don't do much for peace of mind with Mini Ann and Jane Mary, who on at least two occasions, "from stress," end up in the hospital, renewing old acquaintances with the two ambulance drivers they had in class in grade school. "Is our aquarium castle haunted?" "I rather think so." In addition to the over-all mystery of the story, each chapter contains a mystery fish to keep readers guessing, month after month. Some are easy. Some are tougher. And, for the more entrenched freshwater fish hobbyists, there are a couple of zingers, which will send readers splashing for their reference books. Wade Rivers makes a cameo appearance in *The Haunted Aquarium Castle*. He, too, is determined to "get to the bottom" of the mysterious castle. Tom Quinn illustrates *The Haunted Aquarium Castle*. Quinn is becoming famous for his giant downtown Spokane murals. Quinn also illustrated McKinnon's novel *Down Under Jones* and a *Moose Bruce and the Goose* reprint, and many McKinnon and Wade Rivers FAMA stories, including *Drooling Banjos (And All That Jazz)*. Nancy Waddell, a retired editor from J.B. Lippencott and Silver Burdett read and edited *The Haunted Aquarium Castle*. She had this to say about the story: "Bob McKinnon's *The Haunted Aquarium Castle* is a delightful read with a bit of mystery and a passel of eccentricity. His finely-drawn characters are real-life all the way; in fact, I swear one of them lives down the street from me. Once again, McKinnon weaves his own expertise into a very entertaining and captivating tale." Think you're good? Think you're an Afishiando? Let's see you name all thirteen mystery fish plus the bonus fish.

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