

The Amulet of Georgiana Appelo

Description: a moderately heavy gold amulet, in a gaudy Rococo style. The front is inscribed with the Appelo coat of arms (a Guineaman, centered in a triangle of three apples). The back has two moveable rings of characters, in no known alphabet. The Amulet of Georgiana Appelo always feels just a little too warm for full comfort.

It's a tragic tale, in its way: but it's one of those tales where the pathos is tempered by the fact that virtually everybody involved in it got precisely what they deserved. That's what brought the Amulet of Georgiana Appelo to the relevant authorities' attention, in fact. Normally real life is, ah, *sloppier*.

Georgiana Appelo herself can be quickly dismissed; she was a Nineteenth Century heiress to a Dutch shipping company magnate, and the best that you could say of her was that she was *slightly* less actively wicked than her father Markus. And her father was rather drastically wicked, to the point that when he was plucked out of his ship by a rogue wave (in an otherwise sunny and placid sailing day) and drowned the crew legitimately forgot that they theoretically had some sort of obligation to try to

rescue him. The possibility didn't even come up until after the official formal inquest ended, and even then everyone who knew the man personally more or less shrugged. *Take it up with the Almighty*, seemed to be the collective thought. *Surely He had his reasons for doing it this way.*

Moving along: Georgiana Appelo never married, never spoke a kind word to another human being if she could possibly help it, and spent the next sixty years of her life being an appalling corner of Dutch social life until her remarkably lamented death (judging from the attendance at her funeral) in 1895. She had no heirs of her own, and died intestate; Georgiana had also outlived all of her relatives, which meant that her property eventually reverted to the Dutch government. The government soon discovered that this effectively meant the house and its furnishings, as apparently Georgiana had instructed all of her money be withdrawn from the banks and put -- somewhere. She neglected to 'officially' write down the exact location, of course.

And that's where the Amulet comes in. It surfaced about six months later, and ultimately sparked a three-sided struggle for its possession. There was Maxime Janssens, who was the grandson of an old Belgian partner of Markus (and up to his eyeballs in supplying the Belgian Free

State). Then there was Georgiana's social secretary Mila de Vries, who was one of the few people who would tolerate Georgiana, precisely for the post-mortem payoff that never came -- which was particularly annoying, given that Mila had been under the impression that she was to inherit when she 'helped along' Georgiana with a pillow at the very end. When news of the Amulet surfaced, she sought the help of her lover One-Eyed Bram (last name unknown), who was easily one of the most vicious gang leaders in Amsterdam.

Why the struggle? Because the Amulet was reportedly a key to finding Georgiana's hidden treasure. The symbols on the back were from old Markus's private cypher from his days on the Middle Passage; Maxime had the key needed to translate those symbols back into Dutch. Mila had access to Georgiana's papers, including one document that turned out to be the instructions on where to find the treasure. And Bram, of course, had the crew to do the digging.

The three at first at least *tried* to get along, but it all fell apart of course when the treasure location was presumably discovered. Every member of this impromptu cabal promptly tried to betray the other two, in the process of collecting the treasure; and it ended badly for all three

of them. Maxime was found pinned to the wall by a Congolese spear. Mila was pulled out of the Amsterdam harbor with her mouth full of feathers. One-Eyed Bram got off relatively lucky; he got literally blindsided by one of the other two in the initial fracas, was left for the police, and died decades later in prison of the Spanish flu. In all the confusion, the Amulet was lost, and as Bram never actually learned the location of the treasure, the treasure was never recovered.

The document giving the location of Georgiana Appelo's treasure is currently located in an obscure French university's document annex; the Amulet was recovered by the Conspiracy during World War 2 and placed in our own special museum. Why is that? Because the damned thing is **cursed**, that's why. Spontaneous natural curse generation, as near as our researchers can tell; and it's a real beauty, too. Those of us with magical sensitivity report that there's a symmetry to it that makes it a true work of organic esoteric art, well worth being put in a museum. And perfectly safe, too, as long as you don't go after the money.

Which is why the Illuminati have been keeping it; we don't need to go after the money. Which is good, because if one of us did then the curse would undoubtedly end that

person's life in a thematically-appropriate and admittedly entertaining matter. The heads of the Conspiracy was thus saving the Amulet for somebody who, ah, *deserved* it; but as you can see, someone has jumped the gun and stolen the Amulet. Your job will be to go find that idiot, and make the call as to whether it'd be better to intervene. If you decide not to, make sure that you document the inevitable comeuppance. The Illuminati enjoy a good laugh as much as the next secret conspiracy.

Just don't go looking for the treasure yourself. This curse likes to bite on bad people, and while the Illuminati recognizes that evil is usually not cost-efficient, we're not exactly saints, either. Besides: if you so badly need Dutch currency and government bonds to roll around in, we can always give you some out of Petty Cash. That's what Petty Cash is *for*.

PS: If you **do** go look for the treasure anyway, we will absolutely point and laugh.

- © Moe Lane. All rights reserved.
 - <http://www.moelane.com>
 - <https://www.patreon.com/MoeLane?ty=h>