

# SIGHT UNSEEN

by MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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## ELEVENTH INSTALLMENT

There was, on the contrary, a definite place beyond which the medium could not go.

She did not know who had killed Arthur Wells.

To my surprise, Sperry and Herbert Robinson came together to see me that morning at my office. Sperry, like myself, was pale and tired, but Herbert was restless and talkative, for all the world like a terrier on the scent of a rat.

"Hawkins will be here soon," Sperry said, rather casually, after I had read the clipping.

"Here?"

"Yes. He is bringing a letter from Miss Jeremy. The letter is merely a blind. We want to see him."

Herbert was examining the door of my office. He set the spring lock. "He may try to bolt," he explained. "We're in this pretty deep, you know."

"How about a record of what he says?" Sperry asked.

I pressed a button, and Miss Joyce came in. "Take the testimony of the man who is coming in, Miss Joyce," I directed. "Take everything we say, any of us. Can you tell the different voices?"

She thought she could, and took up her position in the next room, with the door partly open.

I can still see Hawkins as Sperry let him in—a tall, cadaverous man of good manners, and an English accent, a superior servant. He was cool but rather resentful. I judged that he considered carrying letters as in no way a part of his work, and that he was careful of his dignity.

"Miss Jeremy sent this, sir," he said.

Then his eyes took in Sperry and

Herbert, and he drew himself up.

"I see," he said. "It wasn't the letter then?"

"Not entirely. We want to have a talk with you, Hawkins."

"Very well, sir." But his eyes went from one to the other of us.

"You were in the employ of Mr. Wells. We know that. Also we saw you there the night he died, but some time after his death. What time did you get in that night?"

"About midnight. I am not certain."

"Who told you of what had happened?"

"I told you that before. I met the detectives going out."

"Exactly. Now, Hawkins, you had come in, locked the door, and placed the key outside for the other servants?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you expect us to believe that?" Sperry demanded irritably.

"There was only one key. Could you lock yourself in and then place the key outside?"

"Yes, sir," he replied impassively.

"By opening the kitchen window, I could reach out and hang it on the nail."

"You were out of the house, then, at the time Mr. Wells died?"

"I can prove it by as many witnesses as you wish to call."

"Now about these letters, Hawkins," Sperry said. "The letters in the bag. Have you got them still?"

He half rose—we had given him a chair facing the light—and then sat down again. "What letters?"

"Don't hear about the bash. We know you have the letters. And we want them."

"I don't intend to give them up, sir."

"Will you tell us how you got them?"

He hesitated. If you do not know already, I do not care to say.

I placed the letter to A 31 before him. "You wrote this, I think?" I said.

He was genuinely startled. More than that, indeed, for his face twitched. "Suppose I did?" he said. "I'm not admitting it."

"Will you tell us for whom it was meant?"

"You know a great deal already, gentlemen. Why not find out from where you learned the rest?"

"You know, then, where we learned what we know?"

"That's easy," he said bitterly. "She's told you enough, I daresay. She doesn't know it all, of course. Any more than I do," he added.

"Will you give us the letters?"

"I haven't said I have them. I haven't admitted I wrote that one. I'll not give them up except to the District Attorney."

"By 'she' do you refer to Miss Jeremy?" I asked.

He stared, and smiled faintly. "You know whom I mean."

We tried to assure him that we were not, in a sense, seeking to involve him in the situation, and I even went so far as to state our position, briefly.

"I'd better explain, Hawkins. We are not doing police work. But, owing to a chain of circumstantial evidence, we have learned that Wells did not kill himself. He was murdered or, at least, shot, by someone else. It may not have been deliberate. Owing to what we have learned, certain people are under suspicion. We want to clear things up for our own satisfaction."

"Then why is some one taking down what I say in the adjoining room?"

He could only have guessed it, but he saw that he was right by our faces. He smiled bitterly. "Go on," he said. "Take it down. It can't hurt anybody. I don't know who did it, and that's God's truth."

And after long wrangling, that was as far as we got.

He suspected who had done it, but he did not know. He absolutely refused to surrender the letters in his possession, and a sense of delicacy, I think, kept us all from pressing the question of the A 31 matter.

"That's a personal affair," he said. "I've had a good bit of trouble. I'm thinking now of going back to England."

And, as I say, we did not insist.

When he had gone there seemed to be nothing to say. He had left the same impression on all of us, I think—of trouble, but not of crime. Of a man fairly driven; of wretchedness that was almost despair. He still had the letters. He had, after all, as much right to them as we had, which was, actually, no right at all. And, whatever it was, he still had his secret.

Herbert was almost childishly crestfallen. Sperry's attitude was more philosophical.

"A woman, of course," he said. "The A 31 letter shows it. He tried to get her back, perhaps, by holding the letters over her head. And it hasn't worked out. Poor devil! Only—who is the woman?"

It was that night, the fifteenth day after the crime, that the solution came. Came, as a matter of fact, to my door.

I was in the library, reading, or trying to read, a rather obtrusive book on psychic phenomena. My wife, I recall, had just asked me to change a banjo record for "The End of a Pleasant Day," when the bell rang.

In our modest establishment the maids retire early and it is my custom, on those rare occasions when the bell rings after nine o'clock, to answer the door myself.

CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK

### NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION

Having qualified as administrator of the estate of William T. Watson, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned within twelve months from date, otherwise this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please come forward and make settlement.

This December 7, 1931

ALBERT WATSON,  
Administrator

### EXECUTOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as executor of the will of L. J. Harrison, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned within twelve months from date, otherwise this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please come forward and make settlement.

This November 14, 1931.

MRS. DONA COFFEY,  
Executor of the Will of L. J. Harrison, Deceased.

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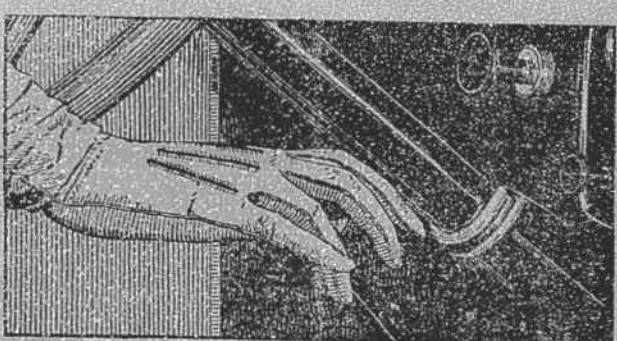
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