

# The RED LAMP



By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

Copyright by Geo. H. Doran Company WNU Service

## SYNOPSIS

Events of the story, from June to September, as set forth in the journal of William A. Porter, professor of English literature:

**JUNE**—The professor's uncle, Horace Porter, died under somewhat mysterious circumstances at his home, Twin Hollows, which is now Professor Porter's property. Jane, the professor's wife, has psychic qualities. She insists Uncle Horace, then dead for a year, was at his class reunion, and a snapshot she takes seems to prove her right. Cameron, a fellow professor of Porter's and president of the Society for Psychological Research, inclines to the idea of psychic photography. Mrs. Porter shows a pronounced disinclination to spend the summer vacation at Twin Hollows. A letter Horace Porter had been writing at the time of his sudden death, reveals he had been interested in spiritualism and makes mention of some implied "danger," and of the "enormity of an idea." A "small red lamp" is also mentioned. Porter's reluctance to live at Twin Hollows cannot be overcome, and, with Edith, Porter's niece, they take up their residence in the Lodge house of the estate. Warren Halliday, in love with Edith, comes to live in a boat-house near the Lodge. A reference Professor Porter had once made to a certain cabalistic design returns to plague him. He finds in the village a superstition that there is something mysterious about the red lamp. There are mysterious happenings, and Mrs. Porter is sure Uncle Horace's spirit is hovering about them. A number of sheep are killed in the vicinity, by some unknown person.

July 7.

Another day has gone by, and I am still at large. Free, I suppose in order that I may eventually again sally forth, some dark night, with my piece of chalk and another knife—for has not Greenough my original one?—to kill more sheep; if indeed there are any remaining for slaughter; or to stab and throw overboard another hapless boatman.

The plain truth is that I am sadly upset. Even what before seemed a plain and obvious duty, to go to the other house tonight and tell Mr. Bethel on his arrival the exact situation, has been all day a matter for most anxious thought. It had seemed quite simple before. I would say to him: "Sir, I have rented you this house. True, I warned your secretary of certain unpleasant qualities it is supposed to have, but I must also warn you. The building is reported to be haunted. I do not believe this, nor daresay will you, but I feel that I must tell you."

Or again: "There is also a popular—or unpopular—idea that some recent sheep-killing around the vicinity are somehow connected with this haunting. The police do not think so, but the more ignorant of the natives do. If this alarms you, I am prepared to pay back your money to you."

Not quite in this fashion but with a similar candor, I have been prepared to clarify my relations with my new tenant. But now what happens? Will Greenough, for instance, credit my entire disinterestedness? Will he not rather believe that I have given but one more evidence of my essential lunacy? Would I not myself, only a few weeks ago, have distrusted any individual who came to me with such a tale?

After all, I have told young Gordon. At least I have that to my comfort if anything happens . . . .

I have seen Bethel, and I have not told him. He gives me every impression, in spite of his infirmity, of being able to look after himself, and after tonight's experience he is welcome to do so. Let him have his raps and his footsteps; let him find his tea-kettle on the floor, and his faces in the pantry. Let him freeze in cold airs or stew in his own juice. I have done my part.

His car drove in at eight-thirty, and I followed it along the drive. True to her agreement, Annie Cochran had only waited until seven and then had taken a firm departure, and I daresay this threw him into the excruciating temper in which I found him. The secretary had assisted him into the house, and I found him in the library, with only one lamp going, huddled in a chair among a clutter of wraps, and introduced myself. He barely acknowledged it.

"Where the devil's the servant?" he barked at me. "I thought there was a woman, or somebody."

"There is a very good woman," I said, "but she goes home before dark. That is," I corrected myself, "she leaves early. I told your secretary that."

"Do you suppose she's left a fire? Gordon!" he called. "Go and see if there's a fire. I want some hot water."

He fumbled in a pocket and brought out what I fancy was a beef cube or some similar concoction, and sat with it in his hand.

"Which way does the house face?" he asked, suddenly.

"East. Toward the bay."

"Then I want a back room. Don't like the morning sun. Don't like anything in the morning," he added, and

peered up at me through his spectacles.

Young Gordon returned then with a cup of hot water and a spoon, and Mr. Bethel favored me with little or no further attention. He has but one usable hand, and the secretary held the cup while he stirred the tablet in it. Only once did he favor me with direct speech during this proceeding. He glanced up as I stood—he had not asked me to sit down—and said:

"Been having some sheep-killing around here lately, haven't you?"

I may have flushed slightly, but I doubt if he could see it, although his eyes were on me. "Yes," I admitted. "Saw it in the papers," he said, and went back to his broth.

Then if ever was my time to plunge, but to save my life I could not do it. That truculent, childish old man, one leg stretched out before him in the relaxation of partial paralysis, one hand

contracted in his lap with the tonic spasm of his condition, taking soup under the direction of a pasty-faced boy who grinned at me above his white head, was no recipient of such information as I had to give. And he allowed me no further opportunity; the cup empty, he indicated that he wished to go upstairs, and with a nod in my direction he shuffled out, Gordon supporting him on the infirm side.

I followed them to the foot of the stairs, and part way up, pausing for breath, he must have suspected my presence there for he turned and looked down.

"What do you think is behind this sheep-killing?" he said. Just that. Not good-night. Nothing whatever about the house; nothing about my presence or my approaching departure. "Who's killed them?" he rasped.

"Some maniac, probably."

"A maniac!" he barked, and steadying himself by Gordon, twisted around so he could see me the better. "Religious tomfoolery, eh? The Blood of the Lamb!"

He cackled drily, staring down at me. Then he turned, without another word, and went on up and out of my sight.

July 8.

I am, I am convinced, under espionage. Old Thomas is too frequently in view, as he patters around his daylight tasks, and tonight I have a distinct impression that some observer who takes an interest in my movements is outside, watching my window. Jock believes this also. He is restless, moving from the passage into my room and back again, and twice, standing near me, the short ruff on the back of his neck has risen.

Halliday brought me today further details about Carroway's disappearance:

"The hotel clerk ran down to the piers," he says, "and he heard the engine going for some time. The boat didn't start up the beach, but out into the bay, as if Carroway felt the other man had a good start of him, and was trying to cross the bay. Then he either lost the sound of the engine, or it stopped."

"He waited on the slip for a half hour or so and then went back to the hotel. Greenough came in about that time and called up Starr, and they went together to the town slip. But



Greenough Decided to Go Out After Him.

Carroway hadn't shown up, and after a time Greenough decided to go out after him.

"They found the boat pretty well out in the bay—the tide was going out—and empty. They looked around, as well as they could, then Starr got into it and brought it back. But here's the part they're not telling: Peter Geiss says Greenough got some waste and wiped something off the top of the engine box."

"He didn't see what it was?"

"They wouldn't let him near the boat, but he says it was the circle again."

Of any other details there are apparently none. Bob Carroway has apparently gone the way of all flesh poor lad. And while Greenough or some emissary of his watches me from my own drive, the murderer is perhaps concocting some further deviltry.

In the meantime a veritable panic has, according to Halliday, seized the countryside, and of this we have certain evidence ourselves. The road beyond the Lodge gates, usually a procession of twin lights, is tonight dark and silent. No motor boats with returning picnic parties rumble across the water, throwing us now and then a bit of song. The fishermen, starting out at three in the morning, are going armed and in fear of their lives. And each man suspects the other.

Jane's attitude these days is curious. She is quite convinced, for instance, that she had a premonition of Carroway's death the night she sent me to the slip. As she has no idea that this premonition of hers may be most unpleasant in its consequences to me, today I got her to talk about it. "Just how did it come?"

"I don't know. I had been asleep, I think. Yes, I know I had. I wakened, anyhow, and I seemed to be looking at the slip. There was somebody there, kneeling."

"Kneeling? Saying his prayers, you mean?" with a recollection of the altar.

"I think he was feeling for something, under the float."

There is a certain circumstantial quality to this, one must admit. He had been seen and was being followed, and his knife for some reason was still where he had left it. Or



What Is More, Jane Sees a Face.

rather, it was not there, since Halliday had that day found it and taken it away. Had it not been for that, poor Carroway might have met his end there on our slip, and not later. But the knife was gone, and there was nothing left but flight.

Just where that flight began no one can say. It seems incredible that he had left his boat moored directly below our boat-house, with Halliday so close at hand. It seems more likely that he ran up the beach a way, and that—well, de mortuis nil nisi bonum. Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me that Carroway could more easily have followed him by one of the row-boats from our slip, than follow the method he did, with the loss of time involved.

Still, I myself would not have started out unarmed after a killer, even of sheep, unless I had first raised the alarm and was fairly sure of assistance to follow.

"But I don't see," I said to Jane, "why you felt that there was anything ominous in this dream of yours, or whatever it was."

"I never have them without a reason."

There may be one comfort to the superstitious in all this; not once, since the night when we lighted the red lamp in the pantry, has it—

Midnight: I have just had rather a curious experience, and I am still considerably shaken.

I had no more than written the above words when I glanced out the window, and distinctly saw a small red light through the window of the den in the main house.

My first thought, so certain was I that the lamp was carefully hidden in the attic, was of fire. Long before I had seen Mr. Bethel's light, in the room above it, go out, and soon after that young Gordon's had been likewise extinguished.

I went quickly to my window and leaned out. So dark is the night that it hangs outside like an opaque curtain, and as the light almost immediately disappeared, I was left staring into this void, when suddenly Jock on the staircase landing gave vent to an unearthly howl.

The next moment I heard, under the trees and toward the house, the short dry cough of cardiac asthma, and smelled the queer unmistakable odor of Uncle Horace's herbal cigarette.

I have reasoned with myself for the last ten minutes or so. All the evidence is against me; Greenough may be watching me, or having me watched, and some poor devil out under the trees is suffering from the night air. Or old Mr. Bethel, unable to sleep, has somehow dragged himself out for a midnight airing under the trees.

But I saw the lamp. And it is locked in the attic. I myself put it there, and at this moment have the key.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

### A SCOTCH INDIAN

A Scotchman walked into a telegraph office and, picking up a blank, asked the, "How much will a message to Chicago cost?"

"Twenty-five cents," replied the clerk, "for the first ten words and 5 cents for each additional word, and no charge for the signature."

"All right," said the canny Scot "send my signature."

"I'd be glad to, what is it?"

After a moment's hesitation, the Scot answered, "Well, I may not look it, but I'm an Indian and my name is 'I Won't Be Home Till Friday.'" —Forbes Magazine.

Driving power averts over-drafts. —Forbes Magazine (N. Y.)

With a cigarette as good as Camels the simple truth is enough

# CAMEL CIGARETTES

WHY CAMELS ARE THE BETTER CIGARETTE

Camels are made of the choicest tobaccos grown—cured and blended with expert care.

Camels are mild and mellow.

The taste of Camels is smooth and satisfying.

Camels are cool and refreshing.

The fragrance of Camels is always pleasant, indoors or out.

They do not tire the taste nor leave any cigaretty after-taste.



© 1929, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Winston-Salem, N. C.

for Economical Transportation



# Another Record!

over

# 500,000

## New Six Cylinder CHEVROLETS

since Jan. 1st

Again, Chevrolet surpasses its most brilliant record of the past by producing over 500,000 six-cylinder Chevrolets in four months—a greater number of six-cylinder cars than any other manufacturer has ever built in an entire year! A ride in this sensational new Six is a revelation—come in and let us give you a demonstration.

der cars than any other manufacturer has ever built in an entire year! A ride in this sensational new Six is a revelation—come in and let us give you a demonstration.

The ROADSTER .....	\$525	The COACH	\$725
The PHAETON .....	\$525	The Sedan Delivery .....	\$595
The COUPE .....	\$595	The Light Delivery Chassis .....	\$400
The SEDAN .....	\$675	The 1 1/2 Ton Chassis .....	\$545
The Sport CABRIOLET .....	\$695	The 1 1/2 Ton Chassis with Cab .....	\$650

All prices f. o. b. factory Flint, Michigan

COMPARE the delivered price as well as the list price in considering automobile values. Chevrolet's delivered prices include only reasonable charges for delivery and financing.

ECONOMY MOTOR CO., Siler City, N. C.

STOUT MOTOR CO. Goldston, N. C.

CHATHAM CHEVROLET CO. Pittsboro, N. C.

A SIX IN THE PRICE RANGE OF THE FOUR

### FOREIGN TRADE GAINING

As regards American foreign trade, the year 1929 is starting in a manner calculated to afford renewed encouragement and stimulus to our international merchants. Thus far figures show substantial gains over 1928.

During January and February we sold to foreign countries \$915,611,

000 worth of goods, against \$764,528,000 worth during the corresponding months last year. This is almost exactly a 20 per cent. increase—a most gratifying rise, which, if it should be continued throughout the year, would mean a billion-dollar growth in our sales to those markets lying beyond our borders. Naturally, it would be futile to attempt a prophecy as to whether the present pace

can be maintained; there are too many incalculable factors in the situation. But there would appear to be at least a possibility that our total foreign trade—exports and imports—during the present calendar year may greatly exceed that of any preceding 12-month period other than the wholly abnormal years 1919 and 1920. —F. Lamont Peirce, in Forbes Magazine.