

# The RED LAMP



By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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## 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 a reference for the Society for Psychical 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 mentioned. Mrs. 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 boathouse near the lake. A reference to a certain calligraphic 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 the place. Numbers of sheep are killed in the vicinity, by some unknown person.

**JULY**—The sheep slayer leaves at the scene of the killings the calligraphic design about which Professor Porter had joked. Greenough, a detective, arrives, and Porter has an uneasy feeling that he is under suspicion. Twin Hollows is rented to an elderly, partially paralyzed man, Bethel, who, with his secretary, Gordon, takes possession. A youth, Carroway, on watch for the sheep killer, disappears. Porter has the red lamp hidden in a room of which he alone has the key, but many people, including the professor himself, believe they have seen its reflection. "Twin Hollows," Halliday is attacked and seriously injured, the attacker escaping. Carroway is found in the bay, murdered. Maggie Morrison, cook employed by the Porters, disappears. A neighbor, Mrs. Livingston, shows an unexplained interest in Mr. Bethel. Gordon, Bethel's secretary, is found by Porter in the grounds of Twin Hollows, unconscious from a blow on the head. Halliday throws himself into an investigation of the mystery.

### August 1.

An incendiary fire was started beneath the boathouse last night, or rather toward morning. An assortment of what was apparently oil-soaked waste was placed in one of the pails from the stoop, and a candle lighted and placed in it. Over this was laid such lumber as was left from the repair of the pier.

Had Halliday been asleep the entire building might have burned. As it happened, he had been in the woods near where we found the boat, on a chance that its proprietor might pay it a visit. He discovered the fire from some distance and by hard running, reached it in-time to extinguish it.

He notified Greenough early this morning, but the gentleman was extremely noncommittal. He stood with his hands in his pockets, kicking over the ashes of the fire.

"What's the big idea, Mr. Halliday?" he inquired.

"I don't get that," said Halliday, belligerently.

"Don't you?" said Greenough, and after kicking the ashes once more, took an unruffled departure.

The best we can make of that is that the detective believes the whole thing a clumsy but concerted plan, on Halliday's part and mine; that we have endeavored to show that, although his watchers would be able to testify that I had not left the house last night, the unknown is still at work.

Nor can I entirely blame him for that. Whoever built the fire knew that Halliday was out at the time. But Halliday could not so state without betraying his knowledge of the boat, a matter he wishes to keep to himself as long as possible.

A new month begins today, and like Peppy, it behooves me to take stock of myself. In spite of my best endeavors, some of my anxiety has crept into this record during the last month; and not always anxiety for myself. Alone, I could take off my coat and fight this thing out, but I am handicapped by Edith and Jane.

Edith will not go and leave Halliday; June will not consider abandoning me here, although she has no idea of the true situation.

I have, I feel, a responsibility I cannot evade. The responsibility to my tenant. I have, by a reduced rent and an alluring advertisement, brought here an elderly paralytic and his young secretary. And, evade the issue as I may, the fact remains that the last two acts of violence have been on my property. From the beginning, indeed, the most casual survey of the situation shows me that Twin Hollows has been a sort of focal point. It was on this property that Nylie saw the sheep-killer hunt sanctuary; not on it, but adjacent to it, is still hidden the boat, and it was from my own boat that he first escaped from Carroway and later killed

him; it was even very possibly his flashlight that Halliday saw, the night of his arrival when, finding the boathouse occupied, he worked his way through the salt marsh toward the sea.

More recently the radius of his activity has been narrowed to the property itself. The secretary sees him outside a window; he enters the house and attacks him from within. And a few days later, possibly having overseen Halliday's discovery of his boat, he attempts to drive him away by setting fire to the boathouse. . . .

I am tempted to ask Mr. Bethel to cancel his lease; to return him his money, entire, and relieve me of responsibility.

What would he say, I wonder?

### August 2.

I have been reading Mrs. Livingston's books, and a pretty lot of nonsense I find them. If there is anything in this question of survival, surely we cannot expect to find it in physical phenomena. Why not better accept that the nervous force which actuates the body may, in certain individuals, extend beyond the periphery of that body?

Nevertheless, it is as well that I brought away from the other house the book I found there on the desk, on "Eugenia Riggs and the Oakville Phenomena." It is no reading for Mr. Bethel, under the circumstances.

One finds, for instance, that the small paneled room which we call the den was used for her seances. That panelling in itself sounds suspicious. But stop! It was not paneled at that time; I recall when poor old Horace found that oak panelling and gleefully installed it in what had been the old kitchen of the original farm house.

An investigation, made just now, has supplemented my memory. The photograph (Note: Plate I, "Eugenia Riggs and the Oakville Phenomena") shows a plastered wall, and one or two crude water colors on it. Possibly the spirit paintings of the text.

It also shows that the cabinet, so called, was not a cabinet at all, but a dark curtain on a heavy pole, which extends across a blank corner. In the picture these curtains are thrown back, showing a small stand on which are the stage properties of "George," a bell, a pan of something, a glass, and a small bunch of flowers. On the floor, ready for his ghostly hand, is a guitar. The wall is certainly plastered.

An inset shows the pan, set on its edge to allow photography, and with the title: "Imprint of hand in putty, Dec. 2nd, 1902. Notice lack of usual whorls and ridges." But in spite of this rather militant caption, I find I am unimpressed. Rather am I wondering whether somewhere in the background there was not a Mr. Riggs, with a short broad thumb and a bent little finger, who was not ignorant of the lack of the usual whorls and ridges in a pair of rubber gloves.

But, considering that plastered wall, the entire evidence in the book, gathered together, forms a surprising whole. One must take off one's hat to the Riggs family, provided there were two of them, or to whomsoever assisted the lady. Especially since the windows were "shuttered and bolted, and small strings of bells, which would ring at the slightest touch, were hung across them."

### August 3.

Halliday, who is an early riser, burst in on us this morning at the breakfast table, fairly bristling with excitement.

"Good morning, everybody!" he sang out. "What do I receive for a piece of very cheering news? Greenough's gone. Benchley came over yesterday and threw him off the case. At least, that's what they say at the post office. Thirteen days he's been fooling around, and he couldn't get over the lump."

"If only he had stayed a little longer," Edith said regretfully, "and somebody had killed him! It's rotten bad luck, that's all."

The conversation had little or no meaning for Jane. She was, I could see, puzzled by our excitement and unable to understand our relief. "Surely they have left somebody," she said. "We ought not to be left without protection. Who knows when something will break out again, and then where are we?"

"Where indeed?" said Halliday. The move is a totally unexpected one. Yesterday, as Halliday said, the sheriff came over to the hotel and was closeted for an hour or two with Greenough. A bellboy reports that, on carrying some cracked ice to the room, he found Greenough sitting morosely by a table, and Benchley at the window, staring out. Half an hour later the sheriff left, passing out of the hotel without so much as a nod to anyone, and within the hour Greenough was paying his bill in the lobby and ordering a car to take him to the train.

Our own relief is enormous, but there is much grumbling among the summer folk as well as the natives. Starv is the usual variety of small-town constable, and it seems extraordinary that the case should be left in his care. It is of course possible that another man is to be sent in Greenough's place, but if so we have no intimation of it.

The immediate result of Greenough's departure has been rather to revive the interest in the situation than otherwise. I dare say as long as the police were on the case the people more or less lay back and depended on them; now they are thrown once more onto their own resources, and a variety of opinions and even of clews are being exchanged at that central clearing house, the post office. Thus: This morning the cows of a man named Vaughan were found huddled

in a corner of the field, giving every evidence of having been run to death during the night.

(To the common sense suggestion of a dog being the culprit, pitying glances.)

A stranger three days ago tried to buy a large knife in the hardware store.

(Later shown to be the Livingstone's new butler seeking a carving knife.)

The second keeper at the lighthouse has resigned, declaring the tower is haunted.

(This is true, so far as the resignation goes. He has, it appears, asked to be transferred. But Ward says there has been no repetition of the strange affair the night of the storm.)

A car driven recklessly and without lights has been seen twice near the Hillburn road, both times after midnight.

(There seems a certain authenticity in this; the car, however, shows its lights until fairly close to another car, when it shuts them off entirely. There may be, of course, some defect in the dimmers.)

My own relief is beyond words. Looking in my shaving mirror today, I am startled at the change in me the last few weeks. The Lears are coming out to dinner tonight. More power to them.

### August 4.

The party last night was a great success. Lear had brought me out a bottle of claret, and with candles on



Edith and Halliday for the Boathouse and a Canoe.

the table and six wine glasses, hastily borrowed from Annie Cochran at the main house, we took on quite a festive air.

We divided after the meal, Jane and Helena to talk, Edith and Halliday for the boathouse and a canoe and Lear and I to pace the drive with our cigars.

Lear's quiet face and general dependability, and perhaps the need of a fresh mind on the conditions here impelled me to tell my story, to which he listened without interruption.

His opinion is that we have to do with a homicidal maniac, and that the sheep-killing was preliminary to the rest, "a propitiation," he puts it.

The supernatural angle of the case he put aside with a gesture.

"I won't even argue it," he said. "There may be something to it; I'm not denying that. But it's not stuff to be meddled with; when the Lord means to open that veil he will do it. And I am no peeping Tom."

He said further that Helena has taken up the ouija board, and sits for hours "with anyone she can entrap," getting absurd messages which sound well and mean nothing.

"In your place," he said, "I would forget it. If you get really to the point where you think you have something, send for Cameron and let him look into it. But keep out of it yourself, Porter. It's bad medicine."

I took them to the eleven o'clock train, and have only just returned. But I think it would amuse Lear, in spite of his hands-off attitude, to know that as I drove into the garage and shut off the lights and the engine, in the very act of getting out of the car I heard once more that peculiar dry cough, the faint slow footfall and smelled again that curious herbal odor which I shall, all the days of my life, associate with my Uncle Horace.

So unexpected was it, coming on top of the happiest evening of the summer, that I stood for a moment immovable. Then I leaped from the terrifying darkness of the garage out into the moonlight, and there confronted young Gordon, standing outside and quietly smoking.

"Hello!" I said, when I could speak.

"Out again, I see."

"Yes. That place gets my goat," he replied. "I guess I'm jumpy, since the other night."

He looked bad, and I asked him if he cared to sit down before starting back. But he refused.

"I'll get h—ll if he finds I've left the house," he said elegantly.

I turned and walked back with him toward the house, and seeing him secretly amused about something, asked him what it was, whereupon he said that he was thinking of the way I had shot out of the garage.

"Put something over on you there, didn't I?"

"You startled me. What do you mean?"

"I guess you know," he said, with his side-long glance. "That cough."

"You mean, the lighthouse story?" He fell again into one of his secret convulsions of mirth.

"No, I don't mean the lighthouse," he said, and turning abruptly, struck off through the trees.

I can take from this as much or as little as I will. Is it possible that Gordon has heard the cough in the house, and associates it with the other sounds of which he has complained to Annie Cochran? Or has he merely been told of it, and with his perverted idea of humor, been deliberately alarming me with it?

### August 5.

Annie Cochran declares that young Gordon has been in the habit of slipping out of the house at night; that he commenced to do it shortly after his arrival, and has done it ever since; that, indeed, he was not sitting on the kitchen steps before he was attacked, but had been out in the car, and was trying to get back into the house.

She also believes that Mr. Bethel suspects it, and has been on the alert, especially since the night of the attack.

"There's been bad blood between them, ever since that night," she said. "They talk a bit when I'm in the dining room, but once I'm out of it, they're as glum as oysters."

She also suspects Mr. Bethel of being afraid of Gordon. On the nights when she assisted him upstairs, while the secretary was still invalided, she always heard him bolt his door as soon as he was inside.

"And the nights he stayed down," she added, "he had me bring down that revolver of his. He laid it to the fellow who got in by the gun room window, but I've got my own ideas about it."

"What makes you think Gordon had been off the place, the night he was hurt?"

"He said he couldn't sleep, didn't he? And he got up and went downstairs to get something to eat, and then went outside?"

"So he said."

"Well, as far as I can make out, he was dressed from top to toe. He didn't need to do that to get down to the pantry."

And we had missed that! Hayward, Greenough and I had checked up that story, according to our several abilities, and had never noticed that discrepancy. "I sent his clothes to be cleaned the next day," she said, "and I noticed it then."

But her real contribution, if I may call it that, lay in the garage, and after tip-toeing to the hall and listening to the sound of Mr. Bethel's dictation from within, she drew me outside.

"So far as I know," she said, "that car's only been out twice since they came, and that was to take Thomas home one time, and me another, the night of the storm. But it's been out, just the same."

"Wouldn't the old man hear it?" "He might and he might not. Suppose it was rolled along the lane and started? He wouldn't hear it there, would he?"

To support her contention she showed me a number of marks in the lane, certainly suspicious but by no means evidential. It is nothing unusual for motorists to strike into the woodland along the lane, under the impression that it is a public road, and to be brought up all standing at the house.

But against all this, at least as pointing to young Gordon as our possible criminal, is what is to me an insuperable obstacle. We know that the crimes are connected with the killing of the sheep. It is not possible to doubt this. And the sheep were killed and the altar built before Mr. Bethel brought Gordon into the neighborhood. Annie Cochran has a certain support for her contention, but not enough.

And she dislikes the boy extremely. Probably she unwittingly revealed the reason for her attack on him just before I left.

"There's something wrong about him," she said. "When a man's dishonest he thinks everybody else is. He's taken to locking his room and carrying the key about with him. I never took a thing of anybody else's in my life."

As Halliday went to town early today, taking the scrap of paper with the cipher to an expert he knows there, I have not been able to discuss this new angle with him. Quite aside from the discrepancy in dates, however, Gordon not arriving until after the reign of terror was well under way, the chief stumbling block is the attack on the boy himself. . . .

Suppose the boy does slip out at night, and take the car? He is young and I imagine pretty much a prisoner all day. He takes dictation all morning, types after luncheon while Mr. Bethel sleeps, and at four o'clock again is ready with his book and pencil. The few moments he has spent with Edith now and then are plainly stolen.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

### Hidden Dogs

Peel large, even potatoes and with an apple corer make a channel through each the long way of the potato. If the frankfurters are small two channels may be made. Draw into each cavity a frankfurter, which has been skinned. Place the filed potatoes in a deep dish, baste with butter or other cooking fat and water, and bake in a hot oven until the potatoes are tender and well browned.

Time in making, 45 minutes.

Temperature, 450 degrees.

1-4 cups flour, 3-4 cup bran, 1 teaspoon salt, 4 teaspoons baking powder, 3 tablespoons brown sugar,

1-4 cup raisins (seedless), 2 tablespoons shortening, 3-4 cup milk.

Sift dry ingredients until thoroughly blended. Work in the shortening with the tips of the fingers. Add the raisins, add the milk slowly. When mixed, roll the dough to 1-2 inch thickness and cut in very small biscuits if you would please the children. Bake in hot oven 12 to 15 minutes. Serve these when a day old.

### You'll Like Carrots This Way

Cook one quart of carrots and use 2 cups carrot puree to 1-4 cup bread crumbs, 2 eggs, 1-4 cup milk, 1 ts. chopped parsley and seasoning. Mix carrots, crumbs and seasoning and fill beaten eggs, add milk, blend and fill buttered pudding cups with the mixture. Set cups in pan of hot water and bake in moderate oven until firm. Unmold and serve with cream sauce.

A compound 300 times as sweet as sugar has been evolved from corn cobs.

### NOTICE OF SALE

Under and by virtue of an order of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, in the proceeding entitled "K. J. Smith against Mrs. M. A. Smith and husband, Manley Smith" the undersigned commissioner will, on the

31st day of July, 1929, offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder for cash the following described real estate, to-wit: NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY:

I, G. W. Blair, sheriff of the county of Chatham, do hereby certify that the following described real estate in said county and state, to-wit: 38 1/2 acres in Matthews Township was, on the third day of October, 1927, duly sold by me, in the manner provided by law, for delinquent taxes of M. A. Smith for the year 1926, amounting to \$25.34, including interest and penalty thereon and the cost allowed by law, when and where K. J. Smith purchased said real estate at the price of \$25.34 Dollars, he being the highest and best bidder for the same. And I further certify that unless redemption is made of said real estate in the manner provided by law, the said K. J. Smith, his heirs or assigns shall have the right of foreclosure of this certificate of sale by civil action at the expiration of one year from the date of sale.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 4th day of October, 1927.

G. W. BLAIR, Sheriff

It being the lands on which the said Manley Smith now resides, located near Route 90 of the State Highway leading from Pittsboro, to Siler City.

Place of Sale: Courthouse door at Pittsboro, N. C.

Time of Sale: 12 o'clock noon.

Terms of Sale: Cash.

This the 29th day of June, 1929.

W. P. HORTON, Commissioner

### NOTICE OF SCHOOL ELECTION

NORTH CAROLINA: CHATHAM COUNTY: OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, JUNE 3, 1929.

In accordance with the petition duly filed, as provided by law, and as more specifically provided by Article 17 of the Codification of the School Laws of North Carolina, wherein one-third, or twenty-five, of the qualified voters, who have resided at least twelve months in the proposed school district, have petitioned the Board of Education of Chatham County, to request the Board of County Commissioners of Chatham County to call a special election for the purpose herein mentioned, and an election is hereby called to be held at the residence of C. P. Teague in the district hereinafter described on

Saturday the 3rd day of August, 1929, for the purpose of voting a special school tax, not to exceed twenty cents on the one-hundred dollars valuation of the property in said district, to supplement the public school funds which may be apportioned by the County Board of Education in case such special tax is voted, in the following described territory, to-wit:

BEGINNING in the Randolph County line near Staley in the public road leading from Staley by (not including) L. C. Siler's and C. C. Cooper's, thence east along the north boundary of Staley local tax district in Chatham County (formerly Woodsdale district) to the bridge at the head of Albright's mill pond, thence east with the courses of Rocky River (including) the lands of Luther Bridges and Harvey Cotner to the west boundary of the Garfield Swain lands, thence along the east boundary of Harvey Cotner's lands to the east boundary of (including) R. D. Teague's land, thence north along the west boundary of (not including) W. J. Thompson's land to the (including) A. J. Clarke lands, thence north along the east boundary of lands of A. J. Clarke lands (including) the Cotner heirs, W. B. Teague, the Widow Thomas, to the Alamance County line; thence west with Alamance County line to Randolph County line, thence south along Randolph County line to the beginning.

At said election of the qualified voters in said territory who shall have registered shall be entitled to vote, those who are in favor of the levy and collection of said tax or taxes, shall vote a ballot on which shall be written or printed the words "For Special Tax," and those who are against the levy and collection of said special tax or taxes shall vote a ballot on which shall be written or printed the words "Against Special Tax." For the purpose of carrying out said election C. P. Teague is hereby appointed registrar, who shall keep his books open from Saturday,

the 29th day of June, 1929, until Saturday, the 27th day of July, 1929, both dates inclusive, for the registration of the voters within said district or territory, and a new registration is hereby ordered; the registration and the election shall be conducted up pure upon request of the General Election Laws for the election to the General Assembly. David Lashley and C. R. Thompson are hereby appointed poll-holders to aid in said election.

After closing the polls on election day the registrar and poll-holders shall proceed to count the votes for and against said election, declare the results of the same, and certify the same to the Board of County Commissioners of Chatham County.

This the 3rd day of June, 1929. R. J. JOHNSON, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, Chatham County C. C. POE, Clerk ex-Officio to said Board of Chatham County Commissioners, (June 27, July 4, 11)

### FORECLOSURE SALE UNDER DEED OF TRUST

UNDER AND BY VIRTUE OF the power of sale contained in that certain deed of trust executed by Alliance Manufacturing Company, to the undersigned Trustee, dated February 9th, 1929, and recorded in the Registry of Chatham County in Book GU, pages 119-20, and default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness therein secured and demand having been made upon the undersigned Trustee to foreclose for the satisfaction of said indebtedness; the undersigned will on

Saturday the 20th day of July, 1929, at twelve (12) o'clock noon in front of the Courthouse door at Pittsboro, North Carolina, offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash, the following described property:

BEGINNING at an iron corner 50 feet from center of Southern Railway tract, M. F. Morris corner; thence south 47 degrees west, his line, 18 poles to an iron in Cheek's line; thence South with Cheek's line 8 poles to a stone, I. P. Coggins' corner; thence east with Coggins' line 19 poles to stone and pointers; thence north 47 degrees east 13 poles to an iron Southern Railway right of way; thence with said right of way 21 poles to the BEGINNING, containing 2 acres, more or less, and being the lot of land conveyed to the party of the first part by J. W. Emerson, and to J. W. Emerson by S. J. Emerson estate, it being the same lot of land upon which is now located the Gin property of the party of the first part. Also all the gin, presses, machinery, motive power, beltings, shaftings, tools, etc., used with and in connection with the operation of the cotton gin located upon said lot, whether the same be fixed to the real estate or not.

This the 18th day of June, 1929. WADE BARBER, Trustee

### NOTICE OF SALE

Under and by virtue of a certain decree made and entered in that special proceeding now pending in the superior court of Chatham county, North Carolina, entitled "James L. Griffin, Administrator of J. J. Brooks, versus Mrs. Sallie Brooks, et al.," the undersigned commissioner will on

Saturday the 13th day of July, 1929, at 12 o'clock noon, in front of the Courthouse door at Pittsboro, North Carolina, offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash, all that certain lot or parcel of land lying and being in Center Township, adjoining the lands of T. M. Bland estate and others, and bounded as follows, viz:

On the north by the lands of T. M. Bland; on the east by the right-of-way of the Pittsboro Railroad; on the south by the Jenks land, and on the west by the Newman lands, containing 35 acres, more or less, and being more fully described and defined in the title deeds which he held the same, SAVE AND EXCEPT, HOWEVER, from this tract of land the dower interest of Mrs. Sallie Brooks in and to the following:

BEGINNING at the southwest corner of the J. J. Brooks lands, Jenks line and running thence about east 163 yards; thence about north 160 yards to a cedar tree in grove; thence about west 180 yards; thence about south 190 yards to the beginning.

This the 10th day of June, 1929. WADE BARBER, Commissioner

Siler & Barber, Attys.

### FORECLOSURE SALE UNDER DEED OF TRUST

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain deed of trust executed by H. G. Goldston and wife, Gola Goldston, to the undersigned Trustee, dated June 23rd, 1928, and recorded in the Registry of Chatham County in Book HA, page 621, and default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness therein secured and demand having been made upon the undersigned Trustee to foreclose for the satisfaction of said indebtedness; the undersigned will on

Saturday the 20th day of July, 1929, twelve o'clock noon in front of the Courthouse door at Pittsboro, North Carolina, offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash, the following described real estate:

BEGINNING at a stake in the fork of the west and east prong of Indian Creek; thence up west prong of Indian Creek its various courses 41 poles to an ash on said creek; thence about north with hedgerow 112 poles to a stone in Cleve Garter's line (formerly W. L. Goldston's line); thence about east with said Garter's line 62 poles to a sweet gum on the east bank on the east prong of Indian Creek; thence down said creek its various courses to the beginning, containing thirty three (33) acres more or less.

This the 17th day of June, 1929. WALTER D. SILER & WADE BARBER, Trustees