

# The RED LAMP



By MARY ROBERTS RINHART

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August 18.

Gordon came back early this morning. I invented an errand to the house soon after breakfast, but found that Mr. Bethel was still sleeping—as well he might—and that preparations for tomorrow's departure were well under way.

While Gordon was busy on the lower floor, Thomas and I made a tour of the house, with a view to closing it. I took advantage of my legitimate presence on the upper floor to examine the locked closet in which I had stored the red lamp. It is still there, and apparently has not been disturbed. . . .

Halliday today advised for me a period of masterly inactivity. Not that he calls it so, but that is what he means.

"I have an idea, Skipper," he said, "that this calling Greenough off the case was sheer bluff. Every move he made was being watched, and unless I miss my guess you'll find he's at Bass Cove, or some place nearby, under another name. I thought I saw his car a night or so ago."

What I finally gathered is that Halliday wants to eliminate me from the case, for my own sake.

"Just now," he said, "you are sitting very pretty. But one more bit of bad luck and he's ready to jump."

Although he smiled, I have an idea that he is deadly serious; that he knows Greenough is not far away, and that for some unknown reason he expects another bit of bad luck. His face is thin and haggard these days, and from the fact that he sleeps a great deal in the daytime, I am inclined to think that he sleeps very little at night.

Between him and Edith, too, I surmise some sort of mysterious understanding. At the same time, there is a noticeable absence of those three-angled conferences in which, some little time ago, we were free to air our various theories.

Willy nilly, I am consigned to innocuous desuetude.

Hayward started yesterday on his vacation.

August 20.

4:00 a. m. Mr. Bethel was murdered between eleven o'clock and midnight last night. Gordon has escaped.

7:00 a. m. Jane is at last asleep, and I have had some coffee. Perhaps if I record the events of the night it will quiet me. After all, one cannot forget such things; the only possible course is to bring them to the surface, to face them.

But I will not face that room.

Murder. The very word is evil. But no one has ever known how evil until he has seen it. Such things cannot be written; they should not be seen. They should not be.

We have had this murder. We have gone over, inch by inch, the scene of it. We have been spared no shock: the evidence of the struggle is on the walls, the floor, the furniture; we have the very knife with which it was committed. We have even gone farther than that. We have followed

## TEST YOURSELF

By Rev. J. E. B. Houser

1. What are the mystical numbers of the Bible and what do they signify?
2. How many miracles did Christ perform?
3. What is the shortest and the longest verse in the Bible?
4. What was a Nazirite?
5. What were the four principal offerings of sacrifice made under the Mosaic law?
6. What was preserved in the Ark of the Covenant?
7. To whom did Jesus appear after his resurrection?
8. What is the devil called in John 8:44?
9. Why is Jesus, the Christ, called the Word?
10. For what purpose was the first land bought, as recorded in the old testament?

## ANSWERS

By Rev. J. E. B. Houser

1. 3 Diety, 7 fullness or completeness or perfection, 10 royalty.
2. 39.
3. John 11:35. Esther 8:9.
4. A person "separated" unto the Lord, Numbers 6:2-21.
5. Self-dedication, sin, trespass, and peace.
6. The Golden Por of Manna, Aaron's rod that budded, Tables of Stone revealing the Ten Commandments, Hebrews 9:4.
7. Mary Magdalene, the Mother of James.
8. A liar and the father of lies.
9. Because he is the revelation of God.
10. The burial place of Sarah, Genesis 23.

Secrets are a mortgage on friendship.

It outside, along the drive to the garage, and from there by the car to the salt marsh beyond Robinson's point.

And yet, according to Halliday, until we have gone still further, we have had no murder, according to the law.

Ever since daylight, I have been struggling to see the justice of a law where, when Gordon is found—and Greenough believes he will be found—we cannot convict him unless we also find that bit of old flesh and blood and bone which was once Simon Bethel.

Is it only necessary, to escape justice, that a criminal artfully dispose of his crime?

And by how narrow a margin he did escape it! A matter of minutes. Between my calling Halliday on the telephone and my meeting him at the terrace; perhaps even between that and our entrance into that wrecked room. A matter of minutes.

In one thing only did he make an error, and even that may not have been an error. He may coolly have abandoned his suitcase, packed and hidden in the shrubbery; may have stood there a second or so, considering it, and then decided to let it lie.

The most grievous thing to me is that I should have given him the warning. And the most terrible picture I have is that, when I called Halliday, he stood listening in at the telephone, craftily calculating: "Can I make it? Can I not?" With that behind him. . . .

Crafty. As old in crime as crime is old, for all his youth. Out on the bay disposing of his horrible freight, and watching the lanterns as they searched for the boat; seeing them scatter, looking for other boats with which to follow him out onto the water, and then quietly heading back, into the creek again, and escaping through the wood. Crafty, beyond words.

August 21.

The excitement is still intense. I have hardly seen Halliday since our trouble; he is working with the police, of which a number have come to assist Greenough. Curious crowds stand outside our gates, which we have been obliged to close and lock. A few of the more adventurous, gaining admission by the lane, are turned back there by guards who are on duty day and night.

Thomas, standing at the gate, has orders to admit only the detectives and duly accredited members of the press.

On the bay we have once more the familiar crowd of searching boats. Off the Point, dragging has been going on, but with no result. Owing to the fact that no guards were placed by the boat, a large portion of it has already been taken away by morbid individuals who will place their trophies, I dare say, on tables or mantelpieces, and thereafter gloat over them.

Truly, just as the lunatic always insists that he is sane, so do the sane often demonstrate that they are mad. And so far, nothing.

Nothing, that is, which leads to Gordon's apprehension. From the time he turned back in the boat and landing, made his escape into the woods above Robinson's point, he disappeared entirely. Here and there a clew has turned up, to end in disappointment. Greenough believes that he will be found, that he cannot escape the police drag-net, but I am not so sure. . . .

Although almost forty-eight hours have passed, Jane, has not yet opened up the subject of the telephone, and because of her morbid reserve on such matters, I have not told the police.

Asked how I had happened to be at the telephone and thus receive the alarm, I have replied that the bell rang, that I went to the instrument, and was immediately aware that one of the receivers was down, either at Halliday's or at the main house; that I heard a crash over the wire, followed by a second and nearer one, and after that a silence; that following that I heard, near the receiver, the sobbing breath of exhaustion, and that immediately after that the receiver went up, and I called Halliday frantically; and that, on his replying, I told him my suspicion that something was wrong at the main house, and to meet me there at once.

But there is a discrepancy here which may cause me trouble if they come back to it. A telephone such as ours does not ring if one of the receivers is down. And the plain fact is that our telephone did not ring at all that night.

As I have not yet recorded the events of that tragic evening in their sequence, I shall do so now.

Halliday had dined with us, and had been more like himself than for some time past. After dinner he and Edith sat on the veranda, and going to lower a shade I saw that she was holding a match while he drew something on a bit of paper. But the match went out almost at once, and I would have thought no more of it, had I not heard Edith say:

"And the cabinet was there?"

"In the corner," he replied.

I am no eavesdropper, so I drew the shade and turned away.

He left at something after ten, and Edith joined us. She was very quiet, and sat watching me play solitaire while Jane sewed industriously. At half past ten or thereabouts, Jane suddenly said:

"The telephone is ringing."

Both Edith and I looked up in amazement; the instrument was in the small hall, not ten feet from where I sat; it would have been impossible for it to ring without our hearing it, and we had heard nothing.

"You've been asleep, Jane!" Edith accused her. But I glanced at her, and I remember that she was oddly re-

laxed in her chair; her face looked white and her eyes were slightly fixed.

"It is ringing," she said, thickly. And that is how I happened to be at the telephone that night. And how, too, I gave the alarm which enabled the murderer to escape, by calling Halliday.

"Get your revolver and meet me at the main house," I said. "There's something wrong there."

I know that had I not rung the telephone, had I gone for Halliday in



He Drew Something on a Bit of Paper.

stead, we would have caught the criminal. But to ring the one house was to ring the other; he may still have been standing there gasping. He had, for all he knew up to that time, the rest of the night in which to finish his deadly work; to dispose of the body, to gather up his suitcase, waiting outside, and get away.

But I called Halliday, and the criminal listened. He knew then that instead of hours he had only minutes. He must have worked fast, in that ghastly shambles of a room; the car was probably already out, in the lane. He may even have stood there, at the corner of the lane, the engine turning over quietly, and watched Halliday running up toward the house. And perhaps he laughed, that secret laugh of his which had always rather chilled me.

Then—he simply got into the car and drove away. Cool and crafty to the last. No body, no murder. He made for the boat.

He left behind him only two real clews; the knife, which Annie Cochran identifies as one taken from the kitchen, and his packed suitcase. Not intentional, this last. He must have needed clean linen. And certainly that diary of his, in cipher—he would not want that in the hands of the police. But what would the diary matter, after all, if he himself escaped?

August 22.

As time goes on the case is complicated with the eagerness of all sorts of people to bring in extraneous circumstances which they consider important.

For instance, Livingstone's butler, the one who bought the knife in Oakville and caused so much excitement by so doing, has been over to get a description of Gordon, preserving an air of mystery which under other circumstances would be vastly entertaining.

Another story concerns a middle-aged man of highly respectable appearance and of a square and heavy build, who was seen walking uncertainly along the main road near the Livingstone place at 1:00 a. m. the night of the murder. A passing car seeing his state, stopped and asked if he was in trouble.

He replied that he had been struck by a car an hour or so before, and had been lying by the road ever since. His condition bore this out, as he was stained with blood and dirt. He accepted the offer of a lift, and was left at the railroad station at Martin's Ferry to catch the express there for the city.

There have been many similar ones; an innumerable number of people are convinced that they have seen Gordon, and apparently almost any dapper youth of twenty or so, with what Edith calls patent leather hair and an inveterate cigarette habit, is likely at any time to be tapped on the shoulder and taken to a police station. . . .

Of clews of other and lesser sorts there has been almost an embarrassment. Both the library and that portion of the hall near the telephone have furnished finger prints. But as Greenough says:

"Finger prints do not discover criminals; they identify them."

Nevertheless, great pains have been taken to preserve them. On the white marble mantel a very distinct imprint in blood was photographed without difficulty; others, less clear, were dusted with black powder before the camera was used. Detailed pictures were made of the library and hall, before any attempt to put them back to order was permitted, and these prints have been enlarged and carefully studied. One of them with a strange result.

Greenough, handing it to me, said: "This print is defective. You can keep it, if you care to."

But I wonder if it is defective. There is what Greenough calls a light streak in the lower corner, but it requires very little imagination to give to this misty outline the semblance of a form, and to the lower portion of

it the faint but recognizable appearance of a brocade.

I have said nothing. What can I say? . . .

One thing which puzzles the police is the violence of the battle; it seems incredible that Bethel could have made the fight for life which he evidently did. At the same time, they have two problems to solve which repeated searching of the house and wide publicity have not yet answered.

One is the disappearance of the manuscript on which Bethel had worked all summer. Annie Cochran has testified that this manuscript was kept locked in a drawer in the library desk; when Halliday and I entered the house this drawer was standing open and the manuscript was missing. It has not yet been located.

But perhaps the most surprising is the failure of any friend or relative of Simon Bethel to interest himself in the case. Cameron's note to Larkin before Bethel rented the house expressly disclaims any previous knowledge of him.

"Here is a possible tenant for Mr. Porter's house," he wrote, "of which he spoke to me some time ago. I have no acquaintance with Mr. Bethel, save that he called on me a day or so ago, in reference to a statement in a book of mine. I imagine, however, that he would be a quiet and not troublesome tenant."

Halliday brought up this curious situation yesterday, in one of the rare moments he has given us since the murder.

"Has it occurred to you, Skipper," he said, "that it is strange that no one belonging to Mr. Bethel has turned up?"

"I dare say a man can outlive most of his contemporaries and most of his friends."

"He wasn't as old as all that." And he asked, apparently irrelevantly a moment later: "The two evenings you saw him and talked to him, how did he impress you? I mean, his state of mind?"

"The last time, of course, he was frankly frightened. He said as much."

"And before that?"

"He didn't say so, but he was more or less on guard. He had his revolver. Of course, those were rather parious times."

As a matter of fact, the case is anything but a clear one against Gordon, as it develops. Greenough has been, all along, as convinced of Gordon's guilt as he had previously been of mine. But Benchley is more open to conviction, and a conversation between Halliday and him this morning, on the lawn near the terrace, is still running in my mind.

Halliday had been protesting against Greenough's method of "following a single idea until it went up a blind alley and died there."

"Of course," he said quietly, "you can make a case against Gordon; it's all here. But you'll have something left over that you won't know what to do with. We know that it was Mr. Bethel who hit Gordon and knocked him out some time ago, but who tied him? Where's the boy's own story about seeing a man at the gun-room window? Mr. Porter here later on finds that same window open, and sees a man in the lower hall. Who was that? The same hand tied the boy that tied Carroway, and Gordon hadn't even seen this place at that time. What are you going to do with that?"

"Then where's Gordon now?" Benchley asked, practically enough.

"I don't know. Dead, maybe."

Benchley stood thinking.

"I think I get the idea," he said. "The fight, you think, was between Mr. Bethel and this unknown of yours; the boy either saw it and got mixed up in it, or knew he'd be suspected and beat it. Is that it?"

"Well, I would say that a man about to commit such a crime doesn't pack his suitcase, with the idea of escaping with it."

A thought which, I admit, had never occurred to me until that moment.

As a result of this conversation Benchley has advanced a theory of his own which accounts at least for the failure of any relatives to make inquiry. This is that the old man was in hiding under an assumed name; hiding, in the most secluded spot he could find, from some implacable enemy who had finally caught up with him.

How he reconciles this with the Carroway murder and the disappearance of Maggie Morrison I do not know, but certain facts seem to bear out this idea. He was, in one sense, a man of mystery. His accounts were paid in cash; the automobile in which he arrived had been bought at second hand a few days before, by the secretary and in the same manner. And all identifying marks had been carefully removed from his clothing.

In addition to all this, there is the puzzling report on the knife itself. Examination under the microscope shows fibers of linen as well as fragments of cellular tissue. But it also reveals minute particles of tobacco leaf, showing it had gone through a pocket.

But Mr. Bethel was not a smoker.

At some one time, then, Bethel clearly secured the knife and wounded his assailant. Not seriously evidently, since after that he was able to do what he did do, but sufficiently to turn the minds of the police toward the man who claimed to have been struck by an automobile.

This clew, however, has developed nothing. The night was dark, and his rescuers have no description of him save of a heavy-set figure and a dazed manner of speech. They carried him to Martin's ferry, but the conductor of

the night express remembers carrying no such passenger. . . .

Greenough today showed me Gordon's diary, rescued from the suitcase. It has at some time been dropped into water, and certain pages are not legible. If indeed that word may be used where nothing is legible; where each page presents such jumbles of large and small letters as the following sentence, which I have copied as a matter of interest:

"Trn g.K. GTRgg UnMT aot LmGT MotrT."

The record is not a daily one, but apparently was used for jotting down odd thoughts or ideas. It continues, however, at intervals, for the entire period of his stay at Twin Hollows, the last entry having been made on August 17.

Certain entries are neat and methodical. The one on July 27, however, after his injury, is by hand, and shows erasures and changes. Once or twice in August the record is long, covering more than a page, while the July entries are all brief. On the last page, however, and without comment, he has drawn in, rather carefully, a small circle enclosing a triangle.

Greenough, while attaching a certain interest to it, has not yet sent it to be deciphered by the code experts of his department. As a matter of fact, I suspect him of holding it out, with the idea of being able to claim the reward of he finds Gordon.

Which reward, by the way, now stands at ten thousand dollars.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

## ONE DAY AT A TIME

By "Miss Polly"

God in his wonderful wisdom and goodness saw fit to make his people live only one day at a time. What a wonderful blessing that He has bestowed on us!

When we are blue and despondent and feel all down and out how sweet it is for night to overtake us and for us to sink into oblivion and forget our troubles for a season and be able to get a fresh start each morning.

There is Sunday always so beautiful regardless of weather because it is our Lord's Day. There is such a sweet sacredness about it that we seem to be able just by looking out into the sunshine to tell that it is Sunday even if we didn't already know it. We look forward to Sunday with so much eagerness that we can hardly wait sometimes for it to come and find ourselves wishing the Sabbath Day would last always, but we only live one day at a time.

And there comes so often Blue Monday. We can not see anything to look forward to. We become so down hearted that we actually think we are tired of life and think it wouldn't matter if God would take us away and we almost make ourselves believe that we would like to die and see what effect it would have on our friends. When our dearest friend on earth mistreats us (and never seems to care or realize the fact) then it is that we'd be willing and glad to die to prove to that friend how he has stepped on our heart with such weight. But thanks to our Heavenly Father that He never lets us live more than one day at a time.

## My Favorite Stories by Irvin S. Cobb

### The Purification of Johnson Sides

JOHNSON SIDES, official peace-maker of the Putes in Nevada, one cold January night got lost in a snow-storm and was induced by a cowboy who found him to take a long swig out of a whisky bottle. This was Johnson's first offense and it tipped him over completely. In a delirium he walked into a burial place and staggered through the musty portals of an ancient and abandoned tomb. There he lay down to sleep it off. The chilly temperature sobered him up. He returned to Carson the next morning penitent and terrified at having broken the law.

The legislature happened to be in session. A humorously inclined member got hold of the Indian, heard his story, and drew up a bill as follows: "SENATE BILL 6521."

"Section I—Be it enacted that the drink taken by Johnson Sides in the Carson City graveyard Monday night, January 3rd, be hereby declared null and void.

"Section II—This act shall go into effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the governor."

With much pomp and paucity and with great wads of red sealing wax and a mass of red ribbon affixed to the document, this hoax was solemnly passed by the senate without a dissenting vote; then was taken to the assembly and there passed unanimously, and after the governor had signed it the precious paper was bestowed upon Johnson with an elaborate speech. He took the document to the outskirts of the town where his tribe was encamped, translated it and announced that the White Father had called the big snake off.

The next morning 300 drunken Putes were gathered up out of the cemetery by the local constabulary.

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## THE GARDNER

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By PANTHA VASHTI HARRELSON

The gardener came in with a troubled countenance the other day, the other week in fact. He wanted to know if I had noticed the pears; I had. A more beautiful sight is rarely seen than a giant pear tree bowing to the earth with growing pears. The long graceful limbs remind me of runners on the last lap of a long race. Every ounce of strength conserved in the tired body and yet nothing crude or useless in the movements made. My heart is uplifted when I see one. It just seems to come up in my throat and say the unexpressable things that are there. My spirit reaches up for a new kinship with God as I see a fruitful pear tree.

The gardener was not thinking of the beauty of limb and fruit, however, when he asked me about the pears. He had noticed that one by one they were beginning to drop to earth while they were yet green. I too noticed that this was happening and as the days have gone I have noticed it more and more. Now the earth underneath the tree is so well covered with fruit that a step will cover many, the foot can scarcely be put down without bruising one or more.

At random I have stooped to pick them up and always I find the same thing: wilt, rot, jaundice. Small wonder they are falling off. The wilt and rot are disease, maybe the fruit could not help that. It is pitiful. But what of the jaundice—the knotty place, the gnarled, unshapen spot—could that too not be helped? No, the storm did that. Here is the mark of a hail stone; there is the healed over bite of a wasp; here blight from the cold of that late spring's near-frost; there the sunken scar healed to be sure but scar nevertheless from a hard knock against a nearby big limb; here in-broken skin, smooth exterior but broken at heart. Surely these could no more be helped than the disease attacked pears.

How pitiful! Life has beaten these potentially beautiful ones into shapeless things, unfit for maturity, which one by one are falling to earth while their more favored kinsmen are coming to a rich maturity. Some of them will grow on until frost. In imagination I can see now their rich satiny skins of soft dimpled yellow and feel their luscious tenderness as I sink my teeth into their mellow sides. Why could not all of them have been well favored and fine?

Pears and their troubles make me think of men and theirs. They too are falling one by one. Here is one attacked by disease; there is one keeled over by the blast; all around those who cannot come to maturity. I pity those struck by disease. It is the common lot of man. I pity more those made unfit by the blows of life. The twisted foot, the gnarled hand, the hunched back, make me ache when I see them. I feel as though I literally had the same condition in my own body. How much more I pity the dwarfed mind, the still-born spirit. Here is a body having the markings of maturity housing the spirit of an unborn babe spiritually.

I ask myself what kind of pear shall I be. Am I to be one that falls before I accomplish God's purpose in me or shall I come to a rich ripeness? And you? In men years alone do not mark maturity. Some have accomplished their purpose in a short span. The Christ was only 33 as years go, only worked 33 years and yet he could pray: "Father, I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do." Others use long years ere they come to theirs. Milton was 57 years old ere he completed his "Paradise Lost." The longer the period of maturity the finer the workmanship of the man seems to be the rule in many activities of life. Look at our statesmen. Old men rule the world is the way some one puts it. Look at our bishops; they are all men of years. Where knowledge must be combined with understanding age and its accompanying wide experience maturity ever comes late. More transient values may be accomplished in shorter time. In pear language some ripen at the beginning of the season, others at its close but those that ripen hang on until ripening time and do not let disease or the vicissitudes of life crowd them off before their time.

Irvin Love, nine-year-old Chester, S. C., boy, suffered injury Saturday when he was kicked in the face by a mule. The iron shoe struck him squarely on the nose, driving the nose back into his face and fracturing the base of the skull. He was taken to a Chester hospital where it is believed he has a chance at recovery.