Mariana Marian The RED LAMP MARY ROBERTS RINKHART

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September 8.

Halliday's attitude is very curious. He is taciturn in the extreme; he avoids any confidental talks with me, and Jane commented on it this morning.

"He worries me," she said, "and he is worrying Edith. If you go out aow and look, you'll see him pacing boathouse veranda, and he has been doing it for the last hour."

I admit that he puzzles me. It was Greenough's errand, so far as I can make out, to relieve my mind as to myself, but to treat Halliday's case. as given to the police, as entirely confidential.

"It's the outside man we are after," he said; "and the outside man we are going to get."

But on my mentioning my right to know who was under suspicion, he only repeated what the detective

"You understand," he said, "there's no case in law yet. Knowing who did a thing, and proving who did it, are different things entirely." But they would prove it, he was con-

fident. So confident, indeed, that before he left he inquired the make and cost of my car. Evidently he has already mentally banked the reward. On the other hand, certain things

seem to me still to be far from clear. Halliday, I understand, passed over to the police the following facts: (a) A copy of the unfinished letter

from Horace Porter to some unknown. (b) A description of the print of a hand, left on the window board. (e) A small illustration from the

book "Eugenia Riggs and her Phenomena." and showing the same hand (d) A sworn statement of the Liv-

ingstones' butler, the nature of which I do not know. (e) An analysis of his own theory of the experiments referred to in the

ferred to later.)

(g) The possibility that attempts to enter the main house are due to the fact that, in the haste of the escape, something was left there which is both identifying and incrim-

But so far as I can discover, he has not told them that, from the time the guards were taken away from the house at night, he was on watch there. In other words, from shortly after the murder he must have known that something incriminating had been left there, when Bethel and his accomplice, Gordon's "outside man," made

their escape the night the secretary was murdered. He may even know what it is, and where. But he has not told Greenough. Again, there is the fact that a state-

ment by the Livingstones' butler was a portion of the evidence he submitted. Surely they are not endeavoring to incriminate Livingstone!

September 9.

It is Halliday's idea to hold another seance, using Cameron's coming as the excuse for it. I gather that he believes that, under cover of the seance, another attempt may be made to secure the incriminating evidence left in the house. Not that he says so, but his questions concerning the sounds I heard in the hall during the second seance point in that direction. "This herbal odor you speak of,

Skipper," he asked, "was that before you heard the movement outside?" "Some time before. Yes. But the odor seemed to be in the room; the sounds were beyond the door."

"You don't connect them, then?" "I hadn't thought about It, but I don't believe I do."

"Did you hear any footsteps?"

I had to consider that. "Not footsteps; there was a sort of scraping along the floor."

"And the moment you spoke this noise ceased?" "Yes."

The whole situation is baffling in the extreme. I cannot ignore the fact that the seances were proposed by Mrs. Livingstone, that it was she who left the hall door unbolted at the second sitting, or that Livingstone himself was absent that second night, presumably ill. At the same time, it was Livingstone who indirectly advised me against the business.

"Let it alone," he warned me. "Let well enough alone."

So far as Halliday is concerned, it is clear that he does not like the idea of another seance, but feels that it is necessary. He assures me the police will be on hand, inside and outside the house, but he does not minimize the fact that there will be a certain risk, and that he dreads taking Jane and Edith into it.

"It's like this," he said today, feeling painfully for words. "In a sense, you and I are at the parting of the ways in this thing. We can let it go,

and turn loose on the world a cruel and deadly idea which may go on claiming victims indefinitely." He made a small gesture. "Or-we put into the other side of the scale all we have in the world, and then-" He pulled himself up. "There's only possible danger," he said. "Unless things slip. there should be very little."

The same list of those present as before. There is an unconscious emphasis placed by Halliday on Hayward making no sound on the drive. It and Livingstone, but perhaps I am overwatchful.

I daresay, thus placed between my duty and my fears, I shall do my duty. perceive that either Hayward or livingstone is once more to be allowed access to the house, and under conditions more or less favorable to what is to be done. But which one? . .

Later: I have done my duty. I have telephoned Cameron, and he will come out tomorrow night.

September 10. Halliday has taken every possible precaution as to tonight. As it has been our custom to go over the house before each seance, and as Cameron may do this with unusual thoroughness, it has been decided not to place Greenough and his officers until after the sitting begins. Halliday has therefore today connected the bell from that room, which rings in the kitchen, to a temporary extension in the garage, with a buzzer. When the lights are lowered, he will touch the bell, and Greenough is then to smuggle his men in through the kitchen.

While no one can say what changes Cameron may suggest in our previous methods, Halliday imagines he will ask us at first to proceed as usual. In any event, I am to sit as near to the switch as possible, and when Halliday calls for lights, am to be ready to turn them on. . . .

8:30. Everything is ready. But I am concerned about Halliday. Has he some apprehension about his own safety tonight? He came an hour or so too early to

start with the car for Cameron, and borrowing pen and paper, wrote a long communication to Hemingway. What is in it I do not know, but he took it with him, to mail on his way to the station.

(End of Mr. Porter's Journal) CONCLUSION

## Chapter I

The Journal takes us up to the evening of September 10, 1922. It was to the fourth and last tragedy of that summer, which filled the next day's papers, that little Pettingill referred. in the conversation recorded in the introduction of this Journal.

It was with this tragedy that, as Pettingill said aggrievedly, the story "quit" on them. And quit it did. We (f) And a letter to Edith from an felt then that the best thing to do, unanonymous correspondent. (To be re | der the circumstances, was to let it

> giving the story to the public, and much to be lost. At that time, It is to be remembered, a wave of spiritualism, or rather spiritism, was spreading over the country; it was still filled. too, with post-war psychopaths. The very nature of the experiment which had been tried was of the sort to seize on the neurotic imagination, and set it aflame. It was not considered advisable to allow it publicity.

> Now, of course, things are different. The search goes on, and perhaps some day, not by this method but by some legitimate and scientific one, survival may be proved. I do not know; I do not greatly care. After all, I am a Christian, and my faith is built on a life after death. But I accept that: I do not require proof of it. . . .

Picture us, then, that evening of September 10, when the Journal ends. waiting for we knew not what; Jane picking up her knitting and putting it down again: Edith powdering her nose with hands that shook in spite of her best efforts: Halliday at the railroad station with the car to meet Cameron; and off in the woodland, where the red lamp of the lighthouse flashed its danger signal every ten seconds from the end of Robinson's point, Greenough and a half dozen officers.

Picture us, too, when we had ail gathered; Cameron, with his hand still bandaged, presented to the dramatis personae of the play and eyeing each one in turn shrewdly; Mrs. Livingstone garrulous and uneasy; and Livingstone a sort of waxy white and with a nervous trembling I had never observed before. Of us all, only Halliday seemed natural. And Hayward natural because he was never at ease.

What Cameron made of it I do not know. Very probably he saw in us only a group of sensation-seekers, ex cited by some small contact with a world beyond our knowledge, and if he felt surprise at all, it was that I

had joined the ranks. He himself did not appear to take the matter seriously. He made it plain that he had come in this manner at my request; that his own methods that beyond certain movements of the would be entirely different. When Edith, I think it was, asked him if he made any preparation for such affairs.

he laughed and shook his head. "Except that I sometimes take a cup of coffee to keep me awake!" he said with Livingstone. Why, I hardly know, except that he seemed to drift toward me. He never spoke but once. and it seemed to me that he was sur veying the shrubhery and trees, like a man who suspected a trap. Oncehe was on my left-I was aware that he had put his hand to his hip pocket. and I was so startled that I stumbled and almost fell. I knew, as confident ly as I have ever known anything, that

he had a revolver there. "Careful, man," he said.

Those were his only words during our slow progress toward the main house, and so tense were his nerves that they sounded like a curse.

Cameron and Edith were leading, and I could hear her talking, carrying on valiantly, although as it turned out she knew better than any of us. except Halliday, the terrible possibilities ahead. Hayward walked alone and behind us, his rubber-soled shoes made me uneasy, somehow; that silent progress of his; it was stealthy and disconcerting. And I think Livingstone felt it so, too, for he stopped once and turned around.

Yet, at the time, as between the two men, my suspicion that evening certainly pointed to Livingstone. Not to go into the cruelty of my ignorance, a cruelty which I now understand but then bitterly resented, I had had both men under close observation during the time we waited for Cameron. And it had seemed to me that Livingstone was the more uneasy of the two. Another thing which I regarded as highly significant was his asking for water just before we left the Lodge, and holding the glass with a trembling hand.

And, as it happens, it was that very glass of water which crystalized my suspicions. The glass and the hand which held it. For the hand was a small and wide one, with a short thumb and a bent little finger!

From that time on, my mind was focused on Livingstone. It milled about, seeking some explanation. I could see Livingstone in the case plainly enough; I could see him, pursuing with old Bethel the "sinister design" to which Gordon had referred, but to which I had no key. I could see him, with his knowledge of the country, using that knowledge in furtherance of that idea which my Uncle Horace had termed a menace to society in general. With the swiftness with which thought creates vision, I could even see him hailing poor Maggie Morrison in the storm. and her stopping her truck when she recognized him.

But I could not see him in connection with Eugenia Riggs and her bowl of putty. Strange that I did not; that it required Jane's smelling salts for me to find that connection. A small green glass bottle, in Edith's room, used as a temporary paper weight on her desk.

As I say, my suspicions were of Livingstone, during that strange walk up the drive. But I had by no means eliminated Hayward.

He was there, behind me, walking with a curious stealth, and with an uneasiness that somehow, without words, communicated itself to me.

All emotions are waves, I daresay. caught the contagion of fear from him; desperate, deadly fear. And once in the house, my sus-

picions of him increased rather than diminished. For one thing, he offered to take Cameron through the house. going off with Cameron himself, was distinctly surly. He remained in the hall at the foot of the stairs, apparently listening to their progress and gnawing at his fingers.

Watching him from the den, I saw him make a move to go up the stairs. but he caught my eye and abandoned the idea.

It was then that Jane felt faint, and went back to the Lodge for her smelling salts. . . .

The letter, undoubtedly the letter which Halliday had shown to the police, was lying open on Edith's desk, under the green bettle, and as I lifted the salts it blew to the floor. I glanced at it as I picked it up.

## Chapter II

In recording the events leading up to the amazing denouement that night -the details of the seance-I am under certain difficulties.

Thus, I kept no notes. For the first time I found myself a part of the circle, sitting between Livingstone and Jane, and with Cameron near the lamp, prepared to make the notes of what should occur.

"Of course," he said, as we took our places, "we are not observing the usual precautions of what I would call a test seance. All we are attempting to do is to reproduce, as nearly as possible, the conditions existing at the other two sittings. And-" he glanced at me and smiled "-if Mr. Porter's admission to the circle proves to be disturbing, we can eliminate him."

He asked us to remain quiet, no matter what happened, and to be certain that no hand was freed without an immediate statement to that ef-

"Not that I expect fraud, of course," he added. "But it is customary, under the circumstances."

I am quite certain that nobody, except myself, saw Halliday touch the bell as the light was reduced to the faint glow of the red lamp.

It was not surprising, I dare say, table and fine raps on its surface, we got nothing at first! in fact, that we got anything at all was probably due solely to Jane's ignorance of the underlying situation. Livingstone, next to me, was so nervous that his hands On the way up the drive I walked twitched on the table; across, Halliday was beside Hayward, and as my eyes grew accustomed to the semidarkness, I could see him, forbidden recourse to his fingers, jerking his head savagely.

And, for the life of me, I could not see where all this was leading us. A breaking of the circle was, by Cameron's order, immediately to be announced. Even in complete darkness. when that came-as I felt it wouldwhat was it that Halliday expected to happen?

began to slide along the carpet; my grasp on Livingstone's hand was relaxed, and indeed, later, as it began to rock violently, it was all I could do to retain contact with the table at all. I began to see possibilities in this, but when it had quieted the circle remained as before.

Very soon after that came the signal for darkness, and Cameron extin-



With a Pocket Flash Examined the Cabinet Thoroughly.

guished the lamp. Soon Edith, near the cabinet, said the curtain had come out into the room, and was touching her. The next moment, as before, the bell fell from the stand inside the cabinet, and the guitar strings was lightly touched. Without warning Cameron turned on

the lamp; the curtain subsided and all sounds ceased. He was apparently satisfied, and after a few moments of experiment with the lamp on, resulting only in a creaking and knocking on the table, again extinguished it. On a repetition of the blowing out of the curtain, however, he left his chair for the first time, and with a pocket flash examined the cabinet thoroughly, even the wall coming in for close inspec-

When he had finished with that, however, I sensed a change in him. I believe now that he suspected fraud, but I am not certain. He said rather sharply that he was there in good faith and not to provide an evening's amusement, and that he hoped any suspicious movement would be reported.

"This is not a game," he said shortly. Jane was very quiet, and now I heard again the heavy breathing which I knew preceded the trance condition, and on Halliday's ignoring that, and or that auto-hypnotism which we know trance.

"Who is that?" Cameron asked in a low tone. "Mrs. Porter," Halliday said. "Quiet,

everybody !"

The room was completely dark, and save for Jane's heavy breathing, entirely quiet. Strangely enough, for the moment I forgot our purpose there; forgot Greenough and his men, scattered through the house; I had a premonition, if I may call it that, that we were on the verge of some tremendous psychic experience. I cannot explain it; I do not know now what unseen forces were gathered there together. I even admit that probably I too, like Jane, had hypotized myself.

And then two things were happening, and at the same time.

There was something moving in the library, a soft footfall with, it seemed to me, an irregularity. For all the world like the dragging of a partially useless foot, and-Livingstone was quietly releasing his grip of my hand. I made a clutch at him, and he

whispered savagely:

"Let go, you fool."

The next moment he had drawn his revolver, and was stealthily getting to his feet. The dragging foot moved out into

the hall. Livingstone, revolver in hand, was standing beside me, and there was a quiet movement across the table. Cameron was apparently listening also; he made no comment, however, and in the darkness and the silence the footsteps went into the ball, and there ceased.

I had no idea of the passage of time; ten seconds or an hour Livingstone may have stood beside me. Ten seconds or an hour, and then Greenough's voice at the top of the staircase:

"All right. Careful below."

Livingstone moyed then. He made a wild dash for the red lamp and turned it on. Hayward was not to be seen, and Halliday, revolver in hand, was starting for the cabinet.

"More light," he called. Quick !"

I had a confused impression of Haltiday, jerking the curtains of the cabinet aside; of somebody else there with him, both on guard, as it were. at the wall; of some sort of rapid; movement upstairs; of the door from the den into the hall being open where it had been closed before, and of a crash somewhere not far away, as of a falling body, followed by a sort of dreadful pause.

And all this is in the time it took me to get around the chairs and to the wall switch near the door. And It was then in the shocked silence which followed the sound of that fall, in the instant between my finding the switch and turning it on, that I will

but the table continued to move. It glow of the red tamp the figure at ! the foot of the stairs, looking up.

Saw it and recognized it. Watched it turn toward me with fixed and staring eyes, felt the cold wind which suddenly eddied about me, and frantically turning on the light, saw it fade like smoke into the empty air. . .

Behind the curtains of the cabinet in the paneling in the den, for Uncle somebody was working at the wall. Horace. It was a long story, but in Edith, very pale, was supporting Jane, who still remained in her strange autohypotic condition. Livingstone's arm was about his wife.

And this was the picture when Greenough came running triumphantly down the stairs, the reward apparently in his pocket, and saw us there. He paid no attention to the rest of us. but stared at Livingstone with eyes which could not believe what they

"Good G-d!" he said. "Then who is there?" He pointed to the wall behind the cabinet.

## Chapter III

The steps by which Halliday solved the murder at the main house, and with it the mystery which had preceded it, constitute an interesting story in themselves. So certain was he that, by the time we were ready for the third seance, his material was already in the hands of the district attorney. And it was not the material he had given to Greenough.

For the solution of a portion of the mystery, then, one must go back to the main house, and consider the older part of it. It is well known that many houses of that period were provided with hidden passages, by which the owners hoped to escape the excise. Such an attempt, many years ago, had cost George Pierce his life.

But the passage leading from the old kitchen, now the den, to a closet in the room above it, had been blocked up for many years. The builder was dead; by all the laws of chance time might have gone on and the passage remained undiscovered.

In 1899, however, Eugenia Riggs bought the property, and in making repairs the old passage was discovered. Although she denied using it for fraudulent purposes, neither Halliday nor I doubt that she did so. She points to the plastered wall as her defense, but Halliday assures me that a portion of the baseboard, hinged to swing out, but locked from within, would have allowed easy access to the cabinet.

But Halliday had at the beginning no knowledge of this passage, with its ladder to the upper floor. He reached it by pure deduction.

"It had to be there," he says modestly. "And it was." . . .

Up to the time young Gordon was attacked at the kitchen door, however, Halliday was frankly at sea. That is, he had certain suspicions, but that was all. He had discovered, for instance, that the cipher found in my garage was written on the same sort of bond paper as that used by Gordon, by the simple expedient of having Annie Cochran get him a sheet of it, on some excuse or other.

But his actual case began, I believe with that attack on Gordon. At least he began at that time definitely to as-

sociate the criminal with the house. "There was something fishy about

it," is the way he puts it. And with Bethel's story to me, forced by his fear that the boy knew it was he who had attacked him, the belief that it was "fishy" gained ground.

"Gordon was knocked out," he says. "And that ought to have been enough. But it was not. He was tied, too, tied while he was still unconscious. Some- the city, and established beyond a body wasn't taking a chance that he'd doubt that they and the piece of a get back into the house very soon."

It was that "play for time," as he terms it, that made him suspicious.

All this time, of course, he was ignorant of any underlying motive; he makes it clear that he simply began, first to associate the crimes with the house, and then with Bethel. He kept going back to his copy of the unfinished letter, but:

"It didn't belp much," he says quietly. "Only, there was murder indicated in it. And we were having murder."

He had three clews, two of them certain, one doubtful. The certain ones were the linen from the oarlock of the boat, torn from a sheet belonging to the main house, and the small portion needed assistance, real assistance. of the cipher. The one he was not Annie Cochran's nelp was always of certain about was the lens from an the below-stairs order. And he found eyeglass, outside the culvert. He began to watch the house; he

at all; there was no situation there, went to him. really; nothing, that is, that he could lay his hand on. But on the night I called him and he started toward Robinson's point, as he came back toward certainly not Gordon, enter the house by the gunroom window. When he got there the window was closed and locked.

He was puzzled. He looked around house. for me, but I was not in sight. Still searching for me, he made a round of the house, and so was on the terrace liday. when I fired the shot. From that time on he saw Bethel somehow connected with the mystery, but only as the brains.

"There was some devil's work afoot," he said. "But always I came up against that paralysis of his. He had to have outside help."

was certain that this accomplice was him by wire. still in the house through all that fol-Starr's. He was so certain by that very nearly took him into his confiswear that I saw once more by the dence the next day. But he was

alread of the boy; he was not dependable; Halliday had an idea that "he was playing his own game."

But if this man was in the house

that night, where was he? He grew suspicious of the den, after that, and he found out through Starr the name of the builder who had put the end he learned something.

Tearing the old baseboard prior to putting up the panels, the builder had happened on the old passage to the room overhead, and he had called Horace Porter's attention to it. It seems to have appealed to the poor old chap; it belonged, somehow, to the room, with the antique stuff te was putting into it. He built in a sliding panel; it was not a particularly skillful piece of work, but it answered. And be kept his secret, at least from me.

I doubt if he ever used it, until prohibition came in. Then, no drinker himself, he put there a small and choice supply of liquor, some of which we found later on. And one bottle of which placed Halliday in peril of his life, a day or so after the night I had fired the shot into the hall.

He had borrowed Annie Cochran's key to the kitchen door, and after midnight entered the house and went to the den. Although he is reticent about this portion of it, I gather that the house was not all it should be that night.

"You know the sort of thing," he

But, pressed as to that, he admits that he was hearing small and inexplicable sounds from the library. Chairs seemed to move, and once he was certain that the curtain in the doorway behind him blew out into the room. When he looked back over his shoulder, however, it was hanging as

He had no trouble in finding the panel, and as carefully as he could he stepped inside. But he had touched one of the bottles and it fell over.

"It didn't make much noise," he says, "but it was enough. He was awake, and paralysis or no paralysis. I hadn't time to move before he was in the closet overhead, and opening the trap in the floor."

He had not had time to move, and even if he had, there were the infernal bottles all around him. So he stood without breathing, waiting for be knew not what.

"Things looked pretty poor," he says. "I didn't know when he'd strike a match and see me. And it was goodnight if he did!"

But Bethel had no match, evidently. He stood listening intently, and in the darkness below Halliday held his breath and waited. Then Bethel moved. He left the trap door above open and went for a light, and Halliday crawled out and closed the panel quietly.

From that time on, however, he knew Bethel was no more helpless than he was. He abandoned the idea of an accomplice, and concentrated of the man himself. . . .

Annie Cochran was working with him; that is, she did what he asked her, although she seems not to have known at any time the direction in which he was working. Her own mind was already made up; she believed Gordon to be guilty. She made no protest, however, when he asked her to break Mr. Bethel's spectacles one early morning, and give him the fragments. But she did it, pretending afterward that she had thrown the

pieces into the stove. Bethel was watchful and suspicious by that time, and she had a bad time of it, but what is important here is that Halliday took the fragments into lens found near the culvert were made from the same prescription.

And he had no more than made his discovery, when Gordon, attempting at last the blackmail which he had been threatening, was put out of the way as quickly and ruthlessly as had been

poor Peter Carroway. "Twenty-four hours," Halliday says bitterly, "and we would have saved

But twenty-four hours later Bethet had made good his escape, and everything was apparently over.

ceased to exist for Halliday. . . .

But from that time Bethel as Bethel,

He was not working alone, however. Very early, he had realized that he the help he wanted after the night Gordon was attacked, in Hayward. As "didn't get" Gordon in the situation a matter of fact, it was Hayward who

"He was worried about you, Skipper," Halliday says, with a grin. "He considered it quite possible that the attempt to wrangle English literature the house he saw the figure of a man, into too many brain corrals might have driven you slightly mad."

On the night, then, when Gordon, was hurt, the doctor was impulsively on his way to Halliday and the boat-

"He came within an inch of having you locked up that night," says Hal-

Later on, he did go to Halliday, and Halliday then and there enlisted him in his service. He was not shrewd, but he was willing and earnest, and from that time on he was useful. He had started, presumably, on his vacation but actually on a very different errand, when the murder at the main On the night in question, then, he house occurred, and Halliday recalled

But when he returned, it was, at lowed; through Hayward's arrival and Halliday's request, to hide in the Livingstone house. It was from there time of Gordon's innocence that he that he came, at night, to assist Hal-

(TO BE CONTINUED)