

SIGHT UNSEEN

by MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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SYNOPSIS—Six people, Horace Johnson (who tells the story), his wife, old Mrs. Dane, Herbert Robinson and his sister, Alice, and Dr. Sperry, friends and neighbors, are in the habit of holding weekly meetings. At one of them, Mrs. Dane, who is hostess, varies the program by unexpectedly arranging a spiritualistic seance with Miss Jeremy, a friend of Dr. Sperry and not a professional, as the medium.

At the first sitting the medium tells the details of murder as it is occurring. Later that night Sperry learns that a neighbor, Arthur Wells, has been shot mysteriously. With Johnson he goes to the Wells residence and they find confirmation of the medium's account. Mrs. Wells tells them her husband shot himself in a fit of depression.

At a second seance Miss Jeremy adds details about a summer resort where Charles Ellingham was known to have been at the same time that Mrs. Wells was there. She also speaks of a pocket book being lost which contained some important car tickets and letters. Mrs. Dane, alone of the women, seems thrilled by the investigation. Now go on with the story—

SIXTH INSTALLMENT

I find that the solution of the Arthur Wells mystery—for we did solve it—takes three divisions in my mind. Each one is a sitting, followed by an investigation made by Sperry and myself.

But for some reason, after Miss Jeremy's second sitting, I found that my reasoning mind was stronger than my credulity. And as Sperry had at that time determined to have nothing to do with the business, I made a resolution to abandon my investigations. Nor have I any reason to believe that I would have altered my attitude toward the case, had it not been that on the Thursday following the second seance, that Ellenor Wells had closed her house, and gone to Florida.

I confess I had an overwhelming desire to examine again the ceiling of the dressing room and thus to check up one degree further the accuracy of our revelations. After some reflection, I called up Sperry, but he flatly refused to go on any further.

"Miss Jeremy has been ill since Monday," he said. "Mrs. Dane's chestnutism is worse, her companion is nervously upset, and your own wife called me up an hour ago and says you are sleeping with a light, and she thinks you ought to go away. The whole club is spot to pieces."

But, although I am small and not a courageous man, the desire to examine the Wells house clung to me tenaciously. Suppose there were cartridges in his table drawer? Suppose I should find the second bullet hole in the ceiling? I no longer deceived myself by any argument that my interest was purely scientific. There is a point at which curiosity becomes unbeatable, when it becomes an obsession like hunger. I had reached that point.

Nevertheless, I found it hard to plan the necessary deception to my wife. My habits have always been entirely orderly and regular. My wildest dissipation was the Neighborhood Club. I could not recall an evening away from home in years, except on business. Yet now I must have a free evening, possibly an entire night.

In planning for this, I forgot my nervousness for a time. I decided finally to tell my wife that an out-of-town client wished to talk business with me, and that day, at luncheon—I go home to luncheon—I mentioned that such a client was in town.

"It is possible," I said, as easily as I could, "that we may not get thru this afternoon. If things should run over into the evening, I'll telephone."

She took it calmly enough, but later on, as I was taking an electric flash from the drawer of the hall table and putting it in my overcoat pocket, she came on me, and I thought she looked surprised.

During the afternoon I was beset with doubts and uneasiness. Suppose she called my office and found that the client I had named was not in town? It is undoubtedly true that a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive, for on my return to the office I was at once quite certain that Mrs. Johnson would telephone and make the inquiry.

After some debate I called my secretary and told her to say, if such a message came in, that Mr. Forbes was in town and that I had an appointment with him. As a matter of fact, no such inquiry came in, but as Miss Joyce, my secretary, knew that Mr. Forbes was in Europe, I was conscious afterwards that Miss Joyce's eyes occasionally rested on me in a speculative and suspicious manner.

Other things also increased my uneasiness as the day wore on. There was, for instance, the matter of the back door to the Wells house. Nothing was more unlikely than that the key would still be hanging there. I trust, therefore, get a key.

Going through my desk I found a number of keys, mostly trunk keys and one the key to a dog-collar. But late in the afternoon I visited a cli-

ent of mine who is in the hardware business, and secured quite a selection. One of them was a skeleton key. He persisted in regarding the matter as a joke, and poked me between the shoulder-blades as I went out.

"If you're arrested with all that hardware on you," he said, "you'll be held as a first-class burglar. You are equipped to open anything from a can of tomatoes to the missionary box in church."

But I felt that already, innocent as I was, I was leaving a trail of suspicion behind me: Miss Joyce and the office boy, the dealer and my wife. And I had not started yet.

I dined in a small chop-house where I occasionally lunch, and took a large cup of strong black coffee. When I went out into the night again I found that a heavy fog had settled down and I began to feel again something of the strange and disturbing quality of the day which had ended in Arthur Wells's death. Already a potential housebreaker, I avoided policemen, and the very jingling of the keys in my pocket sounded loud and incriminating to my ears.

I do not like deserted houses. Even in daylight they have a sinister effect on me. They seem in their empty spaces, to have held in record all that has happened in the dusty past. The Wells house that night, looming before me, silent and mysterious, seemed the embodiment of all the deserted houses I had known. Its empty and unshuttered windows were like blind eyes, gazing in, not out.

Nevertheless, now that the time had come, a certain amount of courage came with it. I am not ashamed to confess that a certain part of it came from the anticipation of the Neighborhood Club's plaudits. For Herbert to have made such an investigation, or even Sperry, with his height and his iron muscles, would not have surprised the club. But I was aware that while they expected intelligence and even humor, of a sort, from me, they did not anticipate any particular bravery.

The flash was working, but rather feebly. I found the nail where the door key had formerly hung, but the key, as I had expected, was gone. I was less than five minutes. I fancy, in finding a key from my collection that would fit. The bolt slid back with a click, and the door opened.

Once inside the house, the door to the outside closed, and facing two alternatives: to go on with it or to cut and run, I found a sort of desperate courage, clenched my teeth, and felt for the nearest light switch.

The electric light had been cut off! I should have expected it, but I had not. I remember standing in the back hall and debating whether to go on or to get out. I was not only in a highly nervous state, but I was also badly handicapped. However, as the moments wore on and I stood there, with the quiet unbroken by no mysterious sounds, I gained a certain confidence. After a short period of readjustment, therefore, I felt my way to the library door, and into the room. Once there, I used the flash to discover that the windows were shuttered, and proceeded to take off my hat and coat, which I placed on a chair near the door. I was at this time that I discovered that the battery of my lamp was very weak, and finding a candle in a tall brass stick on the mantelpiece, I lighted it.

Then I looked about. The house had evidently been hastily closed. Some of the furniture was covered with sheets, while part of it stood unprotected. The rug had been folded into the center of the room, and covered with heavy brown papers, and I was extremely startled to hear the papers rustling. A mouse, however, proved to be the source of the sound, and I pulled myself together with a jerk.

It is to be remembered that I had left my hat and overcoat on a chair near the door. There could be no mistake, as the chair was a light one, and the weight of my overcoat threw it back against the wall.

Candle in hand, I stepped out into the hall, and was immediately met by a crash which reverberated through the house. In my alarm my teeth closed on the end of my tongue, with agonizing results, but the sound died away, and I concluded that an upper window had been left open, and that the rising wind had slammed a door. But my morale, as we say since the war, had been shaken, and I recklessly lighted a second candle and placed it on the table in the hall at the foot of the staircase, to facilitate my exit in case I desired to make a hurried one.

Then I climbed slowly. The fog had apparently made its way into the house, for when, halfway up, I turned and looked down, the candlelight was hardly more than a spark, surrounded by a luminous aura.

I do not know exactly when I began to feel that I was not alone in the house. It was, I think, when I was on a chair on top of a table in Arthur's room, with my candle upheld to the ceiling. It seemed to me that something was moving stealthily in the room overhead. I stood there candle upheld, and every faculty I possessed seemed centered in my ears.

It was not a footstep. It was a soft and dragging movement. Had I not been near the ceiling I should not have heard it. Indeed, a moment later I was not certain I had heard it.

My chair, on top of the table, was none too securely balanced. I had found what I was looking for, a part of the plaster ornament broken away, and replaced by a whitish substance, not plaster. I got my penknife and cut away the foreign matter, showing a small hole beneath, a bullet-hole, if I knew anything about bullet-holes.

Then I heard the dragging movement above, and what with alarm and my insecure position, I suddenly over-balanced, chair and all. My head must have struck on the corner of the table, for I was dazed for a few moments. The candle had gone out, of course. I felt for the chair, righted it, and sat down. I was dizzy and I was frightened. I was afraid to move, lest the dragging thing above come down and creep over me in the darkness and smother me.

And sitting there, I remembered the very things I most wished to forget—the black curtain behind Miss Jeremy, the things flung by unseen hands into the room, the way my watch had slid over the table and fallen to the floor.

Since that time I know there is a madness of courage, born of terror. Nothing could be more intolerable than to sit there and wait. It is the same insanity that drove men out of the trenches to the charge and almost certain death, rather than to sit and wait for what might come.

In a way, I daresay, I charged the upper floor of the house. Whatever drove me, I know that, candle in hand, and hardly sane, I ran up the staircase and into the room overhead. It was empty.

As suddenly as my sanity had gone, it returned to me. The sight of two small beds, side by side, a tiny dressing table, a row of toys on the mantelpiece, was calming. Here was the children's night nursery, a white and placid room which could house nothing hideous.

I was humiliated and ashamed. I, Horace Johnson, a man of dignity and reputation, even in a small way, a successful after-dinner speaker, numbering fifty-odd years of logical living to my credit, had been running half-maddened toward a mythical danger from which I had been afraid to run away.

I sat down and mopped my face with my pocket handkerchief.

After a time I got up, and going to a window looked down at the quiet world below. The fog was lifting. Automobiles were making cautious progress along the slippery street. A woman with a basket had stopped under the street light and was rearranging her parcels. The clock of the city hall, visible over the opposite roofs, marked only twenty minutes to nine. It was still early evening—not even midnight, the magic hour of the night.

Somehow that fact reassured me, and I was able to take stock of my surroundings. I realized, for instance, that I stood in the room over Arthur's dressing room, and that it was into the ceiling under me that the second—or probably the first—bullet had penetrated.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Church Announcements

ADVENT CHRISTIAN
REV. J. T. GREENE, Pastor
Sunday School each Sunday at 9:45. Morning service at 11 o'clock. Evening service at 8 o'clock.

FIRST BAPTIST
REV. P. A. HICKS, Pastor
Sunday School 9:45 a. m., J. P. C. Wright, superintendent. Preaching at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.; B. Y. P. U., 6:30 p. m.; Brotherhood, 6:30 p. m.; mid-week prayer service on Wednesdays at 7:30 p. m.
Choir practice on Wednesdays at 8:15 p. m.

METHODIST CHURCH
DR. O. J. CHANDLER, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 a. m., J. D. Rankin, Superintendent.
Preaching at 11 a. m. and 7 p. m. by Dr. Chandler.
Epworth League, 6:15 p. m.
Prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7 p. m.
Choir practice on Friday, 7 p. m.

Calendar of Services at THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
St. Mark's—Blowing Rock
Service with sermon the first Sunday of each month at 11 a. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m. Luther League every Sunday at 2:30 p. m. Light Brigade Saturday before the first Sunday at 2 p. m.
Grace—Boone
Service the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 11 a. m. and on the first and third Sundays of each month at 7 p. m. through the fall and winter months. Please note the change of time: Vespers at 7 p. m. instead of 8 p. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m. Luther



This baby in a drought stricken section of West Virginia was one of the ultimate consumers of the foodstuffs given by the American Red Cross in the past year. More than 2,750,000 persons were fed by the organization.

League every Sunday at 6 p. m. Ladies' Missionary Society meets on Monday after the second Sunday of each month at 2 p. m. Light Brigade meets on Wednesday after the second Sunday of each month at 4 p. m. Holy Communion—Clark's Creek
Service every third Sunday of each month at 11 a. m. Sunday School at 9:45 a. m. Luther League meets every Sunday at 2 p. m. Light Brigade at 2 p. m. Saturday before the 3rd Sunday of each month.
Banner Elk
Services on the fourth Sunday of each month at 3 p. m.
We do most heartily welcome the public to any or all of these services.
J. A. Yount, Pastor
Cora Jeffcoat, Parish Worker
Amy L. Fisher, Parish Nurse.

WATAUGA CHARGE
REV. H. M. WELMAN, Pastor
Henson's Chapel—Second and Fourth Sundays, 11 a. m. Sunday School at 9:45, J. B. Horton, superintendent. Epworth League, 6 p. m. Valle Crucis—Preaching every First and Third Sunday at 11 a. m. Sunday School 10 a. m., J. M. Shull, superintendent. Epworth League every Wednesday night.
Mabel—Preaching every Second and Fourth Sunday at 3 p. m. Sunday School 10 a. m., Robert Castle, superintendent.
Salem—Preaching every first Sunday at 3 p. m.

Valle Crucis Associated Missions of THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Leicester F. Kent, Rector
Holy Cross Church, Valle Crucis
Every Sunday morning, 9 o'clock; celebration Holy Communion, 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays, 9 a. m.; Church School, 10 a. m.
St. Anthony's Mission, Dutch Creek
Church School every Sunday, 3 p. m.
St. Matthew's Church, Todd
Church School every Sunday, 10 a. m.; service every Sunday 11 a. m.
St. Mary's Church, Beaver Creek
Services 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays, 2:15 p. m.; Holy Communion 1st Sunday, 3:15 p. m.
Holy Trinity Church, Glendale Spring
Services (Holy Communion) each 4th Sunday, 3 p. m.
Avery County Missions
All Saints Church, Linville; Bannery Elk, Carey's Flat, Newland, Roseboro. Services as announced by Captain William A. Smith.

BARBER WHO OWNS COW SWAPS SHAVES FOR HAY
Tuscumbia, Ala.—T. F. Bennett, barber of the Didsville community, 12 miles west of Tuscumbia, has a cow, but to hay. L. L. Odum, a neighbor farmer, has no cow, but plenty of whiskers, and also hay.
The situation has been worrying both Odum and Bennett. They they heard of each other's plight and got together to talk it over.
"You have a cow but no hay," Odum said. "I have a recurring crop of whiskers but no razor. Members of my family need haircuts occasionally. I have plenty of hay that I can not sell, but no cow. You can give my family haircuts and I will supply your cow with hay."
"That looks good to me," Bennett replied. "Bring on the hay and the whiskers."
Good times have come again for both the Bennett and Odum families. Bennett's cow now has plenty of hay and is giving twice as much milk as formerly. The Odum's have not quite as much hay, but they all have haircuts and Odum is minus his whiskers.

AN ULTIMATE CONSUMER

When PAIN Comes

WHAT many people call indigestion very often means excess acid in the stomach. The stomach nerves have been over-stimulated, and food sour. The corrective is an alkali, which quickly neutralizes acids. And the best alkali known to medical science is Phillips' Milk of Magnesia.

One spoonful of this harmless, tasteless alkali neutralizes instantly many times as much harmful acid, and then the symptoms disappear at once. You will never use crude methods when once you learn the efficiency of this. Go get a small bottle to try.

Get the genuine Phillips Milk of Magnesia, the kind physicians have prescribed for 50 years in correcting excess acids. 25c and 50c a bottle—any drugstore.

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EXECUTOR'S NOTICE
Having qualified as executor of the will of M. T. Harbin, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned within twelve months from date, otherwise this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please come forward and make settlement.
This September 29th, 1930,
MRS. MAMIE HARBIN,
Executor of the Will of M. T. Harbin, Deceased.
10-1-61

Work Weary "NERVES"

Do they make you Restless, Cranky, Tired, Sleepless, Dyspeptic, Head-achy? Do they spoil your pleasure and interfere with your work?

Tens of thousands have found a way to get relief from over-worked nerves—a way so simple, so pleasant, so low in cost, that we are constantly receiving letters that say "If I had only found Effervescent Nerve Tablets sooner." Simon Brandt writes:

"I was very nervous from over-work. I couldn't sleep well, appetite was poor, and I felt weak for a long time."
"Used Dr. Miles' Nervine and now feel fifteen years younger and I am working the same as I did before—fourteen to fifteen hours daily."
"Sorry I did not learn about this wonderful medicine sooner as I had tried everything I could hear of, without results, until Dr. Miles' Nervine put me back on my feet."

When you are nervous, try this—put a Dr. Miles' Effervescent Nerve Tablet into a glass of water. Watch it bubble up like sparkling spring water—drink it—enjoy the feeling of calm and relaxation that follows.

In Dr. Miles' Effervescent Nerve Tablets a splendid formula for soothing over-worked nerves is combined with bicarbonate of soda and citric acid which tend to correct hyper-acidity—a frequent cause of nervousness.

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WE can never be sure just what makes an infant restless, but the remedy can always be the same. Good old Castoria! There's comfort in every drop of this pure vegetable preparation, and not the slightest harm in its frequent use. As often as Baby has a fretful spell, is feverish, or cries and can't sleep, let Castoria soothe and quiet him. Sometimes it's a touch of colic. Sometimes constipation. Or diarrhea—a condition that should always be checked without delay. Just keep Castoria handy and give it promptly. Relief will follow very promptly; if it doesn't you should call a physician.