

The Secret Adversary

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

By AGATHA CHRISTIE
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"Wait a moment." He ran back to the station and tackled the porter anew.

"Look here, do you remember a young lady who arrived by an earlier train, the 12:50 from London? She'd probably ask you the way to the Moat house."

He described Tuppence as well as he could, but the porter shook his head. Several people had arrived by the train in question. He could not call to mind one young lady in particular.

Tommy rejoined Julius, and explained. Depression was settling down on him like a leaden weight. He felt convinced that their quest was going to be unsuccessful. The enemy had over three hours' start. Three hours was more than enough for Mr. Brown. He would not ignore the possibility of the telegram having been found.

The way seemed endless. It was past seven o'clock when a small boy told them that "the Moat house" was just past the next corner.

A rusty iron gate swinging dismally on its hinges! An overgrown drive thick with leaves. There was something about the place that struck a chill to both their hearts.

A turn of the drive brought them in sight of the house. That, too, seemed empty and deserted. Was it indeed this desolate spot that Tuppence had been decoyed? It seemed hard to believe that a human footstep had passed this way for months. Julius jerked the rusty bell handle. A jangling peal rang discordantly, echoing through the emptiness within. No one came. They rang again and again—but there was no sign of life. Then they walked completely round the house. Everywhere silence, and shuttered windows.

"Nothing doing," said Julius. They retraced their steps slowly to the gate.

"There must be a village handy," continued the young American. "We'd better make inquiries there. They'll know something about the place, and whether there's been any one there lately."

"Yes, that's not a bad idea." Proceeding up the road, they soon came to a little hamlet. On the outskirts of it, they met a workman swinging his bag of tools, and Tommy stopped him with a question.

"The Moat house? It's empty. Been empty for years. Mrs. Sweeney's got the key if you want to go over it—next to the post office."

Tommy thanked him. They soon found the post office, and knocked at the door of the cottage next to it. A clean, wholesome-looking woman opened it. She readily produced the key of the Moat house.

"Though I doubt if it's the kind of place to suit you, sir. In a terrible state of repair. Ceilings leaking and all. 'Twould need a lot of money spent on it."

"That's all right. We'll have a look around this evening, anyway. By the



He Gave a Sudden Cry, and Stooping, Picked Something Up From Among the Leaves.

way, you've not had a young lady here asking for this key today?"

The woman shook her head. "No one's been over the place for a long time."

"Thanks very much." They retraced their steps to the Moat house. As the front door swung back on its hinges, protesting loudly, Julius struck a match and examined the floor carefully. Then he shook his head.

"I'd swear no one's passed this way. Look at the dust. Thick. Not a sign of a footmark." They wandered round the deserted house. Everywhere the same tale. Thick layers of dust apparently undisturbed.

"We'll go over it again tomorrow," said Tommy. "Perhaps we'll see more in the daylight."

On the morrow they took up the search once more, and were reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the house had not been invaded for some considerable time. They might have left the village altogether but for a fortunate discovery of Tommy's. As they were retracing their steps to the gate, he gave a sudden cry, and stooping, picked something up from among the leaves, and held it out to Julius. It was a small gold brooch.

"That's Tuppence's!"

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely. I've often seen her wear it."

Julius drew a deep breath. "I guess that settles it. She came as far as here, anyway. We'll make that pub our headquarters, and raise hell round here until we find her. Somebody must have seen her."

Forthwith the campaign began. Julius wired to town for his car, and they scoured the neighborhood daily with unflagging zeal. Julius was like a hound on the leash. He followed up the slenderest clue, but, as day succeeded day, they were no nearer to discovering Tuppence's whereabouts. So well had the abduction been planned that the girl seemed literally to have vanished into thin air.

And another preoccupation was weighing on Tommy's mind.

"Do you know how long we've been here?" he asked one morning as they sat facing each other at breakfast. "A week! We're no nearer to finding Tuppence, and next Sunday is the 29th! Today's the 23rd, and time's getting short. If we're ever going to get hold of her at all, we must do it before the 29th—her life won't be worth an hour's purchase afterward. The hostage game will be played out by then. We've wasted time and we're no ruder."

"I'm with you there. We've been a couple of mutts, who've bitten off a bigger bit than they can chew. I'm going right back to London to put the case in the hands of your British police. Scotland Yard for me! I guess the professional always scores over the amateur in the end. Are you coming along with me?"

Tommy shook his head.

"What's the good? One of us is enough. I might as well stay here and nose round a bit longer. Something might turn up. One never knows."

"Sure thing. Well, so long. I'll be back in a couple of shakes with a few inspectors along. I shall tell them to pick out their brightest and best."

But the course of events was not to follow the plan Julius had laid down. Later in the day Tommy received a wire:

"Join me Manchester Midland hotel. Important news—Julius."

At 7:30 that night Tommy alighted from a slow cross-country train. Julius was on the platform.

Tommy grasped him by the arm.

"What is it? Is Tuppence found?"

Julius shook his head.

"No. But I found this waiting in London. Just arrived."

He handed the telegraph form to the other. Tommy's eyes opened as he read:

"Jane Finn found. Come Manchester Midland hotel immediately—Peel Edgerton."

Julius took the form back and folded it up.

"Queer," he said thoughtfully. "I thought that lawyer chap had quit."

CHAPTER XII

Jane Finn

"My train got in half an hour ago," explained Julius, as he led the way out of the station. "I reckoned you'd come by this before I left London, and wired accordingly to Sir James. He's booked rooms for us, and will be round to dine at eight."

Sir James arrived punctually at eight o'clock, and Julius introduced Tommy. Sir James shook hands with him warmly.

Immediately the first greetings were over Julius broke out into a load of eager questions. How had Sir James managed to track the girl? Why had he not let them know that he was still working on the case? And so on.

Sir James stroked his chin and smiled. At last he said:

"Just so, just so. Well, she's found. And that's the great thing, isn't it? Eh! Come now, that's the great thing?"

"Sure it is. But just how did you strike her true? Miss Tuppence and I thought you'd quit for good and all. But I guess I can take it we were wrong."

"Well, I don't know that I should go so far as to say that. But it's certainly fortunate for all parties that we've managed to find the young lady."

"But where is she?" demanded Julius, his thoughts flying off on another tack. "I thought you'd be sure to bring her along?"

"That would hardly be possible," said Sir James gravely.

"Why?"

"Because the young lady was knocked down in a street accident, and has sustained slight injuries to the head. She was taken to the infirmary, and on recovering consciousness gave her name as Jane Finn."

"She's not seriously hurt?"

"Oh, a bruise and a cut or two. Her state is probably to be attributed to the mental shock consequent on recovering her memory."

"It's come back?" cried Julius excitedly.

"Undoubtedly, Mr. Hershimmer, since she was able to give her real name. I thought you had appreciated that point."

"And you just happened to be on the spot," said Tommy. "Seems quite like a fairy tale."

Nevertheless Tommy was now certain of what he had before only suspected. Sir James' presence in Manchester was not accidental. Far from abandoning the case, as Julius supposed, he had by some means of his own successfully run the missing girl to earth. The only thing that puzzled Tommy was the reason for all this secrecy.

Julius was speaking.

"After dinner," he announced, "I shall go right away and see Jane."

"That will be impossible, I fear," said Sir James. "It is very unlikely they would allow her to see visitors at this time of night. I should suggest tomorrow morning about ten o'clock."

Julius flushed. There was something in Sir James which always stirred him to antagonism.

"All the same, I reckon I'll go round there tonight and see if I can't ginger them up to break through their silly rules."

"It will be quite useless, Mr. Hershimmer."

The words came out like the crack of a pistol, and Tommy looked up with a start. Julius was nervous and excited. The hand with which he raised his glass to his lips shook slightly, but his eyes held Sir James defiantly. For a moment the hostility between the two seemed likely to burst into flame, but in the end Julius lowered his eyes, defeated.

"For the moment, I reckon you're the boss."

"Thank you," said the other. "We will say ten o'clock then?" With consummate ease of manner he turned to Tommy. "I must confess, Mr. Beresford, that it was something of a surprise to me to see you here this evening. The last I heard of you was that your friends were in grave anxiety on your behalf. Nothing had been heard of you for some days, and Miss Tuppence was inclined to think you had got into difficulties."

"I had, sir!" Tommy grinned reminiscently. "I was never in a tighter place in my life."

Helped out by questions from Sir James, he gave an abbreviated account of his adventures. The lawyer looked at him with renewed interest as he brought the tale to a close.

"You got yourself out of a tight place very well," he said gravely. "I congratulate you. You displayed a great deal of ingenuity and carried your part through well."

Tommy blushed, his face assuming a prawn-like hue at the praise:

"And since then? What have you been doing?"

For a moment, Tommy stared at him. Then it dawned on him, that of course the lawyer did not know.

"I forgot that you didn't know about Tuppence," he said slowly.

The lawyer laid down his knife and fork sharply.

"Has anything happened to Miss Tuppence?" His voice was keen-edged.

"She's disappeared," said Julius.

"When?"

"A week ago."

"How?"

Sir James' questions fairly shot out. Between them Tommy and Julius gave the history of the last week and their futile search.

Sir James went at once to the root of the matter.

"A wire signed with your name? They knew enough of you both for that. They weren't sure of how much you had learnt in that house. Their kidnapping of Miss Tuppence is the counter-move to your escape. If necessary they could seal your lips with a threat of what might happen to her."

"That's just what I thought, sir."

Sir James looked at him keenly. "You had worked that out, had you? Not bad—not at all bad. The curious thing is that they certainly did not know anything about you when they first held you prisoner. You are sure that you did not in any way disclose your identity?"

Tommy shook his head.

"That's so," said Julius with a nod. "Therefore I reckon some one put them wise—and not earlier than Sunday afternoon."

"Yes, but who?"

"That almighty omniscient Mr. Brown, of course!"

There was a faint note of derision in the American's voice which made Sir James look up sharply.

"You don't believe in Mr. Brown, Mr. Hershimmer?"

"No, sir, I do not," returned the young American with emphasis. "Not as such, that is to say. I reckon it out that he's a figurehead—just a bogey name to frighten the children with. The real head of this business is that Russian chap Kramenin."

"I disagree with you," said Sir James shortly. "Mr. Brown exists." He turned to Tommy. "Did you happen to notice where that wire was handed in?"

"No, sir, I'm afraid I didn't."

"H'm. Got it with you?"

"It's upstairs, sir, in my kit."

"I'd like to have a look at it sometime. You've wasted a week. We'll deal with Miss Jane Finn first. Afterward, we'll set to work to rescue Miss Tuppence from bondage. I don't think she's in any immediate danger."

alone appeared unexcited. He introduced them to the doctor.

"Mr. Hershimmer—Mr. Beresford—Dr. Roylance. How's the patient?"

"Going on well. Evidently no idea of the flight of time. Asked this morning how many had been saved from the Lusitania. She seems to have something on her mind, though."

"I think we can relieve her anxiety. May we go up?"

"Certainly."

Tommy's heart beat sensibly faster as they followed the doctor upstairs. Jane Finn at last! The long-sought, the mysterious, the elusive Jane Finn! How wildly improbable success had seemed! And here in this house, her memory almost miraculously restored, lay the girl who held the future of England in her hands. A half groan broke from Tommy's lips. If only Tuppence could have been at his side to share in the triumphant conclusion of their joint venture! Then he put the thought of Tuppence resolutely aside. His confidence in Sir James was growing. There was a man who would unerringly ferret out Tuppence's whereabouts. In the meantime Jane Finn! And suddenly a drap clutched at his heart. It seemed too easy. . . . Suppose they should find her dead. . . . Stricken down by the hand of Mr. Brown?

In another minute he was laughing at these melodramatic fancies. The doctor held open the door of a room

and they passed in. On the white bed, bandages round her head, lay the girl. Somehow the whole scene seemed unreal. It was so exactly what one expected that it gave the effect of being beautifully staged.

The girl looked from one to the other of them with large wondering eyes. Sir James spoke first.

"Miss Finn," he said, "this is your cousin, Mr. Julius P. Hershimmer."

A faint flush flitted over the girl's face, as Julius stepped forward and took her hand.

"How do, Cousin Jane?" he said lightly.

But Tommy caught the tremor in his voice.

"Are you really Uncle Hiram's son?" she asked wonderingly.

Her voice seemed vaguely familiar to Tommy, but he thrust the impression aside as impossible.

"Sure thing."

A shadow passed over the girl's face.

"They've been telling me things—dreadful things—that my memory went, and that there are years I shall never know about—years lost out of my life. It seems to me as though it were no time since we were being hustled into those boats. I can see it all now." She closed her eyes with a shudder.

Julius looked across at Sir James, who nodded.

"Don't worry any. It isn't worth it. Now, see here, Jane, there's something we want to know about. There was a man aboard that boat with some mighty important papers on him, and the big guns in this country have got a notion that he passed on the goods to you. Is that so?"

The girl hesitated, her glance shifting to the other two. Julius understood.

"Mr. Beresford is commissioned by the British government to get those papers back. Sir James Peel Edgerton is an English member of parliament, and might be a big gun in the cabinet if he liked. It's owing to him that we've ferreted you out at last. So you can go right ahead and tell us the whole story. Did Danvers give you the papers?"

"Yes. He said they'd have a better chance with me, because they would save the women and children first."

"Just as we thought," said Sir James.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

To Polish Silver.

Silver in daily use may be quickly polished by placing in a shallow pan, covering with cold water to which two or three tablespoonfuls of baking soda have been added, and allowing it to boil for five minutes. Drain and when cool rub off the white deposit with a soft towel.

Shelter for Building Workmen.

The Japanese begin building their houses at the top. The roof is first built and elevated on a skeleton frame. Then it affords shelter to the workmen from storms.

Demosthenes, the foremost orator of history, was born in Athens about July in the year 385 B. C.



DUCKS' PARTY

"Quack, quack," said Mrs. Duck. "Quack, quack," said Miss Duck. "Quack, quack," said Mrs. Indian Runner Duck.

"Quack, quack," said Miss Indian Runner Duck. And all the little ducklings said: "Quack, quack, quack, quack."

Then Mrs. Duck said: "Quack, quack, we are going to give a party. I am giving it in honor of my young daughter, Daisy Duck. She is such a perfect duck! Such a perfect duck! And I want to give her a party."

"It will be a swimming party."

"Quack, quack, oh dear," said Mrs. Indian Runner Duck.

"Quack, quack, oh dear," said Miss Indian Runner Duck. "You know I'm not very fond of the water," said Mrs. Indian Runner Duck. "In fact," she added, "I don't like the water. And I don't believe I'll enjoy your party. In fact, I'm not sure but that I have another invitation on that day and wouldn't be able to accept your very kind thought of me."

Mrs. Indian Runner Duck felt that perhaps she had not been very polite and tried to make the last of her speech sound better than the first.

"Oh," said Mrs. Duck, "I really hadn't finished explaining about my party. It will be a swimming party at first for all those who care about swimming but after that it will be a barnyard party."

"We will have all sorts of fun and we will finish off with a splendid dinner."

"I plan to have many different kinds of games played and I thought we'd have a parade which would be a great deal of fun."

"Parades are always amusing. Our parade could be called the Ducks' Waddling Parade and we could sing or quack as we marched along."

"I made up a marching song to sing as we waddled along. I suppose most would say we couldn't sing but no matter, in our quacking way it is singing."

"And besides lots only make a noise who call it singing. So why should not the ducks do the same?"

And all the ducks quacked.

"The truth, quack, quack, the truth. Lots only make a noise and they call



"Our Parade."

their noise singing, so why should not the ducks do the same? Why not, indeed? There is no reason why we should not. So we will. Quack, quack, we will."

And Mrs. Duck said: "Quack, quack, I am so glad that all of you agree with me."

"Let us hear the song," they all called. So Mrs. Duck recited the marching song and this was it:

"Quack, quack, quack, Behind each other's back. Let us march, march, march! Quack, quack, quack!"

And then she took a breath and began to recite the second verse of the marching song which went like this:

"Quack, quack, quack, Even if grace we lack. Let us march, march, march! Quack, quack, quack!"

The ducks all liked that verse and they quack-quacked for all they were worth.

Thus encouraged Mrs. Duck went on: "Quack, quack, quack. For waddling at least we've a knack. So let's march, march, march, Quack, quack, quack."

And yet again Mrs. Duck paused and then began once more to let them hear another verse:

"Quack, quack, quack, Let no one step on a tack. As we march, march, march, Quack, quack, quack!"

They all thought this was excellent advice and all said they would be careful not to do anything of this sort.

And then Mrs. Duck made them all practice their kind of singing and quack-quacking and told them more about the coming party and all decided it would be a splendid affair.

And indeed it was beyond even their high hopes.

Exciting Times.

"Well," mused six-year-old Harry, as he was being buttoned into a clean white suit, "this has been an exciting week, hasn't it, mother? Monday we went to the zoo, Wednesday I lost a tooth, Thursday was Lily's birthday party, Friday I was sick, yesterday I had my hair cut, and now here I am rushing off to Sunday school."

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WEAK, TREMBLY NERVES SHATTERED

Lady Says She Was in a Desperate Condition, But "Now in Splendid Health" After Taking Cardui.

Dale, Ind.—"About three years ago," says Mrs. Flora Roberts, of this place, "I had the 'flu,' which left me in a desperate condition. I had a bad cough. I went down in weight to a little over one hundred pounds. I took different medicines—did everything, but nothing seemed to do me any good. I hurt so badly in the chest at times I would have to go to the door to get my breath."

"I would have the headache and . . . was so weak I felt like I would just have to sink down and stay there."

"My nerves were shattered. I looked for something awful to happen—I would tremble and shake at a noise. My mother said, 'Do try Cardui,' and my husband insisted till I began its use. I used two bottles of Cardui . . . and noted a big improvement in my condition. I kept up the Cardui and weigh 180 pounds. I am now in splendid health—sure am a firm believer in Cardui for I'm satisfied it did the work."

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How He Came In.
"I'm right proud of my son at college. He's one of the most popular young fellows there," said Farmer Hicks proudly.

"Yer don't say so?" exclaimed a neighbor.

"Yep; he recently gave a big dinner in my honor at one of the most fashionable hotels."

"Wuz you there?"

"No, I wuzn't."

"Wal, where do you come in?"

"I paid for it."

Important Guest.
Hubby came home and found an argument going on. His wife was trying to give a bridge party.

"What's the row?" he demanded. "One of the guests is threatening to walk out," explained his wife in a whisper. "I must conciliate her."

"Conciliate nothing. Let her walk out."

"Can't be done, hubby. She'll walk out with six chairs and four bridge tables I borrowed from her."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Nervous?
If Coffee disagrees
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