# The House of Whispers

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**"WHO SHOT HER?"**

Synopsis.—Spalding Nelson is occupying the apartments of his great-uncle, Rufus Gaston. The Gastons, leaving on a trip, tell him about mysterious noises and "whispers" that have scared them. He becomes acquainted with Barbara Bradford, who lives in the same big building. He instinctively dislikes and distrusts the superintendent, Wick. The mysteries in his apartments begin with the disappearance of the Gaston pearls from the wall safe. He decides not to call in the police, but to do his own investigating. It is soon evident that someone has access to his rooms. Becoming friendly with Barbara, he learns that her apartments are equally mysterious. She tells him that several years before her sister Claire, who lives with her, had made a run-away marriage with an adventurer, from whom she was soon parted, and the marriage had been annulled. Claire is engaged to be married and someone has stolen documents concerning the affair from the Bradford apartment and is attempting to blackmail the Bradfords. Nelson takes Miss Kelly, the telephone girl, to dinner with the idea of pumping her. Gorman, a hotel detective, recognizes her as the wife of Lefty Moore, a noted burglar. Nelson tells his story to Gorman and puts the case in his hands. Nelson finds a secret passage, with a panel door in his room. He realizes he loves Barbara. He and Barbara hear a shot in the building.

**CHAPTER VII—Continued.**

**—10—**

I sprang after her, but she moved so quickly that she was out of the window and safely home before I could stop her. Only waiting to see her off the ledge I turned back and hastily pulling the panel into place I dashed for the front of the house. The screams and the shots I was sure had come from the apartment directly below mine. I was certain that there had been murder done there, and my mind was made up to investigate it at once. If I moved quickly there might be an opportunity to catch the murderer red-handed. I let myself out and dashed down the one flight of stairs. As I arrived there, the ascending elevator stopped, and Mr. Wick burst out, followed by an excited elevator runner. Wick was carrying a revolver in his hand.

"Did you hear anything?" he asked excitedly.

"I heard a woman screaming in this apartment and then a shot."

"I heard it, too. In which apartment was it?"

"Right here," I said, pointing to the door.

"Miss Lutan's," he said. "Let's go in. Here's my pass-key. You open the door. I'll be right behind you with my revolver."

**CHAPTER VIII.**

Inserting the key Mr. Wick handed me, I turned it sharply and flung the door wide. It revealed a luxuriously furnished apartment, the front rooms of which were extravagantly ablaze with light.

For a moment the three of us, Mr. Wick, the elevator boy and myself, stood there with our ears alert for any sound from the apartment. While I do not admit to being a coward, the unknown has its terrors for all of us, and I must confess that the knowledge that Mr. Wick had his revolver drawn was indeed comforting. All was silence in the place.

"John," said Wick to the elevator boy, "you stand here right by the door

"She Has Been Murdered," I Cried; "Get the Police at Once."

and keep your eye on the elevator. If anybody tries to sneak past you, you holler for us."

"'Deed I will, Mr. Wick," said the boy, with chattering teeth. "I'll holler, all right."

"Go ahead, Mr. Nelson," said the superintendent, "I'm right behind you with the revolver."

Without waiting to explore the front rooms, I turned at once and ran down the long hall to the sitting room. If, as I suspected, murder had been done here, I was confident that the scene of the tragedy would be the room directly under mine. The screams I had heard—and the shot—had seemed to come from under my very feet.

Although the lights in the front of the hall were burning, the sitting room was in darkness. As I reached the door, my fingers sought the button, and as the flare of light illuminated the room I looked hastily about me. There was no one there, but my one quick glance showed me that the door of the wall safe, located similarly to the one in the apartment above, was standing wide open.

Quirkly I sprang to inspect the room corresponding to mine, a room, it will be recalled, opening off the sitting room. Here, too, was darkness, and as I turned on the lights, I stood aghast with horror.

On the floor, close up to the inner wall, lay the contorted body of a beautiful young woman. Her eyes were wide open and staring. One arm was twisted under her, and the other hand was clutching at the front of her bodice, where a blotch of ghastly red indicated the path of the shot that I had heard.

"It's Miss Lutan," said Mr. Wick's voice behind me.

"She's been murdered," I cried; "get the police at once."

As I bent over her to see if there was any evidence of life, I saw imprinted in her tender white throat the marks of her assailant's brutal fingers.

"Come," I said, "help me lift her on to this couch, and then telephone at once for a doctor."

Mr. Wick had been all the while standing there, staring at the body as if stupefied by the tragedy, but he obeyed my directions, and with him at her feet and I at her head we laid her down on the couch, where I proceeded to loosen her gown and to try by artificial respiration to restore her blood to circulation.

"Get the doctor at once," I commanded again, "and 'phone for the police."

"John," called out Mr. Wick, "go to the 'phone and tell Miss Kelly to send for Doctor Hunt to come at once."

"Tell her to get the police, too," I insisted.

"And let the burglar escape while we're doing it," objected Mr. Wick. "Come on, let's look through the apartment. He may be hiding somewhere still."

Together, while the boy was 'phoning, we went from room to room, peering into closets and under beds. There was no one there and no traces of the murderer's presence. Even the servants' quarters were untenanted. Only one thing happened that struck me as peculiar. As I started up the hall to search the bedrooms, I looked back and caught Mr. Wick furtively closing the wall safe. His action in surreptitiously closing this without saying anything to me made me suddenly suspicious of him. I recalled that Detective Gorman had put Mr. Wick into his circle of suspects along with the burglar's wife. Could it be possible that the superintendent of the building himself was in connivance with the band of criminals who had been harassing the Bradfords and me? I determined to watch his every move.

"There's no one here," I said, as we completed our round of the various rooms. "The murderer has made his escape. Hasn't that boy 'phoned for the police yet?"

Mr. Wick seemed so averse to carrying out my suggestion about the police that I think he must have sensed the suspicion in my voice.

"I think I had better ask Mr. Kent about it first," he said nervously.

"Who's Mr. Kent?" I demanded.

My thoughts were so taken up with the unexpected tragedy that the name at first meant nothing to me. Suddenly I remembered. It was to the apartment of Mr. Henry Kent that Miss Kelly had 'phoned last night when she was dining with me. I recalled, too, that Gorman had charged me to find out all I could about him.

"Who's Mr. Kent?" I repeated sharply. "What's he got to do with it?"

"He's the owner of the building," explained Mr. Wick. "He doesn't like the Granddeck to be mentioned in the papers. He says any notoriety is bad for its exclusiveness. I don't believe he'd want the police called in. In fact, sir, I'm sure he wouldn't."

"Whether he wants it or not," I said firmly, "it's got to be done. You can't keep murders out of the paper. Either you call the police right away or else I will."

My threat forced him to telephone against his will. I could quite understand his employer's aversion to having a crime in the Granddeck made public. But there was no help for it. There had been a dastardly crime committed, and the police must be informed. Yet it was not to the police that Mr. Wick was telephoning. It evidently was to Mr. Kent's apartment in the building.

"Miss Lutan's been shot by a burglar in her apartment," I heard him say. "Mr. Nelson and me just discovered her body. What's that, sir?"

Just what Mr. Kent's reply on hearing the shocking news had been I had, of course, no means of knowing, but whatever it was, over the superintendent's face came an expression of incredulity and amazement.

"What do you think," said Mr. Wick, turning to me; "he says for me to call up Headquarters at once."

"Of course," I said, "it is the only thing to do."

Nevertheless, as Mr. Wick waited for the number, he kept shaking his head and muttering under his breath something that sounded like:

"To think of his telling me to call in the police!"

With the doctor summoned and the police sent for, there seemed to be little else for us to do but wait, so Wick and I sat down together in the rear sitting room with the elevator boy still on guard at the door.

"Who was Miss Lutan?" I asked.

"Why, Daisy Lutan, the actress," said Mr. Wick in surprise. "I supposed every one knew her."

"I've heard about her," I hastened to say, "but I had no idea that she lived in the Granddeck. Did she live here alone?"

"She keeps a maid, an old woman that has been with her for years."

"Where's the maid tonight?"

"Out to the movies, I s'pose. That's where she goes every night when Miss Lutan isn't playing. When she is, she goes to the theater with her."

"Then Miss Lutan is not playing now?"

"Not for the last month."

"Had there been any one here with her tonight?"

"I'll ask the elevator boy."

"John says she came in alone about fifteen minutes ago," said Mr. Wick when he came back. "She went out about seven. Her own chauffeur was driving her then, but when she came back she was in a hired taxi. That's something I can't understand."

"How do you suppose the murderer escaped?"

I was trying every avenue of questioning to see if I could not surprise Wick into some damaging admission. I was beginning to suspect that he knew far more about Miss Lutan's murderer than he was telling. I felt somehow that his whole search for the man who had killed Miss Lutan had been entirely perfunctory, a bluff to

"Women of Her Type Always Have a Lot of Men Friends."

deceive me. In my growing dislike for the man, I felt that it would not be beyond the range of probability for Wick to have been standing guard at the door while a confederate rifled the apartment.

"I'm no detective," he answered noncommittally. "All I know is that he has gone. He certainly ain't here in the apartment."

It was on the tip of my tongue to suggest that we look in the secret passageway. I felt that the shock it would be to Wick to learn that I knew about this might lead him to open his lips. I felt certain that it was by way of a similar passageway to the one I had discovered in my room that the murderer had escaped. But before I could make up my mind to speak the doctor arrived.

He made a hasty inspection and then said tersely:

"There's nothing here for me to do. This woman has been dead for some time."

"How long?" I asked.

"It is impossible for me to judge—maybe twenty minutes, perhaps an hour. I should say that death was practically instantaneous. She was killed by a bullet penetrating the heart. Who shot her?"

He looked sharply from me to Mr. Wick, as if suspecting that it might have been one of us.

"A burglar got her just a few minutes ago," Mr. Wick explained. "Mr. Nelson and me heard a scream and a shot. We let ourselves in here with my pass key and found her here. It must have been a burglar that she surprised when she entered the apartment."

"It looks like it," assented the physician. "There are marks on her throat where he tried to strangle her screams. Have you notified the police?"

"Yes," said Mr. Wick.

"There's nothing more that I can do, then," said the doctor, making his preparations to depart.

"Would you not wait until the police come?" suggested the superintendent. "They'll be here any minute and probably they'll want a statement from you."

"Very well," said the doctor, "I'll wait."

As we waited the three of us chatted about the crime and about the dead actress. From the conversation I learned that at the height of her meteoric career on Broadway Daisy Lutan had become the wife of the young son of a very rich family. His parents insisted that she had trapped him into matrimony and after long legal wrangling she had been divorced about a year ago. She had received a large sum in settlement, and this with her earnings as an actress enabled her to live in luxury.

"Hadn't she a sweetheart now?" I asked.

"Better make it plural," sneered the doctor. "Women of her type always have a lot of men friends."

"No men ever came to see her here. I'm positive of that," said Mr. Wick.

"Of course not," said the doctor sarcastically. "The reputation of the Granddeck apartments must be protected at all costs."

As we talked two detectives in plain clothes arrived. They viewed the body and proceeded to question the doctor.

"How was this woman killed?"

"By a revolver shot right through the heart."

"Who is she?"

"Daisy Lutan, the actress."

"Who did it?"

"It must have been a burglar," interjected Mr. Wick. "My theory is that she came in unexpectedly and found him at work."

"Who found her?"

"These gentlemen," said the doctor, including both Mr. Wick and me with a wave of his hand.

The detectives turned to Mr. Wick first.

"Tell us about it," one of them directed.

"My name is James Wick," he began as if he was reciting a familiar lesson. "I am the superintendent of the Granddeck apartments. I was in the elevator about half an hour ago when I heard a woman screaming and then the sound of the shot. I took out my revolver and got off at this floor to investigate. At the door I found Mr. Nelson. He, too, had heard the screams and the shot and thought they came from this apartment. I took out my pass key and we went in."

"Were there any signs of the burglar?" asked the other man.

"No, we looked all through the apartment and found no one."

"Was anything missing?"

I waited with bated breath to hear if Wick would tell of having found the wall safe open. If he did not I felt it would be conclusive evidence that there was something he was trying to conceal.

"I didn't notice anything missing," he said glibly. "I wouldn't know, anyhow. I don't know what stuff she had here."

"Who would know?"

"Her maid might. She's out now. Generally she's home by eleven o'clock."

"Did she keep only the one servant?"

"Only the maid and a chauffeur."

"Then she was all alone in the apartment?"

"Yes. She'd gone out all dressed up about seven in her own car. She came home unexpectedly in a hired taxi not more than half an hour ago."

"Did she come home alone?"

"Sure she was alone. At least the hall boys told me so. I did not see her come in, myself."

More and more I was convinced that Wick was lying. I was sure he knew far more about affairs than he was admitting. Why did he keep harping on the fact that Miss Lutan had come in "unexpectedly?" What means had he of knowing what time she was expected home? Furthermore he said he was in the elevator when he heard the screams and the shot. I did not believe it would have been possible for the sounds to have carried that far. The walls were all deadened, and the room where the tragedy had taken place was at the back of the house many feet distant from the elevators. I wondered if the burglar had not been in the place with Mr. Wick's connivance, while he stood guard outside. As he heard me coming he might have taken refuge in the elevator. And why did he have his revolver so conveniently ready?

The detective who had been questioning Wick turned to me.

"Who are you?"

"Spalding Nelson."

"What do you do? Where do you work?"

"I'm a clerk."

"A clerk living at the Granddeck apartments," he sneered. "You must have a good job."

"I haven't any at present," I replied. "I'm living here in Mr. Gaston's apartment, taking care of it while he and his wife are away."

I could see that my statement that I was only a clerk and was not at present employed had not made a favorable impression on the detective.

"Will you explain what you were doing at the door of this apartment when the superintendent arrived?" he demanded with a growing suspicion in his tones.

"That's easy to explain," I retorted. "I was in my apartment directly over this one. I heard her scream and then the shot. It seemed to come from the floor right below me, so I ran down to investigate."

"Is that right?" he asked, turning to Mr. Wick.

**The net about Nelson is drawn closer.**

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## NOT TROUBLED BY JEALOUSY

**Social and Domestic Customs Among the Eskimos Are Simple and Easily Arranged.**

An American missionary is the authority for the following description of social and domestic customs that prevail in a certain part of the arctic regions: If a woman is childless, she often asks her husband to select another wife, so that the home may be blessed with children. She has no jealousy toward her rival, for her husband generally treats both with equal respect. The system of polygamy works both ways, for some Eskimos adhere to the single standard. In a tribe where there are more men than women, a woman may often be allowed a second husband, provided she has the approval of her first husband, and her love for some unmarried man does not necessarily lessen her regard for her husband, who may be old or weak, and hence a poor provider. A younger man may prove a real asset to the family. Even if it is a case of simple infatuation, no deception is practiced. The Eskimo woman reveals her feelings to her husband, who, if the lover is worthy, rarely refuses his consent for his wife to go away with this rival for a certain length of time. If the man happens to have a wife of his own, the abandoned husband will often propose to his wife that she arrange matters with the wife of her lover, so there will be a mutual exchange of spouses for a time.

**Olive-Growing Centers.**

Of all the olive-growing lands Spain is the most important in the total yield of oil, and is by nature one of those best fitted to fill its own large demands and furnish an increasing supply for export. Italy, the second olive-oil producing country in Europe, has an area planted in olives about a third greater than Spain has, but its yield in normal years is smaller. The French area under cultivation is confined to the Mediterranean coast, and is reported to be decreasing, since greater profits are obtained from viticulture. It is asserted that in recent years 20,000 hectares of olive groves have been turned into vineyards in France. Tunis and Algeria are declared to offer better prospects for olive raising than does French territory in Europe.

## Coats Carefully Designed

WHEN a coat is dressy enough to wear about town over a silk frock as well as others, and practical enough for the country, in the motor or out, it has claims not to be ignored by the woman of good sense. When it has a style of its own—real distinction—in addition to these virtues—it is a joy to the finder. Here are two coats, one of them long and the other three-quarter length, that will bear examination in the requirements mentioned.

Coat styles are about equally divided between the long and three-quarter length models. Their designers appear to be able to give either any flavor they wish and accomplish the desired end by making the best use of fabric, cut and finish. Long coats of broad plaids, full over the hips, flat at the front and gathered loosely in at the back, are youthful and chic. The same design acquires dignity made up in plain coatings. The smartest of the shorter coats hang in straight lines and many are the varieties in the cut of sleeves and collar, cuffs and pockets that add an intangible but invaluable quality of style to the several good models. Yokes, collars that roll high or are worn open as occasion requires, pockets that are an incident in a wide turned-up hem—all these tricks of the designer that spell good style, reveal that the art of the tailor is the capacity for taking pains.

The coat at the left of the group is made of any one of the soft, plain coatings and could not be much simpler, as it is cut on kimono lines. The collar and cuffs are covered with silk embroidery in self color. Eyelets worked across the back and at each side of the front allow a heavy silk cord to fulfill its duty as a girdle that ties at the front. A similar cord with ends finished by ornaments is used to finish the square, full pockets at each side.

The addition of very ornamental pockets and a novel treatment of the belt, helped out by the use of buttons in two sizes, convert the plain coat at the right into an interesting model for younger women. It requires a plain or mixed fabric.

## Simplicity for Younger Girls

IN DRESSING the miss from six to sixteen almost everyone agrees that she looks her best in simple frocks. Simplicity is the foundation of styles as they are created for her by people who give their talent and time to a task that is a long way from easy. Two white frocks for girls from twelve to sixteen years, the efforts of experts, are shown here for the benefit of mothers who must settle the matter of dresses for graduation day and other days. These models can be made up in any of the lovely colors in organdie or voile.

This frock is made with plain blouse and straight, moderately full skirt. Instead of tucks, there are wide bands about both the bodice and skirt set on the underside and hemstitched to place. A color might be used in these bands but there is an advantage in all-white, since it can be worn over colored underslips as well as over white, and two or three slips provided for the same dress. The waist has a round neck finished with a deep frill of voile and narrower frills make the turned-back cuffs. The pretty leghorn hat, trimmed with small flowers suits the dress exactly.

One of many organdy dresses designed for the younger graduates, has a bodice with deep "V" neck introducing a small chemisette of tucked organdy, and a wide plain collar. There are elbow sleeves with turned-back cuffs. Plain and tucked organdy make the skirt, the tucked side panels having groups of seven narrow tucks at wide intervals, across them. Small, round crochet buttons are placed on the skirt where the tucks are joined to the plain front and back panels and a very small side drapery in the skirt is allowed as a concession to sixteen years and the dignity and importance of graduation day.

*Julia Bottomley*

**Fringe on Coat Sweaters.**

Fringe appears on the more novel coat sweaters.

**Good-Looking Sports Skirts.**

Exceptionally good-looking sports skirts are offered for spring and summer. Brilliant color effects are much in evidence, either in striking plaids or in fancy weave silks. Little trimming is used on skirts, fabric combinations being favored instead.

**Pastel Suede Gloves.**

Many smart women are now wearing pastel suede gloves. Most of the new twenty-button floral design are embroidered in a conventional floral design on the arm. The fad, however, is not confined to the ballroom. Pastel suedes are being worn extensively at afternoon functions as well.

**Promenade Hats.**

Small, close-fitting hats of semi-dressy effect are now called promenade hats, which is, if you stop to consider, a pleasing and fitting distinction between what is known as a dressy hat and the name sport hat, that, despite the original purpose, is now worn at any and all times.


## If You Need a Medicine You Should Have the Best

Have you ever stopped to reason why it is that so many products that are extensively advertised, all at once drop out of sight and are soon forgotten? The reason is plain—the article did not fulfill the promises of the manufacturer. This applies more particularly to a medicine. A medicinal preparation that has real curative value almost sells itself, as like an endless chain system the remedy is recommended by those who have been benefited, to those who are in need of it.

A prominent druggist says "Take for example Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, a preparation I have sold for many years and never hesitate to recommend, for in almost every case it shows excellent results, as many of my customers testify. No other kidney remedy has so large a sale."

According to sworn statements and verified testimony of thousands who have used the preparation, the success of Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root is due to the fact, so many people claim, that it fulfills almost every wish in overcoming kidney, liver and bladder ailments; corrects urinary troubles and neutralizes the uric acid which causes rheumatism.

You may receive a sample bottle of Swamp-Root by Parcels Post. Address Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., and enclose ten cents; also mention this paper. Large and medium size bottles for sale at all drug stores.—Adv.


**Electricity in Next War.**

That the use of high explosives in modern warfare has about reached the end of its development, is the opinion of a French inventor of one powerful compound of that nature.

Neither can poisonous gases, it is indicated, be made much more dangerous than were those contrived in the world war. Flying mechanisms of various types promise much greater menace, and it is probable that any new developments in scientific warfare visible in the next international disagreement will be electrical in their nature.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.


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**Her Method.**

"How did your wife ever get the carpet man to come on time?"

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**Trifle Interested.**

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"Thinking of trying it?"

"I might. Is it patented?"


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