The House of Whispers

By WILLIAM JOHNSTON

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

—17—

"I have," she answered, looking at him steadily in the eye, but speaking with a slight tremor in her tones. I wondered to what it might be due. Was it because she feared the consequences of the revelation as to her identity, or was it that she feared she might be trapped by his questions?

"Now tell me, Mrs. Moore," he shot at her explosively, "who really murdered Daisy Lutan?"

"Henry Kent," she answered quickly, before the district attorney had time to stop her.

"What's this?" exclaimed the judge. "What did you say?"

"Object! object!" vociferated the district attorney, striving in vain to catch the attention of the judge presiding. McGregor, apparently well satisfied with the results of his question, stood there, smiling assurance at me.

"Young woman," directed the judge, "will you kindly repeat your last statement—louder. Who did you say killed Daisy Lutan?"

The girl turned to face the judge. Her lips were set as if she had determined to carry out some fixed plan, cost what it might.

"Daisy Lutan," she repeated, "was murdered by Henry Kent, who owns the Granddeck. He's really Orville Granders, the bank president who got away with eight hundred thousand dollars and was sent up for seventeen years."

There was a commotion in the rear of the courtroom. A dapper little old gentleman with neatly trimmed white whiskers rose hastily and made a dash for the door. Gorman, who had been sitting behind him, sprang after him and pinioned him by the arms:

"Nothing doing, Granders. I've got you."

Wick, sitting up near the counsel table, at the same time showed evidence that he, too, was contemplating hasty flight, but a husky chap whom I suspected of being one of Gorman's aides, seized him, too.

"Your honor," cried my counsel, "I demand the issuance of warrants at once for Orville Granders, alias Henry Kent, and his confederate, James Wilson, alias James Wick and 'Stuffy Jim,' on the charge of having murdered Daisy Lutan and Rufus Gaston. I further urge the immediate release of my client, Mr. Spalding Nelson, in my custody. Testimony that we already have obtained will establish that he was an innocent victim of the dastardly plots of these two ex-convicts."

The reaction that came from this sudden clearing of my name left me in a puzzled daze from which I hardly recovered until late that evening, when, once more free, I found myself in the Gaston apartment. Granders, his tool, Wick, and practically every employee of the Granddeck were under arrest, and warrants were out for other members of the band whose identity had been revealed by the former telephone girl.

And there in the apartment with me were my mother, Gorman, McGregor—and to my surprise and delight, Barbara Bradford. After her sister's wedding, it appeared, Barbara's mother had gone away for a brief rest, leaving her alone in the apartment with the servants. She had welcomed the opportunity to work undisturbed on the mystery that had landed me behind the bars. Thinking that at Rufus Gaston's funeral she might pick up some clue that would be of service in unraveling the tangled skein that held her and me together, she had gone thither, and seeing my mother there, and suspecting at once who she might be, had introduced herself. Quickly they had become good friends and she it was who had informed my mother of my plight.

Present also with us, despite the lateness of the hour, was the district attorney and two of his aides, and Nellie Kelly, or as she much preferred to be called, Mrs. Moore. The girl was technically a prisoner, but her services in bringing the real criminals to book had been so exceptional that she had been released on her own recognizance. Hither she had been brought that the district attorney might check up with her the marvelous tale of criminal conspiracy that she had unfolded to my counsel in the brief recess of the court that day.

Orville Granders, it appeared, had been the master-mind that had directed all the plotting. A score of years before he had been president of one of the metropolis' biggest banks. He had been discovered to have embezzled nearly a million dollars. He had been tried and sentenced to seventeen years' imprisonment, but no one ever had been able to find what he had done with the money, so safely had he hidden it away.

In his long years in prison, associating daily with criminals of the worst sort, and listening to their plans for further crime on their release, his own criminal instincts, already developed, had grown stronger, and he had spent his time planning a new system of crime of which he was to be the head, using as his confederates certain evildoers with whom he had become acquainted in prison. When he had been released he had slipped quietly away to the West and lived in close retirement until he had been forgotten. The white whiskers he had grown so changed his appearance, too, that he had little fear of being recognized. Recovering such part of the stolen money as was left to him, he had come to New York in the guise of a prosperous Western investor and, purchasing a plot of land, had erected the Granddeck apartments, designed for the occupancy of the wealthiest class of tenants.

In this building, sitting like a little white spider in his web, he planned to prey secretly on all who came to live there. Every attendant in the building was either a criminal or an associate of criminals, reporting to him daily all that went on, and obeying his orders implicitly. A special switchboard in his apartment enabled him to listen in at will on all telephone conversations that went on. Every letter delivered at the Granddeck went through his hands before reaching the tenants. For every wall safe in the building he held a master combination and his pass-key would unlock every door there was. And in addition to all this—

HE HAD BUILT A SECRET PASSAGEWAY.

We found it that night and explored it, familiarizing ourselves with all its exits, greatly to the amazement and confounding of Gorman. Connecting with the service elevator by a masked opening, it ran along the hall of each apartment, with entrances concealed in wall panels. It enabled Granders to wander at will through the apartments at night, leaving mysterious notes to terrify his tenants, prying into the secrets hidden in their wall safes, listening when he chose to their most private conversations, examining the contents of their pockets. As he had planned from the beginning, he gained in this way much information that he was able to utilize to his financial profit without arousing suspicion. He had discovered, Mrs. Moore said, secret stock market movements one of his tenants was planning and had made a small fortune out of the advance information. Several injudicious women he had successfully blackmailed, turning over to agents who never came near the Granddeck the secrets he learned from letters he opened and telephone conversations he had listened to.

In the case of Rufus Gaston, he had plotted to steal the Gaston pearls, Mrs. Moore explained, first terrifying the old couple into leaving the apartment, the whispers that had been heard coming of course from the secret passageway.

"But I can't understand," I said, "why, after he had once got hold of the pearls in Mr. Gaston's absence, he should have restored them to their hiding place."

"He had a duplicate made of phony pearls," explained Mrs. Moore. "It was part of his plan not to have any of the tenants discover the thefts for a long time after they occurred."

"If he was so cautious," said the district attorney, "I am puzzled as to why he killed Miss Lutan and Mr. Gaston. He must have realized that both murders would be thoroughly investigated."

"Both were accidents, so to speak," the girl explained. "Each of them surprised him in their apartment, and he had to kill them to make his getaway. I suppose he had been roaming around so much he had got careless."

"How about the revolver?" asked Gorman. "How did he come to plant it in Nelson's room?"

"He was puzzled by Mr. Nelson butting in on the Bradford case, and it made him sore. I heard him and Wick talking about it one day, and he said that he'd teach Mr. Nelson not to interfere. 'How?' asked Wick. 'I'll frame him for the goat if anything happens.'"

"And was it he who had me discharged from my office?" I asked, eagerly.

"Sure it was. He wrote a note on Mr. Gaston's stationery saying that you had forged a check after he had befriended you. He wrote in the letter that he was not going to prosecute you because of your mother, but that he felt that you were unworthy of employment anywhere."

"I believe," said the district attorney, "that that clears everything up, except for one thing—why, Mrs. Moore, did you aid him and Wick in all these crimes?"

"He promised that if I would help him he would get Eddie out," she cried. "I was desperate. I'd do anything to get my husband back."

Gorman and the district attorney exchanged meaning glances. While nothing more was said, I felt sure as they departed that both were thinking that this brave young woman who had

He Had Built a Secret Passageway.

solved the mystery for them certainly deserved some reward, and I think we all realized that the only reward life ever could hold for her was the freedom of her husband.

Presently they went and left us alone, Gorman, my mother, Barbara, and I.

"There are still two things I cannot understand," I said, as we sat talking it over. "The first is"—and I turned to Barbara—"what was your sister doing in this apartment on the night of the first murder? When I came up from the Lutan apartment I caught her just coming out of my door. I could not help wondering if they had made her plant the revolver."

Barbara started up, blushing.

"Oh, no," she cried, "it was nothing like that. You remember a few moments before you and I had been in your room, looking at the secret passageway. Claire just then had come into my room looking for me. She was puzzled by my absence, and the only solution that came to her was that I must be in your rooms. Alarmed at what she considered my imprudence, she had slipped out into the hall, and seeing your door open, had investigated. Of course she did not find me, for I had returned by way of the window ledge. She told me about it the night before she was married. I don't wonder, though, that you suspected her."

"I didn't suspect her," I cried. "I just wondered what she had been doing there."

"That's right," said Gorman. "He wouldn't believe for a minute that she had had anything to do with it."

"But what puzzles me most," I went on, "is how you ever persuaded the telephone girl to give Granders away. It must have been done after she had given her first testimony. How did it happen that she changed so suddenly over to our side?"

As I looked from one to the other for an explanation, Gorman burst out laughing.

"You'll have to ask Miss Bradford about that," he said. "She did it all."

I turned again to look at Barbara, expecting her to speak, but she merely blushed and was silent.

"Go on, tell me," I urged her.

"Well," she said hesitatingly, "as I heard her testifying, I had an inspiration. I heard her say that she loved her husband, and that she did not care

"If Only I Had Something to Offer You Besides My Love!"

who knew it—and—and—and—all at once I realized that love was the strongest influence in the world, so I had Mr. McGregor ask for an adjournment, and then—"

She stopped in confusion, the rosy blushes once more mantling her cheeks.

"Go on," I insisted.

"I can't tell it," she cried.

"You must tell," I urged. "I have a right to know it. What did you do?"

"I managed to see her alone."

Again she hesitated.

"What did you say to her?" I demanded.

"I just told her," she faltered, lowering her eyes as she spoke, "that—that I loved you just as much as she loved her husband, and I begged her for love's sake not to help send you to the chair, and she broke down and told everything."

"Oh, Barbara, my Barbara!" I cried, springing up and clasping her in my arms. "If only I had something to offer you besides my love—"

"I wouldn't worry about that just now, Spalding," interrupted my mother's voice. "They found your great-uncle's will today. He made you his sole heir."

But Barbara and I hardly heeded her good news. We were too busy telling each other the world-old story.

[THE END.]

HOLD CONVERSE IN JUNGLE

Expert Asserts That All Wild Animals Have Method of Communication With Each Other.

If the chimpanzees possess the most extensive ape vocabulary—and Garner, who knew the sound and meaning of about a hundred monkey words, said they do—baboons have the crudest. Dr. Ditmars says that those in the Bronx park collection express their emotions with a roaring bark, a faint chattering, and, when frightened, a wild scream.

"But all animal life has some method of communication," says Dr. Ditmars. "In some cases it isn't vocal, but it satisfies the same need.

"When a lion is lonesome he puts his head close to the ground and roars. Possibly he knows the ground acts as a sounding board. With a different cadence this roar becomes a challenge, and other males take it up until the jungle reverberates with their din.

"Another roar with a different intensity is answered only by females. The lioness will listen to fix the direction from which his roar comes and will move toward him. Then she will roar, and he will move, and finally they meet."—Exchange.

Formation of Asbestos.

Asbestos is found in fissures of rock and it is believed that, when the rock was forming and still hot, water penetrated the fissures, widened them and dissolved some of the silica and magnesia. On drying, these crystallized as a hydrated silicate of magnesia, forming threadlike crystals building up from opposite walls of the fissure and meeting in the middle.

Senatorial Ambition.

"The height of my ambition," remarked Senator Sorghum, "is to walk into a moving picture theater and discover that my portrait is getting as much applause as that of a regular film star."

Mean Comment.

Dick—You have to know that girl well to appreciate what she is worth.

Bob—I don't doubt it; you couldn't take her on her face value.

LAVENDER WOOL

By MILDRED WHITE.

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Tears coursed down Mrs. Spaulding's cheeks. Keith was going to be married; after that fact there could be nothing. Her son was her world and he would leave her. Mrs. Spaulding could think of no happiness apart from his presence, while the thought of another ruling where she had ruled, sharing where she had shared, was bitter. For Mrs. Spaulding's love, in its absorption, was wholly selfish. Keith had dreaded to make his announcement, yet even before his mother's grief-stricken face it had been difficult to conceal the joy of his own. Babs was such a dear girl; he had known from the moment her clear eyes looked into his that all his mother's remonstrance could make no difference in the determination of his choice. Babs, all unaware of opposition, knew only one code—to be happy and make others happy. This to her was the most beautiful thing in the world. So the coldness of Mrs. Spaulding's manner when Keith took her to call was due, Babs decided, to the slight indisposition which the son had explained prevented his mother from making the visit of acquaintance herself. The girl admired the pillared porch where Mrs. Spaulding frigidly received her, she admired the flower beds in the garden, but her lover's mother was indifferently unresponsive. The only sign of friendliness which, so Babs thought, Mrs. Spaulding exhibited, was when, as the girl was about to take her departure, she complimented her upon her soft wool sweater.

Keith, glancing anxiously into his sweetheart's face, was surprised to find there, not the disappointment he feared, but a certain light of pleasure.

"You must be very happy in your lovely home, Keith," Babs had said.

His mother's words were different in tone.

"So that simple little maid is your final choice, Keith?" she asked falteringly, unbelievingly. And though he turned away in disapproval, as time passed and his mother saw Babs more and more, her caustic thrusts against the girl became his constant pain.

Babs wondered at little at the frown between her lover's dark eyes and of late her own brows wrinkled in perplexity over his new and strange requests.

"Would she mind not wearing any more that big black hat? It seemed just a shade conspicuous to him."

Babs laid the becoming hat aside.

Notwithstanding all this subservience to her wish, Mrs. Spaulding's attitude, as her son returned one evening from his visit to Barbara, was most forbidding.

"Did you find your sweetheart at home?" she asked mockingly.

"Certainly Barbara was at home," Keith replied.

His mother shrugged her shoulders.

"She is so much with that DeVoe person," she said.

For a moment the frown was very evident between the young man's astonished eyes.

"Why, Barbara has never mentioned her name to me," he said.

"Probably not," Mrs. Spaulding smiled. "She may have the sense to know that the 'mention' would not be agreeable. I did not feel exactly honored last evening when Barbara brought her bizarre friend to our door as she dutifully stopped to inquire for my health."

"It was—queer." Keith's eyes were bent somberly on the ground as he strode along.

His gentle Barbara and Lucille De Voe, with her noisy companions, could meet on no common footing. He hated to be always questioning—disapproving; yet—"

"Barbara!" he burst out desperately, as she greeted him with her frank smile, "why do you go to see Lucille DeVoe? What do you find to like in that woman?"

Babs shook her head ruefully.

"You never will wait to let me tell you things," she said. "You search out all my surprises. Do you remember the night that your mother admired my sweater? She liked the way it was made, but not the color. And so I thought—she's been having such a cold, Keith, and it's chilly on the porch evenings—I worried a little about her—you see, I love her, Keith, for your sake."

"Yes?" asked the young man, bewildered.

"So I decided to make her a wonderful lavender sweater. Lavender is 'conservative,' isn't it? Miss DeVoe offered to show me how to make it. I had bought my geranium one in her store. Miss DeVoe has the kindest heart. She walked with me the other evening over to your house so that she might be sure of your mother's size. And now the work is done."

Keith drew a long breath.

"I knew you'd be pleased," the girl said, happily. "Shall we take it over now to your mother?"

And as Barbara made her offering, Keith looked straight into his mother's eyes.

"She went to Miss DeVoe for her lessons in knitting," he said. "Barbara wanted to please you with just the style of sweater you admired. Barbara, it seems, loves you, mother."

"The shade is—conservative—isn't it?" Babs asked anxiously.

And all at once tears filled the mother's eyes and she bent and kissed the girl.

"It's lovely, lovely lavender wool," she said.

Brother William's Sentiments.

"I makes no doubt but what de worl'll come ter a end some time or other," said Brother Williams, "but I ain't one ter pray fer it. I has never yit took flyin' lessons down here, an' anyhow, I never wuz in favor of flyin' too high."—Exchange.

Vain Acquisition.

"Some men gets a heap of education," remarked an old colored philosopher, "jest as some people gets a whole lot of bait without ketchin' any fish."—Boston Transcript.

Parasols Are Again Unfurled

TIME out of mind gay and dainty parasols have flaunted their bright colors in the midsummer's sunshine and cast their soft or glowing shadows over fair faces. But during the war they did not flourish. Being among the luxuries that could be dispensed with and for other reasons, they were not so much used. This season, however, finds them revived, and with midsummer just around the corner, they have come out in considerable force and in distinct styles. Many of them appear to take their cue from midsummer millinery, showing a repetition of the fabrics and colors used in hats, and there are parasols for dress, street and country wear that correspond to dress, tailored and sports hats. The simpler designs outnumber the more elaborate ones.

For wear with almost any frock the green parasol with bands of black, or cross bars of black, and all white or white and black designs have the faculty of making a pleasing ensemble. But if one is not confined to a single choice, the made-to-match parasol, of the same materials as the hat worn with it, is smarter than any other. For the street there are navy blue and white combinations in which white organdie figures as a border and in folds on blue silk, these worn with hats of the same combination, match a sea breeze in coolness, and those green silk parasols, with bands of black, suggest cool, leafy shadows cast by the trees. One of these is shown in the picture with handle in black and white enamel, and this model proves very practical. Black and white handles, furnished with large rings to slip over the wrist when the parasol is furled, have proved very popular. Hanging the parasol in this way is about the easiest and safest way of caring for it when it is off duty as a protector from the sun. There are a number of bracelet ideas in handles, including those of narrow black ribbon with gold or silver slides that carry engraved monograms.

A wide-brimmed hat of faille silk overlaid with lace and having a frill of lace about the brim-edge, makes a soft shadow over the face that is deepened and widened by a parasol to match. As shown in the picture, the set is developed in black silk and white lace, but the color that underlies the lace is a matter for individual choice. Wide white lace with a border provides a means of covering a parasol and hat like this with very little trouble; any seamstress can accomplish the work.

The "country club" set shown in the third picture includes a scarf with the hat and parasol so that there are three pieces in it. Pink indestructible crepe is used for this set, and the braid and embroidery decorations are in the same color.

Athena Smiles on Satin Gowns

CONSIDERATION of evening gowns leads us into that realm of apparel where beauty is the paramount and almost the sole consideration. All that the looms have to offer in rich and exquisite products goes into their fashioning and inspires their creators. Satin and ribbons are translated into such clothes, in the two gowns pictured, as must certainly win an approving smile from the goddess of spinners and weavers.

Designers have adopted a trick of adding that "splendor dear to women" to the average evening gown by introducing rich and remarkable ribbons into their composition. Beautiful satin and airy tulle are the same in one or another lovely dress, but a flavor of magnificence pervades a gown when a distinctive and royal ribbon becomes a part of it. This is emphasized in the sleeveless, low-cut model pictured. It has a slip of plain satin, bodice of sequins and plaited overdress of tulle with medallions in two sizes. A glorious ribbon, in metallic brocade, begins as a girdle, becomes a drapery at the right side, a cascade at the left and ends in a train, trailing from a bow and ends of tulle.

Satin and lace join forces in the second lovely gown. The very low bodice is veiled with tulle extending over the shoulders. The apron front and long back drapery of lace reflect a style feature of the season that is not confined to evening dress; it is as popular and effective in frocks for afternoon.

Julia Bottomley

Pongee Dresses.

Pongee dresses are quite the rage in juvenile society this season. Touches of embroidery in contrasting colors, self-ruffles, self-tucking and cording are perhaps the most popular trimming touches.

Cuffs of Fine Linen.

Street frocks of black taffeta are finished with very deep circular cuffs of the same, with a turn-back cuff of white handkerchief linen.

Plaited Serge Skirts.

Plaited serge skirts are much in favor.

Adjustable Trimmings.

A limited amount of dress money and a natural wish for variety suggested an idea to an ingenious girl. She bought one good straw hat of neutral tint, and three different trimmings, each made to fasten on with a clip. One trimming consisted of a simple band of purple ribbon tied in a broad careless bow at the front. But when a saxe-blue costume was to be the order of the day, the purple ribbon could easily be changed for the soft swathing of saxe-blue silk finished with a large looped rosette. For other occasions when the hat was to be worn with an afternoon frock a wreath of simple flowers and foliage gave just the right touch of softness and freshness to the toilette.

Full Tulle Overskirts.

Full tulle overskirts are pretty features of the newest evening dresses.

Stripped Rival Plaids.

Striped fabrics are looming up as rather strong rivals of plaid.

DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE

By Mary Graham Bonner

RED-FACED MOON.

"What makes your face so red, Mr. Moon?" asked the Queen of Fairies.

"Is my face very red?" asked Mr. Moon.

"It is a bright flaming red, like scarlet," said the Queen of the Fairies. "It is really very beautiful. But usually your face is white and you look so quiet and so calm. Tonight you look very much excited. What is it, Mr. Moon? Isn't it unusual for your face to be so red?"

"Yes, it is a bit unusual," said Mr. Moon, "and I will explain it to you if you would like to hear about it."

"I would, indeed," said the Queen of the Fairies.

"Then," said Mr. Moon, "I will tell you at once. Do you know which of Father Week's children is working today, or rather has been working today, for the day is gone and the night is now coming on?"

"Yes," said the Queen of the Fairies, "Sunday has been the child around today."

"Yes," said Mr. Moon, "that is so."

"Well, you see," Mr. Moon continued, "some time ago I was going to bed in the morning and some one said: 'Oh, there is the sun.' Now I was so embarrassed and so flustered that I didn't know what to do. For I couldn't very well explain that I wasn't the sun and yet I didn't want to get the credit which was due the sun and I didn't want to disappoint folks who thought I was the sun for the sun hadn't yet come up. The sun was getting up but wasn't hurrying, for there was no real need of hurrying.

"Well, somehow or other and for some reason or other which I didn't quite understand, I got most fearfully embarrassed. I just did. You know how sometimes you will. It was a compliment, I know, to be taken for Mr. Sun, but at the same time it did embarrass me.

"I was so flustered because I couldn't explain and so for that reason I got very red in the face. Then I heard some folks say: 'Why, it isn't

"I Got Most Fearfully Embarrassed."

the sun at all; it is the moon, and see what a gorgeous, glorious red face he has.'

"Well, then I was so flustered by the sudden praise that I got redder and redder. That was at the beginning of the season and now folks love once in a while to see a red moon. Usually I'm only red in the early morning but for a reason I wanted to give folks a treat in the evening.

"You see, so many people have been having their holidays and now their holidays are over, so I wanted to look my best for them, as they were going back to their work.

"Then there are a great many people who only have the end of the week for rest and I thought I'd make it very lovely for them. You quite understand how I'd want to do that, don't you?"

"I do," said the Queen of the Fairies. "It's a lovely idea."

"And it seems funny to think that from the time I was embarrassed and flustered I have been able to do such a thing as to please people by having a red face.

"Now it is no longer embarrassment or because I am flustered. No, the time when I felt like that was a long, long time ago. Now everything is fine, perfectly fine, and I'm as happy as happy can be that I can do something like this to make folks pleased at the things they see.

"And tonight the clouds are all helping me look their best. The sun went to bed most gloriously and left behind all the fairies which fly about between sunset and moonlight. There are the blue and silver-cloud fairies and there are the red-glow fairies who wear such glowing red frocks and flame-colored wings.

"The grass is blowing and waving and singing. All of the insects and little creatures are chirping and buzzing and singing, too. All of the colors are very clear and very beautiful. Even the thirty-nine cows in yonder field are looking their best and wading in the brook to make themselves feel fresher.

"The yellow lilies along the road and in the gardens I'm looking upon are such an addition, too, to the beauty.

"But I am up here so all can see me and enjoy my red face."

Forgetful Sailors.

Small Lula—Why are sailors so forgetful, papa?

Papa—I didn't know they were, dear.

Small Lula—Then why do they have to weigh an anchor every time they start on a voyage?

A Debt to Ourselves.

The girl who thinks that she is under obligation to be polite only to those who are courteous, is as mistaken as if she should assume a right to tell falsehoods to those known to be untruthful. Courtesy and truth are obligations we owe to God and to ourselves first of all.—Girls' Companion.

Carries Lots of Tunes.

"Two months ago he couldn't even carry a tune."

"And now?"

"He's a piano mover."