

What the Gray House Hid



The Mystery of a Haunted Mansion

by Wyndham Martyn

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THE STORY

Hilton Hanby, prosperous New York merchant, has purchased a country place—the Gray house, near Pine Plains, Miss Selenos, a former tenant of the Gray house, calls at his office and warns him that the house is under a curse. Further alarming details are impressed upon Adolf Smucker, Hanby's secretary, by a man who claims to have been chauffeur for Sir Stanford Seymour, former occupant of the place. The Hanbys laugh off the warnings they have received both from Miss Selenos and from Smucker's acquaintance, as some form of practical joke. But they are shocked when they hear that the caretaker whom they have put in charge of the Gray house, a man named Kerr, has been mysteriously murdered. Hanby consults his friend Pelham.

CHAPTER III

At the real-estate offices of Douglas & Smith, Pelham was referred by Douglas, whom he knew, to a Mr. Appleton.

"Appleton will tell you everything," said Douglas. "He has an amazing memory for details, and a great affection for the Gray house. Come in to my office when you're through."

Frederick Appleton was a small plump man of sixty. He had a distinguished conservatism in dress, a florid complexion, and blue eyes which looked more than usually large owing to the thickness and power of the lenses he wore. After a little preliminary talk, Pelham judged him to be one of those men in relatively unimportant offices who bring to their tasks a certain not unpleasant pomposity.

"I have in this book," said Mr. Appleton, pointing to a ledger, "a complete record of the tenants and the expenses of the Gray house for almost thirty-five years. Here you will find the cost of the upkeep of house, grounds, and stables. In my head I have many facts concerning the people who have resided there, which would be out of place in the books of a strictly business firm."

"I take it, then," said Pelham, "that you have an unusual interest in mankind?"

Mr. Appleton's shrewd but kindly face beamed.

"We see a great deal more in this line of work than you would suppose. Oh, dear me, yes! Do I understand that Mr. Hanby desires information about the place?"

"Yes, and Mr. Douglas said that you could tell me everything. He is a close personal friend of Mr. Hanby."

Mr. Appleton's eyes grew a little harder.

"So I inferred from the fact that the sale was not made through me, I knew that Mr. Hanby was interested in the Gray house, but I admit being staggered when Mr. Douglas made the announcement that it was sold."

"Not that I am criticizing Mr. Douglas," the other went on, "Oh, dear me, no! His manner was brisk and cheerful again. 'What can I do for you, Mr. Pelham?'"

"Did you ever know a Miss Selenos?"

"She occupied the Gray house for three years. I remember her well. Poor lady, she loathed and despised men, particularly your humble servant. We had to evict her for non-payment of rent. She had ample warning, but we had to call the sheriff in. May I ask how you know her?"

"She called on Mr. Hanby and threatened him with all sorts of wild vengeance if he did not sell the place to her."

"There was no doubt about Mr. Appleton's interest now."

"I can quite believe it," he said. "I remember that when we put her out she said that I should be dead within the year. I may say that my good wife was very much relieved when the twelve-month had passed. I hear that she has at last inherited the great Selenos fortune. They were land-poor for many years."

"You think she's not normal?"

"Insanity in the family," said Mr. Appleton firmly. "The things she said to me were most indelicate, and could only be explained by madness of a hereditary type. The speaker hesitated for a moment. 'I suppose she did not mention my name?'"

"I think not, I suppose you remember Mr. Seymour?"

"Now Sir Stanford Seymour, Ch. dear me, yes! I ventured to call upon him when in England two years ago. The tragedy had left its mark

on Sir Stanford, but he was always a reserved type."

"What tragedy?"

"His two sons were drowned in the lake."

"Who was the previous tenant?"

"Mr. John Throckmorton. His wife died at the Gray house. A lovely woman! I went to the funeral. Very sad indeed. The lake again."

"It seems to have been a house of death," Pelham commented. He did not relish the idea of the Hanby family inhabiting it as much as he had done. "Who came after Sir Stanford Seymour?"

"He subtlet it—subject to our approval, of course—to Mr. Crosby Norton. Mr. Norton lost his four children."

"In that same d—d lake?"

"I regret to say yes," Mr. Appleton looked shrewdly at his visitor. "Have you much influence with Mr. Hilton Hanby?"

"I am his closest friend."

"Do you suppose that you could influence him to reconsider his purchase?" Mr. Appleton was consider-

ate and sympathetic. "I am not a believer in haunted houses. I try to be skeptical in such matters, but there seems to be a strange fate about the Gray house. It always takes toll of the young and happy. Those Seymour children, for example—high-bred, strong, happy boys who could swim excellently; yet they are dead, and at Sir Stanford's death his title goes to a distant cousin. Then the Norton children, three girls and a boy—the lake got them, too. I tell myself it was a coincidence. Perhaps! Perhaps!" His manner grew more confidential. "Tell me, Mr. Pelham, did you ever hear such a chain of coincidences as that?"

"It's most disturbing news," admitted Pelham.

"It seems to me," said the other, "that if these unhappy facts were duly brought to Mr. Hanby's notice, he could not disregard them. No doubt Miss Selenos' manner annoyed him, and he disregarded her story on that account; yet—Appleton tapped the big ledger—"the facts are all down here in my own handwriting."

"I'm afraid whatever I said would make him all the more determined to go. He is a skeptic, and opposition makes him ready to fight. I don't think anything would make him give it up."

"I have done my duty, then," said Appleton briskly. "No doubt he is right, and these deaths were due to lack of care. I have here a letter, with estimate inclosed, from a Pine Plains carpenter, who agreed to put the rustic bridge in order. That

bridge, Mr. Pelham, crossed the lake at its deepest part. The Seymour boys were fishing from it when it gave way. I rather think the Norton children were found near there, too."

Appleton turned to the estimate. "You see, Mr. Pelham, these tragedies might have been averted if the owner had seen fit to expend sixty-four dollars and eighteen cents. It was owing to my influence that the lake was completely filled in, and the stream feeding it was diverted to the lower lake. Instead of five acres of water filled with stumps, which made fishing difficult, Mr. Hanby has now a twenty-acre lake with good bass and trout in it and not a pickerel to do damage. I have fished there every year, and I know. I wonder if Mr. Hanby would extend the courtesy to me?"

"I'll answer for him," said Pelham. "I'm a fisherman myself. Thank you for what you've told me."

"Well?" Douglas asked, a little later. "Get what you wanted?"

"And more," said Pelham. "The Gray house has a dismal atmosphere about it, to my way of thinking. Appleton seems to think that for less than sixty-five dollars all those lives might have been saved."

"I think he's right," said the other. "The old lake was within a few yards of the house, and very deep. It was too much of a temptation to children. The banks were steep, too, as I recall them."

"Then you don't believe in the curse theory?"

Douglas lighted a cigar before answering Pelham's question.

"In my office, during business hours the idea seems silly; but sometimes, when I can't sleep at night, I'm not so sure. I've Highland blood in my veins, remember, and race memories of haunted houses, and curses that descend from generation to generation. Don't ask me, Bill."

"You give me the same sort of comfort that Appleton does. He tells me what endles my blood, and then explains it all away by a carpenter's estimate that missed the mark."

It was not a very comfortable motor trip for the Hanbys. When Junior drove, his father thanked God that his will was made and his affairs were in order. When Hanby was at the wheel, his son struggled between a feeling of pride that his progenitor still had his nerve left, and a fear that never again would he tread the campus at New Haven.

"Corking road!" Junior commented, when Pine Plains was in sight.

"Was it a road?" his father demanded. "I'm relieved to know that. I thought it was a race track."

"Where's the Gray house?"

"We passed it on the last lap."

"You might have pointed it out to me," remarked young Hanby.

"Why? I thought, as we went by, that neither of us would ever have the opportunity to inhabit it."

Junior laughed.

"This old bus can certainly clip off the milestones."

"Don't boast. You only scratched the one you hit."

"It beats me," his son remarked philosophically, "why crows don't know their own minds. I didn't dream that beast was going to give us a race."

"Slow down, Junior!" his sire commanded. "We're got to stand well in this community."

Hilton Hanby stepped from the car to be greeted by the local police chief and an officer from Kingston.

"This is my son, Sherlock Gaboriau Hanby," he said. "Is the inquest over?"

"Yes," said the local man. "I wish you'd been here before."

"Any clue to the murderer?" Junior asked.

"Not a one."

Junior smiled. He knew exactly how it would be.

"But there's a mighty interesting development. This fellow Kerr was killed by Kerr at all. He had a whole string of aliases. We finger-printed him, and fitted the right name to him. Your caretaker, Mr. Hanby, was Red Chapin, wanted for 'most everything up to murder.'"

"That's interesting," Hanby exclaimed. "A murderer murdered?"

He was not pleased to think that such a man had been in his employ, although engaged by an agent.

"His references was stolen from some Spanish war veteran named Kerr. We'll find out all about it soon. Also he had Kerr's discharge papers and a medal. Want to look at him, sir?"

"Not on your life!" said Hanby, who detested morbid things.

"I'd like to," Junior suggested.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Commerce Boomed by Methods of Counting

For ages even the most intelligent men could count only to ten or twenty, the number of their fingers and toes. Then sticks and stone counters were laid in rows to indicate and compute numbers involved in barter and trade. In the earliest civilizations symbols were employed to some extent, then in Egypt they had the happy thought of drawing a picture to represent each quantity. Thus, a frog equaled 100,000 and a man with arms outstretched in admiration signified 10,000,000. The Greek and Roman systems of letters for numerals were considered a great advance, but only the most learned could do any adding or subtracting with them. The decimal system was brought by an ambassador from India into Arabia in 773 A. D., and Euro-

pean countries got their numerals from Arabia in the twelfth century. It proved popular right away and teachers of the new system were in great demand. Trade and industry, so long dammed up by a lack of any simple method of keeping accounts or doing business with persons at a distance, sprang into life—and the Commercial era was born.—Detroit News.

Pit Pony's Wisdom

In the old workings of a Rhonda Valley mine, in Wales, a pony hauling its coal wagon suddenly dug his heels in and refused to budge. While the miner with it was vainly trying to coax it to go on, a big piece of roof fell with a crash in front of them.

Dame Fashion Smiles

By Grace Jewett Austin

Dame Fashion has often wondered how a bee feels in the summer time when he happens



Grace J. Austin.

to light in the very middle of a ten-acre lot of white clover. She felt a good deal like that the other day when she had planned to study the spring styles in action at a luncheon given for fifty women, and a dinner for seventy-five later the same day.

The luncheon certainly proved that no one color is ruling. The beautiful gowns were in almost every color of the rainbow, with a special abundance of the various beige shades which prove so universally becoming. Looking over the multi-colored gowns of the diners, where black was notable by absence, Dame Fashion for a moment just clothed them all in her imagination in black, and realized what a pall would have been spread over the scene. No, Dame Fashion is a color advocate forever. Some scientists are declaring that in years hence our eyes may become trained to see more colors than at present.

Even with the spring well advanced, and summer upon us, some of us are still engaged in building up our wardrobe. If this is not an elaborate one, it is well to choose some pieces; perhaps a new coat or an ensemble, and build around that in such a way that all combinations will be in harmony.

The cap-shape and the wrap-around turban are retaining their powerful millinery influence in the summer. Here again the learned folk, who seem to like to take a hand in fashion meditations, have declared the influence of Asia or even more tropic continents in this headwear, but so long as this headwear is so effective, astonishingly comfortable, and an aid to gaining the fashionable and healthful "sun-tan"—with reasonable becomingness in most cases—why should we worry as to what daughter of Adam first wore similar turbans? In fact, no one does do any worrying, but we all wear with pleasure the little hats which are so easy for leaning back in an automobile or railway car, and which no stiff breeze from lake or ocean has a bit of hope of dislodging from the proper places.

Shakespeare gained praise for all the years by mapping out the seven ages of man; some unknown genius has lately deduced the seven dresses of women and has modestly left his or her name unknown. Some of us may have dresses outside the category; some may not have the entire seven, but it is rather good fun to check over one's wardrobe and see how near we have come to this ideal.

Beginning in good Shakespearean style, with morning; the authority recommends simple two-piece frocks of silk, near-silk, cotton or linen, according to the morning activity; in class, at home or marketing. Definite sports frocks have their own well known points of plaited skirts, sleeveless blouses and short jackets. Afternoon street wear is often of printed silk; traveling garb brings its own requirements or harmonizing wraps and accessories, as well as simply made silk crepe dresses. The bridge, club or afternoon-at-the-country-club dress may be more frilly, but cannot have the elegance of material of the sleeved dinner gown which is an outgrowth of much semi-public dining—while last and perhaps gayest, comes the formal evening gown. If we have never had a sleeveless gown, let's try one this summer!

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Smart Tailored Frock in Striped Rayon, Wool

Tulle flowers, often stiffened with wires and velvet strips, are used as floral decorations on tulle evening gowns in the new collections of summer models. A large cluster of varicolored morning glories made of tulle and velvet trimmed a black evening gown. Patou has a stunning black tulle frock which has one shoulder strap and one side of the décolletage in the back outlined with large silk roses in a brilliant shade of cerise.

New Dinner Rings Add to Evening Costumes

Especially appropriate with the striking new evening costumes of this spring is the latest model in hand-some dinner rings as was worn recently at a supper dance held at one of New York's famous Fifth avenue hotels.

Costume colors range themselves into high tones, pastel tints, half-tones of tan or gray and black or white, and these rings are chosen as a distinct contrast for these gown color schemes.

This ring holds a large marquise diamond for the central gem with three trapeze-shaped emeralds on either side. These emeralds are slanted for the ring shoulders, stepped down in angles to reach from the high central gem to the ring circle at the sides.

This use of baguettes or oddly-shaped colored gems for the ring bezels and a large marquise, oblong, square or lozenge-cut diamond for the main stone, is a gesture toward the modern in new rings.

"Jack and Jill" Dresses Are Made of Flour Bags

The old nursery rhyme doesn't say what kind of dresses Jack and Jill wore on their famous water-carrying expedition, nor does it specify that they were twins. However, any little brother and sister under six years of age can safely be dressed alike whether or not they are actual twins. The little "Jack and Jill" dresses shown here are examples of what can be done in this way, without either of them sacrificing their personalities.



Empty Flour Bags Are Suitable for Children's Clothes.

And without sacrificing the family pocketbook, either. For both of these little dresses were actually made from used flour bags, the kind that come into the kitchen by way of the grocery boy or which can be bought over the bakery counter for a few cents apiece.

This material is so firm and closely woven and durable as to be especially suitable for children's clothes. The bags are quickly ripped and the stamping removed in any one of several ways, by covering with lard or kerosene for a few hours and then washing in warm water, or with javelle water, or they may be sent to the general public laundry.

Flour bags take dye beautifully, especially in the darker shades such as yale blue or forest green. Used in combination with the natural material, the effect is charming.

In the dresses shown here, Jill's little box-plaited skirt and Jack's mannish shorts are of the dark material, the blouses are natural colored, and the collar, cuffs and ties of the dark goods.

The number of flour bags required for making the two suits will, of course, depend on the ages of the children, but in any case, the cost will be negligible.

Leather, Tulle, Tweed Flowers, Adorn Frocks

Leather, principally suede, and occasionally printed in contrasting colors, seems to be one of the favorites of the Parisienne for her sports costume flowers. At recent indoor tennis matches a red and blue sports suit had a boutonniere of red and blue suede flowers, the round petals of the blue flowers having red shading and the red flowers blue shading.

Practically all of these flowers have natural looking stamens.

Tweed flowers, brown and white flecked, backed and stiffened by white suede forming a narrow binding to the petals, trimmed a Worth ensemble in brown tweed.

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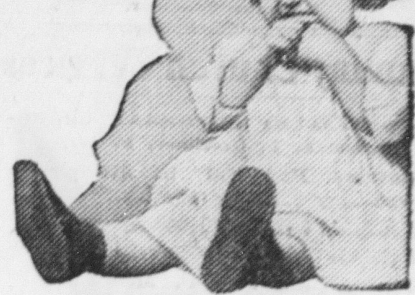
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Growth of Air Force

Before the close of the World war, the United States navy had an air force overseas comprising 400 planes, 50 kite balloons and three dirigibles, operated by a personnel of about 1,100 officers and 18,000 enlisted men. Its pilots had flown approximately 1,000,000 miles, including 6,000 miles of war flights over areas infested by submarines. This large organization was developed from a nucleus of six officers and 63 enlisted men who landed at Pauillac, France, in June, 1917.

Soul's Dilemma

Everywhere the human soul stands between a hemisphere of light and another of darkness on the confines of two everlasting hostile empires—necessity and free will.—Thomas Carlyle.