

# What the Gray House Hid

## The Mystery of a Haunted Mansion

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By Wyndham Martyn

### THE STORY

Hilton Hanby has purchased a country place—the Gray house, near Pine Plains, Miss Selenos, a former tenant, 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 Stamford Seymour, former occupant of the place. The Hanbys laugh off the warnings. But they are shocked when they hear that the caretaker of the Gray house, a man named Kerr, has been mysteriously murdered. Hanby consults his friend Pelham. The family starts for the new home. Appleton, a clerk of Douglas and Smith, the agents from whom Hanby bought the Gray house, urges Pelham to dissuade Hanby from occupying the Gray house. Pelham becomes a member of the household. A phone call from a man who declares he is an old acquaintance of Hanby's, urges him to preserve a part of the grounds as a bird sanctuary. The Hanbys take possession of the Gray house. A stranger introducing himself as Frederick Appleton, calls at the Gray house and is welcomed because of his interest in bird life. Hanby engages Appleton as his agent. The Selenos mystery is explained.

### CHAPTER VII

-12-

Consider for a moment the case of the unfortunate Adolf Smucker, bereft of a job and soured by the difficulty of finding another. Until he was discharged he had not known that his status among his neighbors was woefully due to their mistaken estimate of the importance of his position in the office of Hilton Hanby, of Leonard street, woolen merchant. The only jobs open to him were of a sort that would have lowered him in the eyes of his friends, his family, and the young men paying court to his daughters.

Nor was this all. Like many another careful man, he had deeded his property to his wife, to find, too late, that such a benefactor regards the gift as entirely her own. He was to learn that Mrs. Smucker had long known of his inefficiencies as a provider. After that fateful sentence, "Doff, you've tired yourself," she knew that the task of looking after things was hers. She had long wondered at Mr. Hanby's unusual forbearance.

Smucker was conscious that he had fallen from the domestic pedestal. He saw that he was no longer of prime importance. His meals were now no better than those given these many years to his old father; and the old man dared to jeer at him, to question his interpretation of political events, and to denounce him as a Bolshevist!

The wild look in Smucker's eye became wilder. He was no longer compelled to shave every day. Mrs. Smucker and the girls pressed his pants no more. He frequented more intensely those little clubs of malcontents whose members spoke behind locked doors of the time coming when the land would be as red as ever Russia was red. They did not especially welcome Smucker, since they were mainly of foreign birth and speech; but the chief organizers, who knew men, marked him down as one who could be worked upon if needed.

There must always be some first man to hurt a bomb or throw phosphorus cakes among ripening crops. The best were those like Smucker, who had nursed grievances against richer and more capable men until hatred flamed up at a word of encouragement, and who had no exact knowledge of the details of the movement, or of the names of the active conspirators. Smucker came to depend upon these haters of rule, these enemies to society, for the cheap cigarettes he smoked. He posed as an honest man when capital had thrown him, broken, into life's gutter. They affected to believe him. He was a tool to be used at need.

One day the Smuckers, in family council, decided that Adolf should ask Mr. Hanby for some such letter of recommendation as might enable him to get a clerical position in one of the Weehawken factories. His trousers were pressed, and his shoes shined, and he turned cityward. He did not like the prospect at all, but the Smuckers in council had a massed psychology which overrode all objections.

His family was against him. Those who had listened to him respectfully now turned and jeered. People passing him wondered why he talked to himself so constantly. They could not guess that he was again experiencing vengeful visions of what he would do when he got into power. In these dreams he now included even his old father, who made ten dollars a week, his taunting children, and the two young men who despised him as a future father-in-law.

By this time Hilton Hanby occupied a more prominent position than ever in these schemes of punishment. Hanby was the prime cause of it all. Hanby was capital incarnate. Well the Communist was coming soon!

Smucker demanded to see Mr. Hanby. The office boy, who had suffered much in the past at Smucker's hands, licked his lip when he saw his enemy. "He's out of town," said the boy. "and he wouldn't see you if he was here."

"I'll wait," said Smucker loftily. "We have no sleeping accommodations," said the boy. "He won't be back for weeks, and you'd be in the way."

"You were always a liar," said Smucker.

"And you were always a thief," shouted the other. "I've got your number! I've seen you pinching stamps, and I got the blame for it!"

"You are the serf of a capitalist," said Smucker. "You are lickspittle of the forces that hold us down. We shall have uses for your kind when the day comes!"

"You are a d—d anarchist!" cried the boy.

Here he was interrupted by the office manager, who looked over his glasses at Smucker and frowned. He listened to Smucker's request for a recommendation.

"Not with my consent," he announced. "Don't make a scene, he added sharply. "You were lazy and



With a Screech Hardly Human, Smucker Dived into the Nearest Shadows and Degan a Race for Life

insubordinate, and you padded our expenses. I'll put that in the letter, if it helps you. You are taking up office time. Get out!"

"Never!" said Smucker, snarling. "I'll wait till Hanby comes."

The office boy opened the door in the railings and took Smucker by the shoulder. He was a strong boy, and he acted to use his muscles on the man he detested.

In the corridor, outside, Smucker fell. His head struck a gleaming elevator placed conveniently by the elevator to tempt the promiscuous expectorator. Here he lay, screaming imprecations. Here he declared he would wait until a policeman came to see how he had been assaulted.

The office boy, feeling a little scared, withdrew. Olsen, the elevator man, implored in vain. A nervous man might have been well for Smucker, and he might have won his proposed suit for damages had not he made the mistake of denouncing the officer as foully as his political associates denounced those in charge of the nation's destiny.

"I'm a blasted timeserver wearing the livery of official degradation, am I?" snapped the policeman. His strong hand fastened itself about Smucker's neck and hauled him to his feet. "There's a day coming soon when my fat throat will be cut, is there? Come and tell that to the sergeant at the desk!"

The policeman knew Smucker's sort. He had no intention of taking him anywhere but out into the street. There were many such half-crazed men in Manhattan. He would throw a scare into the fellow—and he did. Smucker now saw that escape was his main object in life. He observed, too, that the policeman's grip was not

very strong. He ducked, broke the hold, and disappeared into the crowd. It all happened as the officer had expected, and he went about his duty; but the episode made an enormous difference in Adolf Smucker. He was now a hunted man. The police wanted him. He was escaping from the tyranny of capital. His home would already be marked. He was an out-cast.

He dived into the subway station at City hall. An hour later he was sitting on a bench near Grant's tomb. A woman with a baby carriage moved hurriedly away when he suddenly burst into merriment. Smucker had forgotten all about his father's little hoard of savings—thirty dollars—which he had taken as the old man lay asleep after his night's work at the docks.

A train noisily puffing along on the river bank gave him a new idea. He would find Hanby, and would punish him as the author of all his misfortunes. Cordons of police were probably waiting for him at the ferries, but they would not be watching the railroad stations yet. He remembered that Pine Plains was the station, and that it was served by the Newburgh, Dutchess and Columbia railroad.

It was dark when Smucker skulked along the road from Pine Plains to the Gray house. It was a long, weedy walk, and Smucker usually tired easily, but tonight he walked on air. He talked aloud. He denounced his enemies and exulted in their doom.

Reason and madness were fighting for the possession of his mind. Perhaps Smucker had never been wholly sane. It needed some such precipitating cause as this to give the battle to the darker forces. When big motor cars gassed him, he spat at them.

It was almost ten when he reached Hanby's estate. Sheltering behind a great elm, he saw two people cantering toward him. The bright moonlight revealed Hilton Hanby and his wife. Mrs. Hanby wore a light linen habit.

The menace of galloping! One of Smucker's orator friends had described how he had been ridden down by the czar's Cossacks. Hanby and his wife had nearly ridden Smucker down.

Then the intruder came upon the swimming pool by the house. He recognized the Hanby children and Pelham, the banker. There were half a dozen others, laughing, diving. Other civilizations had wanted thus on the eve of disaster. Smucker glowered.

The sound of music led him nearer the brightly lighted mansion. He peered through a rear window, and saw that here even the servants revelled. He scowled as he recognized the impudent girl who had let him into the duplex apartment. She was dancing with a manservant. So the Hanbys had flunkies to wait on them now!

Smucker had not determined on his manner of revenge. He realized that he must employ cunning, not force. He was a lone man among many. He cursed himself for not buying a revolver. He withdrew from the house, and sank into the shadows. He would lie down somewhere and plan what to do.

A sound as of the clicking of a rifle trigger made him turn his frightened head. He realized in that moment that he had forgotten the possibility of police pursuit. Now he was conscious of its imminence.

On a little mound fifty feet distant, his body silhouetted against the bright moonlight, stood a man, with a rifle resting in the crook of his left elbow. So on a hundred rolls of film bad Smucker seen wardens and jailers stand, waiting to kill escaping prisoners. As he looked, the unknown raised his rifle. It seemed to the terrified man that it was pointed directly at him.

With a screech hardly human, Smucker dived into the nearest shadows and began a race for life. He headed not where he went, so long as he could seek darkness and escape from the white and mocking moonlight. That he was approaching the house he did not notice until the lighted windows brought him to a stop.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Vigilant Law Officer Had Seen 'Em Doing It

Speeding across the country from Los Angeles to New York by motor, two motion-picture celebrities were held up by the constable in a small town and, as usual, the officer had all the advantage on his side. He refused to give them a ticket and finally compromised by taking them directly before the judge.

The constable was very hot under the collar and declared he would make it hot for them, but the couple were hardly prepared for the outraged officer's charge in court.

"Your honor," he announced pompously, "this is a couple of motion-pic-

ture people an' the charge I'm preferrin' against them is arson."

"Arson!" roared one of the accused. "What do you mean! We were never out of our car till you flagged us!"

"You was burnin' up the road, an' I'm preferrin' the charge of arson against you," insisted the constable, and even the court had to laugh as he let them off with a five dollar fine.

Briefly Told  
Earth's joys are whittled on her stone of sorrow.

### JUST HUMANS

By Gene Carr



"'C'MON, SADIE, TAKE Y'LOUD SPEAKER! I GOTTA GO TO TH' LITTLE MOTHERS' MEETIN'!"

### Mother's Cook Book

All are architects of Fate.  
Working in these walls of Time;  
Some with massive deeds and great  
Some with ornaments of rhyme.  
Nothing useless is or low;  
Each thing in its place is best;  
And what seems but idle show  
Strengthens and supports the rest.  
—Longfellow.

### HOT WEATHER DISHES

NOW while the fresh fish are plentiful, it is the time to pickle a few for the time when they are scarce.

#### Pickled Fish.

Take one quart of water, one quart of vinegar, salt to season, four dozen peppercorns, three dozen allspice, eight slices of lemon, five medium onions sliced, ten bay leaves. Boil the vinegar, water, and salt, onions and spices for half an hour, add the lemon slices and cook five minutes. Drop in the fish (a few pieces), and cook in this liquor until the fish will easily pull off. Place in jars, cover with the liquor and seal. Keep in a cool place and they will be good for weeks.

On a warm day do not try to serve a dessert. Prepare a good cold drink and serve with it:

#### Russian Rocks.

Take one and one-half cups of brown sugar, one cupful of butter, cream well, add three beaten eggs, one tablespoonful of soda dissolved in the water, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, a little salt, three cupfuls of flour, three-fourths of a cupful of chopped nuts and one pound of raisins. Drop from a teaspoon on a buttered sheet and bake in a moderate oven.

#### The Best Doughnuts.

Take one and one-fourth cupfuls of sour milk, one teaspoonful of soda, half teaspoonful of salt, one-fourth cupful of cream, a tablespoonful of melted lard, and two-thirds cupfuls of sugar, three beaten eggs, add the sugar, other ingredients and flour, then when well mixed place in the ice chest for two hours. Roll out and fry in hot fat, using as little flour as possible.

Nellie Maxwell  
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### SUPERSTITIOUS SUE



SHE HAS HEARD THAT—  
The Indians believe that it brings good luck if the bride is given an ear of corn.  
It is supposed to bring plenty to the new pair and to keep evil spirits away.  
Give ear, girls, give an ear.  
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### THE CHEATERS

By DOUGLAS MALLOCH

THE world is full of honest men. Their honesty their pride, Who paid the slightest penny, then Their greater debts denied. They had their names embossed above. The places where they trade, But cheated women of their love And brothers of their aid.

Yes, honest men are every place, Who pay their honest due, That no one ever needs to chase And no one needs to sue. They thought they laid up treasures here And laid up treasures there, Yet cheated sorrow of their cheer And children of their care.

The world is full of honest men, And honesty I praise, And yet they cheated now and then, They cheated lots of ways. They did not cheat with crafty arts, Or goods upon human hearts— And, most of all, themselves— (© 1923, Douglas Malloch.)

### How It Started

By JEAN NEWTON

### "YOUR CARD, SIR"

MANY a young swain, fearing a "not at home," has anathematized the card that he must send ahead instead of walking right in to the lady of his desire. Likewise the man who must cool his heels in an anteroom while his nibs, the office boy, goes off with the bit of pasteboard that will decide his fate. And then there is the debutante who must remember to drop on the card tray, at the end of her calls, "one for each lady in the family," two for this, three for that, until she is ready to expire in the arms of a social secretary.

This practice has come down to us from sixteenth century Italy. Then Padua was attended very largely by students from Germany, with whom it was the custom when they left college to pay farewell visits to their professors. When these dignitaries were not at home to receive the personal token, the students left their names on slips of paper.

Though there is evidence that the Chinese anciently wrote their names on bits of paper which they left to apprise absent friends of their call, it is from the revival of the custom by these students in Italy that the use of personal cards was established in Europe.

### SAWS

By Viola Brothers Shore

FOR THE GOOSE—  
THE difference between a clever woman and a smart one is that the clever woman knows she's clever, but the smart one wants everybody else to be sure and know it.

The two surest cures for the blues is a new dress and a telephone call from a man you ain't quite sure of.

You can bring up a kid to be just as scared of your silence as your temper and it's much more becoming to you.

FOR THE GANDER—  
A man gets crazy over some particular woman and decides he is in love; a woman falls in love with Romance and decides she is crazy over some particular man.

You don't fall to the right if you're leanin' to the left.

Training without talent never gets you to the top; talent without training never keeps you here.

When you get to the point of never contradictin' yourself you're dead and rigor mortis has set in.

### What Does Your Child Want to Know?

Answered by BARBARA BOURJAILY



DO PEOPLE LIVE IN THE MOON?  
There is no food upon the moon And not a thing to drink, So people cannot live there now— Our very wise men think. (Copyright.)