

# SERIAL STORY

## The Real Agatha



By Edith Huntington Mason  
Pictures by Weil Walters Frey Campbell Aleshire Wilson

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### CHAPTER I.

I never quite knew how it was that I took Vincent with me, except that we both needed a holiday at the same time and the same kind of holiday appealed to us both. Vincent's whole name and title is Lord Wilfred Vincent, for he is the younger son of the old duke of Totten. Men of his own age call him "Freddy," but I call him Vincent or Wilfred, because I consider curttailed appellations undignified. Vincent is an artist—that is, he calls himself one; his friends call him "a dabbler in art." He doesn't really go in for it seriously, you know, but he did little sketches of cows and that sort of thing rather well, I fancy. So we agreed that our aim was to find a little old village, far away from London, and get rooms in some old farmhouse. My idea was that Vincent would go out and paint the cows while I would lie in the hammock and the old lady would bring me buttermilk. Wilfred had an idea that he, too, would like to spend a good bit of his time in a hammock, but with this difference, that the old lady's beautiful daughter was to bring him lemonade. But I pointed out to him that the chief reason that I was running away from town was to get rid of the debutantes, and therefore he'd have to leave the fair ones out of our air castle. Our plan was just to bask in Nature, and we had six weeks to bask in. The foreign office doesn't seem to require much of Wilfred's time and he doesn't do anything else except "dabble." Of course, being a younger son, he hasn't a shilling of his own, but the old duke makes him a comfortable allowance, because he dotes on Wilfred as much as he detests his eldest son, Edmund, the heir to the dukedom. So, when Vincent complained of feeling "all run down" it was easy for him to get six weeks off, although, as I tell him, he has been getting "six weeks off" ever since he left Oxford, two years ago. He isn't 24 yet.

Nevertheless, Vincent is one of the best little chaps in the world. I don't mean that he is undersized, for he stands six feet two in his stockings; but is so good natured, so jolly and amiable and straight—well—just naturally nice, don't you know—that everybody is "just crazy about him," as the American girl I met last summer used to say, and all the men, young and old alike, have gotten to calling him "little Vincent" or "Freddy" from his Eton days, just by way of endearment. Of course, I'm much older than Vincent—to be more exact, there's a matter of 12 or 15 years between us—but I must say I can't help being drawn to him. I've known him ever since he was born, and then, you see, we're both Oxford men, belong to the same clubs, and, of course, Terhune is as old a name as Vincent, even if it hasn't any handle to it, and, if I do say it, there's never a dinner given in London town that Archibald Terhune is not invited. But, somehow, in this, my tenth season, I became utterly weary of the limelight, the dinners, the balls, the match-making mammas (for I am an "eligible bachelor"), and, most of all, the debutantes, with their educated smiles and cultivated stares. I felt that I must flee from London to escape, and thus, as Vincent is always ready for a holiday, we found ourselves one fine day well started on our journey. We had taken the noon train for Kingsbridge, and changing there were to go on to Cuppstone, which an artist friend of Vincent's had recommended to us as just the place we were looking for.

"Jolly lawk this," said Vincent, after we had been some time on our way; "only hope Cuppstone and Damer's farm will be what we want. Graham cracked it up to the skies."

"That's the trouble," I complained; "when a thing's talked up too much it's sure to disappoint one."

"Wait till you see it, old pessimist!" said Vincent, with a cheerful grin. "It's got cows which provide buttermilk and art, and I've got some lemons in my grip for the lemonade. The only thing that troubles me is the landlady's beautiful daughter. I'm afraid she'll be a minus quantity." Then he put his feet across on my side of the carriage and lit a nasty, smelly, old pipe. That's the worst of Vincent; he's so young he doesn't think how a thing like that may get on one's nerves. But I wouldn't hurt his feelings for anything, and so I had to let him smoke.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, when we had left the comfortable carriages of the main line for the ramshackle ones of the branch

line, we came to a sudden stop in the center of a big stretch of meadow land. A few miles away we could see the spires and roofs of a little village, and, what was more noticeable, a big castle, that stood on higher ground some distance above the town, but not far from where the train had stopped. I asked the guard what the trouble was, and he told me that something was wrong with the engine and it might be a couple of hours before we could go ahead.

Just as he finished his explanation Vincent, who had been looking out of the window with great interest, sprang to his feet and shook my shoulder excitedly. "Look there! Do you see them?" he cried, pointing at the beautiful meadows with their winding stream and gentle slopes.

"See what?" I demanded somewhat testily, adjusting my glasses and surveying the landscape without perceiving anything of unusual interest.

But Vincent, in a fever of haste, was kneeling and unstrapping his golf clubs. "Hooray," he cried, "Terhune, a golf course as I'm a sinner. Come on, we'll have some sport. The old train's due to wait an hour, anyhow."

I looked again, and, sure enough, I saw that at intervals the close-cropped grass was dotted with little red flags like sparks of fire on a carpet of green velvet. Vincent has many fads, but I think he is keener on golf than anything else. I was disgusted with him. "Vincent," I said with decision, "this is nonsense. You can wait till we get to Cuppstone to play golf. Graham said there were public links there."

"Yes, and he also said that it was the rottenest course he ever played over," said Vincent with some heat. "I made him admit it. And this one is a beauty. A private one, I'll wager. Look at that turf. It is just like velvet, my dear fellow—like velvet," and he swept a practiced eye over the wide green slopes.

Now, I am fond of the game myself within reason, and certainly the prospect was inviting, for I was tired of the confinement of the carriage and Vincent was most persuasive. I knew it was a foolish thing to do; the train might not stay so long as we expected



AGATHA FIRST.

and we might get left; and yet, as I say, it is hard to refuse Vincent anything. I unwillingly permitted him to get out my clubs.

"Whose links are these?" I asked the guard. "Do they belong to the castle?"

"Yessir," replied the guard. "They belong to Castle Wyckhoff, the family seat of Baron Wyckhoff. They're all dead now, though, all 'cept the Honorable Agatha, and she lives in the castle and owns all these acres, sir, all you can see," and the guard waved his hand grandiloquently toward the imposing old pile on the hillside and the green meadows stretching away far below it.

"She must have money," I said, reflectively. Vincent, meanwhile, was hunting in his grip for an atrocious red coat he wears when he golfs.

"Money?" repeated the guard. "Money? Lor' bless you, sir, she 'as millions an' millions. Her own father was Baron Wyckhoff, but 'e died when 'is darter were a little thing. 'E never 'ad a shilling, but 'er stepfather, that married Baroness Wyckhoff two years later, was 'American and 'ad more pounds than there is stones in that castle, sir, an' arter 'is wife died 'e 'ad the place built up again. An' now they're both dead, sir, and 'is stepdaughter, the Honorable Agatha, 'er title is, sir, is helress of all his millions and 'er mother's estate."

"She ought to marry," I said, still reflectively, and without any personal meaning.

The guard smiled knowingly. "There's many a one arter her, sir," he said; "but they don't seem to make no progress against 'er stepfather's will."

"Her stepfather's will?" I repeated, with interest. "Do you hear that, Vincent?"

he's playing golf. "Boosh!" he said; "I'd rather play on her links than see her. If she saw us she might put us off. I'll bet she's a crabbed old maid. I'm surprised at you, Terhune, with your romantic notions. I thought you'd left all that sort of thing behind you in London."

I felt myself reddening slightly, though I knew Vincent didn't mean anything, and was about to make some retort when he drove off unexpectedly, and I stopped in admiration of the clean, fast shot he made. It just cleared a natural bunker and sped on beyond.

At that instant a discordant mixture of sound burst upon our ears, as that of a dog yelping and a vigorous scolding in a high but sweet feminine voice. With one accord we rushed up the gentle rise, and in the depression beyond we beheld one of the handsomest girls I had ever seen in my life. She was bending over a setter puppy and scolding him. The dog's yelps had subsided to a whimper and he was holding up one of his paws as if he had been hurt. "I told you not to come, Rudolph," she was saying, "and I told you to keep out of the way, and I told you you'd get hurt if you didn't."

She was a tall girl, but beautifully proportioned, and wore no hat on her mass of dark hair. When we got nearer we saw that her eyes were big and black, her profile perfect, and her coloring delightful.

Vincent capitulated at once and I let him make his impression first. He's the younger and it always seems a shame not to give such a promising boy a chance.

"I beg your pardon," he said, advancing and baring his head, so that the gold in his brown hair caught the sunlight, "but would you tell me if these are private links and to whom they belong? I fear we are trespassing?" He said this just as if I hadn't told him all about it.

The girl turned to him uncertainly; then she smiled a wide, jolly smile of good fellowship. I knew she would—they all do that at Vincent.

"Was that your ball?" she said, not heeding his question. "I'm very sorry. It hit my dog."

Vincent was all concern in a moment. "What a shame," he said. "Did it hurt him?" and he knelt down to examine the dog's paw.

"Oh, no, Rudolph's all right," she answered; "but it spoiled your drive, and I'm sorry for that," and then she, too, knelt on the grass beside the dog.

I felt that it was time to step forward. "My dear young lady," I said—she couldn't have been more than 20, so I did not hesitate to address her thus—"My dear young lady, will you please tell us whether we are trespassing in using this court? To whom does it belong? You see, I had to pretend ignorance to get more information. I have many of the intuitions that go to make up a great detective, and I had a presentiment that this girl was none other than the Honorable Agatha Wyckhoff herself."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)  
"LEAVES THEIR TIME TO FALL."  
"Mr. Dooley's" Discourse as to the Everlasting Foe.

"Th' most per'ous iv human occupations are usually th' lowest paid. An' why is this so? Is it because we're not afraid iv death? Faith, no, but because we don't know anything about it. We don't appreciate it. If our simple minds cud grasp th' subject th' bravest man in th' wurld wud be found under th' bed sitting. It's there but it isn't there. It happens to iv'rybody but ye can't see it happen to ye'erself. Ye walk briskly up to it or maybe ye even run. Ye never see it till it's too late an' th' 'tis too late to recognize it. 'Tis no good runnin' away fr'm it. Manny a man dodgin' a throlley car has been run over by an' autyomobile. Ye hide fr'm th' lightning an' a mickraek lands ye. Ye avoid railroad trains an' boats an' scratch ye'er thumb with a carpet tack an' 'tis all over. Ye expect it fr'm wan side iv th' street an' it comes fr'm th' other. Ye think that must be it in th' block ahead an' ye make up ye'er mind to walk slow when it steps up behind ye, slaps ye on th' back an' says: 'Ye're wanted at headquarters. Ye'd better come along peaceable.' To which, havin' no further inthrest, ye make no reply. 'Tis th' fr't first time ye'd have an' understanding an' a fear iv death—if ye were alive. But ye are dead."—F. P. Dunne, in the American Magazine.

Dene-Holes in England.  
A large group of the singular excavations known as dene-holes was recently discovered in the forest between Woolwich and Erith. Their positions were indicated by cup-like depressions in the ground. Two of the holes have been explored. Each possesses a circular shaft about three feet in diameter, with holes in the sides, apparently intended for the support of ladders. The holes run down about 50 feet through earth, then pass through four or five feet of chalk, and expand into caverns 18 feet in height. Each cavern has six chambers, grouped radially round the bottom of the central shaft. This is the ordinary arrangement found in dene-holes, which have been thought by archeologists to be secret receptacles for the storage of grain used about the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, or earlier.

The Elusive Thought.  
A little girl who was trying to tell a friend how absent-minded her grandfather was, said: "He walks around thinking about nothing, and when he remembers it he then forgets that what he thought of was something entirely different from what he wanted to remember."

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### SAVAGE FLING AT AUDIENCE.

Inebriated Orator Resented Disapproval of His Condition.

"Like many a statesman of the past," said Senator Beveridge, "he drank too much. And one Fourth of July morning, on a platform hung with flags and flowers before the courthouse of a country town, facing an audience of farmers and their families that had come from miles around, the statesman arose to deliver the Independence day oration in a slightly intoxicated state.

"He was not incapable of an oration, but his unsteady gait, his flushed face and disordered attire spoke ill of him, and the audience hissed.

"He held up his hand. They were silent. Then he laughed scornfully and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, when a statesman of my prominence consents to appear in such a little, one-horse town as this, he must be either drunk or crazy. I prefer to be considered an inebriate."—Washington Star.

### Politeness.

It was the last day of the term in one of our public kindergartens. The children were all seated around the tables thoroughly enjoying the treat of ice cream which the teacher always provided on this occasion.

Glancing around the room at the beaming faces of the children, the kindergarten noticed one child pick up his plate and lick it.

She went up to him and said in a low tone of voice: "Freddie, put down your plate; it is not polite to pick it up and lick it."

Fred obeyed at once, quietly placing his plate on the table. He then put his head down to the plate and licked it.

### A Sensible Literary Chap.

"I'm not runnin' a ten-acre farm in connection with the literary business," says the Sweet Singer of southwest Georgia, "and so, the outlook is more cheerful. I hope to make enough cotton to have my poems published in a book and enough corn to feed the family while I'm waitin' for the public to buy the book. I also take contracts for the digging of wells, and these little side issues will enable me to show American literature just what I can do!"—Atlanta Constitution.

### HEALTH AND INCOME

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### What Women Have Done.

Mrs. M. F. Johnston of Richmond, Ind., gave an interesting account at the Boston biennial of the G. F. W. C. of the Art association of that city, which is ten years old. Five hundred dollars is appropriated each year for the purchase of a picture, and the council gives \$100 for the annual exhibition. The standard in pictures and crafts has changed, she says, and in the next few years much is expected that will give the children the opportunity of greater culture and knowledge of art.

#### A Sample?

"I found a hardwood splinter in this jam."

"Hum. I've often heard of these forest preserves."

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