



By DORNFORD YATES

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SYNOPSIS

John Spencer and his cousin, Geoffrey Bohun, are vacationing in Austria. Geoffrey is a gifted portrait painter but prefers to paint landscapes. Strolling in the forest, John hears voices and decides to investigate. From cover he finds four men burying a man in green livery who, evidently, had been murdered. Pharaoh is the leader of the gang; the others are Dewdrop, Rush and Bugle. Unfortunately, John makes himself known to the assassins by dropping a letter with his name and address. He tells Geoffrey and his chauffeur, Barley, of his adventure. Geoffrey, realizing that John's life is in danger, declares he must vanish. Spencer discovers that the livery of the murdered man corresponds to the livery of the servants of York castle, and tells Countess Helena, mistress of the castle, what he had seen. With Geoffrey and Barley, John starts for Annabel, a nearby village. They encounter Pharaoh. In making their getaway they exchange shots with the gang, without serious result. They arrive at the York castle, where Lady Helena had requested John and his cousin to meet her. She reveals that her father had converted his immense fortune into gold and hidden it in a secret vault in the castle. Knowing that his son, Valentine, Helena's brother, was incapable of controlling the fortune, she had revealed it to Helena alone just before his death. The news leaked out, and Pharaoh is after the treasure. They planned that Geoffrey and Barley would go to Salzburg to watch for Pharaoh, while John was to remain at Plumage. Several nights go by without important incident. John visits York castle and finds that Helena's brother, Count Valentine, is there and with him, on most friendly terms, is Pharaoh as Captain Fanning. Hearing that John is stopping at Plumage, Pharaoh speaks to his servant, Dewdrop. John suspects a plot. As dinner is announced, Helena and John escape, pursued by Pharaoh's men, encountering many difficulties, and finally arrive at a forester's cottage. Freda, their hostess, gets petrol for their car and then goes to Salzburg to get word to Geoffrey. John finds their car gone. He declares his love for Helena.

CHAPTER V—Continued

Helena rose to her feet. "This comes," she said, "of putting me up on a dais. I never was up on a dais, where you were concerned. If you stand up, you'll find that I have to look up—to see myself in your eyes." I stood up, trembling. "Nell," I set my hands on her shoulders and looked her full in the eyes. "That day we lunched at York. Florin looked at you, and you nodded and looked away. Was he... asking you... if you loved me?" She met my gaze squarely. "He was asking me if I was to be your wife." "And you..." My brain was reeling. "I told him what I hoped was the truth." As I drew her into my arms, her hands went up to my hair.

CHAPTER VI

Eavesdropping.

TWENTY-FOUR hours had gone by—and something was seriously wrong. We had passed the day in a happiness such as, I think, is given to very few, but now the sun was sinking, yet Geoffrey had not appeared. That the forester's wife might be late had never entered our heads. We were up betimes the next morning and were ready and waiting for Freda at a quarter to eight. We might have spared our energy, for eight o'clock went by, yet she did not come. Bad news is trying enough; but when the absence of news is so prolonged that only a fool would continue to hope against hope, it is, I think, a stout heart that will feel no alarm. There was no longer any doubt in our minds. Somehow or other Pharaoh had put a spoke in our wheel. At 11 o'clock that Thursday I led the way into the kitchen, took my seat at the table and opened the map. "I must leave you, Nell," I said quietly. "There's no other way." Helena nodded, and a hand went up to her head. "What will you do, John?" "I must get a lift at Witchcraft and hire a car where I can." I considered the map. "I should think I'd get one to Salzborg. From there I must drive to Salzburg for all I'm worth." I drew some paper towards me and started to make some notes. An exclamation from Helena snapped the sentence in two. I looked up sharply. There was horror in her beautiful eyes—and these were far on

the paper on which I was making my notes.

"What is it, Nell?" I cried, rising. She clapped her hands to her face.

"Oh, John," she wailed, "that paper..."

For an instant I stared at the sheet—one of a cheap, gray packet.

"Listen, John. I think that paper has told me why Geoffrey isn't here. You wrote to him in pencil, the pencil was blunt and you pressed." She pointed a trembling finger. "There on that sheet's the impression of what you wrote."

This was true.

"Do you remember our last patrol—how, when we parted, I offered to wire to your cousin? And you said yes, and I did. But I wrote out the wire on a pad of writing-paper—and the pencil was blunt."

"You mean..."

"The pad was on the library table. If Pharaoh saw it and read it, it gave him your cousin's address. Supposing he wired the next morning, while we were talking to Freda, here in this room..."

"Supposing he wired, as I did, using your name..."

"Supposing he said, Return..."

"One moment," I said. "I must think."

I thought very fast.

Hypothesis or no, here was a good explanation of my cousin's failure to come.

"I must go at once," I said, and picked up the map.

"To Plumage, John?"

I nodded.

"I must get a car somehow and drive there as fast as I can. I can hide the car near the high road and go through the woods to the farm. There's not an instant to lose—we're three days late."

Together we studied the map. I glanced at my watch.

"With average luck," said I, "I ought to be there not later than six."

"And then," said Helena quietly.

"My sweet, I don't know. I've got to find out something and to act on what I find out. And now for you. You mustn't stay in the cottage; you must spend the day in the forest and keep out of sight. And I'll come back, my darling, as soon as ever I can."

Two minutes later I was treading the path to Witchcraft.

At half-past six that evening I made the woods behind Plumage, and five minutes later I was lying just clear of their foliage, surveying the back of the farm. I must go no closer until it was dark.

That Bugle and Rush were at Plumage I had no doubt; leave the woods, therefore, I dared not, while it was day.

From where I now lay there was nothing at all to observe. I therefore re-entered the woods and cautiously moved round their fringe.

I was now not far from the lane which led up to the farm, and for one who was content to observe I could not have been better placed. So I picked a spot in the bushes and settled down to observe.

It was forty minutes later that Bugle came out of the house.

I think that he had been sleeping, for he yawned and stretched and looked about him. Then he took his seat on a bench by the side of the door and a servant brought out a tankard and set it down by his side.

One thing, at least, was now clear—if I would have news of my cousin, I should have to do more than observe. If I could find the good wife and hear what she had to tell. The danger, of course, was that I should encounter some servant. I could trust the farmer's wife, but if Pharaoh had given them orders, I could not trust the servants to disobey.

It was eight o'clock and the light was beginning to fall when I heard the sigh of the Rolls on the road of approach.

A moment later the car swept over the bridge, and Bugle laid down his pipe and got to his feet.

I saw that Dewdrop was driving and that Pharaoh sat by his side.

Pharaoh stayed but two minutes. For that time he spoke to Bugle, who listened with evident interest to what he said. Then he nodded to Dewdrop, who instantly let in his clutch. Bugle stood watching (ill Pharaoh was out of sight, then he turned on his heel and went into the house.

And that was all.

As I made my way back to the foot-bridge, I tried my best to believe that the visit which I had just witnessed was Pharaoh's evening call. He had...

country for news of my lady and me and was now returning to York with empty hands. And yet... Pharaoh's manner had been urgent. He had not wasted a moment and the Rolls had not carried much dust. He might have been setting out, and not coming in—setting out on some sudden quest. I decided one thing out of hand. That was to learn, if I could, what Pharaoh had said.

If this was of any importance, Bugle was pretty sure to discuss it with Rush, and if I could hear them talking, as once before—

I heard the sound of a car. This seemed to come from the farm. I heard the engine started and as I stood still, listening, I heard her move off in low gear. Bugle or Rush was withdrawing their car from the coach-house and driving her on to the apron, ready for use.

At this I swore under my breath, for if Bugle and Rush were about to go off on some errand, my object must be defeated and most of my labor lost. I might be able to speak with the farmer's wife, but that she would have news of my cousin was none too sure.

I hastened on desperately. . . . From the verge of the meadows I regarded the back of the house. The light, I have said, was failing, but dusk would not come in for another half hour. Two minutes later I was flat against the trunk of a lime that was standing 12 feet from the window of what had been my bedroom four days before.

Now to enter the house was easy, for all the windows were open and none of the shutters were shut.

One of the lower windows belonged to the primitive bathroom which Geoffrey and I had used, and since this was sure to be empty at this time of day, here was as safe an entry as the faintest of hearts could desire.

I whipped from the lime to the window and swung myself over the sill.

I made bold to open my door, which gave to the hall.

As I did so another door was opened—the door of the sitting-room.

"An' shut the shutters," growled Rush. "Can you understand that? Furmy, you fool."

The man-servant answered something and closed the door. Then I

"Yes, an' wot is comin'?" said Rush. "That's wot I want to know. I judge a man by results. Three weeks tomorrow we've been here, an' wot's your Napoleon done? I'll tell you!" Bugle groaned. "In the first place he's been beat by a girl an' a groom. He knew they was comin', an' he knew they was carryin' gold; an' they got away. An' wot else has he done—that counts? He's let us all in for murder—that's wot he's done. As long as young Arthur walks, there's a rope round each of our necks."

"He won't walk long," said Bugle.

"Says you," cried Bush. "Why we don't even know where he is. Nor the girl. Nor Bohun. But we know where that groom is all right—an' so do they."

"You make me sick," said Bugle. "You know just as well as me our luck's been rank. Did you expect that wot'd pick up a quarter if a million by takin' a week-end trip?"

"In course I didn't," said Rush. "Wot I says is this. Up to date Pharaoh's failed. Dress it up 'ow you like, he's lost every game."

For the next 20 minutes or so they wrangled much as before.

At length Bugle got to his feet and crossed to the car. I watched him start the engine and switch on his lights. Bugle drove the car slowly forward, as though to go down to the bridge. Then he brought her to rest and got out, leaving his engine running and both of his headlights on.

As he sat down again below me, I understood his action and saw why the car was there.

The stone bridge was bathed in brilliance. No one could possibly cross it without being seen.

"Ten minutes more," Rush announced, "an' I'm goin' off. I've ad enough 'o' late nights. When I've nothin' to do, I like to do it in bed."

"I should keep your boots on," said Bugle. "He's comin' back."

There was a moment's silence. Then—"What?" screamed Rush. "Comin' back?"

"That's wot I said," said Bugle. "Wot for?"

With studied deliberation Bugle lighted his pipe.

"Dewdrop's back," he said. "Where from?" said Rush. "I didn't know he was gone."

"Of course you didn't," said Bugle. "When Bohun never showed up, you'd have dropped that line. But that isn't Pharaoh. That wire didn't bring Bohun 'ere, but it fetched 'im out of his digs." He paused to exhale luxuriously. "Dewdrop's back from Salzburg—with a letter young Arthur's wrote."

"Wot, not sayin' where he is?"

"An' the Duchess of Sheba," said Bugle. "Pharaoh's gone off this evenin' to rope the two of them in."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Nest of Bubbles

One of the strangest nests made by fish is that of the Paradise fish, for it is made of bubbles. The male collects a few small pieces of waterweed and binds them together with hosts of bubbles which he blows from his mouth. These fish are beautifully colored, being striped with red, gold, and green, and for this reason are sometimes called Rainbow fish.—Tit-Bits Magazine.



Driving Her on the Apron Ready for Use.

he set his tray on a table that stood in the hall and stepped and opened the door immediately opposite mine.

His intention was plain; he was going to close the shutters of every room.

In a flash I was at my window and was pulling to its shutters and shutting the twilight out.

I had no time to close the case-ment itself. As the servant pushed open my door, I took my stand behind it.

When he found the room dark, he let out a grunt of surprise. For an instant he hung on the threshold, then he turned back to the passage and closed the door.

As his steps died away, I turned the handle once more. . . . It was half past eight now, and the hall was dim.

I could hear no sound of talking, but I knew that Rush was yet in the sitting-room.

Then Bugle, pacing the apron, strolled into and out of my view.

Rush was moving—I heard the scrape of his chair as he thrust it back. An instant later he made his way out of the house.

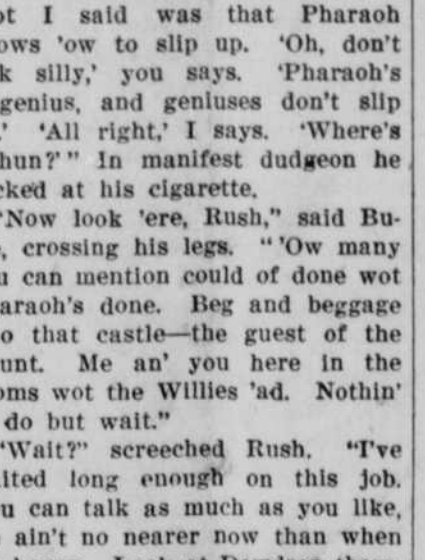
I heard him say something to Bugle and I saw him turn to the right.

As neither reappeared or started the car, it looked very much as though they were sitting down on the bench to the right of the steps. If I was right, then a man at the sitting-room window would be above and behind them and able, if they were talking, to overhear every word. Fate that had used me so rudely, played into my hands.

"Yes, I know that bit," said Rush. "I've heard it before. But if he's such a marvel, where's Bohun gone? Bohun was bound to be here on Monday night. 'Cos why? 'Cos Pharaoh'd wired him—'cos Pharaoh desired 'is presence. Well, that's three days ago, an' he ain't here yet."

Crocheted Potholders in a Lantern Design

By GRANDMOTHER CLARK



Potholders are necessary in every kitchen so why not make them attractive when you do make them? These potholders are crocheted with heavy string crochet cotton forming Jap lanterns and in colors red, green, yellow. The design is the same on all three but the colors are reversed, giving a very attractive and pleasing effect. The finished holders measure 6 inches each. No padding is required if made with heavy cotton. The instructions for making this set, No. 752, will be mailed to you for 10 cents. Instructions with material will be mailed for 40 cents.

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Pension Plan for Employees Announced by Wrigley Co.

Recognizing the advantage and fairness of social security to workers and being in favor of an old age pension plan, the Wm. Wrigley Jr. company, has announced a pension plan, for its employees, effective at once. More than 1,300 employees are affected by the move.

Under the Wrigley plan the company and employees contribute for future service pension on a fifty-fifty basis. The plan provides for employees to be retired at the age of sixty-five.

Law of Progress

Progress invented the great loom, banished the spinning wheel, and the same law of progress has made the woman of today a different woman from her grandmother—both the best of their time.

Killing of White Rhino Highly Arouses Natives

Illegal killing of a white rhinoceros, one of the rarest species of animals in the world, in Mahlabatini has aroused all that part of South Africa and an extensive hunt for the culprits started as soon as officials were informed. The killing, for which natives are believed to be responsible, has caused considerable official interest, because of the recent killing of numbers of game, including hippopotami. It is believed that the rhino, which was one of a comparatively small herd of less than 200, was shot at close range, and that the poachers were disturbed at their work. As soon as the killing was known steps were taken to preserve the carcass which is valuable.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Balboa, Pacific Discoverer, Was Beheaded at Age of 42

Balboa, the man who discovered the Pacific, was beheaded in Darien, in the southern part of Panama, when he was only forty-two years old. He had been accused of trying to make off with several ships in an effort to reach the riches of Peru. Pizarro, a soldier at the time, made the arrest and later accomplished what Balboa had barely started.

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