



SYNOPSIS

John Spencer and his cousin, Geoffrey Bohun, are vacationing in Austria. Geoffrey is a gifted portrait painter but prefers to paint landscapes. While strolling in the forest, John hears English voices and decides to investigate. From a safe 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 on it. 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 Yorick 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 Yorick estate, where Lady Helena had requested John and his cousin to meet her. She reveals to them what the gang is after. Her father had converted his immense fortune into gold sovereigns and hidden them away in a secret vault in the castle. Knowing that his son, Valentine, Helena's brother, was incapable of controlling so large a fortune, he had revealed it to Helena alone just before his death. In some manner, 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 and no word from Geoffrey.

CHAPTER III—Continued

Then I washed my hands and sat down to write to my cousin; but he never had his letter, for before I had written a page the farmer's wife came smiling to serve my tea. That evening I strolled in the meadows, until it was time to change, and I shall always remember the stillness that hung like a mantle about the meadows and woods, a calm that was unreal.

When I rode into sight of Yorick, I saw that a flag had been hoisted on one of the towers. I could not see the device, for the breeze had fallen to nothing, and the bunting was lying lifeless against the staff. No flag had been flying on Tuesday, when Geoffrey and I had visited Yorick for lunch, but I supposed that today was some festival which it was the custom to honor throughout the land.

My supposition was wrong. As I was ushered into the library, Helena rose from a table and took my hand.

"My brother's arrived," she said. "He's only been here twenty minutes, and he's brought a friend with him."

I took my seat beside her on a sofa.

"John," she continued. "I ought to have told you before, but I thought that he'd give me more notice. I'd only time to send the car to the station to meet his train."

Remembering what she had told me of other guests—

"And his friend?" said I.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, the usual sort, I suppose. I haven't even seen him. Never mind. The point is this, Valentine must know nothing of what is afoot. He doesn't know of the gold, and he mustn't know. He mustn't know about young Florin, except that he's dead. I've told him I've lent you Plumage—you and your cousin, of course. But what makes things difficult is this: He is the Count of Yorick, and, as such, when he's here in the castle he has absolute say. I simply do not count. My father did what he could. He left me 'the contents of the castle' and everything else that he had, except the estate. He hadn't the power to leave that away from his son and heir. And so I've a definite hold on Valentine—which he most deeply resents. But sometimes when he is here the knowledge that he is all-powerful goes to his head."

"I'm bound to tell you all this. He'll probably be quite all right; but if he should show off this evening you'll understand."

"I'll be very careful," I said. Then we talked of other things and wondered how Geoffrey and Barley were getting on and whether Rush and Bugle would give us our chance tonight. There seemed to be no reason for cancelling the plans we had made.

It was twenty minutes to nine when we heard a burst of laughter, and the library doors were opened by the servant that stood without.

Then the Count came in, still laughing, with his arm about Pharaoh's shoulders and a challenging look in his eye.

CHAPTER IV

Flight.

HOW Helena knew that it was Pharaoh, I cannot tell. She knew him the instant she saw his face, for I felt her stiffen beside me before she got to her feet.

The Count of Yorick was speaking.

"Helena, this is Captain Fanning." Pharaoh came to her quickly and took her hand. As he looked into her eyes, he spoke very low.

"What a good thing I missed Mr. Spencer. Had I hit him, I should have discarded my ace of trumps."

Before she could answer, he laid his left hand on my arm.

"Mr. Spencer and I," he said, turning, "have met before. In fact, I left his cousin at Salzburg—in excellent health. He was very busy when I saw him. I think he was seeking some subject. . . . I find all his work delightful—he takes such pains."

I stood like some convict, listening to the formality of judgment and finding the grave occasion a hideous dream. I know that Helena introduced me and that I shook hands with the Count—a very good-looking boy, with an overbearing manner and the signs of drink in his face. And I know that while Pharaoh was speaking, he kept a hand under his jacket upon his hip.

All the time my brain was rampant, darting hither and thither.

In a flash we had been confounded. My cousin and Barley were in the castle, the guest of the Count. And Dewdrop was here as his servant, and Bugle and Rush were at hand. Though the castle was full of servants, the Countess was powerless as long as her brother was there; besides my life was forfeit, if Helena lifted a hand.

"My sister tells me you're at Plumage," said the Count. "I hope you've got all you want. I was there to shake off measles and I've never liked the place since."

Before I could answer—

"Where's Plumage?" said Pharaoh, quietly.

The Count told him exactly, whilst I stood dumb.

"Very attractive," said Pharaoh, and tossed his cocktail off. "May I speak to my servant a minute?"

The fellow's audacity shook me. For some reason I did not fear him, but his monstrous impertinence hit me over the heart.

His intention was clear. While we dined Dewdrop would seek Rush and Bugle, and the two would be waiting at Plumage when I returned.

And Helena and I could do nothing.

I heard the Count send for "Captain Fanning's servant." Before he arrived, however, the doors were opened again and a butler entered the room.

"My lady is served."

As we passed through the hall, the curtains of an archway were parted and Dewdrop appeared.

Helena saw him, as I did, and quickened her pace.

My lady and I were within the dining room. Except for the servants we had the room to ourselves.

I heard her speak to the butler.

"Ask the Count to begin," she said. Then she turned to me.

"Come," she breathed.

In a flash she was out on the ramparts, with me behind. There she turned to the left and ran like the wind.

The door of a tower was open, and Helena whipped inside. She fled upstairs and into the pleasant bedroom I ever saw. As I followed her in, she pressed a key into my hand.

"There's a door behind that curtain."

While I was unlocking this, she twitched a coat from a cupboard.

"Have you money, John?"

"About fifty pounds."

"Good."

Then she threw one look around and slipped out of the room.

"Lock it behind us, John."

A short stone stairway brought us into a little hall which was very dimly lighted and was shut by three massive doors.

"The right-hand one," said Helena. "Quick. That's a master key."

We were encountering a winding flight of steps. At the foot of this flight we came to another door, but I could not see to unlock it, so Helena took the key.

And then we were out in some passage and there on our right was a postern that gave to the outside world. But Helena turned instead to a very much smaller door, sunk deep in the wall.

Helena's fingers were shaking, as she fitted the master key.

An instant later the door was locked behind us and we were in the dark.

Helena was trembling. I put my arm about her and held her close. "Reaction," she murmured. "I'll be all right directly. You see, we're safe for the moment. I—I'd like to sit down."

With my arm about her, we sat ourselves down on a step.

"Listen, John. We couldn't have crossed the drawbridge without being seen. And that would have been ruin. . . . But now we've just disappeared. The doors that were open are open, and the doors that were locked are locked. But we have vanished. This stairway leads to a grating in the wall of the moat. It's just above the water. Directly below it, under the water, and, therefore, out of sight, is a footbridge of stone. That leads across the moat to another grating set in the opposite wall. The gratings are barred—not locked, and each of them's barred on this side. The farther grating admits to an old brick tunnel that will lead us under the meadows and into the woods." She got to her feet. "And now we must go. We've not a moment to lose. The ramparts don't overlook this part of the moat, and we simply must get to Plumage before Bugle and Rush."

Carefully we descended the stair, which was very damp.

The water was cold and the iron of the gratings was rusted and very harsh, but the footbridge gave good foothold. Since the water came up to my loins, I made Helena lie across my shoulders and carried her over like that.

As I sat her on her feet in the tunnel, I heard the Count calling her name.

"Helena! Helena!"

I hauled myself out of the water to stand by her side.

"Helena, where are you?"

Gently I closed the grating.

Again the Count lifted his voice. "Fanning!" he bawled. "Fanning!"

Helena touched my arm.

"I could tell him where Fanning is. He's gone to the bridge. Nobody knows of this exit, but Florin and me."

The tunnel seemed without end. It was dark and damp and noisome and ran uphill, and I was more than thankful when after five or six minutes I saw the faint light

of the evening and found the air more fresh. The mouth of the tunnel was masked by a riot of undergrowth, but when we were clear of this screen, I saw at once that we stood due north of the castle.

"And now for Axel," said Helena. "Now Sabre, I hope. When he can't find me, he'll remember the last two nights and come to the Plumage ride."

It was now ten minutes past nine, and dusk had come in. We had, therefore, no fear of skirting the edge of the forest, for the going was better in the meadows and we were at least half a mile from where Axel would be.

We pushed on breathlessly.

We had covered half the distance when Helena caught my arm and stopped in her tracks.

Somebody was whistling—not very far away.

Then we heard Pharaoh's voice. "Good dog," he cried. "Good dog."

The man was out in the meadows, somewhere between the bridge and the Plumage ride.

In a flash I saw what had happened.

Sabre had left the castle, and Pharaoh had seen him go. The porter, no doubt, had told him that that was the Countess's dog, and the fellow had guessed in an instant that Sabre's instinct was leading him to his mistress, wherever she was. And so he had followed Sabre, but had lost him because it was dark.

"Come on," said I. "Now that he's lost Sabre, he hasn't a chance."

"If he hears the horses," breathed Helena.

We were nearly there now, but when Pharaoh whistled again, he was not so far as before.

As we stumbled into the ride, I found the dog paddling beside us.

He may have been there for five minutes for all I know. And there was Axel waiting, ten minutes before his time.

"Good dog," cried Pharaoh.

I judged the man to be fifty paces away.

In a flash I had Helena up on the lively gray.

As she stooped to whisper to Axel, I turned to the other horse, but, perhaps because he was startled, he would not stand. As I swung myself up, he backed sideways against the gray, and before I could find my right stirrup, his dangling iron had clashed with that of Helena, making a ringing sound.

The whistle which Pharaoh was letting suddenly stopped.

I heard the man running towards us as we turned the horses about.

And then we were both sitting down and riding hard for Plumage.

Pharaoh would run to the castle, find the Count and induce him to order a car; and we had to ride to Plumage and drive from there to the high road before that car could reach the mouth of the private lane.

As we came to the apron—"I'll take the horses," said Helena. "You go and get your things."

As she caught my bridle, I flung myself off the bay.

In my bedroom I wasted no time, but snatched up a razor and seized the first clothes I found; yet, ere I was back the horses were fast in the stables and Helena was returning to take her seat in the Rolls.

Thirty seconds later the Rolls slid over the bridge.

I had often read and heard speak of "an agony of apprehension," but never until that evening, when our headlights sent darkness packing out of that lovely lane, had I understood that terrible state of mind.

Then all at once the truth stood clear before me, and something more sinister than fear took hold of my heart.

The lane was no lane, but a trap—full two miles long. Once we were in, we could no more turn the Rolls round than a man that was buried could turn himself round in his grave.

If only we had stuck to the horses and ridden away across country to take some train. . . .

I set my teeth; and we took the rise before us with the rush of a lift.

As the Rolls swept over the crest, for an instant I lifted my foot—and then in a flash all my suspense was over and its grip was torn from my heart.

Two miles ahead a car had turned into the lane.

Helena caught my arm.

"That's the Carlotta. I know it. What can we do?"

For some extraordinary reason my senses were now as lively as they had been lately dull. I knew no hesitation; my confidence was sublime.

"We back," I said quietly. "What a mercy we hadn't got further. As it is, we've plenty of time. They can't do a mile a minute along this lane."

"But, John—"

I patted her blessed hand.

"Don't worry, my dear. It's all right."

Two minutes later I backed her over the bridge.

"Can you see their headlights?" I asked.

"Not yet."

I began to swing around to the right, leaving the roadway and backing onto the turf. When I had gone thirty paces, I threw out the clutch.

At once we heard the Carlotta and a moment later we saw the glow of her lights.

The two of us sat in silence, listening and watching, while Pharaoh "came down like the wolf on the fold."

I do not think we were excited—the danger was past. We now were simply waiting for a car to get out of our way.

And so she did.

Well clear of the beam of her headlights, we watched her sweep down the slope and over the bridge; and as she went by to the apron, I let the Rolls leap forward and take her place on the road.

I do not think that they saw us, for their eyes, of course, were looking the opposite way; but in any event the start which we had was deadly, for they must turn the Carlotta and we had the faster car.

As we floated in silence, I touched my companion's sleeve.

"And now where?" said I.

"We'll go to my nurse at Pomers. Her husband's a farmer there, and they'll see us through. And we'll wire to your cousin to join us and start from there."

We had the ways all to ourselves, and, indeed, I believe that we were the only beings awake in that countryside. Twice we sang through a village. So for some 35 miles.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Five Ports

The Cinque, or Five Ports, are a group of towns in Sussex and Kent which formerly enjoyed certain valuable privileges in exchange for providing help to beat back possible enemies attempting to land on the English coast. They were Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandgate. Afterwards Winchelsea and Rye were added.

GOLDEN PHANTOMS

Fascinating Tales of Lost Mines

by Editha L. Watson © W.N.U.

CATHEDRAL LOOT

IN THE shadow of Mount Taylor, near the old road house and stage station on the Butterfields Central Overland route, a treasure is hidden.

The old stage route dates back still farther, to the days when Old Mexico and New Mexico were one.

Don Gonzales was a Mexican. He came north to live, and he built an adobe house near what is now Bluewater. Here he settled down, raised sheep, and made friends with the Indians.

Just before the Don came up into that country, there had been trouble in the south. One of the great cathedrals had been looted and bandits were abroad. The story traveled a little more slowly than the Don did, but it reached his neighborhood after a while, and it, too, settled down. It was said that Don Gonzales had the loot from the church.

No one saw it, but rumor persisted that it was somewhere around that adobe ranchhouse.

The Don finally died, and those who lived nearby would doubtless have investigated, but Apaches swept down and across the land, and everyone was too busy with the invading hordes to hunt for treasure.

It was in 1898 that a certain rancher came into the country to live, and he rode over to the old Gonzales place one day. He went into the adobe house out of curiosity, for there is always something attractive about an old ruin of the sort, and began looking about him. The fireplace was choked with debris, and rags hung down from the chimney.

Why he pulled at the rags, the rancher probably could not have told. Why does one aimlessly pull at such things? He was no doubt prepared for a slide of dusty debris, but certainly he did not expect what he found—an oil painting rolled up and hidden in the apparently solid wall!

The rancher's appreciation of art was not great. The painting was a curiosity to him, and nothing more. Accordingly he sold it to an Indian trader for a few dollars, and the trader, not much better informed, passed it on to an El Paso dealer for a few dollars.

The El Paso man, however, knew that he had a valuable picture in his hands. He sent it to New York, where it was found to be a masterpiece of religious painting, a product of the golden age of Spanish art, and it finally was sold to a wealthy man for his private collection, bringing a price of \$40,000.

Rumor again flew to Bluewater. Treasure hunters, convinced anew that the church treasure was concealed in or near the old adobe ranch house, traveled from near and far to search for it.

But the painting was all that has ever been found, and the lost loot of the Mexican cathedral still stays hidden beyond the sight of man.

There is other hidden treasure of the same sort in Arizona. Once in a while some fortunate person accidentally finds some of it, to prove that it really exists. For instance:

Joe Walsey, a cowboy, was riding after stray cattle on the Box X ranch in Graham county, Arizona, in 1907. He happened to notice a dead tree propped up by four large rocks, with a shovel handle protruding from the trunk of the tree.

Walsey dug below this monument, and found an iron chest containing old Spanish coins, worth \$40,000, and gold vessels whose value could not be estimated on account of their exquisite workmanship.

DESERT GOLD

AT SIX-MILE station in the California desert, in the year 1894, a prospector was found, old, tired, and crazed from thirst. His name was Golden, and he carried with him three large nuggets, whose price has been fixed at the odd sum of \$3,654. Borax wagon teamsters, who discovered the old man, took him to Mohave, and here he was nursed back to a semblance of health.

After Golder recovered somewhat, he tried to draw a map of the location where he had found the ore. He had been out of water for three days, he said, and his burros could go no farther, so he turned them loose. He had climbed a hill, had seen some trees about five miles away, and on descending the mountain in their direction he had found a gravel bed full of nuggets.

Searchers went out to find this new location, guided by his story. They found his burros, dead from heat and thirst. They found the hill he described, too, twenty-five miles from the nearest water at Red Rock. But no trees were visible from its summit, and no gold lay at its foot. Golder had wandered in mind as well as body, and the place where he found his precious handful of gold has never been discovered.

Glittery Buttons Add Luxury Touch

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Do you need a young, soft-line frock for happy social hours? Here's one that's extremely easy to make. Note the casual spacing of glittery metal, or sparkling crystal buttons at the deep yoke, where a shirred sleeve-top cuts in unexpectedly; buttons again trim cuffs and back closing. Definitely "new-season" from its snug, rolled collar to smartly gored skirt, it's best in sleek satin, or soft crepe.

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40 Famous "First Editions"

Are Found to Be Forgeries

The European book-collecting world received a shock recently when about 40 famous "first editions," which have been accepted as genuine in all standard bibliographies for 50 years, were found to be forgeries.

In most of them, either the paper or the type or both did not exist at the time the books were supposed to have been printed. And in some cases the text was taken from revised editions.—Collier's.

Smiles

Daily Dialogue

Dierdre—Women do not cry at weddings any more.

Aspasia—That makes the bridegroom feel better. Those tears always seemed to accuse him.

Bill Rendered

Kindly Old Man—And you say your name is Bill, son? Why were you named that?

Boy—Because my father said I came on the first of the month.

Water Helps

The nice old gentleman stopped to talk to the wee girl who was making mud pies on the sidewalk.

"My goodness," he exclaimed, "you're pretty dirty, aren't you?" "Yes," she replied, "but I'm prettier clean."



OF INTEREST TO THE HOUSEWIFE

Ferns grow and thrive in suspended window baskets if soil is kept moist and not allowed to dry out.

Keep a roll of glued paper and a ball of twine in your kitchen to use when tying and labeling bundles.

After removing fudge from the stove, add half a teaspoon of baking powder. It makes it fluffy.

To soften hardened putty, place in boiling water and allow to stand until water cools.

Do not keep cyclamens in too warm a room. Too much heat causes the blossoms to lose their firmness. Keep soil about the roots quite damp.

A pail of sand should always be kept near the furnace in the cellar. Should a spark from the furnace start a blaze it may be quickly extinguished with the sand.

Adhesive tape may be quickly and painlessly removed from the skin if softened with benzine. Saturate a sponge with benzine and wash tape with it.

Place a loaf of cake as near the center of oven as possible. If placed close to the firebox one side of cake will rise higher than the other and is likely to burn.

Chilling makes rolled cookie dough firm and easy to roll without the addition of extra flour.

Strips of orange peel coated with melted dipping chocolate are delicious.