

The Girl and the Bill

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS



CHAPTER XII.

Power of Darkness.

To Orme the next half hour was very long. He seated himself upon the floor of the closet and ate the sandwich which the clairvoyant had brought him. Occasionally he could hear her moving about the apartment.

"Poor charlatan!" he thought. "She is herself a 'good sort.' I suppose she excuses the sham of her profession on the ground that it deceives many persons into happiness."

He struck another match and looked again at the ghostly paraphernalia about him. Near him hung a black robe with a large hood. He crushed one of the folds in his hands and was surprised to discover how thin it was and into how small space it could be compressed. Not far away stood several pairs of large slippers of soft black felt. The white robes were also of thinnest gossamer—flimsy stuff that swayed like smoke when he breathed toward it.

By the light of a third match he looked more carefully at the other apparatus. There was a large pair of angel-wings, of the conventional shape. The assortment of masks was sufficiently varied for the representation of many types of men and women of different ages.

The match burned down to his fingers, and again he sat in darkness, wondering at the elaborateness of the medium's outfit. She was a fraud, but he liked her—yes, pitied her—and he felt inclined to excuse her in so far as he could. For the kiss which he had given her he felt no regret; it was hers, in all innocence, for what of good she might have found in it.

The minutes dragged by. He thought of the precious documents, safe in the inside pocket of his coat. What they were, he did not try to determine, but it was plain that they must be of international importance. The talk of ships and Alcatraz's references to commissions had puzzled him. But suddenly came to his mind the newspaper rumors that Japan was secretly adding vessels to her navy through the agency of a South American republic which was having cruisers and battleships built in Europe, to turn them over at their completion, to the Japanese. There was, as yet, no international proof of this policy, for none of the ships had been completed, but the South American country was certainly adopting a policy of naval construction quite out of proportion to her position among the powers.

How came the girl to be involved in this mix-up of nations? Through her father, of course—but who was he? A concessionaire? Her courage and determination, employed against shrewd men, was as notable as the beauty of her face and mind for she was like a queen in her assured comprehension.

How it quickened his heart to think of her! The poor, faded medium, with the smolder of old flames in her eyes, with the records of hard experience written on her face, was a child in stature beside the girl—a child with yearnings that could never be satisfied.

Well, the girl had doubted him. He could not wonder at that, for the facts were all against him, and she had known him only a few hours. Yet he had hoped—had believed—that she would know the truth and the devotion in him without further evidence. Perhaps he had expected too much from her noble insight. After all—and that was part of the loveliness of her—she was a very human girl.

The panel swung open, and Madam Alla stood looking down at him. She spoke in an undertone.

"The Japs are still watching. Arima is sitting on the fire escape by his window, and I can hear the other fellow moving around in the hall outside my door. I think they're on to your being here."

Orme thought for a minute. "I've got to get away soon," he said. "I don't mind telling you that there are papers that must be delivered before twelve o'clock tonight."

"Can I take them for you?" "I don't know where to tell you to take them."

She sighed. "I guess you don't trust me." "Trust you? Of course, I do. But the truth is, Madam Alla, that it is going to need hard work on my part to find the person to whom the papers belong. I don't even know his name." Secretly he condemned himself now, because he had not overcome his scruples and looked at the address on the envelope while he had the chance.

Again she sighed. "Well," she said, "of course, it's beyond me. Do you—do you mind my knowing your name?" "Pardon me," he said. "I didn't realize that you didn't know it already. My name is Robert Orme."

She looked at him with a smile. "Well, Mr. Orme, I'll eat you out of

this. I think I know a way. But you'll have to do just what I tell you. "I depend on you," he said.

She laid her hand on his shoulder with a friendly pressure. "You'll have to wait here a while longer—and you'll have to keep mighty quiet. I've got a circle at three o'clock—a seance. They come once a week, and I can't well put them off. You see, I work alone. It's a small circle, and I never liked the idea of helpers—they're likely to give you away sooner or later. I stretch a curtain across this corner for a cabinet, and they tie me to a chair—and then things happen." She smiled faintly. "I know you won't hurt my game."

"All your secrets are safe with me." He glanced at the dark interior of the closet.

"I didn't know any other place to put you," she said simply. "They'd have got you, if you had went to the hall—Sh-h!" The panel closed and she was away. A moment later he



"Do You—Do You Mind My Knowing Your Name?"

heard her talking with Arima, who apparently had again climbed up to her window.

"Thief must be here," said Arima. "He not been hall. My friend know. We see him come in here." "I told you he wasn't here. If you don't believe me, why don't you call the cops?"

"We not want cops. I come in and watch." "But I'm going to hold a circle here in a few minutes."

"What?" Arima's voice had a puzzled note.

"A seance. The spirit come. You know. All sit around, with the light turned down, and spirits come."

"Oh!" The Japanese either understood or pretended to. "I come, then."

After a period of hesitation the woman said: "Why, yes, I guess you can—if you keep still. Your friend can come, too. You're a neighbor, and I won't charge you anything."

"All right. I call my friend." Footsteps crossed the room and the door to the hall was opened. Presently it closed again, and Orme heard fragments of a conversation in Japanese.

From other sounds Orme gathered that the woman was arranging chairs. "Sit here, you two," he heard her say. "You'll have to keep quiet when the rest come. Do just what they do? Be sure, now."

The bell now began to ring at frequent intervals, each time announcing the arrival of newcomers. Madam Alla's clients were quickly assembling; Orme could hear them whispering among themselves.

A clinking noise he did not at first understand. Then he realized that it was the sound of silver dropping into a box. Some one was taking up the collection. He knew, too, when they hung the curtain across his corner of the room, shutting off the space in which the medium was to sit, and when they lighted the gas and drew down the shades at the window. Then he heard them lead her into the cabinet and tie her to the chair.

The silence that followed these preparations grew oppressive. The clients were waiting for the right "current," and Madam Alla, Orme had no doubt, was using the interval to free herself from her bonds.

In a little while some one started the hymn, "Over the River They Beckon to Me," and the others took it up—women's voices, chiefly, struggling through the melody in their trebles, with the mumbled undertones of one or two men.

A draught of cooler air struck Orme's cheek; a hand found his shoulder; a voice whispered. Under cover of the singing Madam Alla had opened the panel. Her lips were close to his ear. In the creepy tension of the waiting Orme had almost forgotten that Madam Alla's ghosts were a cheat, and the touch of her hand made

him start, but her first words brought him to himself.

"Hush!" she whispered. "You'll get your chance in a minute. Put on a pair of black felt slippers. Here"—she groped along the floor, and gave him the slippers. They were large, and went easily over his shoes.

"Now the black robe, just behind you." He took it from its peg, and slipped into it.

"Cover your head and face with the hood."

He did as directed, finding the eye-holes with his fingers.

"Hide your hands in the sleeves. Now, listen. I'm going to keep them busy looking at the curtains. When you hear a gong ring three times, come through the panel, and go between the curtain and the wall-hanging, on the side toward the window. The gas is down to a pin-point. Those folks think they can see a lot more than they do. But they won't see you, unless you show some white. Anyhow they'll be watching the cabinet. Keep outside the circle of chairs, and work your way to the door of the next room. There are hangings there; go through them. You'll find light enough in the next room to get to the door in the hall. First stuff the robe under the sofa. You'll find your hat under there. You left it here when you came, and I tucked it away. You'd better wear the slippers down the street. Never mind about returning them—unless you care to come. Now, be careful."

"The Japanese—where are they?"

"At the other side of the circle. Don't worry about them. They're only kids when it comes to my game. Now, wait till I get the things I need." She heard faint rustlings as she gathered her paraphernalia. Soon she was back at the panel. The last stanza of the hymn was drawing to a close. "Be sure you follow directions," she whispered.

"I will." He pressed her hand gratefully.

"And—and you won't forget me?"

With a sudden yearning that seemed to be beyond her control, she leaned her body against him. Her warm breath was on his face; her arm found its way around him and held him convulsively.

"Oh," she whispered, "I can't bear to have you go. Don't forget me—please don't forget me."

"I shall never forget you, and what you have done for me," he answered gravely.

"You will come back and see me—sometime?" "I will come back. And I should like to bring a friend, who will have even more cause to thank you than I have."

"A friend?" A tinge of apprehension colored the question: "A—a woman?"

"Yes."

The soft curves of her body were quickly withdrawn from him.

"Oh," she whispered, "I don't believe I want to see her."

For a moment she stood motionless. Then she said:

"Are you sorry you kissed me?" "No," he answered, "I am not."

Her lips brushed his forehead, and he was alone. Groping with one hand, he assured himself that the panel remained open. All in black, he awaited the signal.

And now strange manifestations began in the room without. There were rappings, some faint, some loud—coming apparently from all quarters. Invisible fingers swept gently across the strings of a guitar. Then came the soft clang of a gong—once, twice, three times.

Orme slipped through the panel, into the cabinet. Keeping close to the wall, he moved to the left and worked out into the room. The rappings were now louder than before—loud and continuous enough to cover any slight sound he might make. A little gasp came from the circle as he went out into the room. At first he thought that he had been seen. To his eyes, fresh from complete darkness, the room seemed moderately light; but the gas was little more than a tiny blue dot.

As he took a step forward he saw why the circle had gasped. Through the curtains of the cabinet came the semblance of a tenuous writh in long, trailing robes of white. It was almost formless, its outlines seeming to melt into the gloom.

Advancing a little way into the circle, it shrank back as though timorous, then wavered. From the circle came a woman's voice—anxious, eager, straining with heart-break—"Oh, my sister!"

The figure turned toward her, slowly extended its arms, and glided back to the curtains, where it stood as though waiting.

The sobbing woman arose from her chair and hastened toward the writh. "Agnes!" she whispered imploringly, "Won't you speak to me, Agnes?"

The ghostly figure shook its head. "Are you happy, Agnes? Tell me. Oh, don't go until you have told me." The figure nodded mutely, and with a final slow gesture, waved the woman back to her seat.

Meantime Orme cast his eyes over the circle. Dimly he saw faces, some stolid, some agitated; and there, at the farther end were the two Japanese, intent as children on these wonders. Their sparkling eyes were directed to the cabinet.

The apparition had disappeared between the curtains. But now there was a fresh gasp of wonder, as the figure of a little child stepped out into the room. It did not go far from the cabinet, and it alternately advanced and retreated, turning this way and that, as though looking for some one.

"It wants its mother!" exclaimed one of the women in the circle. "Is your mother here, little one?"

The child stared at the speaker, then withdrew to the curtains.

"They will begin to talk after a while," explained the woman—"when the control gets stronger, I always

feel so tender for these little lost spirits that come back to hunt for their loved ones."

Orme moved swiftly around the circle. He passed so close to the Japanese that he could have touched them. The felt slippers made his steps noiseless; the thick rug absorbed the shock of his weight.

He passed through the hangings of the doorway to the next room. There he had no gaslight; the window shades, however, were not drawn so closely but that a little daylight entered. He removed the robe and stuffed it under the old sofa at one side. His hat, as Madam Alla had said, was there, and he put it on and went to the hall door. The circle had begun to sing another hymn. Orme got into the hall, shut the door silently, and hurried down the stairs, the long-drawn strains of the song following him and dying away as he neared the street entrance. In the lower hall he removed the felt slippers and tossed them into a corner.

He was amazed at the loudness of the street noises, and the glare of the sunlight as he stepped to the sidewalk. He stood there blinking for a moment, until his eyes became accustomed to the light. The foot-procession of the city streamed by him.

Suddenly a man turned in toward the doorway, and, with a startled exclamation, stopped short. Orme found himself looking into the gleaming eyes of Alcatraz.

To be continued.

ALVO NEWS

J. A. Schaffer went to Lincoln Monday.

Fred Leidig was in Lincoln on business Monday.

H. S. Ough was in Lincoln between trains Sunday.

Little Miss Anastacia Barry was quite sick Tuesday.

Mrs. J. A. Schaffer spent Sunday with friends in Lincoln.

Dr. Moore, of Murdock, was in town between trains Tuesday.

Ray Lynch, of Omaha, returned to his home Tuesday on No. 18.

Mrs. Mary Skinner returned home from Lincoln Sunday on No. 14.

W. E. Newkirk has moved his pool and billiard parlors into the Barry building.

Mr. Foreman expects to visit his brothers in Fort Worth, Texas, in the near future.

Fred Dremer went to Plattsmouth Monday, returning home Tuesday evening.

Harry Parcell and J. A. Schaffer went to Omaha last Thursday returning Friday on No. 17.

Albert Foreman's sale last Friday was well attended and things sold well, averaging the whole sale.

Mrs. Mary Fletcher, who has been keeping house for Albert Foreman, went to Lincoln Tuesday on No. 17.

Mrs. Leo Barry and daughter Helen left Monday for their new home at Lincoln, where Mr. Barry is night operator.

J. H. Stroemer went to Omaha Friday evening with a shipment of hogs. He returned home on No. 17 Saturday evening.

Bud Grove bought the restaurant from Carlton Gullion on Tuesday. Mr. Gullion will continue to operate the barber shop.

Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Newkirk's children have had an attack of the La-Grippe, but are getting along quite well at present.

Uncle Geo. Cook returned home Sunday from a visit of several weeks at Beaver City, Neb., with his brother John and family.

Mrs. Harry Parsell and daughter Beatrice left Saturday on No. 13 for a week's visit with her sister, Mrs. Fred Fetrow near Hebron, Nebraska.

Oris Foreman was called home on Wednesday, as he had received word that Dan Donnelly who works for him at Valparaiso, had fallen and broken his arm.

Carroll Colbert, of Weeping Water, spent Saturday and Sunday the guest of Miss Grayce Bailey, departing on No. 17 Sunday evening for Grand Island, Nebraska, where he has a position.

C. R. Jordan returned home Tuesday evening from the hospital at Omaha, where he has been for the treatment of his eyes for the past ten days. He is recovering nicely.

Byron Foreman left on No. 14 Sunday for Omaha. It is reported that he has purchased the farm northeast of town formerly known as the J. V. Parsell farm, on which Harry Parsell has lived the past year.

Mrs. Simon Johnson was painfully burned about the hands and arms last Sunday by accidentally upsetting some coal oil on a red hot stove. Dr. Muir attended her and she is resting quite well at this writing.

Singer Finds Foreign Name Is Valuable

MUSIC lovers who are patriotic have long complained that too much attention is paid to foreign musicians and have grumbled that America has not produced singers who have achieved the fame and fortune that have been bestowed on those born abroad. In many cases American students have gone to Europe to study and have returned with foreign knowledge and foreign names.

Mme. Bernice de Pasquall recently has had several experiences which emphasize the point and show that the singer knows what she is about when she drops the name of Smith, Jones or Brown for Brizzolari, Geewitzky or Howenthal.

Mme. de Pasquall was born Bernice James, and she comes of good old New England stock. She acquired all her musical education in the United States and was proud of her American lineage as well as of her American mu-



MME. DE PASQUALL

sical knowledge. But she tried vainly to gain recognition in the United States. Confident of her ability, she proclaimed her Americanism, but she obtained no engagements worth while.

Then she went to Italy, and there she gained the recognition denied her at home. While abroad she married Count de Pasquall, a tenor of considerable note, and naturally she took his name. After making a reputation by singing in the leading opera houses in Italy she returned to the United States and was engaged as a member of the Metropolitan Opera company in New York, the best known musical organization in this country and including the world's best known singers.

Recently Mme. de Pasquall has been singing at concerts all over the United States, and it was thus that she learned the value of the name she had acquired through marriage. She also learned the value of a European education.

"I am often asked as to my nationality," she said recently, "and I always reply proudly that I am an American. 'But you were educated abroad,' my questioner will remark. When I reply that my musical education was acquired in the United States I see that I have lost standing. The average person shows at once that the belief is common that anything of an artistic nature produced in the United States must of necessity be inferior to that bearing a foreign label."

PARROT ON ROLLER SKATES.

Prize Winner at Masquerade Was Gigantic but Lifelike Polly.

"He's a bird," was the correct even if slangy description that fitted the prize winner at a recent masquerade skating carnival in London. The man who attracted the most attention and who had the most striking costume, according to the judges, was made up



PRIZE MASQUERADE COSTUME

in imitation of a parrot. Nothing of the man could be seen, even his feet being concealed by the claws.

The parrot was a distinct hit, but there were other novelties. For instance, one skater represented "Uncle Sam upside down." He wore a costume made of stars and stripes as cartoonists dress the figure that typifies the United States, but he had it so arranged that, while he really skated on his feet, he apparently was skating on his hands, with his long legs sticking high in the air.

BROTHERS HELD FOR THEFT

Davenport Men Accused of Stealing Supplies From Arsenal.

Davenport, Ia., Feb. 10.—Charged with stealing a large amount of United States ordnance stores from the Rock Island arsenal and selling them to local junk dealers, Louis and Edward Rohem, two brothers, living in Davenport, are under arrest here awaiting disposition of their case by the federal court.

Louis Rohem was in charge of the government store house at the arsenal and his brother has been keeping house for him. The police, while investigating some petty thefts a few days ago, found 105 pounds of brass, 180 pounds of lead, and other articles used at the arsenal in a junk shop. They traced the stuff to the Rohems. Going to their house and searching the place they found a large quantity of cotton flannel, bridges, bits and other leather goods stored in the rooms.

CHEATING IN COE "EXAMS"

Guilty Ones Who Refuse to Confess Will Be Suspended.

Cedar Rapids, Ia., Feb. 10.—That a number of students at Coe college have been guilty of cheating in the recent semester examinations was disclosed when President Marquis declared in the chapel that a sweeping investigation would be made and unless those involved confessed they would be suspended. It is understood that some one stole the list of questions and handed them around. Members of the faculty said the number involved was small.

CHURCH TO DO BUSINESS FOR GOD

Waterloo Methodists Form Building and Loan Association.

Waterloo, Ia., Feb. 10.—Members of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal church have taken the initiative in a movement which will have a far-reaching effect. The plan is the organization of a building and loan association in the church "to do business for God." The association will be incorporated for about \$50,000, with the right to begin business as soon as \$1,000 of the capital stock is subscribed and paid in.

The building and loan department will be conducted on the same plan as the commercial associations, with the exception that the stockholders will realize no profits, all the profits being turned back into the fund. Lots will be bought and houses erected and these will be sold on the installment plan or rented. The members of the church are enthusiastic over the plan and all who are able will subscribe for stock.

BREEDERS NAME OFFICERS

W. J. Miller of Newton Heads Aberdeen-Angus Association.

Des Moines, Feb. 10.—The Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' association elected officers as follows: President, W. J. Miller of Newton; vice president, Charles Esher of Shelby county; secretary, Isaac Igo of Indianola.

Henry Wallace, president of the National Conservation congress, called a meeting to be held in Washington, Feb. 15.

Cole Given Heart "Balm."

Sioux City, Ia., Feb. 10.—Sam Cole has been awarded \$100 as "balm" in a suit brought against A. Wigg, a Morningdale dairy manager, on the charge of alienating the affections of Cole's wife. Cole had asked \$5,000. Cole swore on the witness stand that Wigg took his wife riding in his milk wagon and that they were altogether too "chummy."

Teachers to Meet at Waterloo.

Waterloo, Ia., Feb. 10.—A state meeting of teachers and those engaged in manual training and domestic arts will be held in the manual training building of East Waterloo school, Feb. 24 and 25. Professor J. E. Blakely of Fort Dodge is president.

Denies Fruit Damage.

Logan, Ia., Feb. 10.—Investigation of present conditions of the apple, cherry, plum, pear and other fruit trees indicates that Harrison county's prospects for fruit is most flattering at the present time, despite the reports to the contrary.

Nearly All for Sunday Closing.

Council Bluffs, Ia., Feb. 10.—Twenty-six hundred replies from the patrons of the Council Bluffs postoffice in the referendum vote on Sunday closing have been returned to the office, and of this number only two raise objections to the proposal.

Goold Heirs Sell Coal Lands.

Knoxville, Ia., Feb. 10.—The Jay Goold heirs disposed of their Iowa holdings, consisting of 3,200 acres of coal lands in Marion county. John W. Legrand, Sr., and his two sons acquired the property.

Tax Scandal in Cincinnati.

Cincinnati, Feb. 10.—Six indictments charging bribery against Jacob Baschang, a deputy tax collector and politician, and the issuing of subpoenas against twenty brewers were the sensations in the liquor tax probe here. The grand jury investigation will be continued and further sensational disclosures, including possibly additional indictments, are expected.

Poultry Wanted

Highest prices paid for all farm produce.

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