

The Long Green Gaze

A Cross Word Puzzle Mystery

By Vincent Fuller

(Continued from Yesterday.)

"Thank you, so much, dear," Miss Minty said. "I needed something like that."

Janet, sitting in the wing chair, still holding her crystal ball, seemed to take little interest in the applause that followed the music.

"Why not ask Ghopal to show you how the thing works?" suggested Chalfonte.

"Oh, I wish you would, Mr. Rose," Janet leaned toward Ghopal, her fear of him forgotten. "I've always wondered if a person really could see the future in a crystal ball."

Ghopal bowed with his usual serious courtesy.

"Look closely in the crystal ball, Miss Janet. Concentrate on it and be still."

Chalfonte had joined Miss Minty and Aunt Emily, who had returned to the library and were curiously fingering the strange gifts. In the music room the young people gathered about Janet and Ghopal, Jarvis, with a skeptical smile, spoke to his sister: "You're not likely to see much of a future husband there, Jan, or anything else, unless the ball is a mirror."

"You are looking into the crystal depths, all is clear, you peer closer."

Ghopal's voice droned on in endless monotonous tones, as he gazed involuntarily at the crystal; there was an almost breathless silence. To Janet, the ball seemed to be expanding, and the serpents at its base writhed and twisted and their eyes glittered evilly.

"Now a cloud appears," Ghopal's voice resumed its monotonous droning; "it grows and seems to darken the crystal ball. Ghopal's voice was the little group bent nearer the ball, and indeed a mist did seem to be dimming its clarity. "Now it is vanishing, rolling away and you are in a vast marble corridor. You look off—almost into infinity. Coming towards you down this endless corridor is a speck which grows larger and larger as you advance. Ghopal's voice was a drone of meaningless words as he considered as the hum of insects in summer. As if in a dream, Janet found herself moving down the tremendous corridor towards an advancing figure which she now saw to be a man, though the face was as yet undistinguishable.

"What's all this foolishness?" Aunt Emily's harsh voice broke the spell. "Crystal gazing, eh? Well, I don't approve of that, nor allow it in my house."

Janet shivered and sighed. Looking up she met Ted's intent gaze. "Gee, I wish she'd waited until I'd made

sure that my future husband was dark-haired and snappy," she pouted. "Now to keep you young people out of mischief," Emily announced, "I've bought some cross-word puzzles. Working them will help your vocabularies and intelligence generally. I thought quite a while about what we'd all do for amusement, and I decided on these. I want you each to do at least one before you go up to bed. And if you like them as well as I do you'll want to do them in bed. You'll find unabridged dictionaries in the various rooms—I like to have them whenever I happen to be working a puzzle."

"The old girl looks darned near human," Ted whispered to Janet. "See her face—it's rosy. Emily's fit to be tied."

"And, Theodore—," Emily's face sobered. "I want you particularly to make an effort with these. They may act as a tonic for your brain, and lead me to em. I challenge any of you to beat my time. I warn you in advance that I'm the panhellenic champion."

It was not until midnight that they ceased work. "That's enough for one night," Emily said peremptorily. "I've finished mine—and it was a hard one, too." With a wave of her hand she silenced their protests. "But we're not through, Aunt."

"No matter. That will give you something to do tomorrow. Everybody to bed now. Breakfast is at eight, and you're all to be down on time. Tomorrow's going to be a full day."

Miss Minty was the last to leave the library. As she snapped the switch, leaving only the hall light slanting in upon the table, the bronze idol leered at her malevolently. At the same instant, a soft footstep sounded near the door. She started. But it was only Soames making sure of the locks.

"Good night, Soames," she said, and hurried up the stairs. Safe in her own room at last, she locked the door and undressed slowly. The idol possessed her thoughts and it was one thirty before she snapped out the light and went to her door again to make sure that it was locked. She stood there a moment after trying it, listening intently. Somebody brushed past. There was an unmistakable soft footfall, as of somebody in stocking feet. Weakly she sought her bed, and reassured herself, under the covers, that it was only somebody on his way back from the bath.

CHAPTER II

As was her custom, the next morning Emily Dunseath woke at seven-thirty and called for Miss Minty. Minty, as much servant as companion, entered the room on tiptoe and raised the window shade.

"Put it higher," Emily commanded, "and get the morning paper. I want to see about yesterday's cross-word puzzle. That lower left corner—the paper was brought. "Now get out my blue crepe dress and the black pumps. I'll show these youngsters. I can dress as well as they can." Minty laid out the dress and brought the pumps. "Now comb out my curls—but hand me my teeth first." Minty started for the curls, veered at the second command, caught up the tumbler of water containing the teeth, and straightened the curls on the dresser. "It's just as I thought," Emily continued, after adjusting her teeth. "That was one of those smart definitions. I thought the thing that ceased in 1918 was the World War or the Great War. That's what any decent, patriotic person would think. But here it is—sobriety. Another dig at prohibition. They ought to keep propaganda out of these puzzles. I bring me the plain black ones. For heaven's sake, use your head, Minty."

At five minutes of eight she left the room, was joined by Rose and Helen in the hall, and downstairs, found that Grant and Jarvis had preceded her. Ted clattered down the stairs immediately after Janet, and was soon followed by the others.

At the table, Emily pushed her grapefruit aside with a murmur about acid stomach, called for an orange, ate half, and then turned to glare at Janet. "Young lady, you look altogether too much like a giddy flapper to suit my taste. I certainly got a pretty penny's worth when I paid for your education. In my day, any girl who came to breakfast with no more to hold her together than you have, would have been spanked and sent to her room. That's more sugar than you want this morning, Rose," she said, passing a cup of coffee on to Chalfonte and taking another.

A slow flush rose in Janet's cheek and subsided. "At least," she re-

turned. "I don't try to hold a family together with a mythical will."

Emily glared at her above her lifted cup, finished drinking the coffee, set the cup down meticulously in its saucer, opened her mouth to speak—then sank deep into her chair, a look of amazement on her face. Her left hand caught the edge of the table as she sank, her eyes bulged from her face, seemed to focus on the emerald on her finger, and dived even as she watched its green glimmer above the right yellow finger on the white table cloth. Slowly her head dropped down upon her breast.

"Quick, she's fainted!" Grant cried, springing up first.

Rose was at Emily's side as quickly as Grant, bathing her face with a wet napkin. Jarvis, Soames and Grant carried her to the dayport in the telephone room, as Minty rushed to the telephone. Emily's great form gave no sign of life. "Loosen her clothes," Helen advised, "and get more water."

"Dr. Murdoch will be here at once," Minty panted in from the telephone. "He was starting anyway, and he lives just a hundred yards down the hill."

"It looks more a stroke to me," Jarvis said. "Get a blanket, somebody and open the windows. Now all but two or three of you get into the hall. There's too much confusion here."

Minty appeared with the smelling salts and held them to Emily's nose. "Emily, Emily," she called tearfully. "It's Minty." But there was no result. If anything, Emily's figure relaxed into an even greater solidity.

Then Dr. Murdoch came, a nervous little man of fifty odd, with gold-rimmed glasses and a gray mustache.

"This is strange—very strange," he said. "She was in perfect health only day before yesterday. Now all of you get out except Miss Minty."

Presently, the doctor rushed through the agitated group outside the door and went to the telephone in the alcove under the stairs.

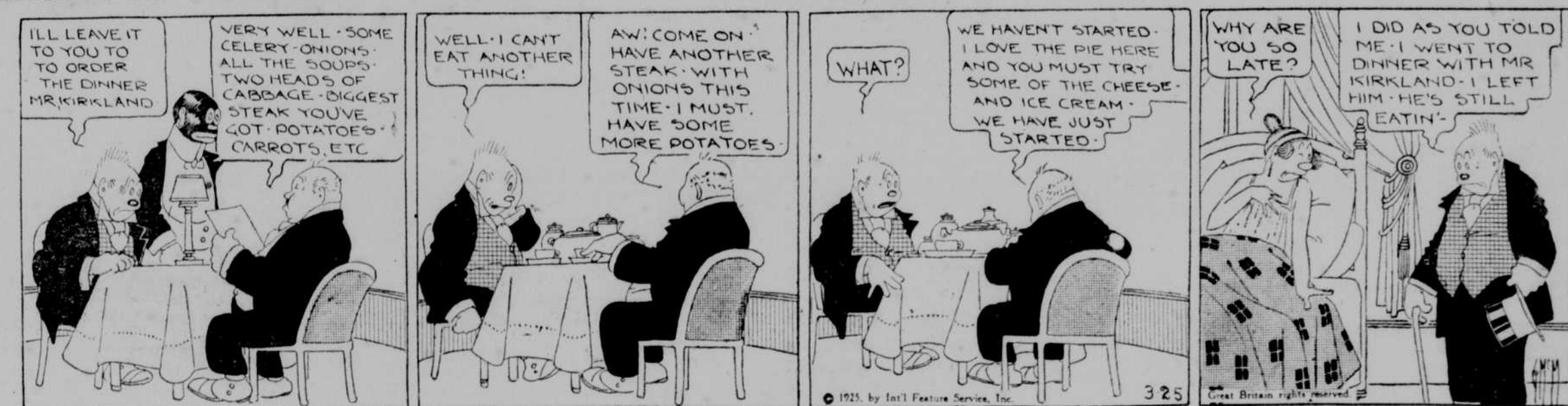
(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess (Copyright 1925)

THE NEBBS



BRINGING UP FATHER



JERRY ON THE JOB



TILLIE, THE TOILER



Real Famous Folks at Home (a famous opera singer)



ABIE THE AGENT



New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. MINTYRE

Paris, March 24.—Gambling houses are operated here under government license. The most luxurious of the lot is on the Rue de la Paix over Dunhill's tobacco shop. My cicerone was an American whom I suspect is a runner for the establishment.

The visitor must sign a police card giving his name, year he was born, occupation and other intimate details. The card goes to the Prefect of Police. Formal dress is required. The place is known as a club and regulations are strict.

A police official stands at each table. Loud talk is forbidden. The patron may not take a drink at the gaming table. He must go to the bar in another part of the establishment. Women are not permitted in gambling rooms although there is a reception room where they may wait for those who gamble.

A ten course dinner with wine and cigars is served free. So far as I could determine there was not an American at the tables. The stakes are high and under the brilliant lights was a sea of pale faces.

The croupiers interested me. Every pocket in their clothes is sewed up. Each night before they leave they are searched by an inspector. They are not permitted to have cuffs on their trousers. Their pay in tips is high for France. They average \$30 a night.

I saw the son of a famous Parisian jeweler loose \$2,000 at baccarat in about two seconds. He fairly led. If a patron has extremely heavy losses he is not permitted to leave the building alone. He is followed to the sidewalk. The idea is to prevent suicide on the premises.

There are about 22 of these clubs in Paris. The proprietors grow rich by exacting the unflinching rake-off.

On a sunny day Paris flowers out in habiliments. But on rainy days the drabness is reflected in dress. Consequently when I wore a light suit under leaden skies my American friends told me I hope diplomatic relations will not be strained.

In an absent-minded moment I dropped a telegram pneumatic in a mail box at my hotel. I told the concierge about it, hoping that when the mail carrier came and opened the box he would be able to retrieve it. Instead the concierge took a long ruler and patiently fished every letter out of the box. The last one was mine. He dropped the rest back into the slot. In America such tampering would, if discovered, send a man to jail. The concierge made no effort at secrecy.

The muffled footsteps of market horses at midnight is somehow soothing. In the front seat the driver is almost invariably sound asleep. His horse knows the way. And you soon learn to love these animals. There is so much patient resignation about them as they plod along with their carts of carrots, cabbages and other vegetables.

A regular Normandy rain struck Paris today. It was slanting and as opaque as a curtain. In a neighboring courtyard and old man with a fan-like beard has been sitting on a bench for two hours, called a floor waiter to find out why he exposed himself to the torrens. "He always sits out in the rain," he replied. But he did not know the reason why. Paris—ever unexplainable.

The farm peasant resembles a balloon about to soar. His blue blouse is heavily starched and puffs out from his body. The collars and cuffs are embroidered. His body is garbled from unceasing toil. He seems a pastel of woe.

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