

SIGHT UNSEEN

by MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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EIGHTH INSTALMENT

SYNOPSIS

Six people, Horace Johnson (who tells the story) his wife, old Mrs. Dane, Herbert Robinson and his sister, Alice, and Dr. Sperry, friends and neighbors, are in the habit of holding weekly meetings. At one of them, Mrs. Dane, who is hostess, varies the program by unexpectedly arranging a spiritualistic seance with Miss Jeremy, a friend of Dr. Sperry and not a professional, as the medium.

At the first sitting the medium tells the details of a murder as it is occurring. Later that night Sperry learns that a neighbor, Arthur Wells, has been shot mysteriously. With Johnson he goes to the wells residence and they find confirmation of the medium's account. Mrs. Wells tells them her husband shot himself in a fit of depression.

At a second seance, Miss Jeremy adds details about a summer resort where Charles Ellingham was known to have been at the same time that Mrs. Wells was there. She also speaks of a pocketbook being lost which contained some important car tickets and letters. Mrs. Dane, alone of the women, seems thrilled by the investigation.

Johnson goes alone and investigates the deserted house. He is frightened by strange noises, as of an intruder in the house, but completes his investigation.

He leaves the house and in his excitement carries off the fire tongs, leaving them in his own hall rack where his wife discovers them the next morning and reproaches him for his nocturnal wanderings. He also forgets to bring away his overcoat, which is carried off by the mysterious stranger. Mrs. Dale learns of his peculiar actions and charges him with possessing an unsuspected sense of humor.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"I am not aware—" I began stiffly. "I have always believed that I furnished to the Neighborhood Club its leaven of humor."

"Don't spoil it," she begged. "Don't. If you could know how I have enjoyed it. All afternoon I have been chuckling. The fire-tongs, Horace. The fire-tongs!"

Then I knew that my wife had been to Mrs. Dane and I drew a long breath. "I assure you," I said gravely, "that while doubtless I carried the wretched things home and—er—placed them where they were found, I have not the slightest recollection of it. And it is hardly amusing, is it?"

"Amusing!" she cried. "It's delicious. It's made me a young woman again. Horace, if you could have seen your wife's face when she found them, I would give cheerfully almost anything I possess."

But underneath her mirth I knew there was something else. And, after all, she could convince my wife if she were convinced herself.

I told her of the visit Sperry and I had made the night Arthur Wells was shot, and of what we discovered; of the clerk at the pharmacy and his statement, and, last of all, of my own experience in the deserted house.

She was very serious when I finished. Tea came, but we forgot to drink it. Her eyes flashed with excitement, her faded face flushed. And with it all, as I look back, there was an air of suppressed excitement that seemed to have nothing to do with my narrative. I remembered it, however, when the denouement came the following week.

She was a remarkable woman. Even then she knew, or strongly suspected, the thing that the rest of us had missed, the x of the equation. But I think it only fair to record that she was in possession of facts which we did not have, and which she did not divulge until the end.

"You have been so ungenerous with me," she said finally, "that I am tempted not to tell you why I sent for you. Of course, I know I am only a helpless old woman, and you men are people of affairs. But now and then I have a flash of intelligence. I'm going to tell you, but you don't deserve it."

She went down into the black silk bag at her side which was as much a part of her attire as the false front she wore with such careless abandon, and which, brown in color and indifferently sewed, was invariably parting from its mooring. She drew out a newspaper clipping.

"On going over Clara's notes," she said, "I came to the conclusion, last Tuesday that the matter of the missing handbag and the letters was important. More important, probably, than the mere record shows. Do you recall the note of distress in Miss Jeremy's voice? It was almost a wail."

I had noticed it.

"I have plenty of time to think," she added, not without pathos. "There is only one Monday night in the week, and—the days are long. It occurred to me to try to trace that bag."

"In what way?"

"How does anyone trace lost articles?" she demanded. "By advertising, of course. Last Wednesday I advertised for the bag."

I was too astonished to speak.

"I reasoned like this: If there was no such bag, there was no harm done. As a matter of fact, if there was no such bag, the chances were we were all wrong, anyhow. If there was such a bag, I wanted it. Here is the advertisement as I inserted it."

She gave me a small newspaper cutting.

"Lost, a handbag containing private letters, car-tickets, etc. Liberal regard paid for its return. Please write to A31, the Daily News."

I sat with it on my palm. It was so simple, so direct. And I, a lawyer and presumably acute, had not thought of it!

"You are wasted on us, Mrs. Dane," I acknowledged. "Well? I see something has come of it."

"Yes, but I'm not ready for it."

She dived again into the bag, and brought up another clipping.

"On the day that I had that inserted," she said impressively, "this also appeared. They were in the same column." She read the second clipping aloud, slowly, that I might gain all its significance:

"Lost on the night of Monday, November the second, between State Avenue and Park Avenue, possibly on an Eastern Line street car, a black handbag containing keys, car-tickets, private letters, and a small sum of money. Reward and no questions asked if returned to Daily News office."

She passed the clipping to me and I compared the two. It looked strange and I confess to a tingling feeling that coincidence, that element so much to be feared in any investigation, was not the solution here. But there was such a chance and I spoke of it.

"Coincidence rubbish!" she retorted. "I am not through, my friend."

She went down into the bag again, and I expected nothing less than the pocketbook, letters and all, to appear. But she dragged up, among a miscellany of articles women like to carry, an envelope.

"Yesterday," she said, "I took a taxi-cab ride. You know my chair gets

and talk, and even labor. We think we are living. But for the last day or two I have been seeing visions—you and I and the rest of us, living on the surface, and underneath, carefully kept down so it will not make us uncomfortable, a world of passion and crime and violence and suffering. That letter is a tragedy."

But if she had any suspicion then as to the writer, and I think she had not, she said nothing, and soon after I started for home.

In one way, Mrs. Johnson's refusal to speak to me that evening had a certain value, for it enabled me to leave the house without explanation and thus to discover that, if an overcoat had been left in place of my own, it had been taken away. It also gave me an opportunity to return the fire-tongs, a proceeding which I had considered would assist in return of the entente cordiale at home, but which most unjustly appeared to have exactly the opposite effect.

It has been my experience that the most innocent action may, under certain circumstances, assume an appearance of extreme guilt . . .

By Saturday the condition of affairs between my wife and myself remained in statu quo, and I had decided on a bold step. This was to call a special meeting of the Neighborhood Club, without Miss Jeremy, and put before them the situation as it stood at that time, with a view to formulating a future course of action, and also of publicly vindicating myself before my wife.

In deference to Herbert Robinson's recent attack of influenza, we met at the Robinson house. Sperry himself wheeled Mrs. Dane over, and made a speech.

"We have called this meeting," he said, "to determine whether the Neighborhood Club, as a body wishes to go on with the investigation or to stop where we are."

He paused, but, as no one spoke, he went on again. "It is really not as simple as that," he said. "To stop now in view of the evidence, we intend to place before the Club, is to leave in all our minds certain suspicions that may be entirely unjust. On the other hand, to go on is very possible to place

afternoon. I realized that, in her own way, she was making a sort of atonement.

Miss Jeremy was out riding with Sperry, but arrived shortly after we got there. Sperry was glad to see us. It was not hard to see how things were with him. He helped the girl out of her wraps with a manner that was almost proprietary, and drew a chair for her close to the small fire which hardly affected the chill of the room.

Sperry looked at the girl and smiled. "Shall I tell them?" he said.

"I want very much to have them know."

He stood up, and with that unconscious drama which actuates a man at a crisis in his affairs, he put a hand on her shoulder. "This young lady is going to marry me," he said. "We are very happy today."

My wife, to my surprise, kissed the girl.

Tea was brought in by Hawkins!

I knew him immediately, but he did not at once see me. He was evidently accustomed to seeing Sperry there, and he did not recognize my wife. But when he had put down the tray and turned to pick up Sperry's overcoat to

carry it into the hall, he saw me. The man actually stared. I cannot say that he changed color. He was always a pale, anaemic-looking individual. But it was a perceptible instant before he stooped and gathered up the coat.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Canadian National Railways Earnings

The gross revenues of the Canadian National Railways for the week ending July 21st, 1932, were \$2,784,068, as compared with \$3,298,097 for the corresponding period in 1931, a decrease of \$514,029.

Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway

TRAIN SERVICE

Train No. 17—North Bay to Moosonee, leaves North Bay 10.00 a.m. Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, arrives Moosonee 8.00 a.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Train No. 18—Moosonee to North

Bay, leaves Moosonee 9.30 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, arrives North Bay 5.50 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Trains Nos. 17 and 18 use Canadian Pacific Railway station at North Bay, and operate sleeping car service between Moosonee, Cochrane, Porquis Jct., Swastika, Cobalt and Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

Trains Nos. 46 and 47—Through service daily between Toronto and Cochrane, carrying through sleepers between Toronto and Timmins, Toronto and Rouyn, and between Montreal and Cochrane. Parlor Cafe Car service operating between North Bay and Swastika. These trains use Canadian National Railways station at North Bay.

Connections at Earleton Jct. for Elk Lake, except Sunday.

Daily except Sunday service between Englehart and Charlton.

Connections at Porquis Jct. daily for Connaught, South Porcupine, Schumacher, Timmins and Iroquois Falls.

Connections at Swastika daily for Kirkland Lake, Cheminis, Aldermac, Rouyn and Noranda.

See current time table or apply to any T. & N. O. Railway Agent for full particulars.

A. J. PARR,
General Freight and Passenger Agent,

TRY OUR WANT ADS

You Are a Very Disobedient Person

DO YOU PROTEST, and say that you're not a very disobedient person? Be patient, for a moment, and we shall see.

Look at the advertisements which you see in this newspaper, and in other newspapers. Most of them bid you do something—something which, if done, would be advantageous to you, as well as being profitable to the advertiser. But do you always obey these advertisers? You do not! And what is your excuse?

Take your teeth by way of example. Are you doing what you can to prevent or delay their decay and loss? If you are like most persons, you are not. Yet you are being urged by advertisements to use regularly a product which, if used regularly, would keep your mouth and teeth in a really good health condition; and would enable you to keep your teeth sound, and keep away toothache.

It isn't the price of the product which keeps you from using it—it's just plain inertia and procrastination.

Then there's an electric or other kind of washer—this by way of example—able to be purchased on the instalment plan. The advertisements bid you buy it, and give you good reasons why you should use this labor-saving, life-prolonging mechanism.

Has every man and every woman known to you obeyed the commands of the advertisements of this washer? They have not. And their resistance cannot be put down to disbelief. The explanation is: Most of us are shameless procrastinators—putting off, putting off, putting off, all the time.

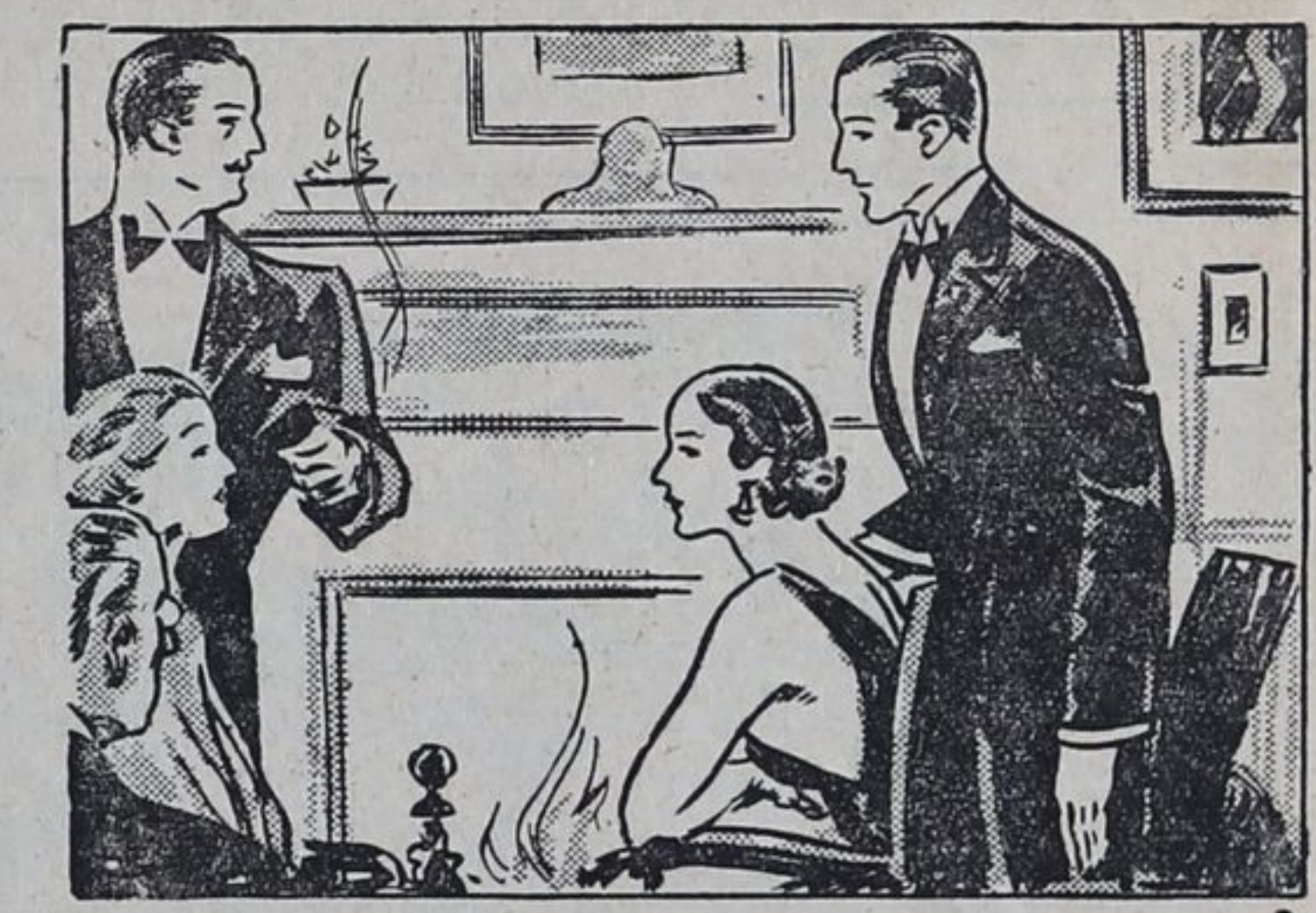
When you read advertisements, see in them the untiring effort of manufacturers and institutions to cause you to do right things

Take the life insurance companies, by way of example: Their advertisements urge all of us to insure our lives. Yet how stubborn most of us are! We resist the biddings of the advertisements and the canvasses of the salesmen of life insurance. We defer doing the obviously right thing, often for years!

So when you see and read advertisements, and when you feel inclined to say, "What a shocking lot of money is spent by advertisers!" reflect on this idea: It is the stubborn disobedience of men and women that is to be condemned.

We should be grateful to those advertisers who pursue us all our life, bidding us do things, which if done, would be advantageous to us

This advt. is sponsored by the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association



"This young lady is going to marry me," Doctor Sperry said.