

ASK NO QUESTIONS!

By BELDON DUFF

SYNOPSIS

Annassa West leaves Bride's House in Connecticut. Several previous tenants had died there mysteriously, and a bride had disappeared. It is stipulated that the new tenant ask no questions. John Diamond, owner of a New York newspaper, insists that Ann leave. Her stable boy, Otto, is murdered. Then a deputy who is put on guard in the house is shot to death. A stranger, who has been riding one of Ann's horses at night, rescues her from a morass when she seeks aid of Dr. Cranston, a veterinarian. Alva Cropsey, managing editor of Diamond's paper, learns of a mysterious "naturalist" who searches at night. The stranger who had ridden Dracula appears and is hired as stable boy. He gives his name as David Smith.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd.)

There was an uncomfortable silence, broken by David.

"You've every right in the world to distrust me; and you do. I can see it in your eyes. Admit now you're not quite sure whether I had anything to do with the two murders or not."

Annassa was frank enough to admit she had had her doubts. Today, since coming to the red barn, to be exact, those doubts had begun to seem ridiculous.

Her companion studied her admiringly.

"Not afraid to face issues, are you?"

"Why should I be? And you?"

"Lord, I don't know!"

He drew a breath through lean nostrils and looked down at her from a height of six feet and four inches.

"Whatever brought a girl like you to a place like this?"

Annassa gave to her reply more consideration than the question deserved, or so she thought.

"I came to right a wrong."

A look of incredulity was her reward.

"And how are you getting on?"

"Badly," she admitted. "Very badly."

With a sudden savage gesture he planted his clenched fist against the wall.

"Damn it all! Bride's House can't hold its secret forever. It shan't! I'll tear the place apart, shingle by shingle. I'll—"

She put her hand on his arm. Her voice was tense with excitement.

"Then you came on the same errand that brought me?"

Instantly the old air of caution returned.

"What gave you that idea?" And in a troubled tone, "I doubt if a wrong that isn't righted on the spot can ever be."

"Oh, so far as that goes," she tried to speak gaily, "I am beginning to doubt everything, even my ability to escape the fate of my predecessors on this farm."

He caught his breath.

"That's what's been—worrying me"—gulping out the words as though each one stuck in his throat—"ever since you came here."

More suspicious—this time along a different line.

"You didn't come to spy on me? You're not being paid by someone to scare me away?"

His look of surprise was better than a thousand denials.

"I? Scare you away? Say, listen! Stopping till his face was less than a foot away from her own, "I've been so afraid you'd quit I haven't known what to do. Every night I've stood under your window until long after the light went out. And every morning I've waited till you made the rounds of the stables, dreading lest you'd go again—wondering if I'd ever see you again. If I—"

He took a determined grip on himself. When he spoke again it was with intentional brusqueness. "Don't talk rubbish. Of course I'm not being paid. Your barging in last week with all the live-stock was a complete surprise. I'd been anticipating an uninterrupted month or two here to work out something for myself."

The mistress of Bride's House thought a moment.

"Well, if we both want to be interrupted, and we both want to find out what's going on here, then there's no reason why we can't work together, is there?"

Her companion threw back his head and laughed till the echoes woke in the rotting rafters.

"You're a persistent kid. No, I suppose there isn't any reason why we shouldn't work together. And to show that I'm no niggard when it comes to a bargain, I'm going to let you in on a discovery I made the day before you arrived."

Swiftly, and without a glance to see whether she followed him, the big stranger led the way to the harness room where he paused before the trap door which had first lured her on to the discovery of Otto's dead body. Taking a small flashlight from the pocket of his flannel shirt, he handed it to her and, stooping, lifted the door by means of the ring imbedded in one of its centre planks. The light made it possible to get down the ladder without mishap, so her guide did not offer to assist her; but when the cellar had been reached, she found a hand stretched out, waiting, and heard a warning:

"Mind you don't trip over anything. The floor's covered with broken glass and rusty nails."

Without further comment they picked their way to the farther corner, where David dropped the fingers which had rested on his palm and took over the flashlight.

"Here!"

As he spoke he was lifting away packing cases, handling their weight and bulk with the ease of a child playing with a set of building blocks.

In a moment the wall behind had been laid bare; and Annassa saw near the floor, a round dark hole scarcely larger than the top of a hoghead.

"The mouth of a tunnel," announced the giant in a voice which trembled with some strange emotion. "Your stable boy, snooping around among these boxes, came upon it. A fairly dangerous discovery. It cost him his life."

Annassa West stooped and peered into the hole.

"Where does it lead to?"

"I don't know."

"You haven't explored it?"

"No!"

She stood up.

"You found it last week, and you haven't explored it yet? Why?"

His answer amazed her.

"Go into that rat hole? It's impossible—physically impossible."

The girl measured the opening with a piece of scantling and then tried it against the wide chest.

"I think you can do it," she said gravely, and waited, her heart thumping, for the answer.

"No!"

The heart thumped a little harder.

"Why not?"

Her companion turned the flashlight down so that his face was hidden from her.

"I lied a moment ago. It is not a physical impossibility. It is a mental one. And there is no use asking me what or why, because I do not know myself. If I did I would not be here now, in Bride's House."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Conning Tower" was not a bad name for Noah Peabody's gilded lunch wagon. At the boarded-off end, where its proprietor slept, a bowed window gave on the village of Hale. Crossing in three directions. Here, attached to the framework, just high enough to be operated from a wing chair, was an ingenious device resembling a railroad semaphore—a folding gate arm which could be extended or shortened at will and which pivoted easily from right to left. At the end of this arm was strapped a pair of old field glasses by whose aid the inquisitive Noah had greatly increased his area of vision.

By eleven o'clock on Tuesday the breakfast demand for wheat cakes and coffee was about over, and the call for hamburger with onions had not yet commenced. A half hour of peace beckoned. Mr. Peabody thought to make the most of it.

With his eye glued to the field glasses, he saw a closed black wagon leave Seth Toby's undertaking establishment—a sign the body of the murdered deputy was at last to be removed from Bride's House. He also observed Garling, the surly keeper of Berkshire Towers, when he passed down the road, accompanied by his dog Beetle. Over one shoulder Garling carried a fishing rod which was as good as an announcement that Mr. Diamond had gone to the city for the day. It was no secret in the Crossing that the house on the hill was never left unguarded for a moment when the master was at home, a condition of affairs which had piqued the law-abiding citizens of that town beyond all expression.

The virtuous Mr. Peabody adjusted the glasses for one last peep and hurriedly wiped them with the end of his necktie.

A strange man was coming down the road from the direction of Branchville. It was evident he was heading for the Ark, so the Ark's proprietor hustled back behind the counter and put on a fresh tick apron.

"Morning, pardner," he said when the screen door had opened and closed.

"What'll it be?"

"Ham and eggs," said Cropsey.

"And a cup of black and white."

"Oh-kay!" Two eggs slid from their shells to a waiting pan. "A newspaper gent, bent you?"

"Well er—" hedged the managing editor of New York's foremost newspaper, "not exactly."

"No need to be afraid of me," was the encouraging reply. "I ain't agin publicity."

"I suppose you've formed a theory as to who committed the murders?"

"Me, and everybody else in the Crossing, thinks that the Runnels ghost is up to its old tricks."

"I don't believe in such rubbish, do you?" was his way of landing in the thick of the situation.

Noah set a cup of coffee on the counter and pushed sugar and a pitcher of cream after it. "Seth

A Traveller Views England After Twenty Years Absence

After twenty years I have seen England again, and I am not disappointed. All the lovely things I remembered and hoped to see once more are still there and have remained the same.

It is as though I had returned to gaze upon an exquisite tapestry that had hung for many centuries in the same honored place. Here and there a thread has been broken or worn away, perhaps, but it has been repaired so thoroughly that the design is undisturbed. The background is put in with such solid, painstaking effort that it has stood the test of years; and, if tears have sometimes dropped on those closely worked stitches, the gold and silver threads have not been tarnished.

Looking at London with eyes that had longed for many years, I did not search for nor count the new buildings; in fact, I must confess that there were some of which I was not even cognizant. This sort of progress has been going on all over the world and there are some of us who absorb the results unconsciously. Regent Street has maintained its crescent and the flower women still rest their baskets of fragrance at the feet of Eros. Structure by structure a more modern setting is being built around Westminster, but those delicately wrought pinnales, ethereal against the smoky London sky, still grip one's heart; for, unless a frame is so unifying as to be noticeable, the picture remains undisturbed. The morning sunlight still plays upon the fountains in Trafalgar Square and on the steel gray wings of pigeons wheeling around the base of Nelson's Column. In Kensington Gardens the sheep move lazily as ever beneath the trees, cropping the grass as they go, and one may still imagine the music of a pastoral or the far-away echo of Peter Pan's voice, calling.

I shall not soon forget an awakening one morning—the first morning in London. Our windows looked out to Whitehall Court and very early, while the light was still faint, I heard the sound of bagpipes skirling. Nearer and nearer it came along until I was impelled to run to the window. Along the street, his tartans swirling around him, came a stalwart piper, followed by a detachment of red-coated guards. They kept perfect formation and marched with all the pomp and ceremony of the centuries that lie behind the pageantry of London. Not even the sonorous chiming of Big Ben, close at hand, had thrilled me more.

The changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace still goes on. I saw the gay scarlet of the uniforms massed against the background of those drab old walls and I heard the band play. I watched the orderly crowd of men, women and children lined up outside the iron rails and gathered around the entrance. It interested me, having witnessed less tactful methods in other countries, to notice the good-humored English "Bobbie" admonish the crowd when they pressed in too closely toward the big gates. Every one opened up again with pleasing grace, as he waved them back into place. He did it with a slight motion of his hand and a smile on his face. I like these London policemen; they are friendly souls, ready to give you in-

formation or prepared to stretch out a protecting hand when the traffic surges too heavily.

While I am on the subject of the handling of traffic, I would like to comment upon a condition that impressed me very much—the absence of "don'ts" in the traffic rules. This is not peculiar in London; my companion and I observed it all over England. Motorists are requested, not commanded; admonished, not threatened. Even the signs on the road are worded politely. A reckless driver of the most hardened caliber would find it impossible, I think, to resist the appeal: "Gently, please."

We had previously decided that the most interesting way to renew our acquaintance with the English countryside would be to hire an automobile and drive ourselves whither we would. The courtesy shown us by our fellow motorists was most gratefully received, for we were conscious that this was our first experience in many years of driving on the left-hand side of the road. We left London with the feeling that everyone travelling toward, or with us, would be instantly aware of our inexperience and perhaps consider us objects of annoyance. But a few miles brought us reassurance.

Before long we gave ourselves up to the joy of the moment. Could anything be lovelier than England in September? The trees were green and leafy, with no suggestion, as yet, of winter; for the seasons still seem to come less violently here than in some parts of the world. Not until we found ourselves much further north did we discern any yellowing leaves. The quiet, low-lying meadows of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire looked so verdant that we wondered if we had forgotten their green, or if they were more green this year than ever before.

We meandered through villages—rejoicing to find familiar landmarks—passing the lovely old ivy-covered houses of Chalfont St. Giles and the unspoiled red brick and timbered cottages of Wickham End. There was a common where I had once, as a little child, gathered wild foxgloves; and still farther along a signpost, pointing to a footpath across the fields, reminded us of a place where we had both spent many happy hours. And so on all the way to Oxford. We found no perceptible changes here. Perhaps we did not look for them. We seemed to be, as it were, turning the pages of a well-loved book. We knew so much of it already by heart that we were sure of the enjoyment to be found on each page.

It seemed fitting that nightfall should find us in Stratford-on-Avon, the little town that nestles in the very heart of England and yet belongs to all the world. To sleep in an old four-post bed, in a room with lattice windows, appeared a right culmination to a day into which so many memories had been crowded.

We found ourselves, one Sunday evening, beneath the turrets and battlements of Ludlow. We walked through the quiet streets of the little town that still appears to shelter under those dominant walls, and then our steps led us to the footpath that follows the outer line of the castle. In contrast to the peaceful valley of the Teme, these mighty stone walls towered above us like cliffs and we were reminded of the part this great castle had played in the history of the Border.

Gradually the dusk crept over the Stretton hills beyond the river and the shadows deepened beneath the arches of the old stone bridge. Little groups of people passed us, sauntering; a band of youths, a mother taking her small flock home to bed; an aged

couple, a boy and girl, arm in arm. We felt ourselves slipping into place with those people and once again we felt ourselves a part of England.

Waiting there in the twilight, we talked no more of those old warlike Lords of the Marches, but into our thoughts crept some lines from Housman's lovely poem:

"Oh come you home of Sunday
When Ludlow streets are still
And Ludlow bells are calling
To farm and lane and mill.

"Leave your home behind you,
Your friends by field and town;
Oh, town and field will mind you
Till Ludlow tower is down."
—Gwen Castle, in The Christian Science Monitor.

Superb Quality . . Always "SALADA" TEA "Fresh from the Gardens"

Bell-Ringing in Italy

When you come to think of it, it is really astounding to much individuality there is in bells and bell-ringing throughout Italy. Used as we are to the peals and the well-ordered traditions of bell-ringing in England, perhaps we are apt at first to be a little contemptuous of what seems to be the harum-scarum jangling of bells in Italian towns. But hearken patiently and eventually you will find something like order emerging out of chaos and, before you know it, you will find yourself becoming fond of what you first regarded as nothing but a cacophony of din.

The bells are unmistakably different in tone from English bells. They are not so mellow and, as a matter of fact, some of them are positively harsh and raucous. Not a few of them are cracked and hoarse. But, in some subtle way, they fit into the picture as nothing else could and you would miss them terribly were they silenced. The method of ringing—or, perhaps, you prefer to call it the lack of method—

differs in every city and town. Venetian bell-ringing is not to be confounded with Florentine bell-ringing, any more than the note of the Marangona could be mistaken for the voice of the major bell of the Duomo in Florence.

Roma's bells, again, are every bit as individual in tone, and the manner in which they are rung, as are the bells of either Florence or Venice. Whether it be the Marangona's deep-throated crash that sends Saint Mark's pigeons circling upward from the Piazza, or whether it be the snarling roar of the great bell in Giotto's tower, with all the lesser bells of Florence following in chorus, Italian bell music adds much to the complex charm of the land. At San Sepolcro the campanile and bells make a very characteristic feature of the town, and one is glad to hear the metallic clangour as many times a day as it pleases the ringers to pull the ropes.—From "Down the Tiber and Up to Rome," by Harold Donaldson Eberlein, Geoffrey J. Marks, Frank A. Wallis.

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New Gloves



Mystery gloves, fashioned of extra thin black silk lace, are all the rage in Paris at the moment. They are said to enhance the whiteness of arms and hands.

Map Making Today

Making a map of the world is no longer simply a matter of cloistered draftsmen, difficulties encountered by the National Geographical Society in completing their recently published world map demonstrated.

Stopping the presses three times in the final weeks of publication of the map in order to make changes necessitated by new developments in the complicated maze of international relations, and by unexpected changes in names of cities, was only one of innumerable obstacles faced in the society's task of trying to make an up-to-the-minute picturization of the world.

Probably the most trying task of the numerous preliminary details, the society said, was that of obtaining the correct spellings of names of cities and countries. The Japanese Embassy, on one occasion, in order to determine whether a final "O" should be placed on the word "Manchukuo," was forced to cable half way around the world. The answer was "yes."

Many names, which have been familiar to the world at large for centuries, fail to appear on this latest map. In their place appear other names, unrecognizable to most people. For example, "Nizhni Novgorod," famed for centuries as a great Russian city, now appears as "Maxim Gorki." The Hague is now "s Gravenhage," although the former name is listed in parenthesis to help the reader. Swyrno is listed under its newest name—"Tzmir."

The physical problem of printing the map and distributing it was in itself no mean task. More than forty-two tons of a particular kind of paper were used in making it, and more than 5,000,000 impressions were made, during which process the sheets traveled an estimated total distance of more than 2,569 miles. Nearly two tons of special inks were used.

"What do you think of our mural tablets?" asked the cathedral verger. "Yaal," drawled the American visitor. "I put a penny in the box over there, but nothing came out; so I guess I didn't get a chance to try them."

World's Surface Same In All Ages, Expert Says

Washington.—Oceans and continents always have been much as they are today in major outlines, says Dr. Charles E. Resser, paleontologist of the Smithsonian Institution.

Record of the rocks since earliest times on earth indicates that the only changes in outline have been minor ones, caused by slow rising and sinking of the land.



First Politician—"I suppose you have said things that you were sorry for?"

Second Politician—"Oh, yes, but I have always managed to show that I was misquoted."

Each of the unemployed men in Bolivia is entitled to obtain from the Government the gold washing rights of five acres in La Paz area.

It is an unexpected explosion of thought.

Girl Guide News

Brownies' Health

A is the Air we breathe! The ugliest our nose.

Not through our mouth the germs are our foes.

B is for Back, now all through the year you must tuck in your back. I tall you would grow.

C stands for Clothes we change every week.

For true Brownies always for cleanliness seek.

D is Disease which is what we avoid. And make all the nasty germs—oh, so annoyed!

E stands for Ears we wash every day. For otherwise how could we hear what folk say?

F is for Feet; take care of them, do! For think what a lot of work they do for you.

G stands for Germs, those teeny wee things.

Which hide in the dirt and illness bring.

H is for Hair so shining and bright. We brush it at morning, and brush it at night.

I's Indigestion—an unpleasant pain. If we don't eat so fast we won't get it again.

J is for Jubbe, if you have