INITIALS ONLY

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN
AUTHOR OF "THE LEAVENWORTH CASE"
"THE FILIGREE BALL" "THE HOUSE OF THE WHISPERING PINES"
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CHARLES WILLIAMS
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SYNOPSIS.

George Anderson and wife see a remarkable looking man come out of the woods. He is in a trance and walks with his hands in the snow and gazes at the Crescent attracts them to the Clarmont, a fashionable hotel. Anderson is a detective. Mrs. Anderson has fallen fond. Anderson describes the man to be Orlando Brotherson. Physicians find that Miss Challoner was drugged. Anderson suspects Brotherson of being guilty of acquisition. Gryce, an aged detective, and Sweetwater, his assistant, are called in. Gryce is interested. Miss Challoner's jewelry is missing. Gryce's sister found near the scene of tragedy is believed to be the woman used.

CHAPTER V—Continued.

"Does that frighten you? Are you so affected by the thought of blood?"

"I don't see me. And I put the thing under my pillow! I thought it was all —so pretty."

"Mrs. Washington." Mr. Gryce from that moment ignored the daughter. "Did you go there?"

"Yes, but I didn't know where it came from. I had not even my daughter sleep. I didn't know where she got it till I read that bulletin."

"Never mind that. The question anything as to whether any stain was left under that pillow?"

"I didn't see any stain, but you can look for yourself. The bed has been made up, but there was no change of linen. We expected to remain here a few days and can be gained by hiding any of the facts now."

"None whatever, madam."

"Come, Carolina, Caroline, sit down and stop crying. Mr. Gryce believes that you have not been frightened by the girl. 'You had no idea, I'm sure, where that scapegoat came from or that what it had been used. That's enough, dear."

Her shudder, as she seated herself, was very noticeable. She was very young to simulate so successfully emotions of this character.

"I'm glad of that," she responded, half trustfully, half gratefully, as Mr. Gryce followed her mother into the adjoining room. "I've had a bad enough time of it without being blamed for what I didn't know and didn't do."

Mr. Gryce laid little stress upon these words, but much upon the look of curiosity she showed in the minute and careful examination he now made of her room. There was no stain on the pillow-sham and none on the brown-spread where she might have naturally laid her head after lying down on first coming into her room. The blade was perished that it must have been rubbed off somewhere, either purposely or by accident.

They returned to where the girl still sat, wrapped in her cloak, sobbing still, but not so violently.

"Will—will he tell?" she whispered. The answer came quickly, but not to the mother's tones. Mr. Gryce's voice had lost none of their natural acuteness.

"I do not see that I should gain much by doing so. The one closest to me, and who would feel the fact of your indiscretion with Miss Challoner's death, I fear, failed to make. Do you remember the exact spot where you stood, Miss Watkins?"

"No, no. Somewhere near those big chairs; I didn't have to step out of my way; I recall a good deal."

Mr. Gryce's answering smile was a study. It seemed to convey a kindly message, one for the mother and one for the strong petite, ventured finally to remark.

"I have had a fine idea left on the subject."

"And what is that?"

"The girl wore a red cloak. If I may take not, the finding of a blue cloak spot on it might not show to the casual observer. Yet it would mean much to us."

"Sweetwater!"

A faint blush rose to the old man's cheek.

"Shall I request the privilege of looking that garment over?"

"Yes."

The young fellow ducked and left the room. When he returned, it was with a downcast air.

"Nothing doing," said he.

And then there was silence.

A knock at the door was followed by the immediate entrance of Mr. Chalmers, who had come in search of the inspector, and showed some surprise to find his place occupied by an unknown old man.

Mr. Gryce motioned Sweetwater from the room. With a woeful look the young detective withdrew, his last glance cast at the cutter still lying in full view on the table.

Mr. Gryce, not unmindful himself of this object, took it up, then laid it down again with an air of seeming abstraction.

The latter's attention was caught.

"What is that?" he cried, advancing a step and bestowing more than an ordinary glance at the object thus brought carefully, as it were, to his notice.

Mr. Gryce, observing the other's emotion, motioned him to a chair. As his visitor sank into it, he remarked, with all the consideration exacted by the situation:

"It is unknown property, Mr. Chalmers. But we have every reason to think it belonged to your daughter."

"I have seen it, or one like it, often in her hand." Here he drew suddenly himself and the hand stretched forth to grasp it quickly came back. "Where—where was it found?" he hurriedly demanded. "O God! am I to be crushed to the very earth by sorrow?"

Mr. Gryce hastened to give him such relief as was consistent with truth.

"It was picked up—last night—from the lobby floor. There is nothing remarkable in connect it with her death.

The pause was eloquent. Mr. Chalmers' grief gave the detective an agonized look and turned white to the lips. Struggling visibly, as the silence continued, his head fell forward, and he muttered, in a voice scarcely audible:

"I honestly believe her the victim of some fearsome stranger. I do now, but—but I cannot understand the police —any cost I must retract a statement I made under false impressions and with no desire to deceive. I said that I recognized all of the persons who admired her and aspired to her hand as being known to me, but I made a secret heart as thoroughly as I had supposed. Among my efforts I have just come upon a batch of letters—love letters, I am forced to acknowledge—signed by initials totally strange to me. The letters are mainly in two —most of them—but one—

"What about the one?"

"Shows that the writer was displeased. It may mean nothing, but I could not let the matter go without calling myself right with the authorities. If it might be allowed to rest with these letters can remain secret, if would save me the annoyance of seeing her honest concerns—the secret of her innocent recesses of a woman's heart, laid open to the public gaze.