Woman's Realm -:- Social and Personal -:- Fashions -:- Literature

The Murder at Hazelmoor

By AGATHA CHRISTIE

Chapter 1 Continued

Some of the girl's animation dropped away from her. She seemed almost constrained in her manner as she answered.

"Yes—this is the first time I've ever been away. It's all most frightfully thrilling."

Thrilling to be shut away like this is a remote moorland village? Funny idea. He couldn't get the hang of these people.

The door opened and the parlormaid announced:

Mr. Rycroft and Mr. Garfield."

There entered a little, elderly, dried-up man and a fresh-colored, boyish young man. The latter spoke first.

"I brought him along, Mrs. Willett. Said I wouldn't let him be buried in a snowdrift. Ha, ha. I say, this all looks simply marvelous. Yule logs burning."

"As he says, my young friend very kindly piloted me here," said Mr. Rycroft as he shook hands somewhat ceremoniously. "How do you do, Miss Violet? Very seasonable weather—rather too seasonable, I fear."

He moved to the fire talking to Mrs. Willett. Ronald Garfield buttonholed Violet.

"I say, can't we get up any skating anywhere? Aren't there some ponds about?"

"I think path digging will be your only sport."

"I've been at it all the morning."

"Oh! you he-man!"

"Don't laugh at me. I've got blisters all over my hands."

"How's your aunt?"

"Oh! She's always the same — sometimes she says she's better and sometimes she says she's worse, but I think it's all the same really. It's a ghastly life, you know. Each year, I wonder how I can stick it—but there it is—if one doesn't rally round the old bird for Xmas—why, she's quite capable of leaving her money to a cat's home. She's got five of them, you know. I'm always stroking the brutes and pretending I dote upon them."

"Mr. Duke," announced the parlormaid.

Mr. Duke was a recent arrival. He had bought the last of the six bungalows in September. He was a big man, very quiet and devoted to gardening. Mr. Rycroft who was an enthusiast on birds and who lived next door to him had taken him up, over-ruling the section of thought which voiced the opinion that of course Mr. Duke was a very nice man, quite unassuming, but was he, after all, quite — well, quite? Mightn't he, just possibly, be a retired tradesman?

But nobody liked to ask him—and indeed it was thought better not to know. Because if one did know, it might be awkward, and really in such a small community it was best to know everybody.

"Not walking to Exhampton in this weather?" he asked of Major Burnaby.

"No, Trevelyan will hardly expect me tonight."

"It's awful, isn't it?" said Mrs. Willett with a shudder. "To be buried up here, year after year—it must be ghastly."

Mr. Duke gave her a quick glance. Major Burnably too stared at her curiously.

But at that moment tea was brought in.

After tea, Mrs. Willett suggested bridge.

"There are six of us. Two can cut in."

Ronnie's eyes brightened.

"You four start," he suggested. "Miss Willett and I will cut in."

But Mr. Duke said that he did not play bridge.

Ronnie's face fell.

"We might play a round game," said Mrs. Willett.

"Or table turning, or tipping," suggested Ronnie. "It's a spooky evening. Mr. Rycroft and I were talking about it this evening as we came along here."

"I am a member of the Psychical Research Society," explained Mr. Rycroft in his precise way. "I was able to put my young friend right on one or two points."

"Tommy rot," said Major Burnaby very distinctly.

"Oh! but it's great fun, don't you think?" said Violet Willett. "I mean, one doesn't believe in it or anything. It's just an amusement. What do you say, Mr. Duke?"

"Anything you like, Miss Willett."

"We must turn the lights out, and we must find a suitable table. No—not that one, Mother. I'm sure it's much too heavy."

Things were settled at last to everyone's satisfaction. A small round table with a polished top was brought from an adjoining room. It was set in front of the fire and everyone took his place round it with the lights switched off.

Major Burnaby was between his hostess and Violet. On the other side of the girl was Ronnie Garfield. A cynical smile creased the major's lips.

There were all the usual laughs whispers, stereotyped remarks.

"The spirits are a long time."

"Got a long way to come."

"Hush—nothing will happen unless we are serious."

At last,after some time, the murmur of talk died away.

A silence.

A tremor ran through the polished surface. The table began to rock.

"Ask it questions. Who shall ask? You, Ronnie."

"Oh—er—what do I ask it?"

"Is a spirit present?" prompted Violet.

"Oh! Hullo—is a spirit present?"

A sharp rock.

"That means yes," said Violet.

"Oh! er—who are you?"

No response.

"Ask it to spell its name."

"How can it?"

"We count the number of rocks."

"Oh! I see. Will you please spell your name."

The table started rocking violently.

"A B C D E F G H I—I say, was that I or J?"

"Ask it. Was that I?"

One rock.

"Yes. Next letter please."

The spirit's name was Ida.

"Have you a message foranyone here?"

"Yes."

"Who is it for? Miss Willett?"

"No."

"Mrs. Willett?"

"No."

"Mr. Rycroft?"

"No."

"Me?"

"Yes."

"It's for you, Ronnie. Go on. Make it spell it out."

The table spelled "Diana."

"Who's Diana? Do you know anyone called Diana?"

"No, I don't. At least——"

"There you are. He does."

"Ask her if she's a widow?"

The fun went on. Mr. Rycroft smiled indulgently. Young people must have their jokes. He caught one glance of his hostess's face in a sudden flicker of the firelight. It looked worried and abstracted. Her thoughts were somewhere far away.

Major Burnaby was thinking of the snow. It was going to snow again this evening. Hardest winter he ever remembered.

Mr. Duke was playing very seriously. The spirits, alas, paid very little attention to him. All the messages seemed to be for Violet and Ronnie.

Violet was told she was going to Italy. Someone was going with her. Not a woman. A man. His name was Leonard.

More laughter. The table spelled the name of the town. A Russian jumble of letters—not in the least Italian.

The usual accusations were leveled.

"Look here, Violet," (Miss Willett" had been droppd.) "You are shoving."

"I'm not. Look, I take my hands right off the table and it tips and rocks just the same."

"I like raps. I'm going to ask it to rap. Loud ones."

There was a pause. The table was inert. It returned no answer to questions.

"Has Ida gone away?"

One languid rock.

(To Be Continued)

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The HOUSEWIFE and HER ACTIVITIES

SUMMER-STORM

The sun has set, fast falls the night,
The crickets song is hushed in fright,
The mother-bird has sought her nest,
Dark storm-clouds gather in the west,
A brooding silence rests o'er all,
A sudden splash of rain-drops fall,
A vivid flash sweeps o'er the sky,
Deep thunder rolls, the storm is nigh.

—C.W.W.

Curtains

To prevent short curtains from blowing vases off window ledges try the flowing hint: Screw a small hook under the wooden window sill, and sew a small loop on to the bottom of your curtain. The curtain can then be hooked into position without spoiling the appearance of the window.

Raffia Bags

Raffia bags can be made like new again by means of straw hat dye. Remove the lining from the bag and paint on the color with a small brush.

Salt Cellars

To prevent salt from cacking in salt cellars, mix in a little ground rice.

Boiled Rice

To prevent boiled rice or other milk pudding from sticking to the bottom of the saucepan during cooking, first grease the bottom of the pan with a little butter.

Cleaning Wallpaper

To clean wallpaper, make a large piece of dough and rub over the walls with it, turning the dough as soon as it becomes dirty.

Peeling Onions

After peeling onions wash your hands in cold water to rid them of the smell. If washed in hot water, the pores are opened, and the juice penetrates the skin.

GIVE RUGS OR CARPETS A GOOD SHAMPOO

How the sun shows up the telltale marks on the rug or carpet and makes the pattern we thought so clear look dull and unattractive Now is the time to give the carpet a shampoo. It will look all the better for it, just as your hair does. First go over it with a brush or vacuum cleaner, then rub over a soapy lather carpet soap, adding a little ammonia to the suds. Remove all traces of soap with a damp cloth, using several changes of water, then finally rub with a dry cloth.

ANOTHER WAY

Or you can clean the carpet by sprinkling it liberally with common salt. Leave this on for an hour, then brush off, and rub the carpet over with a cloth dipped in hot water, adding to this a lump of ammonia.

Ink marks should be removed at once, but if you come across any which have been left to dry, apply salt and lemon juice. Leave for one hour, then brush off and rub with a cloth dipped in ammonia.

Greasemarks may be removed by covering them with a paste made by mixing together some fuller's earth and magnesia.

Leave on overnight, then brush off and rub over with a damp cloth.

DO'S AND DON'T FOR HOT WEATHER

Here are the "sunshine warnings" of Sir Arbuthnot Lane, President of the British New Health Society.

Don't wear tight collars and restricting garments.

Don't eat meaty meals. Get away from the "three good meals a day habit.

Don't sleep in hot, stuffy rooms.

Don't expose yourself to the sun for long periods.

Gradualness is the secret of successful sun-bathing.

Don't let your children rush about during the hottest part of the day.

Eat plenty of fresh fruit and green vegetables.

Substitute dairy products for "flesh" foods.

City workers should have a good substantial breakfast.

Ensure that your children wear a light, wide-brimmed hat of the panama type to protect the head and neck from the sun.

HISTORY IN GRANITE.

Two hundred and forty granite landmarks stretching from the Swiss frontier to the sea-coast of Belgium indicate the limit of the only advance in the war.

Seven of these are in the Ypres salient, and the Ypres League, at the invitation of the Belgian Government, has provided the stones. They are four feet high, and each is surmounted by a carved representation of the "tin hat." On each is inscribed in English, French, and Flemish the phrase: "Here the invader was brought to a standstill."

The League has also erected forty landmarks on sites which became famous during the fighting in Flanders. Each is an iron post bearing the name by which the place was known to the troops engaged. Some of the names which have become immortal, like "Sanctuary Wood" and "Kitchener Wood," have a curious origin. The latter has no connection with the name of the great field marshal, but is a soldier's translation of its real name, Bois de Cuisinier.

The former owes its strange title to the fact that when, in October, 1914, Gen. Bulfin had collected there a number of small parties and stragglers, he issued an order that they "were in sanctuary and not to be employed except by his instructions." The soldiers came to the natural conclusion that they were in Sanctuary Wood.

THE COOK'S CORNER

Gooseberries Canned

Use ½-lb. sugar to 1 lb. ripe gooseberries; let the fruit stand two to three hours covered with the sugar in the preserving vessel, then bring slowly to the boiling point. Fill into jars and cool.

Green Gooseberries Canned

Fill the jars with green fruit, shaking it well down; fill the jars with water that has been boiled and allowed to get perfectly cold; seal wrap each jar in paper and set in cool place.

Gooseberry Jelly

Take well grown fruit, but not quite ripe, cover with water and boil until they are soft; strain the juice, and to each pint of juice allow 1 lb. of sugar. Proceed as for other jellies.

Qualities That Make For Individual Popularity — Dorothy Dix — Says That All Virtues Can Be Acquired By Practice

It is Just as Easy to Make People Admire Us as it is to Have Them Give Us Only a Passing Notice — Life Will be so Much Brighter

A young girl asks: What are the qualities that make an individual popular? Well, there is no particular charm or virtue that makes a person a knockout with his fellow creatures, but, generally speaking, we like friendly people, the sort of people who meet our advances half way, who speak to us cordially, who never miss the opportunity to do us a good turn and who take a kindly interest in us and our affairs.

You never see anybody pinning any popularity medals on the breasts of cold, reserved people, who act as if every one they met was just so much poison to them. Nor is digging human clams out of their shells a pastime that appeals to many. Those who like to flock by themselves are permitted to do so without any interference from the general public.

We like people who are easy on the eyes. That is why we fall for beautiful women and handsome men at sight. It takes a lot of virtues to offset a snub nose and carroty hair and a face that is just as assemblage of ill-assorted features. The homely have to work for all they get, but the good-lookers have the world presented to them on a silver salver.

We like well-dressed people. Nothing sells men and women to us quicker than for them to look as if they had just stepped out of a bandbox. If they are well groomed, freshly shaved or waved, we think that they have personal pride and are willing to take the trouble to make the best of themselevs. If their clothes are well chosen and up-to-date, we feel that they have judgment and perception and that they have judgment and perception and that they keep up with the times. But if they are slouchy and untidy, and look as if they had just been finished out of a ragbag, we rate them as lazy and slipshod and back numbers.

We like intelligent people. We like men and women who have good, hard, horse sense and who can be depended upon to use their heads in any situation and do the best thing that could have been done under the circumstances who never run off with new fads and freak religions, but who keep their feet firmly planted on the earth, their minds open to new ideas and their opinions sane and reasonable.

We like people with good manners. There is nothing else on earth that pays such big dividends as courtesy. We go back to the shops where the salespeople take the trouble to tsy to please us; we give jobs to the applicants who ask for them pretty please. Just a little gallantry to an old lady, just a note of thanks, just a little deference to a crotchety old man, just knowing how to open a door or pull out a lady's chair at a table has boosted many a man into success. The boor may have a heart of gold, but few will dig under his roughness to find it.

We like tactful people. All of us purr under the hand that strokes our fur the right way. We like those who remember our tastes and cater to our little peculiarities. We like those who never step on our toes or ride houghshod over our prejudices. We like those who always say the right things to us and recall our triumphs instead of reminding us of our failures.

We like interesting people. We like people who have been places and seen things and who can tell about them in a bright and sprightly way. We like men and women who read and think and who can discuss a new book or a new play and what is going on in the world. Everybody dreads a bore. Being slain with the jawbone of an ass is such a peculiarly lingering and painful way in which to die.

We like modest people. We like men and women who put the soft pedal on their own achievemnts and possessions and who do not feel called upon to spend hours at a time telling you how great and wonderful they are, and what infant phenomena their children are, and how many millionaires want to marry their daughters, and how their sons won the football game, and so on and so on.

We like sincere people. We like people to be what they are and we despise the pretender and the poser. We honor and respect those who are not ashamed of doing honest work, who do not affect to be more cultured than they are, who live within their incomes and who do not try to keep up with the Joneses.

We like cheerful people who laugh things off instead of having hysterics over them. We like the people who tell us a joke instead of their troubles and who send us off with a smile on our lips instead of an added burden of sorrow on our hearts. Most of us have troubles enough of our own without having our neighbors' griefs added to them.

We like girls who are pretty and sweet and modest and who don't pretend to be hard-boiled and sophisticated and who don't think they have to pet and drink and smoke in order to get a date.

We like boys who respect their parents, who think their father is the greatest man in the world and who have some purpose in life besides being a rounder.

We like husbands and wives who love each other, who make a happy home, who are good parents, and who never stage their fights in public, if they have any. There are none of these qualities that may not be acquired by any one desiring to be popular. Try a few.

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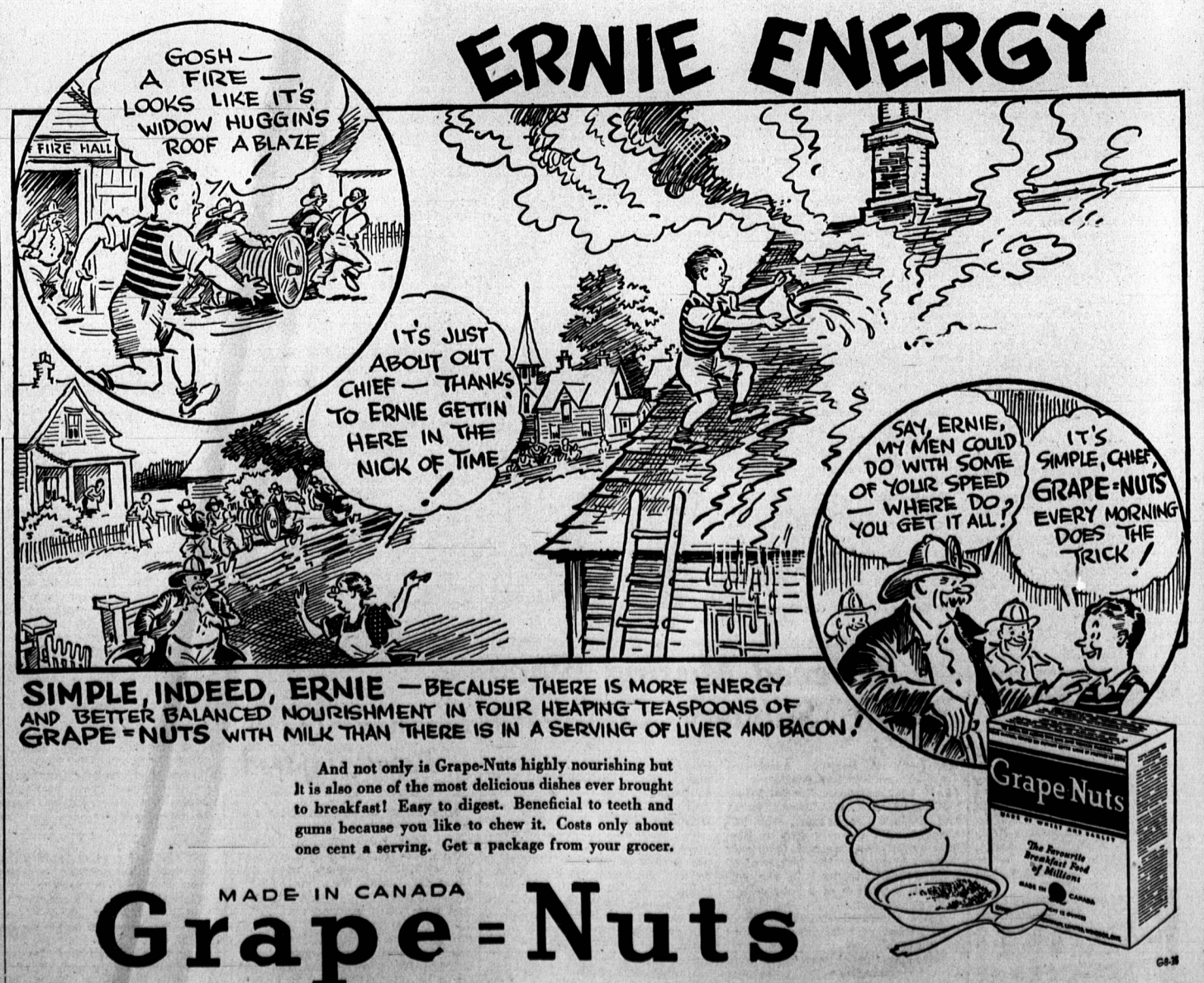

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