

# DARK HOLLOW

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

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## CHAPTER I.

### The House of Mystery.

A high and narrow gate of carefully joined boards, standing ajar in a fence of the same construction! What is there in this to rouse a whole neighborhood and collect before it a group of eager, anxious, hesitating people?

This is Judge Ostrander's place, and anyone who knows Shelby or the gossip of its suburbs knows that this house of his has not opened its doors to any outsider, man or woman, for over a dozen years; nor have his gates been seen in all that time to gape at anyone's instance or to stand unclosed to public intrusion. The seclusion sought was absolute. The men and women who passed and repassed this corner many times a day were as ignorant as the townspeople in general of what lay behind the gray, monotonous exterior of the weatherbeaten boards they so frequently brushed against.

The house was there, of course—they all knew the house, or did once—but there were rumors of another fence, a second barrier, standing a few feet inside the first and similar to it in all respects, even to the gates which corresponded exactly with those outer and visible ones and probably were just as fully provided with bolts and bars.

And now! In the freshness of this summer morning, without warning or any seeming reason for the change, the strict habit of years has been broken into and this gate of gates is not only standing unlocked before their eyes, but a woman—a stranger to the town as her very act shows—has been seen to enter there!—to enter, but not come out; which means that she must still be inside, and possibly in the very presence of the judge.

Where is Bela? Why does he allow his errands—But it was Bela, or so they have been told, who left this gate ajar. . . he, the awe and terror of the town, the enormous, redoubtable, close-mouthed negro, trusted as man is seldom trusted, and faithful to his trust, yes, up to this very hour, as all must acknowledge, in spite of every temptation (and they had been many and alluring) to disclose the secret of this home of which he was not the least interesting factor. What has made him thus suddenly careless, he who has never been careless before? Money? A bribe from the woman who had entered there?

What else was there to believe? There stood the gate with the pebble holding it away from the post; and here stood half the neighborhood, in a fascination which had for its motif the knowledge that they, themselves, if they had courage enough, might go in, just as this woman had gone in, and see—why, what she is seeing now—the unknown, unguessed reason for all these mysteries—the hidden treasure or the hidden sorrow which would explain why he, their first citizen, the respected, even revered judge of their highest court, should make use of such precautions and show such unvarying determination to bar out all comers from the place he called his home.

It had not always been so. Within the memory of many there it had been an abode of cheer and good fellowship. Not a few of the men and women now hesitating before its portals could boast of meals taken at the judge's ample board, and of evenings spent in animated conversation in the great room where he kept his books and did his writing.

But that was before his son left him in so unaccountable a manner; before—yes, all were agreed on this point—before that other bitter ordeal of his middle age, the trial and condemnation of the man who had waylaid and murdered his best friend.

Though the effect of these combined sorrows had not seemed to be immediate (one month had seen both); though a half-year had elapsed before all sociability was lost in extreme self-absorption, and a full one before he took down the picket fence which had hitherto been considered a sufficient protection to his simple grounds, and put up these boards which had so completely isolated him from the rest of the world, it was evident enough to the friends who recalled his look and step as he walked the streets with Algren Etheridge on one side and his brilliant, ever-successful son on the other, that the change now observable in him was due to the violent sundering of these two ties. Grief slowly

settled into confirmed melancholy, and melancholy into eccentricities. Judge Ostrander was a recluse of the most uncompromising type; but he was such for only half his time. From ten in the morning till five in the afternoon, he came and went like any other citizen, fulfilling his judicial duties with the same scrupulous care as formerly and with more affability. Indeed, he showed at times, and often when it was least expected, a mellowness of temper quite foreign to him in his early days. The admiration awakened by his fine appearance on the bench was never marred now by those quick and rasping tones of an easily disturbed temper which had given edge to his invective when he stood as pleader in the very court where he now presided as judge. But away from the bench, once quit of the courthouse and the town, the man who attempted to accost him on his way to his carriage or sought to waylay him at his own gate had need of all his courage to sustain the rebuff his presumption incurred.

The son, a man of great ability who was making his way as a journalist in another city, had no explanation to give of his father's peculiarities. Though he never came to Shelby—the rupture between the two, if rupture it were, seeming to be complete—there were many who had visited him in his own place of business and put such questions concerning the judge and his eccentric manner of living as must have provoked response had the young man had any response to give. But he appeared to have none. Either he was as ignorant as themselves of the causes which had led to his father's habit of extreme isolation, or he showed powers of dissimulation hardly in accordance with the other traits of his admirable character.

All of which closed inquiry in this



They Burst Through the Second Gate.

direction, but left the maw of curiosity unsatisfied. And unsatisfied it had remained up to this hour, when through accident—or was it treachery—the barrier to knowledge was down and the question of years seemed at last upon the point of being answered.

Meantime a fussy, talkative man was endeavoring to impress the rapidly collecting crowd with the advisability of their entering all together and approaching the judge in a body.

"We can say that we felt it to be our duty to follow this woman in," he argued. "Didn't you say she had a child with her, Miss Weeks?"

"Yes, and—"

She had about decided that it was only proper for her to enter and make sure that all was right with the judge when she saw a woman looking at her from the road—a woman all in purple even to the veil which hid her features. A little child was with her, and the two must have stepped into the road from behind some of the bushes, as neither of them were anywhere in sight when she herself came running down from the corner.

It was enough to startle anyone, especially as the woman did not speak, but just stood silent and watching her through a veil the like of which was not to be found in Shelby, and which in itself was enough to rouse a decent woman's suspicions.

She was so amazed at this that she stepped back and attempted to address the stranger. But before she had got much further than a timid and hesitating "Madam," the woman, roused into action possibly by her interference, made a quick gesture suggestive of impatience if not rebuke, and moving resolutely towards the gate Miss Weeks had so indiscreetly left unguarded, pushed it open and disappeared within, dragging the little child after her.

"And she's in there still?" "I haven't seen her come out."

"Then what's the matter with you?" called a burly, high-strung woman, stepping hastily from the group and laying her hand upon the gate still standing temptingly ajar. "It's no time for nonsense," she announced, as she pushed it open and stepped promptly in, followed by the motley group of men and women who, if they lacked courage to lead, certainly showed willingness to follow.

One glance and they felt their courage rewarded. Rumor, which so often deceives, proved itself correct in this case. A second gate confronted them exactly like the first, even to the point of being held open by a pebble placed against the post. And a second fence, also built upon the same pattern as the one they had just passed through; the two forming a double barrier as mysterious to contemplate in fact as it had ever been in fancy. In gazing at these fences and the canyonlike bank stretching between them the wand of curious invaders forgot their prime errand for a moment.

But whatever the mysteries of the place, a greater one awaited them beyond, and presently realizing this, they burst with one accord through the second gate into the mass of greenery which, either from neglect or intention, masked this side of the Ostrander homestead.

Never before had they beheld so lawless a growth or a house so completely lost amid vines and shrubbery. Two solemn fir trees, which were all that remained of an old-time and famous group, kept guard over the untended lawn, adding their suggestion of age and brooding melancholy to the air of desolation infesting the whole place. One might be approaching a tomb for all taken that appeared of human presence. Even sound was lacking. It was like a painted scene—a dream of human extinction.

Instinctively the women faltered and the men drew back; then the very silence caused a sudden reaction, and with one simultaneous rush they made for the only entrance they saw and burst without further ceremony into the house.

A common hall and common furnishings confronted them. More they could not gather; for blocked as the doorway was by their crowding figure, the little light which sifted in over their heads was not enough to show up details. Halting with one accord in what seemed to be the middle of the uncarpeted floor, they waited for some indication of a clear passageway to the great room where the judge would undoubtedly be found in conversation with his strange guest.

ed them upon this adventure was still ahead; but even she quailed when she found herself face to face with a heavy curtain instead of a yielding door.

"Look at this!" she whispered, pushing the curtain inward with a quick movement.

Sunshine! A stream of it, dazzling them almost to blindness and sending them, one and all, pell-mell back upon each other! However dismal the approach, here all was in brilliant light with every evidence before them of busy life.

The room was not only filled, but crammed, with furniture. This was the first thing they noticed; then, as their blinking eyes became accustomed to the glare and to the unexpected confusion of tables and chairs and screens and standing receptacles for books and pamphlets and boxes labeled and padlocked, they beheld something else.

The judge was there, but in what a condition. From the end of the forty-foot room his seated figure confronted them, silent, staring and unmoving. With clenched fingers gripping the arms of his great chair and head held forward, he looked like one frozen at the moment of doom, such the expression of features usually so noble, and now almost unrecognizable were it not for the snow white of his locks and his unmistakable brow.

Frozen! Not an eyelash quivered, nor was there any perceptible movement in his sturdy chest. His eyes were on their eyes, but he saw no one; and down upon his head and over his whole form the sunshine poured from a large window let into the ceiling directly above him, lighting up the strained and unnatural aspect of his remarkable countenance and bringing into sharp prominence the commonplace objects cluttering the table at his elbow.

Inarticulate murmurs swelled and ebbed, now louder, now more faintly as the crowd surged forward or drew back, appalled by that motionless, awe-compelling figure.

A breathless moment; then the horrified murmur rose here, there and everywhere: "He's dead! He's dead!" when quietly and convincingly a bluff masculine voice spoke from the doorway behind them.

"You needn't be frightened. In an hour or a half-hour he will be the same as ever. My aunt has such attacks. They call it catalepsy."

Imperceptibly the crowd dwindled; the most discreet among them quite content to leave the house; a few, and these the most thoughtful, devoted all their energies to a serious quest for the woman and child whom they continued to believe to be in hiding somewhere inside the walls she had so audaciously entered.

The small party decided to start their search by a hasty inspection of the front hall, when a shout and scramble in the passages beyond cut short their intent and held them panting and eager, each to his place.

Frightened, they drew their gaze from the rigid figure in the chair, and, with bated breaths and rapidly paling cheeks, listened to the distant murmur on the far-off road.

What was it? They could not guess, and it was with unbounded relief they pressed forward to greet the shadowy form of a young girl hurrying toward them from the rear, with news in her face. She spoke quickly.

## HUNTER SHOTS A DEER WITH OPIUM

### Adirondack Guide Puts Big Buck to Sleep and Captures It Alive.

Rome, N. Y.—An Adirondack guide dropped into Boonville, north of this city, the other day to lay in his winter supply of provisions, traps, ammunition and clothing, and told of his ingenious capture, alive, of a big buck. A man who owns a large deer park in the southern part of the Adirondacks had seen an unusually large buck that he was very anxious to secure for his preserve, and he offered \$100 for it, alive and crated, ready for shipment. All the guides in that sec-



Sent Contents of Both Barrels into Its Side.

tion knew of the big deer and made efforts to get it alive.

John Benham went to the nearest village and had the druggist make some pellets of gun, flour, paste and opium a trifle larger than buckshot. Then he loaded several shells with them.

The next time he saw the big buck on the runway he sent the contents of both barrels into its side. It ran and he followed it, coming up to it about two hours later. The buck was in a clump of evergreens fast asleep.

As soon as the hardened mixture so heavily loaded with opium entered the deer's body it had begun to dissolve, and soon the animal was overcome by sleep.

Benham said the deer had run in a circle and was only a few rods from his camp when it dropped asleep.

It was carried to camp and boxed for shipment, the antlers and hoofs being tied to the sides and bottom of the crate. When the buck awoke it was well on its way to the private park. Benham got a check for \$100 the next day.

## TOUGH EAR TURNS A BULLET

### Would-Be Suicide Fires Twice; First Bullet Only Tickles; Second Is a Mystery.

San Francisco, Cal.—Edward Duclos, an aged man, thought he wanted to die, so he bought a revolver and borrowed two cartridges. He suffered from an affliction in one ear. Putting the muzzle of the revolver in his ear he fired. The explosion was followed by a tickling sensation, so he took a little silver instrument used to probe his troublesome ear, and with this began feeling in the wound. The bullet dropped to the floor. Again he stuck the muzzle of the revolver in his ear and fired. Another explosion and still the tickling sensation.

Having no more bullets, Duclos went to Dr. E. W. Parson and told him a rambling story of a revolver accidentally going off and the bullet lodging in his ear. He said nothing about the second shot. Doctor Parson sent him to St. Mary's hospital and notified the police. Detectives de la Guerra and Maloney investigated. Duclos seemed worried about something until the detectives found the revolver hidden in a woodpile with the second bullet jammed in the muzzle. They told Duclos:

"I'll never try to commit suicide again," he said. "I was afraid I had swallowed that second bullet."

## SAVED FROM LIVING TOMB

### Held for Forty-Eight Hours in Quick-sand—Barrel Is Improvised Diver's Helmet.

Ware, Mass.—After 48 hours' imprisonment in quicksand, 25 feet below the surface of the earth, Maurice Allen was rescued by a gang of 50 firemen, policemen and citizens, who had dug a ditch 50 feet long and 30 feet deep to reach him.

Allen was conscious when rescued, but very weak. He said he had been unable to help himself, as his feet were held firmly by a piece of plank. A bit and saw, which were lowered to him, enabled him to work one of his feet free, but another cave-in buried the tools and left him as helpless as before.

## Dancing Frocks of Taffeta and Lace



NET-TOP laces over foundation skirts of taffeta silk are so excellent for making dancing frocks that the girl who is devoted to dancing cannot make a better choice of materials. The taffeta is just crisp enough and the lace has just body enough to keep a dancing gown from becoming crushed and "sleazy-looking," and taffeta seems somehow especially well suited to youthful wearers. It is an unpretentious material with a shining surface which looks particularly well under laces.

In the very simple draped bodice, the taffeta silk is draped over the lace underbodice, reversing the order of things in the skirt. The lace extends beyond the silk, forming a short sleeve drapery for the arms and a chemise at the front of the bodice. The bodice and skirt are joined at the waist line. A very wide girle and sash is made of the taffeta. It is laid in folds about the waist and extends from just below the bust to a few inches below the normal waist line. It is kept in shape with stays tacked to the front, sides and back, on the underside. The ends cross at the right and are brought down below the waist at the back, where the sash is finished with two big loops without ends.

## Waved and Unwaved Coiffures



NOT all of the new coiffures are waved and curled, but those that are not are rare enough to prove the rule that the new modes favor waves and curls about ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Both types are shown in the illustration, and both are beautiful, but the waved coiffure is far more becoming to the average woman.

In this coiffure the back hair is arranged in a French twist, which is spread out so that it looks soft, and pinned to place with small shell pins. The front hair is "stuffed" and combed back in a pompadour, with the ends pinned under the coil. It is then parted in a very shallow part at the front and fastened with invisible pins in pretty, soft waves about the face.

The waved hair is parted at one side and brought back to the coil, where the ends are either curled or pinned under. If the hair will not curl successfully or is very short, the small, soft curls may be bought ready to pin in. They are very light and naturally curly, and are used in many ways in the new styles. They are pinned down with invisible wire pins, making a fascinating finish along one side of the coil.

For the young woman with regular features it is a delightful style, showing off the abundance of her own hair to the very best advantage. JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

## Smart Handkerchiefs.

Colored handkerchiefs are being used. Made in fine linen to match the costume, if the color is light, to go with dark gowns the handkerchiefs must be vivid, such as red, orange, green or purple. They are made of an exquisite quality of linen and hand hemstitched, the hems being about a quarter of an inch wide. The monogram is embroidered in a darker shade than the handkerchief.

## Black Linings Used.

It is interesting to note that black satin linings are being introduced on many of the new tailored models—on almost all the smart coats made of navy cloth or serge, and also on coats in light colors. There is something very attractive about a black satin lining in a serge suit of the classic order. Such a lining supplies the little mannish touch which makes the suit original and a thing apart from the ready-made costumes which are to be found in the stores. A little

## NOT A MATTER OF INTELLECT

### Though Not Generally Understood, "Culture" Really Appertains to the Spirit.

We talk much of culture and get it mixed up with learning and scholarship. It may be these things, but never unless it has another quality, and that is gentility. Culture is a matter of the spirit, rather than the intellect. It is not as John Galsworthy says, scientific learning, social method, and iron discipline, nor the power of appreciating and producing works of art. Culture belongs to the soul; it feels more than it thinks. Think of a man, crabbid, short-spoken man being cultured! He is the very opposite of it. We have seen tall scholars who could read Greek, solve the calculus and discuss Spinoza, who were not as much cultured as a rabbit.

## Cable Over Whirlpool.

An aerial passenger cableway is soon to be built across the whirlpool at Niagara falls to enable visitors to get a close view of that marvel of nature and to experience the thrills connected with such a view without incurring any danger. The system, which is described with illustrations in the August Popular Mechanics magazine, is similar to one recently installed at San Sebastian, Spain, for spanning a chasm between two mountain resorts, and to the one that climbs the first stage of the Wetterhorn in Switzerland. The whirlpool is situated in Canadian territory, about six miles below Niagara falls. The cableway is to be about 1770 feet long, with the cables attached at an elevation of about 250 feet above the whirlpool. The car, which has already been built in Spain, has a capacity of fifty passengers.

## MOST DIFFICULT HINDU FEAT

### Dancing Girl Balances Eggs on Threads That Are Stretched From Rim of Wheel.

Of the many wonderful feats performed by Hindu jugglers, one of the most remarkable is the egg dance. Usually it is executed by a girl, fantastically dressed. She makes use of a willow wheel, around which at equal distances are threads, and at the end of each thread there is a noose, held open by a bead.

## Greek Coins Most Perfect.

### Between the rude issues of Asia Minor and the most perfect coins of the Greek states is an interval of three centuries, during which all that is known, or probably ever will be known, in beautifying a steel die is achieved. So far as design is concerned, the Greek coins were simply perfect. No modern coins can compare with them in beauty.—Scientific American.

## COW ON TRESTLE HALTS ALL

### Falls Between Sills and Owner Cautions the Trackmen to Handle Her Carefully.

Hazleton, Pa.—Transportation on the Jeddo branch of the Hazleton & Mahanoy division of the Lehigh railroad was tied up for half a day by a cow which in walking across the trestle near Drifton fell down between the sills.

The owner would not permit her to be handled roughly and the railroaders had their hands full to get her out.