

Dark Hollow

By Anna Katharine Green

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SYNOPSIS.

A curious crowd of neighbors invade the mysterious home of Judge Ostrander, county judge and eccentric recluse, following a veiled woman who has gained entrance through the gates of the fast double barriers surrounding the place. The woman has disappeared but the judge is found in a peculiar state. The judge awakes. Miss Weeks explains to him what has occurred during his absence. He secretly discovers the whereabouts of the veiled woman. She proves to be the widow of a man who married the judge and electrocuted for murder years before. Her daughter is engaged to the judge's son, from whom he is estranged, but the marriage is between the lovers. She tries to clear her husband's memory and asks the judge's aid. Miss Weeks tells the story of the murder of Albert Etheridge by John Scoville in Dark Hollow, twenty years before. The judge and Mrs. Scoville meet at Spencer's. Fully as she shows him how on the day of the murder she saw the shadow of a man, whistling a snail and wearing a long peaked cap. The judge engaged her and her daughter to live with him in his mysterious home. Deborah and her lawyer, Hank, go to the police station and see the records of the murder of Etheridge. She discovers a broken knife-blade point embedded in it. Deborah and her lawyer go to live with the judge. Deborah sees a portrait of Oliver, the judge's son, with a black band across his eyes. That night she finds in Oliver's room a cap with a peak like the shadowed one, and a knife with a broken blade-point. Anonymous letters increase her suspicions.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"I have been told—" thus Deborah easily proceeded, "that for a small house yours contains the most wonderful assortment of interesting objects. Where did you ever get them?"

"My father was a collector, on a very small scale of course, and my mother had a passion for hearing which prevented anything from going out of this house after it had once come into it."

"My husband—" began Mrs. Scoville, thoughtfully.

Miss Weeks stared in consternation at Mrs. Scoville, who hastened to say: "You wonder that I can mention my husband? Perhaps you will not be so surprised when I tell you that in my eyes he is a martyr, and quite guiltless of the crime for which he was punished."

"You think that?" There was real surprise in the manner of the questioner. Mrs. Scoville's brow cleared. She was pleased at this proof that her affairs had not yet reached the point of general gossip.

"Miss Weeks, I am a mother. I have a young and lovely daughter. Can I look in her innocent eyes and believe her father to have so forgotten his responsibilities as to overshadow her life with crime? No, I will not believe it. Circumstances were in favor of his conviction, but he never lifted the stick which struck down Algernon Etheridge."

Miss Weeks, who had sat quite still during the utterance of these remarks, fidgeted about at their close, with what appeared to the speaker, a sudden and quite welcome relief.

"Oh," she murmured, and said no more. It was not a topic she found easy of discussion.

The address which now spread over the very interesting countenance of her visitor, offered her an excuse for the introduction of a far more momentous topic, one she had burned to introduce, but had not known how.

"Mrs. Scoville, I hear that Judge Ostrander has got your daughter a piano. That is really a wonderful thing for him to do. Not that he is so close with his money, but that he has always been so set against all gaiety and companionship. I suppose you did not know the shock it would be to him when you asked Bela to let you into the gates?"

"No! I didn't know. But it is all right now. The judge seems to welcome the change. Miss Weeks, did you know Algernon Etheridge well enough to tell me if he was as good and irreproachable a man as they all say?"

"He was a good man, but he had a dreadfully obstinate streak in his disposition and very set ideas. I have heard that he and the judge used to argue over a point for hours. And he was most always wrong. For instance, he was wrong about Oliver."

"Oliver?"

"Judge Ostrander's son, you know. Mr. Etheridge wanted him to study for a professorship; but the boy was determined to go into journalism, and you see what a success he has made of it. As a professor he would probably have been a failure."

"Was this difference of opinion on the calling he should pursue the cause of Oliver's leaving home in the way he did?" continued Deborah, conscious of walking on very thin ice.

But Miss Weeks rather welcomed than resented this curiosity. Indeed, she was never tired of enlarging upon the Ostranders.

"I have never thought so. The judge would not quarrel with Oliver on so small a point as that. My idea is, though I never talk of it much, that they had a great quarrel over Mr. Etheridge. Oliver never liked the old student; I've watched them and I've seen. He hated his coming to the house so much; he hated the way his father singled him out and deferred to him and made him the confident of all his troubles. When they went on tear walks, Oliver always hung back,

and more than once I have seen him make a grimace of distaste when his father urged him forward. He was only a boy, I know, but his dislikes meant something, and if it ever happened that he spoke out his whole mind, you may be sure that some very bitter words passed."

Was this meant as an innuendo? Impossible to tell. Such nervous, fussy little bodies often possess minds of unexpected subtlety. Deborah gave up all hope of understanding her, and, accepting her statements at their face value, effusively remarked:

"You must have a very superior mind to draw such conclusions from the little you have seen. I have heard many explanations given for the breach you name, but never any so reasonable."

A flash from the spinster's wary eye, then a burst of courage and the quick retort:

"And what explanation does Oliver himself give? You ought to know, Mrs. Scoville."

The attack was so sudden as it was unexpected. Deborah flushed and trimmed her sails for this new tack, and inquiringly asked: "Then you have heard—" waited for the enlightenment these words were likely to evoke.

It came quickly enough.

"That he expected to marry your daughter? Oh, yes, Mrs. Scoville; it's common talk here now. I hope you don't mind my mentioning it."

Deborah's head went up. She faced the other fairly, with the look born of mother passion, and mother passion only.

"Reuther is blameless in this matter," she protested. "She was brought up in ignorance of what I felt sure would prove a handicap and misery to her. She loves Oliver as she will never love any other man, but when she was told her real name and understood fully what that name carries with it, she declined to saddle him with her shame. That's her story, Miss Weeks; one that hardly fits her appearance, which is very delicate. And, let me add, having once accepted her father's name, she refuses to be known by any other. I have brought her to Shelby where to our own surprise and Reuther's great happiness, we have been taken in by Judge Ostrander, an act of kindness for which we are very grateful."

Miss Weeks got up, took down one of her rarest treasures from an old etagere standing in one corner and laid it in Mrs. Scoville's hand.

"For your daughter," she declared. "Noble girl! I hope she will be happy."

The mother was touched, but not quite satisfied yet of the giver's real feelings towards Oliver, and, after thanking her warmly, remarked:

"There is but one thing that will ever make Reuther happy, and that she cannot have unless a miracle occurs. Oh, I do not wonder you smile. This is not the day of miracles. But if my belief in my husband could be shared; if I should be enabled to clear his name, might not love and loyalty be left to do the rest? Wouldn't the judge's objections, in that case, be removed? What do you think, Miss Weeks?"

"There! we will say no more about it." The little woman's attitude and voice were almost prayerful. "You have judgment enough for two. Besides, the miracle has not happened," she interjected, with a smile which seemed to say it never would.

Deborah sighed. Whether or not it was quite an honest expression of her feeling she will not inquire. She was there for a definite purpose and her way to it was, as yet, far from plain. The negative with which she followed up this sigh was one of sorrowful acceptance. She made haste, however, to qualify it.

"But I have not given up all hope. I know as well as any one how impossible the task must prove, unless I can light upon fresh evidence. And where am I to get that? Only from some new witness."

Miss Weeks' polite smile took on an expression of indulgence. This roused Deborah's pride and, hesitating no longer, she anxiously remarked:

"I have sometimes thought that Oliver Ostrander might be that witness. He certainly was in the ravine the night Algernon Etheridge was struck down."

Had she been an experienced actress of years she could not have thrown into this question a greater lack of all innuendo. Miss Weeks, already under her fascination, heard the tone but never thought to notice the quick rise and fall of her visitor's uneasy bosom, and so unwarned, responded with all due frankness:

"I know he was. But how will that help you? He had no testimony to give in relation to this crime, or he would have given it."

"That is true." The admission fell mechanically from Deborah's lips; she was not conscious, even of making it. Then, as her emotion choked her into silence, she sat with piteous eyes searching Miss Weeks' face, till she had recovered her voice, when she added this vital question:

"How did you know that Oliver was in the ravine that night? I only guessed it."

"Well, it was in this way. I do not often keep my eye on my neighbors (oh, no, Miss Weeks!), but that night I chanced to be looking over the way just at the minute Mr. Etheridge came out, and something I saw in his manner and in that of the judge who had followed him to the door, and in that of Oliver who, cap on head, was leaning towards them from a window over the porch, made me think that a controversy was going on between the two old people of which Oliver was the object. This naturally interested me, and I watched them long enough to see Oliver suddenly raise his hat and shake it at old Etheridge; then, in great rage, slam down the window and disappear inside. The next minute, and before the two below had done talking, I caught another glimpse of him as he dashed around the corner of the house on his way to the ravine."

"And Mr. Etheridge?"

"Oh, he left soon after. I watched him as he went by, his long cloak flapping in the wind. Little did I think he would never pass my window again."

So interested were they both, that neither for the moment realized the strangeness of the situation or that it was in connection with a crime for which the husband of one of them had suffered, they were taking up this past, and gossiping over its petty details.

Mrs. Scoville sighed and said: "I couldn't have been very long after you saw him that Mr. Etheridge was struck?"

"Only some twenty minutes. It takes just that long for a man to walk from this corner to the bridge."

"And you never heard where Oliver went?"

"It was never talked about at the time. Later, when some hint got about of his having been in the ravine that night, he said he had gone up the ravine, not down it. And we all believed him, madam."

"Of course, of course. What a discriminating mind you have, Miss Weeks, and what a wonderful memory! To think that after all these years you can recall that Oliver had a cap on his head when he looked out of the window at his father and Mr. Etheridge. If you were asked, I have no doubt you could tell its very color. Was it the peaked one?"

"Yes, I could swear to it." And Miss Weeks gave a little laugh, which

was the difference of opinion the cause of Oliver's leaving?"

sounded incongruous enough to Deborah, in whose heart at that moment a leaf was turned upon the past, which left the future hopelessly blank.

"Must you go?" Deborah had risen mechanically. "Don't, I beg, till you have relieved my mind about Judge Ostrander. I don't suppose that there is really anything behind that door of his which is would alarm anyone to see?"

Then, Deborah understood Miss Weeks. But she was ready for her.

"I've never seen anything of the sort," said she, "and I make up his bed in that very room every morning."

"Oh! And Miss Weeks drew a deep breath. "No article of immense value, such as that rare old bit of real Satsuma in the cabinet over there?"

"No," answered Deborah, with all the patience she could muster. "Judge Ostrander seems very simple in his tastes. I doubt if he would know Satsuma if he saw it."

Miss Weeks sighed. "Yes, he has never expressed the least wish to look over my shelves. So the double fence means nothing!"

"A whim," ejaculated Deborah, making quietly for the door. "The judge likes to walk at night when quite through with his work; and he doesn't like his ways to be noted. But he prefers the lawn now. I hear his step out there every night."

"Well, it's something to know that he leads a more normal life than formerly!" sighed the little lady as she prepared to usher her guest out.

"Come again, Mrs. Scoville; and, if I may, I will drop in and see you some day."

Deborah accorded her permission and made her final adieu. She felt as if a hand which had been stealing up her chest had suddenly gripped her

throat, choking her. She had found the man who had cast that fatal shadow down the ravine, twelve years before.

CHAPTER X.

Anonymous Letters.

Deborah re-entered the Judge's house a stricken woman. She reached her room door and was about to enter, when at a sudden thought she paused and let her eyes wander down the hall till they settled on another door, the one she had closed behind her the night before, with the deep resolve never to open it again except under compulsion. A few minutes later she was standing in one of the dim corners of Oliver's musty room, reopening a book which she had taken down from the shelves on her former visit. She remembered it from its torn back and the fact that it was an algebra. Turning to the fly leaf, she looked again at the names and schoolboy phrases she had seen scribbled all over its surface. For the one which she remembered as "I hate algebra."

It had not been a very clearly written "algebra," and she would never have given this interpretation to the scrawl, had she been in a better mood. Now another thought had come to her, and she wanted to see the word again. Was she glad or sorry to have yielded to this impulse, when by a closer inspection she perceived that the word was not "algebra" at all, but "Algernon. I hate A. Etheridge—I hate A. E.—I hate Algernon E." all over the page, and here and there on other pages, sometimes in characters so rubbed and faint as to be almost unreadable and again so pressed into the paper by a vicious pencil point as to have broken their way through to the leaf underneath.

The work of an ill-conditioned schoolboy! but—this hate dated back many years. Paler than ever, and with hands trembling almost to the point of incapacity, she put the book back and flew to her own room, the track of thoughts bitter almost to madness.

It was the second time in her life that she had been called upon to go through this precise torture. Then, only her own happiness and honor were involved; now it was Reuther's, and the fortune which sustained her through the ignominy of her own truth she failed her at the prospect of Reuther's. And again, the two cases were not equal. Her husband had had traits which, in a manner, had prepared her for the ready suspicion of people. But Oliver was a man of reputation and kindly heart; and yet, in the course of time this had come, and the question once agitating her as to whether Reuther was a fit mate for him and now evolved itself into this: Was he a fit mate for her?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

LIGHT ON JOHN'S "BARGAIN"

But Unsuspecting Mrs. Brown Could Only See Humorous Mistake Made by Store Clerk.

"I see you have one of those cake pans that Bargun's ten cent store sold last week at their special sale," said Mrs. White, as she was visiting in Mrs. Brown's kitchen one morning.

"Yes, isn't that good value for ten cents?" replied Mrs. Brown, holding the pan up proudly.

"Indeed it is," said Mrs. White, taking the pan in her hands. "I wanted one, but the good ones were all gone before I could be waited on. How did you manage it?"

"Oh, I sent John," smiled Mrs. Brown. "I was busy and couldn't go that morning, and you know John passes there each morning about eight o'clock, when the store opens. So I asked him if he wouldn't stop and get me a pan, and he said he would."

"I should think you would be afraid to trust him to buy one. Some of them were quite badly damaged, you know," said Mrs. White.

"Oh, John is careful," Mrs. Brown assured her. "He always gets the best of everything. The one he got me is absolutely perfect as far as I can see."

"Well, isn't that wonderful! I didn't see a perfect one in the store. But didn't your husband object to carrying the pan home? Mine would, and they never deliver anything sold at the special sales."

"They delivered this," said Mrs. Brown. "John is well known and the stores are anxious to accommodate him. Then he has a way of getting things done."

"I shall certainly send Robert to Bargun's the next time they have a special sale," said Mrs. White. "Why, this pan is just as good as the ones they sell for a quarter at Jones' hardware store, next door to Bargun's."

"Yes, it is exactly the same," said Mrs. Brown, triumphantly. "I thought it was, but I wanted to make sure; so I went into the hardware store the other day and asked to see their pans. They showed me one for a quarter that is exactly like mine. I told the man I had got a pan just like it for ten cents, and then he made the funniest mistake—he said he had sold John one only a few days ago. Wasn't that queer?"

"It certainly was," said Mrs. White. "Youth's Companion."

Cost of Fame.

Soon after victory had declared itself in favor of the British arms at the memorable battle of Blenheim the Duke of Marlborough, in traversing the ranks, observed a soldier leaning in a pensive manner on the butt-end of his musket. His grace immediately accosted him thus: "Why so pensive my friend, after so glorious a victory?" "It may be glorious," replied the son of Mars, "but I have only earned forgiveness by contributing to all this acquisition of fame!"

For Travel Wear and Other Wear



One of many separate coats, which have been cleverly christened with a few names—the "overall" coat—is pictured here. It is made up in black and white checked material, with ball buttons of gun-metal finish for its sole decoration. No coat could be much plainer and few could be smarter looking.

Plain as it appears, this coat represents results of expert tailoring. Its body is set on to a round yoke, which supports the rolling collar and admits of the coat being opened at the front, or forms an excellent protection when it is closed. The lower part of the coat is moderately full, hanging in a box plait at the back. The wide belt confines the fullness only a little at the waist line. The six and practical pockets are a valuable decorative feature, making opportunity for additional machine stitching of exquisite exactness. The cuffs are finished with machine stitching and the collar, yoke and belt all break the obvious workmanship that is the pride of the separate coat.

Another model in a separate coat that will compare a second look because of its smartness is cut longer than the checked coat shown here, and made of a plain dark material. These coats depend upon clever cutting for style and becomingness more than anything else, and are designed to suit different figures. The longer coat looks especially well on stout figures, making them look more slender. It manages to narrow the appearance of width across the shoulders and to add to the length of the neck.

The belt is placed below the waist line and is extended at each side so that the ends cross at the middle of the back and are fastened where they terminate in the side seams. It is a marvel of clever management for the effect of slenderness it lends to the stout figure.

The overall coat is a ready-made garment and one may expect the best and most satisfactory results by selecting it from the stocks which are made ready to wear each season. This insures the services of experts in designing and cutting and perfection in the workmanship required in making.

Millinery Eloquent of Midsummer



Three hats, typical of those that are intended for wear in the heart of the summer, are examples of high art in millinery. They represent the work of trained professionals both in their conception and in the execution of the careful and difficult work required to carry out the designers' ideas.

The wide-brimmed hat of crepe georgette trimmed with grapes has a low round crown of the crepe supported by the lightest of wire frames. The side crown is a broad band of hemp braid bound with crepe, and the "halo" brim is supported by this band. The brim edge is finished with the narrowest of bindings, made of the hemp. All the body of the hat is in a tint of pink so pale that it may be called a flesh color. There is a band of narrow ribbon in lavender about the crown, and long ends of it hang from a bow underneath the brim. It would be hard to imagine a daintier background for the rich wreath of grapes and leaves and tendrils that lie about the brim. They are in deep purplish red, in pale green, and in shades of the ripening grape.

A second hat has a milan crown and brim in a shepherdess shape, with the brim extended in width by a shirred covering of this point d'écrit net. The milan is in the light yellow of the natural straw and the net is white. A sash of more ribbon in light blue is crushed about the crown over a band of velvet ribbon. It is brought over the brim at the back and caught on the under brim, hanging in a single long end behind. A single big pink rose lies in its foliage has a very up-to-date pose on the front brim.

The third hat, of leghorn, is trimmed with embroidered chiffon which is laid flat about the crown, and a raffia of chiffon attached to the brim. This chiffon is usually in white, with several colors in the embroidered border, but may be had in light blue, white, or pink, and in deeper tones of blue or brown. A sash of velvet ribbon with long hanging ends, and three little nosegays of roses set in small flowers complete the decoration.

The leghorn shape in the natural color of the straw admits of many color schemes in trimming, for it harmonizes with everything; but light, attractive colors, with pink in the lead, have the preference for midsummer hats.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY