

# The House of the Whispering Pines

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN  
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Roberts

(CONTINUED.)

"When you went into the kitchen, Mr. Cumberland, to get the stable door key, was the gas lit, or did you have to light it?"  
"It-it was lit, I think."  
"Don't you know?"  
"It was lit, but turned low. I could see well enough."  
"Why, then, didn't you take both keys?"  
"Both keys?"  
"You have said you went down town by the short cut through your neighbor's yard. That cut is guarded by a



WAS CARRIED OUT IN HER DISMAYED FATHER'S ARMS.

door which was locked that night. You needed the key to that door more than the one to the stable. Why didn't you take it?"  
"I—I took it when I took the other."  
"Are you sure?"  
"Yes; they both hung on one nail. I grabbed them both at the same time."  
"Which of the two hung foremost?"  
"I didn't notice."  
"You took both?"  
"Yes, I took both."  
"And went straight out with them?"  
"Yes, to the stable."  
"And then where?"  
"Through the adjoining grounds downtown."  
"You are sure you went through Mr. Fulton's grounds at this early hour in the evening?"  
"I am positive."  
"Was it not at a later hour, much later, a little before 11 instead of a little before 9?"  
"No, sir. I was on the golf links then."  
"But some one drove into the stable."  
"So you say."  
"Unharnessed the horse, drew up the cutter, locked the stable door and, entering the house, hung up the key where it belonged."  
"No answer this time."  
"Mr. Cumberland, you admitted in your direct examination that you took with you out of the clubhouse only one bottle of the special brand you favored, although you carried up two into the kitchen?"  
"No; I said that I only had one when I got to Cuthbert road. I don't remember anything about the other."  
"But you know where the other—or, rather, remnants of the other—was found?"  
"In my own stable, taken there by my man Zadok Brown, who says he picked it out of one of our waste barrels."  
"This is the part of bottle referred to. Do you recognize the label still adhering to it as similar to the one to be found on the bottle you emptied in Cuthbert road?"  
"It is like that one."  
"And you carried that other bottle off, and had it been broken as this has been broken, would it not have presented an exactly similar appearance to this?"  
"Possibly."  
"Only possibly?"  
"It would have looked the same; I cannot deny it. What's the use fooling?"  
"Mr. Cumberland, the only two bottles known to contain this special brand of wine were in the clubhouse at 10 o'clock that night. How came one of them to get into the barrel outside your stable before your return the next day?"  
"I cannot say."  
"This barrel stood where?"  
"In the passage behind the stable."  
"The passage you pass through on

your way to the door leading into your neighbor's grounds?"  
"Yes."  
The dreaded moment had come. This "Yes" had no sooner left Arthur's lips than I saw Ella throw out her innocent arms and leap impetuously to her feet with a loud, "No, no, I can tell!"  
She did not say what, for at the hubbub roused by this outbreak in open court she fainted dead away and was carried out in her dismayed father's arms.  
This necessarily caused a break in the proceedings. Mr. Fox suspended his cross examination, and in a few minutes more the judge adjourned the court. As I observed the satisfaction with which Mr. Moffat scented this new witness—a satisfaction which promised little consideration for her if she ever came upon the stand—I surrendered to fate.  
Inwardly committing Carmel's future to the God who made her and who knew better than we the story of her life and what her fiery temper had cost her, I drew a piece of paper from my pocket and, while the courtroom was slowly emptying, hastily addressed the following lines to Mr. Moffat, who had lingered to have a few words with his colleague:  
There is a witness in this building who can testify more clearly and definitely than Miss Fulton that Arthur Cumberland, for all we have heard in seeming contradiction to the same, might have been on the golf links at the time he swears to. That witness is myself.  
ELWOOD RANELAGH.  
I was ready to meet the surprised lawyer's look when his eye rose from the words I had written and settled steadily on my face. Next minute he was writing busily, and in a second later I was reading these words:  
Do you absolutely wish to be recalled as a witness, and by the defense? M.  
My answer was brief:  
I do. Not to make a confession of crime. I have no such confession to make. But I know who drove that horse. R.  
I had sacrificed Carmel to my sense of right. Never had I loved her as I did at that moment.  
A turning point had been reached in the defense. That every one knew after the first glance at Mr. Moffat on the opening of the next morning's session. As I noted the excitement which this occasioned even in quarters where self control is usually most marked and such emotions suppressed I marveled at the subtle influence of one man's expectancy and the powerful effect which can be produced on a feverish crowd by a well ordered silence suggestive of coming action.  
I, who knew the basis of this expectancy and the nature of the action with which Mr. Moffat anticipated startling the court, was the quietest person present. Since it was my hand and none other which must give this fresh turn to the wheel of justice it were well for me to do it calmly and without any of the old maddening throb of heart. But the time seemed long before Arthur was released from further cross examination and the opportunity given Mr. Moffat to call his next witness.  
Something in the attitude he now took, something in the way he bent over his client and whispered a few admonitory words, and, still more, the emotion with which these words were received and answered by some extraordinary protest, aroused expectation to a still greater pitch and made my course seem even more painful to myself than I had foreseen when dreaming over and weighing the possibilities of this hour. With something like terror I awaited the calling of my name, and when it was delayed it was with emotions inexplicable to myself that I looked up and saw Mr. Moffat holding open a door at the left of the judge with that attitude of respect which a man only assumes in the presence and under the dominating influence of woman.  
"Ella?" thought I. "Instead of saving her by my contemplated sacrifice of Carmel, I have only added one sacrifice to another."  
But when the timid, faltering step we could faintly hear crossing the room beyond had brought its possessor within sight and I perceived the tall, black robed, heavily veiled woman who reached for Mr. Moffat's sustaining arm I did not need the startling picture of the prisoner, standing upright with outthrust and repellent hands, to realize that the impossible had happened and that all which he, as well as I, had done and left undone, suffered and suppressed had been in vain.  
Mr. Moffat, with no eye for him or for me, conducted his witness to a chair. Then as she loosened her veil and let it drop in her lap he cried in tones which rang from end to end of the courtroom, "I summon Carmel Cumberland to the stand to witness in her brother's defense."  
The surprise was complete. It was a great moment for Mr. Moffat, but for me all was confusion, dread, a veil of misty darkness through which shone her face, marred by its ineffaceable scar, but calm as I had never expected to see it again in this life and beautiful with a smile under which her deeply shaken and hardly conscious brother sank slowly back into his seat amid a silence as profound as the hold she had immediately taken upon all hearts.

CHAPTER XXII.  
"WHERE IS MY BROTHER?"  
WHAT is the explanation of Carmel's reappearance in town and of this sensational introduction of her into the courtroom in a restored state of health of which no one, so far as known, had had any intimation save the man who was responsible for her appearance? The particulars are due you.  
She had passed some weeks at Lakewood under the eye of Miss Unwin, the nurse who was detailed to watch as well as tend her. During these weeks she gave no sign of improvement mentally, though she constantly gained strength otherwise and impressed everybody with the clear light in her eye and the absence of everything suggestive of gloom in her expression and language. There was the same complete loss of memory up to the time of the tragic occurrence which had desolated her home; the same harping at odd moments on Adelaide's happiness and her own prospect of seeing this dear sister very soon which had marked the opening days of her convalescence. But beyond and back of all this was some secret joy, unintelligible to the nurse, which helped rather than retarded the sick girl's recovery.  
Meanwhile Carmel was allowed such liberty as her condition required, but was never left alone for a moment after a certain day when her eye suddenly took on a strange look of confused inquiry totally dissociated with anything she saw or heard.  
The awakening took place at Lakewood. Carmel had been out and was just crossing the hall of her hotel to the elevator when she stopped with a violent start and, clutching the air, was caught by her nurse, who had hurried up at the first intimation of anything unusual in the condition of her patient.  
The cause of this agitation was immediately apparent. Near them sat two ladies, each with a small wine-glass in her hand—a common sight enough, but it worked a revolution in Carmel's darkened mind. The light of youthful joyousness fled from her face, and the cheek, just pulsing softly with new life, blanched to the deathlike hue of mortal suffering. Dropping her eyes from the women, she said to the woman in the whose arms she felt herself supported:  
"Explain! Where am I?"  
"At Lakewood, in a hotel. You have been ill and are only just recovering."  
Her hand went up to her cheek, the one that had been burned, and still showed the deep traces of that accident.  
"I remember," said she. Then, with another glance at her dress, which had studiously been kept cheerful, she remarked, with deep reproach: "My sister is dead. Why am I not in black?"  
The nurse, realizing her responsibility (she said afterward that it was the most serious moment of her life), subdued her own astonishment at this proof of her young patient's knowledge of a crime of which she was universally supposed to be entirely ignorant and, bestowing an assuring smile on the agitated girl, observed softly:  
"You were too ill to be burdened with black. You are better now and may assume it if you will. I will help you buy your mourning."  
"Yes; you look like a kind woman. What is your name, please, and are we here alone in this great hotel?"  
Now, as a matter of expediency, to save Carmel from the unendurable curiosity of the crowd and herself from the importunities of the New York reporters, Miss Unwin had registered herself and her charge under assumed names. She was, therefore, forced to reply:  
"My name is Huckins, and we are here alone. But that need not worry you. I have watched over you night and day for many weeks."  
"You have? Because of this slight burn?" Again Carmel's hand went to her cheek.  
"Not on account of that only. You have had a serious illness quite apart from that injury. But you are better; you are almost well—well enough to go home, if you will."  
"I cannot go home—not just yet. I'm—I'm not strong enough. But we shouldn't be here alone without some man to look after us. Miss Huckins, where is my brother?"  
At this question, uttered with emphasis, with anxiety—with indignation even—Miss Unwin felt the emotion she had so successfully subdued up to this moment betray itself in her voice as she answered with a quiet motion toward the elevator: "Let us go up to our room. There I will answer all your questions."  
But Carmel, with the waywardness of her years, or perhaps with deeper reasoning powers than the other would be apt to attribute to her, broke softly away from Miss Unwin's detaining hand and, walking directly into the office, looked about for the newspaper stand. She reached it just as a boy stepped into view with the evening bulletin, on which had been written these words:  
The last juror obtained in the trial of Arthur Cumberland for the murder of his sister, Adelaide.  
Carmel saw and stood, a breathless image of horror. A couple of gentlemen came running, but the nurse waved them back and herself caught Carmel and upheld her, in momentary dread of another mental if not physical collapse.  
But Carmel had come back into the world of consciousness to stay. Accepting her nurse's support, but giving no sign of waning faculties or imperfect understanding of what she had seen, she spoke quite clearly and with her eyes fixed upon Miss Unwin.  
"So that is why I am here, away from all my friends. Was I too ill to

be told? Couldn't you make me know what was happening—you or the doctors—or anybody?"  
"You were much too ill," protested the nurse, leading her toward the elevator and so by degrees to her room.  
"And Arthur—poor Arthur, has been the sufferer! Tell me the whole story. I can bear it," she pleaded. "I can bear anything but not knowing. Why should he have fallen under suspicion? He was not even there. I must go to him. Pack up our clothing, Miss Huckins. I must go to him at once."  
With the sudden rending of the clouds which had obscured her intellect strange powers had awakened in this young girl.  
"You shall go," began the nurse, and stopped.  
Carmel was not listening. Another change of thought had come. "How can I?" fell in unconscious betrayal from her lips. "How can I?" Then she stood silent, ghanstly with lack of color one minute and rosy red with its excess the next, until it was hard to tell in which extreme her feeling spoke most truly.  
What was the feeling? Nurse Unwin felt it imperative to know. She approached Carmel with renewed offers of help and such expressions of sympathy as she thought might lure her into open speech.  
But discretion had come with fear, and Carmel, while not disdaining the other's kindness, instantly made it apparent that, whatever her burden and however unsuited it was to her present weak condition, it was not one she felt willing to share.  
"I must think," she murmured as she finally followed the nurse's lead and seated herself on a lounge. "Arthur on trial for his life! Arthur on trial for his life! And Adelaide was not even murdered!"  
"No?" gasped the nurse, intent on every word this long silenced witness let fall.  
"Had he no friend? Was there not some one to understand? Adelaide"—here her head fell till her face was lost to sight—"had—a—lover!"  
"Yes, Mr. Elwood Ranelagh. He was the first to be arrested for the crime."  
The soul in Carmel seemed to vanish at this word. The eyes, which had been so farseeing the moment before, grew blank and the lithe young body stiff with that death in life which is almost worse to look upon than death itself. Then the stony eyes softened and fell, the rigidity of her frame relaxed, and Carmel sank back again on the sofa and tried to read the headlines on the open sheet before her. But her eyes were unequal to the task. With a sob she dropped the paper and entreated the nurse to relate to her from her own knowledge all that had passed.  
Miss Unwin complied, but with reservations. She said nothing about the marks on Adelaide's throat or of the special reason which the police had for arresting Mr. Ranelagh. She did not dare. Strangulation was a horrible death to contemplate, and if this factor in the crime—she was not deceived by Carmel's exclamation that there had been no murder—was unknown as yet to her patient, as it must be from what she had said, and the absolute impossibility, as she thought, of her having known what went on in the Whispering Pines, then it had better



CARMEI, LIFTING UP THE LID, LOOKED IN REMAIN UNKNOWN TO HER UNTIL CIRCUMSTANCES FORCED IT ON HER KNOWLEDGE OR SHE HAD GOT SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO BEAR IT.

accident explained and everything done for the unconscious woman which medical skill could suggest Carmel, finding a moment to herself, stole to the trunk and, lifting up the lid, looked in. She had been watchful of her nurse from the first and was suspicious of the actions which had led to this untoward accident. Seeing the two little books, she took them out. The notebook lay open, and on the page thus disclosed she beheld written:  
Ap Lox Fidestum Trubum  
Ridiculous nonsense—until she consulted the code. Then these detached and meaningless words took on a significance which she could not afford to ignore:  
Ap—A change.  
Lox—Makes remarkable statements.  
Fidestum—Shall we return?  
Trubum—Not tractable.  
Carmel endeavored to find out for whom this telegram was intended. There was nothing to inform her. A moment of indecision was followed by quick action. She had noticed that she had been invariably addressed as Miss Campbell by every one who had come into the room.  
Regaining her own room, which was on the other side of their common sitting room, she collected a few necessary articles and placed them in a bag, which she thrust under her bed. Hunting for money, she found quite an adequate amount in her own purse, which was attached to her person. Satisfied thus far, she chose her most inconspicuous hat and coat and, putting them on, went out by her own door into the corridor.  
The time—it was the dinner hour—favored her attempt. She found her way to the office unobserved and, going frankly up to the clerk, informed him that she had some telegrams to send and that she would be out for some little time. Would he see that Miss Huckins was not neglected in her absence?  
"I will see to it," said he. Then, as she turned to go, he ventured to add: "It is quite dark now. If you would like one of the boys to go with you"—But he received no encouragement and allowed his suggestion to remain unheeded.  
She looked grateful for this and was pulling down her veil when she perceived two or three men on the other side of the room watching her in evident wonder. Stepping back to the desk, she addressed the clerk again, this time with a marked distinctness: "I have been very ill, I know, and not always quite myself. But the shock of this accident to my nurse has cleared my brain and made me capable again of attending to my own affairs. You can trust me; I can do my errands all right, but perhaps I had better have one of the boys go with me."  
The clerk, greatly relieved, rang his bell. With the first step into the street Carmel's freshly freed mind began its work. "Where is the railroad station?" she inquired of the boy who was trotting along at her side.  
"Over there," he answered vaguely.  
"Take me to it."  
The sight of the station, from which a train was just leaving, frightened her for a moment with its bustle and many lights, but she rallied under the stress of her purpose and, entering, found the telegraph office, from which she sent this message, directed to her physician at home, Dr. Carpenter:  
Look for me on early train. All is clear to me now, and I must return. Preserve silence till we meet.  
This she signed with a pet name known only to themselves and dating back to her childish days.  
Then she bought a ticket and studied the time table. When quite satisfied she returned to the hotel. She was met in the doorway by the physician who was attending the nurse. He paused when he saw her and asked a few questions, which she was penetrating enough to perceive were more for the purpose of testing her own condition than to express interest in his patient. She answered quietly and was met by a surprise and curiosity which evinced that he was greatly drawn toward her case. This alarmed her. She did not wish to be the object of any one's notice. On the contrary, she desired to obliterate herself, to be counted out so far as all these people were concerned. But, above all, she was anxious not to rouse suspicion. So she stopped and talked as naturally as she could about Miss Huckins' accident and what the prospects were for the night. These were favorable, or so the doctor declared, but the injured woman's condition called for great care, and he would send over a capable nurse at once. Meanwhile the maid who was with her would do very well. She herself need have no worry.  
"You are very good," said Carmel. "I am tired and when I once get to bed shall certainly sleep. I shall give orders not to be disturbed. Isn't that right?"  
"Shall I accompany you to the door of your room?" he asked.  
She shook her head, with a smile.  
"I am quite capable of finding my room. I hope Miss Huckins will be as well in a week from now as I am at this moment. But, doctor"—she had been struck by a strange possibility—"I should like to settle one little matter before we part. The money I have may not be quite safe in my hands. My memory might leave me again, and then Miss Huckins might suffer. If you will take charge of some of it on her account I shall feel relieved."  
"It would be a wise precaution," he admitted. "But you could just as well leave it at the desk."  
"So I can," she smiled. Then, as his eye remained fixed on her: "You are wondering if I have friends. We both have, and I have just come from telegraphing to one of them. You can

leave us with an easy mind. All that I dread is that Miss Huckins will worry about me if her consciousness should return during the night."  
"It will not return so soon. Next week we may look for it. Then you can be by to reassure her if she asks for you."  
The doctor, lifting his hat, took his departure. The interview might have lasted five minutes. She felt as though it had lasted an hour.  
She followed the doctor's advice and left half the money she had in charge of the clerk. Then she went upstairs. She was not seen to come down again, but when the 8:45 train started out of the station that night it had for a passenger a young, heavily veiled girl, who went straight to her section. A balcony running by her window had favored her escape.  
[See us continued.]  
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