

# THE HOUSE OF A THOUSAND CANDLES

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## CHAPTER X.

### An Affair With the Caretaker.

I read in the library until late, hearing the howl of the wind outside with satisfaction at the warmth and comfort of the great room. Bates brought in some sandwiches and a bottle of ale at midnight.

"If there's nothing more, sir—"  
"That is all, Bates." And he went off sedately to his own quarters.

I was restless and in no mood for



Her Brilliant Cheeks Were a Delight to the Eye.

bed, and mourned the lack of variety in my grandfather's library. I moved about from shelf to shelf, taking down one book after another, and while thus engaged came upon a series of large volumes extra illustrated in water colors of unusual beauty. They occupied a lower shelf, and I sprawled on the floor like a boy with a new picture book in my absorption, piling the great volumes about me. They were on related subjects pertaining to the French chateaux.

In the last volume I found a sheet of white note paper no larger than my hand, a forgotten book mark, I assumed, and half crumpled it in my fingers before I noticed the lines of a pencil sketch on one side of it. I carried it to the table and spread it out. It was not the bit of idle pencilling it had appeared to be at first sight. A scale had evidently been followed and the lines drawn with a ruler. With such trifles my grandfather had no doubt amused himself. There was a long corridor indicated, but of this I could make nothing. I studied it for several minutes, thinking it might have been a tentative sketch of some part of the house. In turning it about under the candelabrum I saw that in several places the glaze had been rubbed from the paper by an eraser, and this piqued my curiosity. I brought a magnifying glass to bear upon the sketch. The drawing had been made with a hard pencil and the eraser had removed the lead, but a well defined imprint remained.

I was able to make out the letters, N. W. to C.—a reference clearly enough to points of the compass and a distance. The word ravine was scrawled over a rough outline of a doorway or opening of some sort, and then the phrase:

### THE DOOR OF BEWILDERMENT.

Now I am rather an imaginative person; that is why engineering captured my fancy. It was his efforts to make an architect (a person who quarrels with women about their kitchen sinks!) of a boy who wanted to be an engineer that caused me to break with my grandfather. Fate was busy with my affairs that night, for, instead of lighting my pipe with the little sketch I was strangely impelled to study it seriously.

I drew for myself rough outlines of the interior of Glenarm House as it had appeared to me, and then I tried to reconcile the little sketch with every part of it.

"The Door of Bewilderment" was the charm that held me. My curiosity was thoroughly aroused as to the hidden corners of the queer old house, round which the wind shrieked tormentingly. I went to my room, put on my corduroy coat, took a candle and went below. One o'clock in the morning is not the most cheering hour for exploring the dark recesses of a strange house, but I had resolved to have a look at the ravine opening and determine, if possible, whether it bore any relation to "The Door of Bewilderment."

All was quiet in the great cellar; only here and there an area window rattled dolorously. I carried a tape-line with me and made measurements of the length and depth of the corridor and of the chambers that were set off from it. These figures I entered in my notebook for further use, and sat down on an empty nail keg to reflect. The place was certainly substantial; the candle at my feet burned steadily with no hint of a draft; but I saw no solution of my problem. I was losing sleep for nothing; my grandfather's sketch was meaningless, and I rose and picked up my candle, yawning.

Then a curious thing happened. The candle, whose thin flame had risen unwaveringly, sputtered and went out as a sudden gust swept the corridor.

I had left nothing open behind me, but some one had gained ingress to the cellar by an opening of which I knew nothing.

tern to a level with his eyes and began sounding the outer corridor wall with a hammer.

Here, undoubtedly, was my friend Morgan—again! There was the same periodicity in the beat on the wall that I had heard in my own rooms. He began at the top and went methodically to the floor. I leaned against the wall where I stood and watched the slow approach of the lantern. The small revolver with which I had first fired at his flying figure in the wood was in my pocket. It was just as well to have it out with the fellow now. My chances were as good as his, though I confess I did not relish the thought of being found dead the next morning in the cellar of my own house. It pleased my humor to let him approach in this way, unconscious that he was watched, until I should thrust my pistol into his face.

His arms grew tired when he was about ten feet from me and he dropped the lantern and hammer to his side and swore under his breath impatiently.

Then he began again with greater zeal. As he came nearer I studied his face in the lantern's light with interest. His hat was thrust back, and I could see his jaw hard set under his blond beard.

He took a step nearer, ran his eyes over the wall and resumed his tapping, beginning close to the ceiling. In settling himself for the new series of strokes he swayed toward me slightly and I could hear his hard breathing. I was deliberating how best to throw myself upon him, but as I wavered he stepped back, swore at his ill luck and flung the hammer to the ground.

"Thanks!" I shouted, leaping forward and snatching the lantern. "Stand just where you are!"

With the revolver in my right hand and the lantern held high in my left, I enjoyed his utter consternation, as my voiced roared in the corridor.

"It's too bad we meet under such strange circumstances, Morgan," I said. "I'd begun to miss you; but I suppose you've been sleeping in the daytime to gather strength for your night prowling."

"You're a fool," he growled. He was recovering from his fright—I knew it by the gleam of his teeth in his yellow beard. His eyes, too, were peering restlessly about. He undoubtedly knew the house better than I did, and was considering the best means of escape. I did not know what to do with him now that I had him at the point of a pistol; and in my ignorance of his motives and my vague surmise as to the agency back of him, I was filled with uncertainty.

"You needn't hold that thing quite so near," he said, staring at me coolly. "I'm glad it annoys you, Morgan," I said. "I want you to tell me how you got in here."

He laughed. "I came in by the kitchen window, if you must know. I got in before your solemn jack-of-all-trades locked it up, and I walked down to the end of the passage there"—he indicated the direction with a slight jerk of his head—"and slept until it was time to go to work."

"If you can't lie better than that you needn't try again. Face about, now, and march!"

I put new energy into my tone, and he turned and walked before me down the corridor in the direction from which he had come. We were, I dare say, a pretty pair—he tramping doggedly before me, I following at his heels with his lantern and my pistol.

"Not so fast," I admonished sharply.

"Excuse me," he replied mockingly. He was no common rogue; I felt the quality in him with a certain admiration for his scoundrelly talents.

I continued at his heels, poking the muzzle of the revolver against his back from time to time to keep him assured of my presence—a device that I was to regret a second later.

When we were, I should judge, about ten yards from the end of the corridor, at that moment I prodded him with the point of the revolver, he fell backward against me, threw his arms over his head and grasped me about the neck, meanwhile turning himself lithely until his fingers clasped my throat. The lantern fell from my hand and one or the other of us smashed it with our feet.

A wrestling match in that dark hole was not to my liking. I still held onto the revolver, waiting for a chance to use it, and meanwhile he tried to throw me, forcing me back against one side and then another of the corridor.

With a quick rush he flung me away, and in the same second I fired. The roar of the shot in the narrow corridor was deafening. I flung myself on the floor, expecting a return shot, and quickly enough a flash broke upon the darkness dead ahead, and I rose to my feet, fired again and leaped to the opposite side of the corridor and crouched there. We had adopted the same tactics, firing and dodging to avoid the target made by the flash of our pistols, and watching and listening after the roar of the explosions.

It was a very pretty game, but not destined to last long. He was slowly retreating toward the end of the passage where there was, I remembered, a dead wall. His only chance was to crawl through an area window I knew to be there, and this, would, I felt sure, give him into my hands.

After five shots apiece there was a truce. The pungent smoke of the powder caused me to cough, and he laughed.

"Have you swallowed a bullet, Mr.

I could hear his feet scraping on the cement floor; he was moving away from me, doubtless intending to fire when he reached the area window and escape before I could reach him. I crept warily after him, ready to fire on the instant, but not wishing to throw away my last cartridge.

He was now very near the end of the corridor. I heard his feet strike some boards that I remembered lay on the floor there, and I was nerved for a shot and a hand-to-hand struggle, if it came to that.

I was sure that he sought the window; I heard his hands on the wall as he felt for it. Then a breath of cold air swept the passage, and I knew that he must be drawing himself up to the opening. I fired and dropped to the floor. With the roar of the explosion I heard him yell, but the expected return shot did not follow.

The pounding of my heart seemed to mark the passing of hours. I feared my foe was playing some trick, creeping toward me, perhaps, to fire at close range, or to grapple with me in the dark. The cold air whistled into the corridor, and I began to feel the chill of it. Being fired upon is disagreeable enough, but waiting in the dark for the shot is intolerable. I rose and walked toward the end of the passage.

Then his revolver flashed and roared directly ahead, the flame of it so near that it blinded me and the wad of the cartridge burned and stung my cheek. I fell forward dazed and blinded, but shook myself together in a moment



He Flung Me Away and in the Same Second I Fired.

and got upon my feet. The draft of air no longer blew into the passage. Morgan had taken himself off through the window and closed it after him. I made sure of this by going to the window and feeling it with my hands.

I went back and groped about for my candle, which found without difficulty and lighted. I then returned to the window to examine the catch. To my utter astonishment it was fastened with staples, driven deep into the sash in such a way that it could not possibly have been opened without an expenditure of time and labor.

My eyes smarted from the smoke of the last shot, and my cheek stung where the wadding had struck my face. I was alive, but in my vexation and perplexity not I fear, wholly grateful for my safety. It was, however, some consolation to feel sure I had winged the enemy.

I gathered up the fragments of Morgan's lantern and went back to the library. The lights in half the candlesticks had sputtered out. I extinguished the remainder and started to my room.

Then, in the great dark hall, I heard a muffled tread as of some one following me—not on the broad staircase, nor in any place I could identify—yet unmistakably on steps of some sort beneath or above me. My nerves were already keyed to a breaking pitch, and the ghost-like tread in the wall angered me. Morgan, or his ally, Bates, undoubtedly, O reflected, at some new trick. I ran into my room, found a heavy walking stick and set off for Bates' room on the third floor. It was always easy to attribute any sort of mischief to the fellow, and undoubtedly he was crawling through the house somewhere on an errand that boded no good to me.

It was now past two o'clock and he should have been asleep and out of the way long ago. I crept to his room and threw open the door without, I must say, the slightest idea of finding him there. But Bates, the enigma, Bates, the incomparable cook, the perfect servant, sat at a table, the light of several candles falling on a book over which he was bent with that maddening gravity he had never yet in my presence thrown off.

He rose at once, stood at attention, inclining his head slightly.

"Yes, Mr. Glenarm."

"Yes, the devil!" I roared at him, astonished at finding him—sorry, I must say, that he was there! The stick fell from my hands. I did not doubt he knew perfectly well that I had some purpose in breaking in upon him. I was baffled and in my rage floundered for words to explain myself.

"I thought I heard some one in the house. I don't want you prowling about in the night, do you hear?"

"Certainly not, sir," he replied in a grieving tone.

I glanced at the book he had been reading. It was a volume of Shakespeare's comedies, open at the first scene of the last act of "Winter's Tale."

"Quite a pretty bit of work that, I should say," he remarked. "It was one of my late master's favorites."

"Go to the devil!" I bawled at him, and went down to my room and slammed the door in rage and chagrin.

## CHAPTER XI.

### I Receive a Call.

Going to bed at three o'clock on a winter morning in a house whose ways are disquieting, after a duel in which you escaped whose only by sheer good luck, does not fit one for sleep. When I finally drew the covers over me it was to lie and speculate upon the events of the night in connection with the history of the few

weeks I had spent at Glenarm. Larry had suggested in New York that Pickering was playing some deep game, and I, myself, could not accept Pickering's statement that my grandfather's large fortune had proved to be a myth. If Pickering had not stolen or dissipated it, where was it concealed? Morgan was undoubtedly looking for something of value or he would not risk his life in the business; and it was quite possible that he was employed by Pickering to search for hidden property. This idea took strong hold of me, the more readily, I fear, since I had always been anxious to see evil in Pickering. There was, to be sure, the unknown alternative heir, but neither she nor Sister Theresa was, I imagined, a person capable of hiring an assassin to kill me.

On reflection I dismissed the idea of appealing to the county authorities, and I never regretted that resolution. The seat of Wabana county was 20 miles away, the processes of law were unfamiliar, and I wished to avoid publicity. Morgan might, of course, have been easily disposed of by an appeal to the Anmandale constable, but now that I suspected Pickering of treachery the caretaker's importance dwindled. I had wanted all my life for a chance at Arthur Pickering, and in this affair I hoped to draw him into the open and settle with him.

I slept presently but woke at my usual hour, and after a tub felt ready for another day. Bates served me, as usual, a breakfast that gave a fair aspect to the morning. I was alert for any sign of perturbation in him; but I had already decided that I might as well look for emotion in a stone wall as in this placid, colorless serving man. I had no reason to suspect him of complicity in the night's affair, but I had no faith in him, and merely waited until he should show his hand.

By my plate next morning I found this note, written in a clear, bold, woman's hand:

"The Sisters of St. Agatha trust that the intrusion upon his grounds by Miss Armstrong, one of their students, has caused Mr. Glenarm no annoyance. The Sisters beg that this infraction of their discipline will be overlooked, and they assure Mr. Glenarm that it will not recur."

An unnecessary apology! The note paper was of the best quality. At the head of the page "St. Agatha's, Anmandale" was embossed in purple. One of the sisters I had seen beyond the wall undoubtedly wrote it—possibly Sister Theresa herself. A clever woman, that! Thoroughly capable of plucking money from gulleible old gentlemen! Poor Olivia! born for freedom, but doomed to a penitence existence with a lot of nuns! I resolved to send her a box of candy sometime just to annoy her guardians. Then my own affairs claimed attention.

"Bates," I asked, "do you know what Mr. Glenarm did with the plans for this house?"

He started slightly. I should not have noticed it if I had not been so keen for his answer.

"No, sir. I can't put my hand upon them, sir."

"That's all very well, Bates, but you didn't answer my question. Do you know where they are? I'll put my hand on them if you will kindly tell me where they're kept."

"I fear very much, Mr. Glenarm, that they have been destroyed. I tried to find them before you came, to tell you the whole truth, sir; but they must have been put out of the way."

"That's very interesting, Bates. Will you kindly tell me whom you suspect of destroying them? The toast again, please."

His hand shook as he passed the plate.

"I hardly like to say, sir, when it's only a suspicion."

"Of course I shouldn't ask you to incriminate yourself, but I'll have to insist on my question. It may have occurred to you, Bates, that in a sense—in a sense, mind you—I'm the master here."

"Well, I should say, if you press me—that I fear Mr. Glenarm, your grandfather, burned the plans when he left here the last time. I hope you will pardon me, sir, for seeming to reflect upon him."

"Reflect upon the devil! What was his idea, do you suppose?"

"I think, sir, if you will pardon—" "Don't be so fussy!" I snapped. "Damn your pardon, and go on!"

"He wanted you to study out the place for yourself, sir. It was dear to his heart, this house. He set his heart upon having you enjoy it—"

"I like the word—go ahead."

"And I suppose there are things about it that he wished you to learn for yourself."

"You know them, of course, and are watching me when I'm hot and cold, watching me to see when I'm hot and cold, like kids at a child's game."

The fellow turned and faced me across the table.

"Mr. Glenarm, as I hope God may be merciful to me in the last judgment, I don't know any more about it than you do."

"You were here with Mr. Glenarm all the time he was building the house, but you never saw walls built that weren't what they appeared to be, or doors made that didn't lead anywhere."

I summoned all my irony and contempt for this arrangement. He lifted his hand as though making oath.

smooth shaven face was bright with the freshness of youth. Here was a sturdy young apostle without frills, but with a vigorous grip that left my hand tingling. His voice was deep and musical—a voice that suggested sincerity and inspired confidence.

"I'm afraid I haven't been neighborly, Mr. Glenarm. I was called away from home a few days ago after I heard of your arrival, and I have just got back. I blew in yesterday with the snow storm."

He folded his arms easily and looked at me with cheerful directness, as though politely speculating as to what manner of man I might be.

"It was a fine storm; I got a great day, out of it," I said. "An Indiana snow storm is something I have never experienced before."

"This is my second winter. I came out here because I wished to do some reading and thought I'd rather do it alone in a university."

"Stodious habits are rather forced on one out here, I should say. In my own case my course of reading is all cut out for me."

"The Glenarm collection is famous—the best in the country, really. Mr. Glenarm, your grandfather was certainly an enthusiast. I met him several times, though he was a trifle hard to meet!"—and the clergyman smiled. "My grandfather had his whims; but he was a fine, generous-hearted old gentleman," I said.

"You haven't been on our side of the wall yet? Well, I promise not to molest your hidden treasure if you'll be neighborly," and he laughed merrily.

"I fear there's a big joke involved in the hidden treasure," I replied. "I'm so busy etc."

"I have no time for social recreation."

He looked at me quickly to see whether I was joking. His eyes were steady and earnest. The Reverend Paul Stoddard impressed me more and more agreeably. There was a suggestion of quiet strength about him that drew me to him.

"I suppose every one about here thinks of nothing but that I'm at Glenarm to earn my inheritance. My residence here must look pretty sordid from the outside."

"Mr. Glenarm's will is a matter of record in the county, of course. But you are too hard on yourself. It's nobody's business if your grandfather wished to visit his whims on you. I should say, in my own case, that I don't consider it any of my business what you are here for. I didn't come over to annoy you or to pry into your affairs. I get lonely now and then and thought I'd like to establish neighborly relations."

"Thank you; I appreciate your coming very much,"—and my heart warmed under the manifest kindness of the man.

"And I hope"—he spoke for the first time with restraint—"I hope nothing will prevent your knowing Sister Theresa and Miss Devereux. They are interesting and charming—the only women about here of your own social status."

My liking for him abated slightly. He might be a detective, representing the alternative heir, for all I knew and possibly Sister Theresa was a party to the conspiracy to drive me away.

"In time, no doubt, in time, I shall know them," I answered evasively.

"Oh, quite as you like!"—and he changed the subject. We talked of many things—of outdoor sports, with which he showed great familiarity, of universities, of travel and adventure. Columbia was his alma mater, but he had spent two years at Oxford.

"Well," he exclaimed, "this has been very pleasant, but I must run. I have just been over to see Morgan, the caretaker, at the resort village. The poor fellow accidentally shot himself yesterday cleaning his gun or something of that sort, and he has an ugly hole in his arm that will shut him up for a month or worse. He gave me an errand to do for him. He's a conscientious fellow and wished me to wire for him to Mr. Pickering that he'd been hurt, but was attending to his duties. Pickering owns a house at the farther end of the colony and Morgan has charge of it. You know Pickering, of course?"

I looked my clerical neighbor straight in the eye, a trifle coldly, perhaps. I was wondering why Morgan, with whom I had enjoyed a duel in my own cellar only a few hours before, should be reporting his injury to Arthur Pickering.

"I think I have seen Morgan about here," I said.

"Oh, yes! He's a woodsman and a hunter—our Nimrod of the lake."

"A good sort, very likely!"

"I dare say. He has sometimes brought me ducks during the season."

"To be sure! They shoot ducks at night—those Hoosier hunters—so I hear!"

He laughed as he shook himself into his greatcoat.

"That's possible, though unportsmanlike. But we don't have to look a gift mallard in the eye."

We laughed together. It was easy to laugh with him.

"By the way, I forgot to get Pickering's address from Morgan. If you happen to have it—"

"With pleasure," I said. "Alexis Building, Broadway, New York."

"Good! That's easy to remember," he said, smiling and turning up his coat collar. "Don't forget me; I'm quartered in a hermit's cell back of the chapel, and I believe we can find many matters of interest to talk about."

"I'm confident of it," I said, glad of the sympathy and cheer that seemed to emanate from his stalwart figure. I threw on my overcoat and walked to the gate with him and saw him hurry toward the village with long strides.

(To be Continued.)

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# The LATEST FASHIONS



The costume at the left is of soft grayish green cloth trimmed with braid and soutache embroidery of a little deeper shade. The bolero opens over a waistcoat of white cloth or velvet, embroidered in delicate colors, and the sleeves are finished with under cuffs of the same. The skirt is made with flat plaits at the top and a box plait in the middle of the front and back. It is trimmed with bands of the braid and embroidery which finish at different distances from the front.

The other gown is of striped brown cloth or cheviot. The short jacket is trimmed with bands of the material, the stripes running crosswise; these are bordered with narrow bias bands also of the material.

The shawl collar is of brown velvet, the waistcoat is of cream-colored cloth fastened with mother-of-pearl buttons. The jacket is finished with a little plaited basque and the sleeves are finished and trimmed to correspond. The skirt is made with ten gores or breadths, the stripes running alternately lengthwise and crosswise and forming box plaits in two widths. It is trimmed with the bias bands, giving the same effect as on the jacket.

In colors there are many shades of gray, castor and brown. It may safely be said that, so far as the writer has observed, there are more gowns worn of these colors in different shades than of any other, save black. Green is worn in great moderation, there is no more blue in evidence than usual, for blue is a staple color, and, as in trying mauve, exquisite as it is, it is trying and less of it is worn just now.

Some of the most beautiful panne cloth costumes are in rich cerise pink and a warm yellow; the latter sounds odd, to say the least, but that is the color, a soft dull shade, not apricot, not lemon, and one that blends admirably with certain browns.

One very attractive costume we noted the other day was one consisting of a walking skirt and Eton coat of one of the new checked cloths, the checks about a third of an inch across and in dull colors. In the somewhat dim light the checks looked to be a blue and brown, or green.

The little Eton coat hung out from the figure above the belt, but long enough to touch it if pulled in, and at the top there was a pointed-yoke effect, produced probably by the trimming. The sleeves were of medium size, and the coat and the skirt also were trimmed with bands of plain cloth or else braid an inch and a quarter wide. These plain trappings outlined a hip yoke at the sides only, the strappings then running down the skirt, dividing it into panels.

The gown was topped by a pelerine, and she carried a muff to match.

The hat worn was a moderately large, almost flat, oval-shaped affair, with a low crown. It was a sort of castor brown, with a knot of blue or green velvet at one side, combining well with the color of one of the checks in the costume. From this knot a white sigrette streamed up and then back.

The purple velvet reception gown shown herewith is a superb example of the use of Venetian point in a rich cream, almost an ecru. It may be suspected that that part of the jupe covered by the coat is of soft silk or satin and that the coat is tacked to it, for it would be a sartorial sin to cover so much exquisite and costly lace as a whole skirt would necessitate if worn with so long a coat drapery.

The coat of the skirt is cut into gorges, each overlapping the one in front and each a bit shorter as it goes toward the front, until the two separate in the front to show the lace panel. Each gorge of the coat is edged with ermine, and the four large cabochons seen at the front of the blowing top are of brilliant and amethyst set in gold.

The sleeves have a foundation of heavy cream satin, finished at the bottom with deep bands of Venetian point edged with velvet, and the upper part of each sleeve is concealed by three overlapping flounces of point applique. The waistcoat is of the point lace, and the little high stock and attached pieces are of tucked white chiffon.

these outstanding puffs were! They suited only the tall and thin, but the short, fat woman added ten or more inches to her breadth and deducted an equal number from her height with great cheerfulness, rather than appear old-fashioned. This is but one of the many instances of ridiculous adherence to a particular style of gown.

In hats, in size, shape, and color there is no limit; sense and good taste alone are requisite. As to coiffures, they may be worn high or low, and with or without the pompadour, marcelled or plain, whichever suits best the individual type.

The light weight broadcloths, whether plain, checked or otherwise, are seen in many of the modish costumes. The plain cloths are used for the formal calling costumes, and the checks for the informal and tailored costumes for walking and informal wear generally. Indeed, cloths seem to lead over velvets this season at the smart day affairs, where, as last winter, any number of velvet gowns were in evidence.

THE DEMOCRAT ADS CATCH THE EYE 3 DAYS FOR 25 CTS AND BRING RESULTS TRY ONE FOR A RENT OR FOR ONE MAY SELL THAT PLANO A NEW HOUSE OR GET A BOARDER