

'WHERE'S EMILY?'

by Carolyn Wells

WHAT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE

On the eve of her marriage to Rodney Sayre, Emily Dunn disappears. She had left her Hilldale Park home, "Knollwood," to visit the hospital, but never reached there. Foul play is feared when Jim Pennington reports his wife, Pauline, and Emily's best friend, also missing.

Now Go on with the Story.

CHAPTER XIII.
Involuntarily, Pete looked for footprints.

But none were possible on the hard, stony road, covered, too, with falling autumn leaves.

The road—there was no footpath—led along a rather steep embankment, then across a bridge that spanned a wide and deep ravine, and on to another bridge that crossed a smaller ravine, and then off to more level lands and a street which led to the Stevenson house.

Here Gibby was admitted, and soon greeted by a large, stalwart man of genial address and pleasant manner.

His errand made known, Alec Stevenson looked earnestly at him, then asked him to go with him into his den.

There, with the door shut, his host told Pete that he had no use for the foreigner in question, but that Mrs. Stevenson was really daffy about him, and therefore he could say nothing to his disparagement.

"But what do you know of his standing, his history?" urged Pete. "Nothing, simply nothing," said Stevenson, with such an air of finality that it seemed useless to prod him further.

"And, I suppose, Mrs. Stevenson knows no more than you do?" he said.

"No. Not of his past nor his sponsors. The women of the place here took him up, and in true feminine fashion they wanted no guarantee or references. Sorry not to be more helpful, but that's how it is."

But as Pete Gibby walked back through the starless, murky night, he remarked to himself that Friend Stevenson was one large and elegant liar.

Pete Gibby walked slowly back to Knollwood, thinking about Mr. Stevenson. He knew nothing of the man but what he had just seen for himself, but he was puzzled at his attitude.

On the face of things, it was all right for Stevenson to distrust the Swami, but to hesitate about saying so, since the Oriental was his wife's friend.

But Gibby sensed more than that. There was something furtive about Stevenson's manner that implied a deeper feeling about the whole matter than merely his wife's opinions.

"Oh, Lord," groaned Gibby to himself, "I'm a fine detective, I am! Running off with all sorts of fool ideas that have no basis whatever. If I'm going to look into this case, and I certainly am, I must be at least methodical and logical about it. Emily is missing, mysteriously missing, and so is Polly Pennington. Now, first of all, are they together, wherever they are, or separated? If the same influence is responsible for both disappearances, they are probably together. And I feel it must be the same influence. It's too extraordinary for a bride and her matron of honor to be wiped off the earth at the same time, unless by the same agent. But, granting that, where does it get me? Nowhere."

Gibby trudged along, his mind a blank as far as theories or deductions were concerned. Indeed, his detective instinct was decidedly embryonic, being merely a lover of detective stories, and a quick mind for solving their fictional problems.

A real question of mystery had never before come his way, and having one now plumped down before him, he was a little bewildered by his sudden opportunity.

He had crossed the bridge over the little ravine. These two bits of natural scenery were the pride of Hilldale.

The whole town was picturesque, the whole topography was hills and dales, but the two ravines were deep, jagged canyons whose rocks

had been tossed up from the clefts in the earth by some prehistoric convulsion of nature.

The bridges across these were of a rustic sort, and over their railings vines had been trained by the Town Improvement society, who took intense pride in fostering the fairness of their fair city.

Not really a city, Hilldale was a good-sized town and growing apace.

The shops and business section were some distance away from the residential park, and the great estates of the landowners were jealously guarded from invasion of any modern improvements that might mar their natural beauties.

A fine motor road had been put through, but otherwise the roads and paths were almost primitive. The houses, usually on a hill or rise of ground, were approached by walks of irregularly shaped flagstones or bits of marble. It was in no sense an old-time place, it was all modern, but it aimed for simplicity and good taste.

Sometimes adventurous climbers would go down into the ravines, but it was a wearisome, even dangerous trip, and few dared it.

Gibby had paused on the bridge as he crossed the little ravine and leaning against the stout railing, looked down into the dark abyss. The thought struck him that Emily might have fallen over the rail, but he saw at once it was too high for that. Moreover, she had used the bridges all her life and would not dream of leaning over the side too far.

Yet he looked down into the black darkness, and determined that when it was again daylight, the ravines must be looked into.

A half-moon hung in the sky, but though it somewhat illumined the surrounding scene, its rays did not penetrate the black chasm.

He concluded to say nothing of this, however, for it was too remote a possibility and it would probably send the girls into hysterics.

So Pete Gibby went on, staring about him at the wooded hills and the scattered houses. Most of the houses showed bright lights, and from some he could hear sounds of music, or even laughing voices.

He knew few of them, however; only the young people who had been over to Knollwood for the rehearsal had he even met.

He glanced up at the Pennington house as he went on. Surrounded by trees it was on the side of a hill that ran down the little ravine.

Only a few lights showed from its windows, and Gibby felt a wave of compassion for the man who sat there as uncertain as to his wife's fate as they were about Emily's.

Pete was a bit intuitive, and he had sensed a slight hint of resentment in Pennington's attitude. It was almost as if Penn blamed Emily for Polly's disappearance. At most as if he thought that Emily had urged his wife to go to the hospital to see the new baby.

And Pete had gathered that the slight of any baby was liable to send Polly off in one of her nervous spells, and that in such cases she was more or less irresponsible.

So he gave a thought of real sympathy to the waiting husband and then his thoughts returned to their own tragedy.

For he had begun to look on it as a tragedy. Most certainly something had happened. What sort of happening could it be, he didn't know, couldn't even imagine. But it spelled trouble, and it was nearing a crisis.

Before he reached the house at Knollwood, he knew there was no good news there. If Emily had returned, the house would have been lighted up, from top to bottom, whereas, there were only lights in the lounge and a few other rooms.

He went in and found Everett Craven was still there, but Rodney and Lamb had not yet returned.

"I don't like your old Stevenson," Gibby said to the lawyer, as he lighted a cigarette.

"Why not?" asked Craven, not greatly interested.

"I don't know. Sort of Doctor Fell, I guess. But he doesn't ring true. He says he can't abide his Oriental Nibs, but as he's a friend

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Automobiles and good roads have made good fishing streams harder and harder to find. Streams that once teemed with fish are now practically barren, in spite of the efforts of state and government officials to plant them.

This, of course, is due to the fact that fish are taken before they are full grown.

Efforts are being made to eliminate this lack of fish in many of the streams by planting larger fish, some two and three years old. Planting of tiny fish has proved inadvisable because few of them ever reach maturity. The small fish are prey of their own kind and of every other fish in that particular stream.

"There is no more fun on earth than fishing," stated E. W. Fuhr, regional manager of Chevrolet Motor company, recently.

The out-of-doors feature alone is worth the effort, then if the effort is rewarded with a fine mess of trout or other fish there is nothing that so satisfies the soul of the angler. There's a thrill in hooking a big one and playing him until he is captured.

"We in the west have a great advantage. Mountain streams are only a few hours away, and those who care to walk away from the main traveled roads can always come back with the limit."

of Mrs. Stevenson's he was to swallow him."

"Well, that's about the size of it. And he's not alone in that. Some several husbands put up with the obnoxious Lal Singh because he's a tad with the women."

"Nothing criminal about him, I suppose?"

"Not that I know of," Craven said. "I've looked him over pretty well, and he seems to me just out for the cash."

"Does he charge by the hour?"

"Oh, yes. That is, he gives an afternoon or an evening here and there, and expects and gets a goodly honorarium. It's all right if people choose to fall for it. He got around Emily in the matter of her will, but he didn't get any immediate money from her. Except, of course, his own fee, when she engaged him for an afternoon."

"I suppose, Pete," Nell put in, "you're trying to fasten Emily's absence on Mr. Singh. If you only knew how ridiculous it makes you appear! Oh, I know you fancy yourself as a detective, but—"

"Hush up, Nell," said Betty, who was crying now. "I won't have you speak as if Emily had been kid-

naped or something."

"Well, where is she then?" Pete spoke abruptly.

But before anyone could respond to his question, Rodney and Lamb came in.

Their dejected air made inquiry unnecessary, and it was in silence that they let Prall take their hats and sticks, and provide them with highballs and cigarettes.

"Something's got to be done," said Sayre, heavily.

He spoke as one in dream or trance.

"You see," he went on, "something must have happened. Emily isn't at any house; we called at all the neighbors. She never got to the hospital; we've been there. We could find nobody who saw her or heard of her after she left this place. Prall saw her go out the back door, and that's all we know. Now, as the person most deeply interested, I feel I should take the helm. I'm not forgetting you, Aunt Judy," he said, with a pathetic look at her, "but as Emily's future husband I feel I have a right to dictate."

"Of course you have, Rodney," Aunt Judy said, tremulously. "Whatever you think best to do, that you must do."

"I think so, and I propose to call the police at once and let them take up the matter. That is, to my mind, the only thing to do. The only argument against it is the unpleasant publicity of it. But I think the time has come to discount that. If Emily is all right, she will forgive us for getting so alarmed at her absence, and if she isn't all right, surely we want the help of the police."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)
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