

Announcement

To the People of Halsey and vicinity we wish to announce the opening of our Gift Shop and China department; also Electrical Goods. In the gift shop you will find quaint Vases, Baskets, Statues and other articles costing from a few cents to several dollars. The China includes both Haviland and English. Also a good selection of Glassware. We cordially invite you to call when in Albany and look over our line of gifts and dishes, and also see the beautiful furniture we are displaying.

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The Secret Adversary

By AGATHA CHRISTIE

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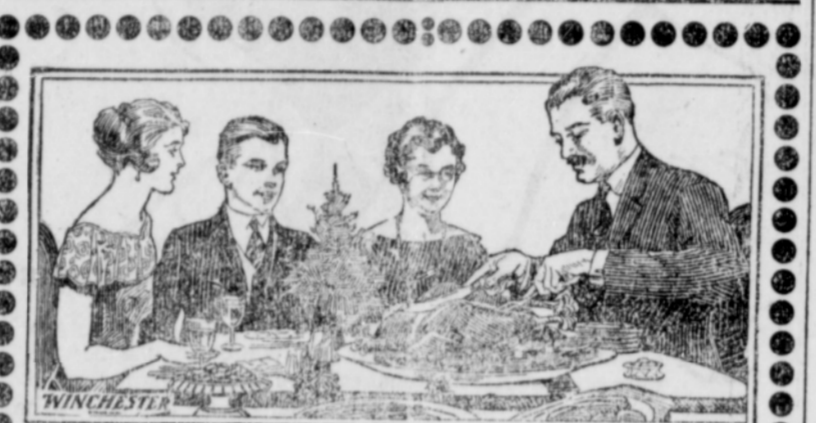
(Continued)

In a flash Tuppence was out on the pavement. A policeman was approaching. Before he arrived Tuppence had handed the driver five shillings, and she and Jane had merged themselves in the crowd. "It's only a step or two now," said Tuppence breathlessly. Hand-in-hand, the two girls hurried along. "It may be my fancy," said Tuppence suddenly, "but I feel as though there was some one behind us." Tuppence and Jane took to their heels. The house they sought was some way down. Footsteps echoed behind them. Their breath was coming in choking gasps as they reached Sir James' door. Tuppence seized the bell and Jane the knocker. A man reached the foot of the steps. For a moment he hesitated, and as he did so the door opened. They fell into the hall together. Sir James came forward from the library door. "Hallo! What's this?" He stepped forward, and put his arm round Jane as she swayed uncertainly. He half-carried her into the library, and laid her on the leather couch. From a tangle on the table he poured out a few drops of brandy, and forced her to drink them. With a sigh she sat up, her eyes still wild and frightened. "It's all right. Don't be afraid, my child. You're quite safe." Her breath came more normally, and the color was returning to her cheeks. Sir James looked at Tuppence quizzically. "Am I right in thinking that the joint venture has ended in success, and that this"—he turned to the girl on the couch—"is Miss Jane Finn?" Jane sat up. "Yes," she said quietly, "I'm Jane Finn. I have a lot to tell you." "When you are stronger—" "No—now!" In a low voice Jane began her story. "I came over on the Lusitania to take up a post in Paris. When the ship was torpedoed, a man came up to me. He asked me if I was a patriotic American, and told me he was carrying papers which were just life or death to the Allies. He asked me to take charge of them. I was to watch for an advertisement in the Times. If it didn't appear, I was to take them to the American ambassador. "Most of what followed seems like a nightmare still. I see it in my dreams sometimes. . . . I'll hurry over that part. Mr. Danvers had told me to watch out. He might have been shadowed from New York, but he

didn't think so. At first I had no suspicions, but on the boat to Holyhead I began to get uneasy. There was one woman who had been very keen to look after me, and chum up with me generally—a Mrs. Vandemeyer. I remembered that she'd been quite near me on the Lusitania when Mr. Danvers gave me the packet, and before that she'd tried to talk to him once or twice. I began to get scared, but I didn't quite see what to do. "One thing I'd done already as a precaution—ripped open the oilskin packet and substituted blank paper, and then sewn it up again. So, if anyone did manage to rob me of it, it wouldn't matter. "What to do with the real thing worried me no end. Finally I opened it out flat—there were only two sheets—and laid it between two of the advertisement pages of a magazine. I stuck the two pages together round the edge with some gum off an envelope. I carried the magazine carelessly stuffed into the pocket of my ulster. "At Holyhead I found myself in a carriage with Mrs. Vandemeyer after all. I consoled myself with the thought that there were other people in the carriage—there was quite a nice-looking man and his wife sitting just opposite. So I felt almost happy about it until just outside London. I had leaned back and closed my eyes. I guess they thought I was asleep, but my eyes weren't quite shut, and suddenly I saw the nice-looking man get something out of his bag and hand it to Mrs. Vandemeyer, and as he did so he winked. "I can't tell you how that wink sort of froze me through and through. My only thought was to get out in the corridor as quick as ever I could. I got up, trying to look natural and easy. Perhaps they saw something—I don't know—but suddenly Mrs. Vandemeyer said 'Now,' and flung something over my nose and mouth as I tried to scream. At the same moment I felt a terrific blow on the back of my head. She shuddered. Sir James murmured something sympathetically. In a minute she resumed: "I don't know how long it was before I came back to consciousness. I felt very ill and sick. I was lying on a dirty bed. There was a screen round it, but I could hear two people talking in the room. Mrs. Vandemeyer was one of them. I tried to listen, but at first I couldn't take much in. When at last I did begin to grasp what was going on—I was just terrified! I wonder I didn't scream right out there and then. "They hadn't found the papers, they'd got the oilskin packet with the blanks, and they were just mad! They didn't know whether I'd changed the papers, or whether Danvers had been carrying a dummy message, while the real one was sent another way. They spoke of"—she closed her eyes—"tormenting me to find out! "I began thinking madly. What could I do? I knew I wouldn't be able to stand up against torture very long. Suddenly something put the thought of loss of memory into my head. The subject had always interested me, and I'd read an awful lot about it. I had the whole thing at my finger-tips. If only I could succeed in carrying the bluff through, it might save me. I said a prayer, and drew a long breath. Then I opened my eyes and started babbling in French! "Mrs. Vandemeyer came round the screen at once. Her face was so wicked I nearly died, but I smiled up at her doubtfully, and asked her in French where I was. "It puzzled her. I could see. She called the man she had been talking to. He stood by the screen with his face in shadow. He spoke to me in French. He asked me my name. I said I didn't know—that I couldn't remember anything at all. "Suddenly he caught my wrist, and began twisting it. The pain was awful. I screamed. He went on. I screamed and screamed, but I managed to shriek out things in French. I don't know how long I could have gone on, but luckily I fainted. The last thing I heard was his voice saying: 'That's not bluff! Anyway, a kid of her age wouldn't know enough.' "When I came to, Mrs. Vandemeyer was sweet as honey to me. She'd had her orders, I guess. "By and by she went out of the room altogether. I was suspicious still, and lay quite quiet for some time.

In the end, however, I got up and walked round the room, examining it. I thought that even if anyone was watching me from somewhere, it would seem natural enough under the circumstances. It was a squalid, dirty place. There were no windows, which seemed queer. I guessed the door would be locked, but I didn't try it. There were some battered old pictures on the walls, representing scenes from Faust. Jane's two listeners gave a simultaneous "Ah!" The girl nodded. "Yes—it was the place in Soho where Mr. Beresford was imprisoned. Of course, at the time I didn't even know if I was in London. One thing was worrying me dreadfully, but my heart gave a great throb of relief when I saw my sister lying carelessly over the back of the chair. As the magazine was still rolled up in the pocket! "I lay down on the bed again, and by and by Mrs. Vandemeyer brought me some supper. "That was an awful night. I'd made my plan whilst I was waiting for her. The papers were safe so far, but I couldn't take the risk of leaving them there any longer. They might throw that magazine away any minute. I lay awake waiting until I judged it must be about two o'clock in the morning. Then I got up as softly as I could, and felt in the dark along the left-hand wall. Very gently, I un-

locked curiously round the dingy room. "It was here that our young friend was confined for so long, was it not?" he said. "A truly sinister room. You notice the absence of windows, and the thickness of the close-fitting door. Whatever took place here would never be heard by the outside world. "You feel—as we all feel—THE PRESENCE OF MR. BROWN. Yes"—as Tuppence made a movement—"not a doubt of it—MR. BROWN IS HERE. "In this house?" "In this room. . . . You don't understand? I AM MR. BROWN. . . ." Stupefied, unbelieving, they stared at him. The very lines of his face had changed. It was a different man who stood before them. He smiled a slow cruel smile. "Neither of you will leave this room alive! Shall I tell you how it will be? Sooner or later the police will break in, and they will find three victims of Mr. Brown—three, not two, you understand, but fortunately the third will not be dead, only wounded, and will be able to describe the attack with a wealth of detail! The treaty? It is in the hands of Mr. Brown. So no one will think of searching the pockets of Sir James Peel Edgerton!" There was a faint sound behind him, but, intoxicated with success, he did not turn his head. He slipped his hand into his pocket. "Checkmate to the Young Adventurers," he said, and slowly raised a big automatic. But, even as he did so, he felt himself seized from behind in a grip of iron. The revolver was wrenched from his hand, and the voice of Julius Hershelmer said drawlingly: "I guess you're caught redhanded with the goods on you." The blood rushed to the K. C.'s face, but his self-control was marvelous, as he looked from one to the other of his two captors. He looked longest at Tommy. "You," he said beneath his breath. "You! I might have known." Seeing that he was disposed to offer no resistance, their grip slackened.



For a Successful Thanksgiving

To complete the success of your Thanksgiving dinner, it is necessary that the big, brown, savory turkey be served properly. You can assure the success of this serving by providing the Winchester carving set—keen, sharp, well designed to do the work neatly. We have several distinctive patterns of Winchester carving sets from which to select. Other Equipment for Thanksgiving: Casseroles, Cooking Utensils, Electric Toasters and Grills, Kitchen Cutlery Sets, Percolators, Roasters, Silverware, Stainless Steel Knives. A three-piece set of genuine black stag handles and sterling silver mountings. Eight-inch forged chrome vanadium steel blade. Roscoe Ames Hdwe. ALBANY OREGON THE WINCHESTER STORE

hooked one of the pictures from its wall—Marguerite with her casket of jewels. I crept over to my coat and took out the magazine, and an odd envelope or two that I had shoved in. Then I went to the washstand, and damped the brown paper at the back of the picture all round. Presently I was able to pull it away. I had already torn out the two stuck-together pages from the magazine, and now I slipped them with their precious inclosure between the picture and its brown paper backing. A little gum from the envelopes helped me to stick the latter up again. No one would dream the picture had ever been tampered with. I rehung it on the wall, put the magazine back in my coat pocket, and crept back to bed. "They watched me constantly for weeks. Sometimes they'd ask me questions by the hour—I guess there was nothing they didn't know about the third degree—but somehow I managed to hold my own. The strain of it was awful, though. . . . I feel that the horror is store for me would

once. You have been followed here—not a doubt of it. When we leave the house we shall be followed again, but not molested, for it is Mr. Brown's plan that we are to lead him. But the Soho house is under police supervision night and day. There are several men watching it. When we enter that house, Mr. Brown will not draw back—he will risk all, on the chance of obtaining the spark to fire his mine. And he fancies the risk not great—he will enter in the guise of friend!" Tuppence flushed, then opened her



"Then the Papers," said Sir James slowly, "Are Still at the Back of the Picture in That Room."

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mouth impulsively. "You know who Mr. Brown is, don't you?" "Yes," said Sir James gravely. "I have been morally certain of his identity for some time—ever since the night of Mrs. Vandemeyer's mysterious death." "Ah!" breathed Tuppence. "For there we are up against the logic of facts. There are only two solutions. Either the choral was administered by her own hand, which theory I reject utterly, or else—" "Yes?" "Or else it was administered in the brandy you gave her. Only three people touched that brandy—you, Miss Tuppence, I myself, and one other—Mr. Julius Hershelmer!" Jane Finn stirred and sat up, regarding the speaker with wide, astonished eyes. Springing to her feet, she cried out angrily: "What do you mean? What are you trying to suggest? That Mr. Brown is Julius? Julius—my own cousin?" "No, Miss Finn," said Sir James. "Not your cousin. The man who calls himself Julius Hershelmer is no relation to you whatsoever."

CHAPTER XVII Mr. Brown. Sir James' words came like a bombshell. Both girls looked equally puzzled. The lawyer went across to his desk, and returned with a small newspaper cutting, which he handed to Jane. Tuppence read it over her shoulder. It referred to the mysterious man found dead in New York. "As I was saying to Miss Tuppence," resumed the lawyer, "I set to work to prove the impossible possible. The great stumbling-block was the undeniable fact that Julius Hershelmer was not an assumed name. When I came across this paragraph my problem was solved. Julius Hershelmer set out to discover what had become of his cousin. He went out West, where he obtained news of her and her photograph to aid him in his search. On the eve of his departure from New York he was set upon and murdered. His body was dressed in shabby clothes, and the face disguised to prevent identification. Mr. Brown took his place. He sailed immediately for England. Since then he had been hand and glove with those sworn to hunt him down. Every secret of theirs has been known to him. Only once did he come near disaster. Mrs. Vandemeyer knew his secret. It was no part of his plan that that huge bribe should ever be offered to her. But for Miss Tuppence's fortunate change of plan, she would have been far away from the flat when we arrived there. Exposure stared him in the face. He took a desperate step, trusting in his assumed character to avert suspicion. He nearly succeeded—but not quite. "Now we're ready. I know better than even to suggest going without you, Miss Tuppence—" "I should think so indeed!" Sir James' car drew up at the corner of the square and they got out. A policeman produced a key. They all knew Sir James well. The three entered the house, pulling the door to behind them. Slowly they mounted the rickety stairs. At the top was the ragged curtain hiding the recess where Tommy had hidden that day. Tuppence had heard the story from Jane in her character of "Annette." She looked at the tattered velvet with interest. Even now she could almost swear it moved—as though someone was behind it. Supposing Mr. Brown—Julius—was there waiting. Impossible of course! She must not give way to this foolish fancying—this curious insistent feeling that Mr. Brown was in the house. Hark! What was that? A stealthy footstep on the stairs? There was someone in the house! Absurd! She was becoming hysterical. Jane had gone straight to the picture of Marguerite. She unhooked it with a steady hand. The dust lay thick upon it, and festoons of cobwebs lay between it and the wall. Sir James handed her a pocket-knife, and she ripped away the brown paper from the back. . . . The advertisement page of a magazine fell out. Jane picked it up. Holding apart the frayed inner edges, she extracted two thin sheets covered with writing! No dummy this time! The real thing! "We've got it," said Tuppence. "At last. . . ." Sir James took it, and scrutinized it attentively. "Yes," he said quietly, "this is the ill-fated draft treaty!" "We've succeeded," said Tuppence. There was awe and an almost wondering unbelief in her voice. Sir James echoed her words as he folded the paper carefully and put it away in his pocket-book, then he

looked curiously round the dingy room. "It was here that our young friend was confined for so long, was it not?" he said. "A truly sinister room. You notice the absence of windows, and the thickness of the close-fitting door. Whatever took place here would never be heard by the outside world. "You feel—as we all feel—THE PRESENCE OF MR. BROWN. Yes"—as Tuppence made a movement—"not a doubt of it—MR. BROWN IS HERE. "In this house?" "In this room. . . . You don't understand? I AM MR. BROWN. . . ." Stupefied, unbelieving, they stared at him. The very lines of his face had changed. It was a different man who stood before them. He smiled a slow cruel smile. "Neither of you will leave this room alive! Shall I tell you how it will be? Sooner or later the police will break in, and they will find three victims of Mr. Brown—three, not two, you understand, but fortunately the third will not be dead, only wounded, and will be able to describe the attack with a wealth of detail! The treaty? It is in the hands of Mr. Brown. So no one will think of searching the pockets of Sir James Peel Edgerton!" There was a faint sound behind him, but, intoxicated with success, he did not turn his head. He slipped his hand into his pocket. "Checkmate to the Young Adventurers," he said, and slowly raised a big automatic. But, even as he did so, he felt himself seized from behind in a grip of iron. The revolver was wrenched from his hand, and the voice of Julius Hershelmer said drawlingly: "I guess you're caught redhanded with the goods on you." The blood rushed to the K. C.'s face, but his self-control was marvelous, as he looked from one to the other of his two captors. He looked longest at Tommy. "You," he said beneath his breath. "You! I might have known." Seeing that he was disposed to offer no resistance, their grip slackened.



Quick as a Flash His Left Hand, the Hand Which Bore the Big Signet Ring, Was Raised to His Lips.

Quick as a flash his left hand, the hand which bore the big signet ring, was raised to his lips. "Ave, Caesar! te moriturus salutant," he said, still looking at Tommy. Then his face changed, and with a long convulsive shudder he fell forward in a crumpled heap, whilst an odor of bitter almonds filled the air.

CHAPTER XVIII A Supper Party at the "Savoy." The supper party given by Mr. Julius

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