



The Vanishing Men

BY RICHARD WASHBURN CHILD

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(Continued From Last Week)

"No, I have not lived with fear at all," he went on, looking straight into her eyes. "I have not lived with it because it is a parasite. I have been wounded, but I learned that five-eighths of the pain was fear. I have been apprehensive of some terrible calamity and the fear was the main part of the calamity. There are men in the world in myriads who fear that they may lose their money. Fear is worse than poverty. Brena. For God's sake, let's not fear!"

"I did not say that I had fear," she said. "I only said I had lived with fear."

"The world is a fool about fear," Peter drove on. "It makes cowards of us, but it is also the mother—"

"Of what?"

"Of murderers," he said.

Brena was silent.

To Peter, as the day came to an end, she had indeed decided to go from London. She spoke of it as if it were a slight from some kind of danger. Once she said, "You are much too nice to take any risks, Peter." He had asked her about these risks, but she said, "Among other risks, that of wasting your energies on something which leads nowhere." When they had

aimed at a little inn in Jersey street, she said, "Come home with me. No one sees us go in and out. It is like a nest hidden in an old stump. We can talk and then—"

"What?"

"Good-by. Goodnight. Good-by."

All the way up Regent street she kept her arm through his as if she feared that suddenly the mortal part of him would melt away, as if this contact might be made so real that it would live on in memory, and sometimes the illusion of this strong forearm, warm through its sleeve, might return to her.

The apartment, which she had retained without occupancy for some unexplained cause, was on a street of colorless brick houses where three street lamps, spaced with irritating precision, spread their radiance on the front walls in a fan-shaped insolence. It was in a house at the far end of this street—modest quarters for one who appeared to have plenty of money at her command; two flights of carpeted stairs led up to a little landing and her door.

She lit the lamp in the corner while Peter took the key from the hole, and the expanding light showed again the gray and gold room with its chintz curtains and its old English mahogany and the carved desk with its burly-maple panels and the hangings woven in Java at the windows. But Peter closed the door gently with his foot because he saw none of the room where the light was dim. Once more, as when he had seen her first, she stood beneath a light which poured down upon her its flood, emphasizing her as if she, of all the universe, had the quality of radiance and life. She had thrown aside her cloak; she stood with an aura of eternal youth about her, a girl who had come out of the ages and would live on without end, the center of all things. She gazed back at Peter from her dark eyes, wondering, waiting for him to move.

He walked toward her slowly, but without hesitation. In his face there was a square look—the look of a fixed will that has come into its own at last.

"Brena, I'm going to break my promise."

"Yes, dear, I understand. I can resist you, Peter. It would be hard, but I could do it."

"I could do it. I do not want to do it. The promise was for your sake, Peter. Not for mine alone."

"I've asked you nothing—no questions," he said, putting his hands upon each of her shoulders and holding her at arm's length.

"No, Peter, none."

"Because I did not care," said he.

"No matter what might come?"

"No matter what might come."

He drew her toward him and took a breath of the unperturbed fragrance of Brena Selcoss. And then, with eager, hungry yearning, expressed only through the restraints of tenderness and profound respect, as if indeed he had some ancient debt in his arms, he kissed her lips, he pressed his cheek into her hair, he touched the back of her neck with his fingers.

"I love you," he said. "Can you understand all I mean by those plain words—I love you?"

"I love you, Peter."

"You must never leave me now."

She sprang back, tearing herself from him as if he had treacherously plunged a knife into her.

"Not that, Peter. Not that! I thought you knew. I thought this was—good-by."

Like one in great pain which must be borne in silence, she threw back her head and stood quivering and tense.

"You can't have misunderstood!" she said in a breaking voice. "Is this my punishment—that you have misunderstood?"

"I want you, Brena—forever. I could have sworn I never would want anyone—like this."

"Peter, it cannot be."

She seized his hand and, leaning over, pressed her wet cheek upon his wrist.

"It cannot be, Peter. It happened when I was no more myself—the one you know—then I am Muriel Benham. It happened when I was less than eighteen—seven years ago. I am married."

"Married?" he gasped, putting his other hand lightly upon her cheek. "Where, then, is he? How long ago did he—"

"Go?"

"Yes."

"Three years. I loathed him. I loathed his eternal flight."

"And where is he now?" he asked.

"I do not know."

She shuddered.

"He—"

"Vanished."

Peter was white. Breathing hard, he said, "You—Brena—will you tell me everything?"

"Yes, Peter—before I go, I will tell you everything. It will show you why I am afraid—for you."

CHAPTER V

Brena Selcoss had been born on American soil.

One of her most vivid memories was that of her father, an austere man, who all his life long had carried about in the great and muscular body with its slow movements and its suggestion of latent giant power, a restless soul, ever seeking to find its way hither and thither like a strong giant ant of unceasing activity looking for new work.

She could remember dimly that her mother, whose hair never lost the red-gold Celtic glory until she and her second child died together when she was forty-two, had referred with whispered awe to the turbulent career of her husband, Demetrius. There were vague recollections of the mother's pride in the fact that he had risked and lost his career, begun so early in life and so brilliantly in chemical research and in a professorship in Athens, that he had tossed aside all consideration for himself to labor for a constitutional Greece and to risk his life in a conspiracy for freedom.

Mary Vaughn, as her name had been before her marriage, knew something of insurrection herself; she had had the ill fortune to be the daughter of the famous Tom Vaughn who was forced to flee Ireland with his family after the unsuccessful and forgotten "Garrison Plot" of the '50s. Mary, from the time she was a child, sang like a bird. She might have become a famous contralto, for her voice had that same warm, rich quality inherited by her bewitched daughter, but like a bird her true home was upon the open moors with their free spaces and the shadows of the clouds passing over the grass; New York, of adamant and recalcitrances, was as good for the joy of her voice as it would have been for that of a wild nightingale. She never spoke harshly of that "terrible Babylon," however, without adding, "But 'twas there I met your father, Brena, and I'll speak no ill of it."

So, with some of her sparkling self-dimmed, she gave all her expression of loyalty to her husband; her slight upon gauzy, unsubstantial wings was always a circle about his head, as if she were a brilliant moth hovering about the top of a grim mountain which always quivered, threatening volcanic disasters. Something had died within her when they took her from the moors and the open places, and that which was left was an Irish beauty and a bottomless well of affection for her man and her Brena.

(Continued from last week)



WE HAVE all heard remarks similar to the following: "Well, I don't know what I have to be thankful for! I don't think of the money we have lost, and then we had to give up our dear one. It just seems like our lot is worse than anybody's!"

One, on hearing such, feels like singing. "Look all around you, find some one in need, help somebody today. We thankful creatures! The only thing that occasions such a remark is the fact that we are all blessed with too much. We are all millionaires. If we would but take into account our wonderful opportunities and the grand privileges with which God has endowed us. When one has a feeling that his is a sorrowful plight, he has only to look around to see many in worse circumstances. We are too prone to count money a great asset, and if we do not figure a large bank account on which to draw, or live in a mansion, like unto our neighbors, we are inclined to feel that our blessings are few. Money never made a home. A mansion oftentimes shelters that falls short of being a home.

What is a home? Home is the abiding place of man, where contentment is, and love abounds. A place where children make you glad; where children play and laughter resounds; where friends may come and take away some kindly thought to help each day.

The one great thing for which we can all be thankful, and it reaches hovel and palace, and is more pronounced than at any period since the days of our Pilgrim fathers—is the great love being manifested by humanity. We have all learned that we cannot exist, one without the other.

Water never rises above the source. The home is the source of civilization, and we have awakened to the fact that the humblest home, the vilest hovel,



have a place in the grand scheme of American civilization. Truly we are our brothers' keeper; we cannot live unto ourselves nor can we rise above the source—the nucleus of civilization—the home. All our great leaders have come to this realization. The

ministers are advocating both and community service—the government is backing it. The nation has failed to become christianized from within the four walls of churches, and so on every hand is a cry for social betterment—a call for the best of our talents to be used for the development of boys and girls socially. Back to the home is the slogan, for unless our homes are perfected, our community bettered and our love for humanity strengthened, our nation cannot attain the highest standard.

So for this great move we are thankful, and as we render our thanks to God, let us pledge ourselves anew, realizing more fully our responsibilities to our home, to our community and to God.

SUMMONS

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Washington County, E. E. Swenson and Hulda E. Swenson, his wife, Plaintiffs, VS. John G. McFadden and Minnie C. McFadden, his wife, Defendants.

You and each of you are hereby required to appear and answer the complaint filed against you in the above entitled court and cause, on or before the last day of the time prescribed in the order for publication of this summons, to-wit: On or before the expiration of six weeks next, from and after the date of the first publication of this summons, the date of said first publication thereof being on Nov. 6, 1925, and if you fail so to appear and answer said complaint for want thereof the plaintiffs will apply to the Court for the relief prayed for in their said complaint, to-wit: a decree of the above entitled Court correcting the description of the real estate described in, and returning and correcting that certain deed executed and delivered by defendants, John G. McFadden and Minnie C. McFadden, his wife, to E. E. Swenson and Hulda E. Swenson, his wife, plaintiffs herein, dated September 11, 1924 and on September 15, 1924, recorded in the office of the recorder of conveyances of Washington County, Oregon, in Book 138 at page 215 thereof, records of deeds of said County and State, and mentioned in plaintiff's complaint herein, by correctly describing said land as being all the following bounded and described real property, situated in the County of Washington and State of Oregon, to-wit: Beginning at an iron pipe 312.9 feet north and 272.91 feet North, 89 degrees, 3 minutes East from the South West corner of Section 15, T. 1 S., R. 1 W.; thence south 89 degrees, 3 minutes, west 302.2 feet to center of County road; thence North 5 degrees, 30 minutes, West in center of County Road 71.36 feet to a point; thence North 89 degrees 3 minutes, East 209.1 feet to a point; thence South 71.2 feet to the place of beginning. It being the intention to convey the south half of Lot 61, Hocken acres, according to an unrecorded plat thereof; and that said deed be declared to be a deed to, and to have conveyed from said defendants to plaintiffs the land above described.

And for a further decree of the above entitled Court that plaintiffs

E. E. Swenson and Hulda E. Swenson, his wife, are the absolute owners in fee simple of all of said real property above described, and the whole thereof, and that their title to the same be forever quieted as against all of said defendants; that you and all persons claiming by, through or under you, or either of you, have no right, title or interest of, in, or to said land or any part thereof, and that plaintiffs have such other and further relief as to the Court may seem just and equitable. This summons is served upon you

by publication in The Beaverton Review, by order of Hon. George H. Hagley, Judge of the above entitled Court, which order was made and dated Nov. 4, 1925, at Hillsboro, Oregon. First publication Nov. 6, 1925. Last publication, Dec. 18, 1925. M. B. Bump and D. D. Bump, Attorneys for Plaintiffs. M. B. Bump, residence and post office address, Hillsboro, Oregon. D. D. Bump, residence and post office address, Forest Grove, Oregon. Adv c 48-4

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