



# The Vanishing Men

BY  
RICHARD WASHBURN CHILD

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WNU Service

(Continued From Last Week)

Less and less did he appear inclined to go out of their apartment; less and less did he go anywhere alone. "There is a book auction—the Olden collection with two volumes of illuminated MSS. from the old monastery at El Mayaguez," he said one day in March. "Will you go with me, Brena?" "Of course," she said, but his request marked sharply the moment of her realization that unless he were behind the closed doors of his library, he always wanted somebody with him. She tried to remember the various occasions when he had found trivial excuses to take the habit of the short-

four on some short excursion beyond the pretentious entrance of the apartment house; she concluded that he did not ask her to accompany him for the pleasure of companionship. He seldom conversed with her as he had once done; if there was a choice between going with her or in the limousine with Paul, he chose the silent and cynical chauffeur. Nor was this all. She began to notice frequent repetitions of the fear that had seized him within so short a time of their odd marriage. He never spoke of this, but she saw over and over again his face, which had become less youthful now, contort, the color leave it, his eyes grow restless

and with terror, she had observed him in a theater, even at a moment when a tense dramatic situation was being enacted on the stage, turn around as one turns who feels eyes from behind, and search the faces of those who sat in rows farther back. She had known him to pause at the doorway of a brilliantly lighted cafe and, without paying attention to the beckoning head waiter, who perhaps was impressed by the distinction and beauty and carriage of Brena, costume as always with colorings that no other woman of her tints of hair would dare essay, look searchingly at every party at the tables before giving his hat to the check girl. She had seen him walk from end to end of a limited train gaining from left to right at those in the drawing-room chairs, just as one does to discover an acquaintance, but with his countenance smeared over with grotesque apprehension. He was forever trying to scrutinize the faces flicking by, whether the afternoon sun shone on them on Fifth avenue or they peered out in white patches from under the black of jostling umbrellas in a rainy evening on Broadway. Even Brena began to look apprehensively into the world's stream of faces.

He who had once consulted doctors about his precious health; who, when she first had known him, followed the trail of other rich men who amuse themselves with their physical condition but with that passionate love of his own well being and life which was a characteristic developed in him as in no other; who was steamed and rubbed, manipulated, illuminated by various rays and but of light to add days to his number, now had lost all interest in health. Some external menace had swallowed the fears of those internal. He brooded alone. He consulted no one.

Brena felt it her duty to interrogate him; she was met by the first burst of rage he had ever projected at her. "Let me alone!" he said evilly, as he thrust a vicious glance at her. "I have problems that are my own. Keep your hands off!"

"You forget that whatever it is that is making you so strange affects my life also," said Brena. "Little by little it is isolating us both from normal human beings. You glare into people's faces as if you expected to have the next one fasten his or her teeth in your throat."

"So you are thinking at last of yourself?"

"Of course I am," she answered, walking around the living-room table and touching the books there with her finger-tips. "I might say that I was above thinking of myself. But they who say it always excite my suspicion. I'm trying to think of both of us—as an average human being should."

He said, "You forget!" He was in a towering anger.

"No, I don't," Brena replied quietly. "You bought me."

She picked up a novel, read its title and dropped it suddenly, as she said, "Yes, you bought me—the bargain of giving me a life for growth and in return I was to be your companion. You asked for no more than that and to have me help you come back to some sweetness of spirit for which you longed. Well, I've given you nothing more than you bought. And nothing less. For I've tried."

He looked up quickly, turned his ear toward her and then, having listened, stared at the ceiling.

"I was wrong," he said. "A brutish moment. I only meant that there is something of course—my nerves, no doubt—a decay."

"It would be unfair for me not to say more," said Brena.

He folded his small, cold hands upon the open book in his lap and stared.

"You do not mean that some man—"

"No."

"I couldn't tell, of course. A bargain is a bargain. The truth is that I would be joyful if you were made happy. I expect that. But I couldn't know its approach. Your circles and mine are no longer the same. You are ripening still—a wonderful miracle!"

"You have no circle," said Brena.

"No," said he, "I have no circle."

"There are times when I wonder whether this new turn in our lives is not connected in some way with me."

"New turn?"

"Yes!" She was vehement. "This thing which hangs over us like a gullotine blade. This thing which makes you go about wrapped in your chills of fear. This thing which makes your eyes flicker from side to side as if every street corner were an ambush. The thing which makes you afraid to be alone."

He sprang up.

"What if it were?" he said. "It is possible, isn't it? It is possible that a person might carry around in their trail some strange destiny. There might be some extraordinary forces behind you, mightn't there? It is possible that some tragic end awaits all men who bind their lives with yours."

Brena opened wide her dark eyes.

"That is enough," she said.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to leave you, Compton," she said.

If she had spoken these lines in the theatrical emphasis with which they are spoken by several hundred women in each thousand sooner or later, as wise a man as Compton Parmelee would have laughed in her face. It was only necessary to know Brena to know that if she said these words it would be with a calm, a sureness, a regretful sorrow all combined in the tone of her voice and the expression in her eyes that would carry conviction. Compton was convinced.

The idea knocked him onto his knees. He came half crawling, stumbling, struggling up toward her.

"No, no! No, no, Brena—for God's sake!" he whimpered. "For the love of Christ don't leave me!"

At her feet he shampooed his hair as in an imaginary basin until its sparse growth had been rumbled under the palms of his clutching, twitching hands.

"Well, then never speak of any mystery trailing upon my heels," she had said. "Never bring this insinuation that a curse follows me. You have had your chance to be free of it and instead of wanting me to go you want me to stay. I loathe dramatics."



## "No, No, No, Brena—for God's Sake!" He Whimpered.

He stood, with his eyes indicating humiliation through the terror which still lingered in his face, he arose and walked toward the door.

"Very well," he said at last in cold, hard syllables. "You shall not hear of it again. Forget it. Call it a mad and foolish thing. My lips are sealed. But the time will come. There are stranger things in the world than you know."

He closed the door and left her alone, somewhat shaken; and in spite of all that she had said, somewhat eager to ask him more. If she had, he would have pressed his thin lips tight and said nothing. He did this on later occasions, he had made up his mind to wrestle with his fears, whenever they might be, alone. His physician told Brena confidentially, that Compton Parmelee was suffering only from a mild form of neurasthenia in which dread had attached itself to some particular chain of morbid thoughts.

In March Parmelee conceived the idea that he was being followed. He spoke of it several times and Brena laughed.

(To be continued next week)

## CONTEST WILL OPEN IMMEDIATELY

(From the Beaverton Hummer)

Now is a good time for all you would-be authors and poets to show your skill. In order to work up some enthusiasm for the Hummer, the Staff wishes to announce that a story and poem contest is now open to one and all of the students in B. H. S. The stories must contain at least 300 words, but not more than 500. There is no restriction as to the length of the poems, but both stories and poems must be written neatly so that they can be easily read. The Staff will judge them, and there will be a prize for the story and poem printed in each issue. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, for there will be a contest of this sort for the next three issues, as well as a prize for the best story of the term.

All manuscripts for the first contest must be handed to me on or before Wednesday, February 10, 1926.

—Helen Stiles, Literary Editor

Have you read about the contest? Read!!!

## BEAVERTON TRAMPLES TEAM FROM GRESHAM

(From the Beaverton Hummer)

The powerful Gresham squad was the latest victim of our Orange and Black "Cyclone".

Although they were just nosed out, the Gresham team played a clean game, and Beaverton had to fight and fight hard for everything they got.

During the first half, the visitors outplayed us, and were on the long end of a 6-2 advantage. The lone basket being made by "Kid" Jones, who played a whale of a game.

The next half saw a reversal of form by our local lads and they romped all over the floor and had run up 12 points before Gresham had time to think.

During the last frame Gresham started a belated rally but it was too late to help matters along any.

The team chart is showing better form every time they play, and have won a majority of their games, and should be noticed by the students and given some real support, because anybody who would "walk a mile for a Camel" would have walked ten miles to see the Gresham-Beaverton fracas.

The Lineup

Beaverton (12) (10) Gresham

Harrison F Johnson

Gray F Dousett

Johnson C Lane

Jones G Howen

Tigard G Rushen

Sprague S

Referee: Taggart

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He has to his credit wonderful results in diseases of the stomach, liver, bowels, blood, skin, nerves, heart, kidney, and wetting, bladder, catarrh, weak lungs, rheumatism, sciatica, leg ulcers, and rectal ailments.

Below are the names of a few of his many satisfied patients in Oregon.

Rose J. Applin, Carson, Wash., nerve trouble, Mrs. Otto Will, Jefferson, varicose ulcer, leg.

M. P. Christianson, Albany, bladder trouble.

Mrs. M. A. Ewan, Coquille, stomach trouble.

Robert Ziglinski, Seio, stomach and heart trouble.

John Roth, Albany, adenoids and tonsils.

Mrs. M. L. Olsen, Portland, appendicitis.

Remember the above date, that consultation on this trip will be free and that his treatment is different.

Married women must be accompanied by their husbands. Address: 241 Bradbury Bldg., Los Angeles, California.

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## ADMINISTRATRIX' NOTICE

In the County Court of the State of Oregon, for Washington County.

In the matter of the estate of Jonas J. Bickel, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, Inez B. Rogers, was on the 25th day of September, 1925, duly appointed by the County Court of the State of Oregon, for Washington County, Administratrix of the estate of Jonas J. Bickel, deceased, and that Letters of Administration were issued to her as such by said Court. All persons having claims against the said estate are hereby notified

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to present the same duly verified with proper vouchers attached, according to law, within six months from the date of this notice, at her residence 3 miles Northwest from Beaverton, Oregon.

Dated and first published on this 15th day of January, 1926. Date of the last publication, February 12th, 1926.

Inez B. Rogers, Administratrix.

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M. H. Kendall, Attorney for said estate.  
His post office address, McMinnville, Oregon. Adv c7-11

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**Attention** Oldtime Fiddlers and Quadrille Dancers  
**Fiddlers' and Dancers' Contest!**  
WILL BE HELD AT THE  
**--Beaver Theater--**  
Date to be announced in next issue  
We want all Fiddlers in vicinity of Beaverton to send in their names and addresses to enter contest. Contestants and their families will receive passes on that  
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