

RESURRECTION ROCK

by Edwin Palmer
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Was the body of that gay young lieutenant, BARNEY LOUTRELLE, lying cold and stiff in the snow and ice? This was the fear in the heart of ETHEL CAREW, when she rushed from the home of her old grandfather, LUCAS CULLEN, SENIOR, who had been struck with a stroke and when she learned that Loutrelle was going to Resurrection Rock, that ghostly island in Lake Huron, with its uncanny house. Loutrelle and Ethel had met in these northern woods of Michigan. In London he had received, in a sense, messages from Ethel's father, instructing him to go to the Rock—a trip which he hoped would clear up his obscure past.

Old Lucas Cullen, winner of millions in violent battles for timber land in the early days, tries to prevent Loutrelle from reaching the Rock and Ethel fears that Barney has been killed by REINOLFO, acting under Cullen's orders. She tries to reach the Rock herself.

CHAPTER VI.

Ethel reached the lake and removed her skis. Kincheloe was still far ahead of her, but he was exhibiting an uneasiness which restored to Ethel her fears of the night. Miss Platt's husband seemed to be losing determination; he no longer was hurrying but was glancing back often at her, and he was wandering off from the direct line to Resurrection Rock.

She noticed that something on the shore seemed to disturb him, and, looking about, Ethel observed that Asa Redbird had emerged from the trees and was hastening after them. Asa was carrying his rifle.

"You want me to stop him?" Asa inquired when he came up.

Ethel shook her head. "Just come with me."

In silence they completed their journey to the mysterious house on Resurrection Rock. There were no signs of life and when Ethel and Asa Redbird reached the main entrance, the girl received the first shock.

The glass panel over the knob had been broken. After a moment's hesitation, Ethel thrust her arm through the hole so plainly prepared for turning the key from the outside.

As she did so she realized that neither Bagley nor Barney Loutrelle would have need to enter in this fashion.

"Bagley got key from Wheedon," Asa explained. "Barney Loutrelle came yesterday and Bagley right here and let him in."

The room showed no sign of disorder or of violence done there, yet sight of the room itself amazingly disturbed her. She did not know why, at first; she merely felt frightened as by something uncanny.

"Asa, I've been in this room. I've never been in this house before; but I've been in this room," Ethel exclaimed.

"Yes?" Asa inquired, unable to comprehend her.

It was plain to her that this room once had been part of a French building. French of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Ethel's recognition of this partly explained her impression of familiarity here when she was a child at her aunt's chateau.

Aunt Cecilia had taken her on visits to chateaux of many of Uncle Hilaire's friends. She might indeed have been in this very room before. It was hopeless for her to try to recall from her memories of when she was 8 and 9.

Her mind was not now dwelling upon what might have been her own association with this room. What was Barney Loutrelle's? He had been sent across the ocean to the room. Why?

She moved nearer the mantel and gazed at the design incised over the fireplace; it bore a dignified, formal device like—yes, very like—the device wrought upon Barney Loutrelle's ring.

They searched the house thoroughly. No one, living or dead, was in the house; nowhere had they come upon sign of violence or indication of cause for Barney Loutrelle's disappearance.

"Where's he gone, Asa?" Ethel appealed finally.

"How do I know?" the Indian returned irritably, and Ethel appreciated that his nerves were on edge.

She heard scratching at the door and, remembering the dogs, she recalled the brown mat in Lad's hair.

"Let them in, Asa," she directed. When the door was opened and the dogs ran in, she thought that they rushed into the salon because she was there; but Lad only brushed against her on his way to the further end of the great room where he thrust his head down and smelled of the floor, whimpering and scrambling about in a circle.

Less blundered about near him so excitedly that Ethel followed to see what was there, only to find a space of bare, varnished floor. But her interest stirred Lad to leap upon her and dash to the door on the south which communicated with the outside steps down the Rock to the summer landing.

When she looked through the glass of this door, Ethel observed for the first time that those steps showed the depressions of deep footprints.

The dogs jumped into the snow and floundered down the steps to the ice where they shook themselves and

rolled over, barking. She was fearfully expecting that Lad was leading her to the sort of horror which she had believed to be in the house when she came upon chunks of ice standing beside a hole, about a yard in diameter, which had been chopped through to the water.

Young ice had frozen over, not yet half an inch thick. She knelt and leaned forward with her hands on the edge of the hole, peering down through the new, glassy crystal into the dark, deep water underneath. She felt footsteps on the floor of ice and, looking about, she saw that Asa after some delay had descended from the Rock. He came to her side and gazed into the hole.

"Water hole," he said quietly. "Bagley chop it here yesterday to fill buckets. Bagley did not chop it so big."

"Yes; that's it; why? Why, Asa?" she cried, suddenly losing control of herself. "Why should any one want that hole bigger?"

"Nobody would," Redbird assured positively. "For water."

"No," she said. "No; no; no!" She meant, first, agreement with Asa; then revolt at, and denial of, the images in her own mind. The Indian and she now understood the same events alike; Asa, indeed, had discovered more than she.

"What kept you up there?" she asked him.

He said he would show her; and together they ascended the steps in the Rock. He led her to the part of the floor where the dogs had been sniffing.

"Somebody washed right here, you see. Somebody did it last night, I think; somebody scrubbed. But no place else."

"Somebody burned cloth in fireplace?" Asa informed, going to the hearth and producing a handful of ashes which exhibited the woven texture of cloth; he produced also a charred bit of shaped wood which had been the back of a scrubbing brush. Asa offered it to take it, and she put out her hand to take it, and she put out her hand to take it, and she put out her hand to take it.

Asa had let go of it, thinking that she was taking it, and it dropped to the floor between them. It was to make sure that such trifles as this were completely burnt, she thought, that Kincheloe wished to come to the Rock early this morning.

She could think these things; but she could not say them.

She told him about the mat of blood in Lad's hair.

Asa went out and examined the dog.

"Nothing there now," he reported when he returned. "Hair there all cut off."

This brought her to the door to witness for herself that, since her discovery early that morning, some one had clipped the hair close under the dog's jaw. Who had done that? Kincheloe? Or Miss Platt? Or—her grandfather?

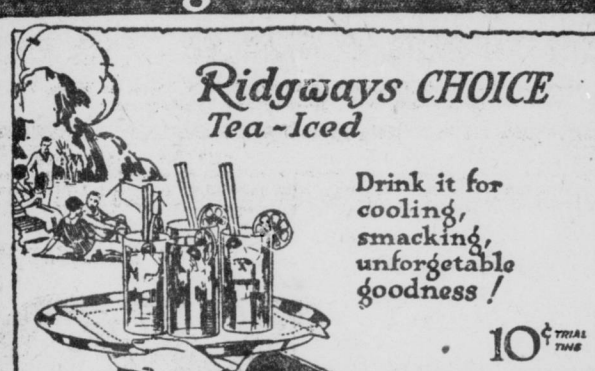
"Somebody was killed here, Asa?" "What else to think?"

"But who—Asa, who?" "Who was here last night?" Asa returned logically.

She clinched. He meant, of course, her friend of yesterday, Barney Loutrelle.

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Pound 27¢
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