

a commanding type, a guy with a loud voice, a fist like a Grant gold-medal ham, a thick neck, an aggressive way with clients, and a mania for selling meat in eighteen different ways that never were thought of before, most of them vulgar, pushing, and rude. Or, in other words, Clay, you."

Of Sally we know chiefly that she wants what she wants when she wants it, and is not particular about how she gets it. "When I'm put upon," she tells Clay after she has messed up his apartment, "I have to do something back—I can't help it, it's how I am." Later she tells him: "The old man played me tricks and choked to death, so it seems. Alec played me tricks and drowned, so it seems. She played me tricks and she'll burn, as it will seem." When she is wrought up, her adrenalin gland is excessively stimulated, and she smells, so Cain tells us, like a rattlesnake. She can't help it; it's how she is.

Edmund Wilson in 1940 hoped that Cain might go on to do something better, but he didn't, and here, in this production of his later years, he has merely repeated himself. There is as much trash as ever; for instance: "She got up and turned on the floor lamp back of her chair, standing before him naked. 'Can't we just have our beautiful hour?' she asked softly. But her eyes did not correspond with her voice or, for that matter, with her white, childish loveliness. They were cold, hard, and crafty."

That Cain was at one time taken seriously is hard to understand. He has always known how to keep a story moving, and in *The Magician's Wife* action follows action with such speed that the reader may temporarily overlook the faults. But at best it is only a diversion, and there are better diversions on the market.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

**FRASER YOUNG'S  
LITERARY CRYPT NO. 1149**

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1126 will be found in the next issue.*

CMM JRL TXFCM LOAJMRGXJFA

CLO DCNO XF C AGCGO JT DXFN

SZXIZ XA FJG YJXFY GJ MCAG.

QLJRAC

**Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1148**

*"Know thyself?" If I knew myself,  
I'd run away.*

—GOETHE.

**ON THE FRINGE**

## Through the Years With Ethel and Albert

**O**N THE assumption that you've always wanted to attend a séance, let me tell you about the one I went to thanks to Hans Holzer, a psychic Sherlock and the author of *Ghosts I've Met* (Bobbs-Merrill, \$5). I suppose I'd better begin this account with a statement as to where I stand on the spirit world. Never having met a ghost—knock wood—I do not believe in them. Then again, I have never met Elizabeth Taylor but, boy, do I believe in her. Let's say I'm an open-minded skeptic, which was my attitude throughout.

Ringwood Manor, where the séance took place, is in Ringwood Manor State Park, in northern Passaic County, New Jersey. The history of Ringwood begins in approximately 1740 with the founding of one of this country's first iron mines, a mine that supplied at least part of the chain used to blockade the Hudson River during the Revolutionary War. Washington is known to have visited the first Ringwood Manor at least three times before it was destroyed by fire during the Revolution. Begun about 1810, the current Manor has been changed and added to throughout the years by its owners, the most famous of whom was Peter Cooper, founder of Cooper Union in New York City. Ringwood Manor today is a sprawling architectural meld of bay windows, Ionic columns, and gables on a lovely hillside in the Ramapo Mountains. Most of its rooms have been restored, and the house is open to the public at a nominal charge.

I drove up with James Byrne, in charge of publicity for Mr. Holzer's publishers. It was a good day for a séance, a sunny afternoon with dark clouds starting to move in. En route we passed a hearse and a Pepsi sign with "Come Alive" on it in bold letters—two omens which made me feel happily creepy.

In front of Ringwood Manor, we met the others who would attend the séance. They were:

*Mr. Alex Waldron*, former superintendent of Ringwood Manor State Park. It was his experience that had brought us all to the Manor. He had been working in his office, the room in the Manor through which all visitors to the house enter. The time was between 3:30 and 4:30 of a bright afternoon. "I heard two fellows walking down the hall that leads

to the office. I knew there were two because they were out of cadence. Their footsteps were heavy—as if they were carrying something. I was busy and not really paying attention; there were often workmen around the house. When they got to the door behind me, they stopped. I reached around and opened the door for them, thinking their hands were full. There was no one there. I checked down the hall, the only place they could have gone. There was no one."

*Mrs. Claire Tholl*, who had written the letter about the footsteps to Hans Holzer. In her own visits to Ringwood Manor she had experienced nothing more definite than "a feeling of a presence."

*Mr. Wayne Daniels*, a friend of Mrs. Tholl and a consultant on the restoration and reconstruction of old houses; he claimed that there were two rooms in the house that "felt strange" to him.

*Mr. Hans Holzer*, in charge of the entire investigation, including the questioning of Mrs. Tholl and Mr. Waldron before we entered the Manor.

*Mrs. Ethel Meyers*, voice coach and trance medium. She had driven up with Hans Holzer, who said that he had told her nothing about the place they were going to. She waited in the car during the preliminary questioning so that she wouldn't have any facts which might cast doubt on anything occurring during the séance.

*Mrs. Hans Holzer*, who kept Mrs. Meyers company in the car. Mrs. Holzer carried a camera, which she was going to use during the séance in the hope of snapping something unseen (she didn't).

When Hans finished with his questions, Mrs. Holzer and Ethel Meyers joined us. We all entered Ringwood Manor and started down the narrow, gloomy, wooden hallway from which Mr. Waldron's footsteps had come. Suddenly, Ethel Meyers pressed a hand to her bosom. "I felt a man looking in the window at me."

I looked out the wide hall window. There were white lilac, bright sunlight, and the advancing dark clouds. Nothing else.

We were deep into the hall now. Dark, unfinished rooms were off to our left. Ethel Meyers said to Hans Holzer, "I felt a terrible pressure of the heart back there."

Hans: "There is a feeling in the atmosphere."

Ethel: "Yes, it is heavy."

Another few steps.

Ethel: "There is something funny here. It grabs."

Hans: "Let them guide you to whatever area . . ."

Ethel: "I feel a tremendous amount of hate. Someone has died under a curse." I still felt nothing.

Suddenly, Ethel Meyers stopped. She seemed puzzled. "Does the name Jackson mean anything? Jackson White?"

"That's not a name of a person," Mrs. Tholl said. "It's what the descendants of the runaway slaves who went up into the hills and interbred with the local Indians call themselves."

When we came to the restored bedroom that had once belonged to Mrs. Abram Hewitt, the daughter of Peter Cooper, Ethel Meyers said: "I need courage to go in. Whoever went out in this room went out with a bad conscience."

"This is a pretty large room," Hans Holzer told his tape recorder.

Ethel: "There is a presence here that is not friendly. A man and a woman are miles apart. Is there another way out of this room?"

**H**ANS opened a door and we all trooped through a large bathroom into a small room with blue plaster walls and a black marble fireplace. There was an antique piano, a round table, and several chairs. Light filtered through shrubbery outside the five narrow windows along one wall.

Ethel Meyers sat down at the table and closed her eyes. Her breathing grew heavy. I sat on her right, Hans with his tape recorder on her left, Mrs. Holzer and camera on my right opposite her husband. James Byrne took the fifth seat. Mr. Waldron was in a corner by the windows, Mr. Daniels leaned against the fireplace, and Mrs. Tholl was at the piano, her tape recorder in action.

Ethel Meyers's breathing was deep and raspy and sounded loud enough to be all three Barrymores in concert. Hans said to me, "Mrs. Meyers slips into a trance all by herself."

Then Ethel Meyers spoke in a tight, pinched voice that seemed to have a slight touch of Irish in it. "Hello, Mr. Holzer, this is Florence."

Hans looked surprised. "Florence is a well-known medium who passed away two weeks ago."

Ethel-Florence, who had no right being in Ringwood Manor, prattled on interminably about her busy afterlife. "The President of the United States came to see me. He has fear in him. He . . ."

Hans finally cut her off with a curt thank you. A new voice spoke through

Ethel Meyers. It was deeper than Florence's and belonged to Albert, the medium's "control" in the other world. He apologized for Florence.

Hans: "Is there anyone here who requires our help?"

Ethel-Albert: "There are two or more stories here. I will try to untangle them. There is more than one heartfelt tragedy here. I must turn back time to look. I must see it clearly before I speak."

**A**LBERT went away, leaving us alone with Ethel's breathing. Holzer signaled his wife to have her camera ready. She was having difficulties. While instructions flew back and forth through the gloom, a hysterical female voice—she identified herself only as Lucy—popped out of Ethel: "I didn't. Before my God, I didn't."

Hans: "We are your friends."

Ethel-Lucy pointed to her left side. "I can't walk. I can't walk! I didn't take it!" Ethel-Lucy, who had a slight Irish accent, grabbed Holzer's arm. "Where are you? Where's a friend? Don't go away. Jeremiah? Do you hear? Where are you, friend? I have never stolen. Before God, I have never stolen. . . ."

Holzer had to pry himself free of Ethel-Lucy. He told Albert to take her away but before she left he asked Lucy to "tell me the name of the person who has wronged you."

For an answer he got Mrs. Meyers's breathing. Suddenly, she sat imperiously upright. A regal female voice boomed out. "I have wronged no one." She thumped the table sharply. "Go!" Thump again. "Take this unearthly creature from here, this thief!"

While the unnamed lady was thumping out her orders in a voice touched with Prussian—and Irish—Holzer was busy rewinding his tape spool and Mrs. Holzer was struggling again with her camera. The last light was seeping out of the room.

Holzer asked the lady her name. He got back an aloof "I sit in my own dwelling and I need not be responsible to you. I am in no court of justice."

Hans: "What did the girl take?"

Ethel-Lady: "I am not divulging to you."

Since the lady was so uncooperative, Hans decided to put her at rest by telling her she was dead. He told her that she was speaking through "an instrument," as Mrs. Meyers-in-trance was called. Ethel-Lady reached up and felt her face and glasses. "What is this?" She peered down into the table top.

Hans: "You have died."

Ethel-Lady: "Call a doctor. Tell the girl to put it back. It was my mother's. I can't see. I am dying."

Mrs. Meyers collapsed face down on the table. A moment later she started



*"I'll be amazed if you communicate with him; I never could."*

mumbling in a deeper, masculine voice.

Hans: "Sit up and speak freely."

Ethel: "Whatsa matter everybody?"  
She sounded like a drunken Barry Fitzgerald.

Hans: "Who are you?"

Ethel: "Jeremiah."

Hans: "Well, we've got the whole cast."

Ethel-Jeremiah: "Dammit, who are you? Yer one of those white trashes."

Hans: "Who owns this house?"

Ethel-Jeremiah: "None of yer damn business. Yer white trash."

Several "white trashes" and no facts later, Hans decided it was time for Jeremiah to hit the road. "You're dead. You can't stay around here and make noise."

Ethel-Jeremiah: "Look at my back. They whipped me yesterday. Look at Red Fox, my squaw. (Ethel-Jeremiah put his/her hand to her/his mouth and gave a war whoop.) Do you hear that? My Lucy never walked again. I was told, live in forest like your forebears did. Don't covet money and the white woman."

Hans: "Albert, please take him out and bring back the instrument."

Ethel-Albert: "My instrument is drained. Please make a ring of energy."

We joined hands around the table giving, I believe, some of our energy to Mrs. Meyers, who came to, asking:



"Where's Albert? My hips hurt. Do you hear screaming? I didn't fall?"

We returned to the Hewitt bedroom, where Hans commented on what we had heard. He felt the remark about Jackson Whites was most interesting since "I didn't tell her we were going to Ringworm [sic]." As for Florence's dropping in—and Mrs. Meyers said she didn't know that Florence had died—Hans said, looking vaguely around the room: "She was a lousy trance medium. I'm sorry, Florence, but you were."

Concerning the other voices, Hans said they would be tough to check out historically as we had not been given last names or dates and because cases of servant thefts were usually dealt with by their masters, not the law.

We finished our evening by touring the rest of the house, which Mrs. Meyers found "fantastically alive." After assorted goodnights and the clicks of dying tape recorders, we headed in our separate directions. A half-hour later I was tangling with spirits again. They came at me out of shot glasses, and I believed in every one of them.

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

## A Roadway Called War

*Guns at the Forks*, by Walter O'Meara (Prentice-Hall. 273 pp. \$6.95), the first volume in a projected *American Forts Series*, tells of the battle between French and English for the "hub of the continent" during the 1750s, and of their simultaneous efforts to subdue the wilderness. Esmond Wright, professor of modern history at the University of Glasgow and chairman of the British Association for American Studies, wrote "Washington and the American Revolution" and "Fabric of Freedom."

By ESMOND WRIGHT

WALTER O'MEARA has already to his credit as novelist and historian several studies of the Canadian fur trade and the Spanish Southwest. His theme here is the story of Pittsburgh between 1753 and 1765—or, rather, the story of the five forts that were built in succession in these years at the forks of the Ohio River: Fort Prince George, Fort Duquesne, Mercer's Fort, Fort Pitt, and Fort Fayette. He relates it all without benefit of footnote but after a thorough reading of the sources, as his bibliography testifies; and his account of Braddock's defeat, drawing on Stanley M. Paragellis's researches, takes account of the latest estimates. For the most part *Guns at the Forks* is a straightforward tale; O'Meara does not need to embroider or romanticize, for his subject provides in itself as exciting a narrative as any chronicler could wish.

The forks of the Ohio in the 1750s were the hub of the continent, on whose future the destiny of North America turned. In a great arc around La Belle Rivière (as the French properly called the Ohio) lay the citadels and outposts, the fur centers, mission stations, and headquarters of the Army and Marine of New France. They ringed the English coastal settlements, from Louisbourg and Quebec through Fort Frontenac and Fort Niagara to Detroit and St. Joseph in the West, to Vincennes, Chartres, and Kaskaskia in the Southwest, and on to the Gulf itself.

If thin in numbers and widely scattered, the French were well led from first almost to last. They had a single-minded devotion to their cause, and, free from the restraints of the Puritan

ethic and the British taste for racial separation, they had always handled the Indians with great skill (the Iroquois excepted). Only when the British discovered scouts and traders with similar skills and addictions, like Cresap and Croghan, Weiser and Johnson—most of them, significantly, non-English—did their Indian diplomacy have a similar success. Save at two points, the Hudson-Champlain gap and the difficult country between the Blue Ridge and the Ohio, the French were invulnerable.

For their part, the British settlements were superior in numbers and in resources. But on their frontiers they were changing in character. Ethnically they were increasingly Scottish, Scotch-Irish, and German. Slow to advance across the mountains, they were slow to defend themselves when attacked (except by asking for regular troops from home, for whom—before or afterwards—they were most unwilling to pay). They were, furthermore, stubbornly civilian-minded.

In the first years of the struggle the advantage lay with France. And Mr. O'Meara gives a vivid account of the efforts by the successive French commanders, Duquesne, Contrecoeur, Vaudreuil, and Montcalm, to build and maintain a line of forts south from Lake Erie to hold off the British advance, and especially of their efforts to maintain an impregnable bastion at the point where the Allegheny and the Monongahela meet to form the Ohio. By contrast, the

(Continued on page 47)

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## Mr. Clean

By Ellen Count

I'VE got the disease and the doctors' sterile techniques can't touch me—  
I'm in the country beyond cure,  
My dust eternal on the floor,  
lodging in cracks—it's you  
I need, O my impossibly brawny one!

I am this nation of kneeling women  
(holding a bottle shaped like a man)  
praying to a label . . . Idol,  
here lies your niche. Unfold  
the super arms, ungrit the teeth  
behind that smile,  
peel off the plastered shirt  
and come and help me with my  
dirty work.