



THE MYSTERIOUS LIFE AND
SCANDALOUS DEATH OF HEIRESS
HUGUETTE CLARK

The
PHANTOM
of FIFTH
AVENUE

MERYL GORDON

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
MRS. ASTOR REGRETS: THE HIDDEN BETRAYALS
OF A FAMILY BEYOND REPROACH

The
PHANTOM
of FIFTH
AVENUE

THE MYSTERIOUS LIFE AND
SCANDALOUS DEATH OF HEIRESS
HUGUETTE CLARK

MERYL GORDON



GRAND CENTRAL
PUBLISHING

NEW YORK BOSTON



[Begin Reading](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Photos](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher constitutes unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), prior written permission must be obtained by contacting the publisher at permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

*To Walter
For Everything*

*To my parents
Spirited, Indomitable, Ever Curious*





William Andrews Clark spent \$7 million building his 121-room mansion, the largest private home in Manhattan. It was torn down in 1926, eleven years after it was completed. (*Collection of the New York Historical Society, George P. Hall & Son Photograph Collection, negative #58976*)

Character List

THE PATRIARCH

William Andrews Clark: (1839–1925) Montana copper mogul, U.S. senator, voracious art collector, one of the richest men in America, worth at minimum the equivalent of \$3.3 billion in contemporary dollars.

First Marriage

Katherine Stauffer: First wife, childhood friend from Pennsylvania. Married in 1869, bore seven children, died in 1893 of typhoid after visiting the World's Fair in Chicago.

Children of Katherine and William Andrews Clark who survived to adulthood:

Mary Clark Culver Kling de Brabant: (1870–1939) Eldest daughter, married three times, based in Manhattan, known for lavish parties and romantic entanglements.

Charles Clark: (1871–1933) Spendthrift California horse-racing enthusiast, often sued by creditors, worked for father, said to be father's bagman in bribing Montana legislature, married three times.

Katherine Clark Morris: (1875–1974) Married to a Manhattan physician, a descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, presided over 3,000-acre farm estate.

William Andrews Clark Jr.: (1877–1934) Founder of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, widowed twice, employed by his father, racy reputation, left fortune to seventeen-year-old boy.

Second Marriage

Anna La Chapelle: (1878–1963) Became William Andrews Clark's ward as a fifteen-year-old in Butte, trained to play the harp in Paris. Marriage to the senator belatedly claimed to have occurred in 1901 but license never produced. French-Canadian parents, mother ran a boardinghouse, father convicted of practicing medicine without a license.

Children from Anna's marriage to William Andrews Clark:

Andrée Clark: Born in France in 1902. Girl Scout, played piano, attended Spence School. Died on Maine vacation in 1919 of meningitis.

Huguette Clark: Born in France in 1906, died 2011. Talented artist (painter, photographer, miniaturist), played the violin, attended Spence School, exhibited her work at the Corcoran Gallery, passionate doll collector, became a recluse in later years.

Anna La Chapelle's siblings

Amelia La Chapelle: (1881–1969) Married three times, no children. Frequently traveled with Anna and the senator, very close to Huguette.

Arthur La Chapelle: (1883–1946) Based in California. His daughter, Anna La Chapelle, was supported by Huguette, her first cousin. Sued Huguette to break a trust.

THE FRIENDS AND SUITORS

Tadé Styka: (1889–1954) Polish artist, child prodigy in Paris. His portrait of Teddy Roosevelt hangs in the White House. Painted eleven portraits of Senator Clark. Huguette Clark's painting instructor for thirty years, frequent escort during the 1930s, closest man in her life.

Doris (Ford) Styka: Fashion model who walked into Tadé's studio during Huguette's painting lesson and stole his heart. Married the artist in 1942.

Wanda Styka: Their daughter. Huguette's goddaughter, museum archivist.

William M. Gower: (1905–1976) Huguette’s only husband. Married in August 1928, separated in April 1929, divorced in 1930. Received \$1 million to marry Huguette. Moved to France with second wife, Constance Baxter Tevis McKee Toulmin. Later reestablished affectionate connection with Huguette.

Etienne de Villermont: (1904–1982) French marquis and childhood family friend of the Clarks. In 1938, Walter Winchell announced the marquis’s engagement to Huguette. Etienne married a Frenchwoman instead but conducted a decades-long flirtation with Huguette, who wrote him checks.

Edward FitzGerald: Duke of Leinster. Bankrupt Irish duke, briefly courted Huguette for her money.

Edward “Major” Bowes: (1874–1946) Radio pioneer, host of NBC’s *Original Amateur Hour*, popular culture sensation in the 1930s, famous for his gong. Widower, began dating Anna Clark in 1935.

Dr. William Gordon Lyle: Family physician to the Clarks. Wife Leontine was a Spence classmate of Huguette. Their children: Gordon Lyle Jr. and Leontine “Tina” Lyle Harrower (goddaughter of Anna Clark).

Suzanne Pierre: French, widow of Dr. Jules Pierre, also a Clark family physician. Huguette’s best friend dating from the mid-1970s, saved Huguette’s life. Died in 2011.

Agnes Clark Albert: Daughter of Huguette’s half brother Charles Clark. Family member who had the closest relationship by far with Huguette and Anna Clark. Died in 2002.

HUGUETTE’S RETAINERS

Donald Wallace: Lawyer, worked for Huguette from 1976 to 1997. Exasperated by her failure to update her will. Died in 2002.

Wallace Bock: Attorney who inherited Huguette as a client from Donald Wallace, worked for her from 1997 until her 2011 death. Wrote her controversial final will, named an executor.

Irving Kamsler: Accountant, worked for Huguette from 1979 to 2011, visited often and held her medical proxy, executor of her will. Pled guilty to online sex offenses in 2008.

Christopher Sattler: Huguette’s assistant from 1991 to 2011. Worked on her artistic photography projects, maintained her three apartments at 907 Fifth Avenue.

THE NURSES

Hadassah Peri: Filipino immigrant married to an Israeli cabdriver, Peri was Huguette’s principal nurse from 1991 to 2011. Received \$31 million in gifts from Huguette including extensive real estate, antique jewelry, and a Stradivarius.

Geraldine Coffey: Irish immigrant, private night nurse, worked for Huguette from 1991 to 2011.

Marie Pompei: Hospital staff nurse, one of the first people to treat Huguette, became her close friend.

THE HOSPITAL PERSONNEL

Dr. Robert Newman: Chief executive officer of Beth Israel Hospital, where Huguette lived for two decades. Repeatedly solicited gifts from Huguette, even had his mother visit the heiress in an effort to secure donations.

Dr. Jack Rudick: Surgeon who treated Huguette for skin cancer, later received \$2.1 million in gifts from Huguette.

Dr. Henry Singman: Chief personal physician to Huguette. He made the 1991 house call that led to her admission to the hospital. Received more than \$1 million in gifts from Huguette.

THE LEGAL FIGHT

Clark family members who launched original guardianship lawsuit

Karine McCall: Granddaughter of Charles Clark.

Ian Devine: Great-grandson of Mary Clark.

Carla Hall: Great-granddaughter of Katherine Clark.

The lawyers in the estate fight

Harvey Corn: Represented Hadassah Peri.

John Dadakis: Represented Wallace Bock and Huguette Clark estate.

John Graziano: Represented Wanda Styka.

Jason Lilien and Carl Distefano: New York State Attorney General’s office.

John Morken: Represented Clark relatives.

Peter Schram: Appointed by the court to represent public administrator’s office.

The judges

Kristin Glen: Tart-tongued Surrogate's Court justice.

Nora Anderson: Assigned Clark probate case in 2013 after Glen retired.

The Descendants of Senator William Andrews Clark

