

At Sea

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Carolyn Wells

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Death strikes Garrett Folsom while swimming at Ocean Town, N. J. Investigation shows he has been stabbed to death under the water.

Folsom's companions were Roger Neville, a business partner; Mrs. Helen Barabaz and Carmelia Valdon. Folsom, just before his death, had been standing next to Ned Barron, known as the copper king.

Anastasia Folsom, eccentric and mischievous sister of the dead man, arrives and takes command. At the inquest it is learned that the death weapon was a pichan, an Oriental knife, and it had been bought on the boardwalk.

It is also learned that one Croydon Sears, who was in Barron's party, is a fancier of curious knives. Anastasia engages Titus Riggs, an architect, to work on the case. Dan Pelton, the dead man's nephew, arrives and is intrigued by some curious French dolls in Folsom's room.

He believes his uncle had been blackmailing several people and he and Riggs discover suspicious documents in Folsom's effects, bearing the initials of Croydon Sears.

Carmelia Valdon admits that she is anxious to recover some letters that were in Folsom's possession. A remark from Riggs nettles her and she leaves.

Now go on with the story: CHAPTER XXXI Carmelia evinced no anger, made no quick or peevish motion, but as she went off the Duchess observed:

"She's mad clear through. See it sticking out of her back!"

"She'll get over it," said Neville, carelessly. "Now, Riggs, come on the table. Want the Duchess to stay?"

"I'll go then," and Mrs. Barnaby rose, with an air of relief. "Had you wanted me to go, I should have stayed, and I know I'd be bored to death."

With her wide, seemingly vapid, but really wise smile, she followed the direction Carmelia had taken. "Great little old woman," and Neville looked at Riggs.

"Does she know anything?" "Everything."

ing. I mean about the Folsom murder.

"Good Lord, no! How should she?" "I don't know how she should, but that doesn't argue that she doesn't."

"She may for all I can say—I've really not talked to her about it."

The Riggs watched his man, for in a sense Neville was his man, for the moment. Riggs didn't actually suspect him, but a number of vague vapors had begun to crystallize suddenly and all at once, and Titus wanted to be sure.

"Have you talked much about it, Neville?" he said. "I mean, have you heard or gathered anything that would help me in my search? For you must be interested in getting at the truth."

"I daresay I ought to be," the other cut in. "But I'm not. I don't look at these things as some people do. I'd rather let poor old Garry lie. To dig into that man's past would not only mean a lot of reproach to his memory but trouble and annoyance for other people who, whatever they may be, are innocent of any complicity in his death."

"Complicity? How can you think more than one person acted? Even the coroner's jury said at the band of a person unknown, omitting the alternative plural."

"I used the word carelessly, but even so there may have been complicity of intent with an individual action. I don't suggest this at all. I'm only defending my English."

He smiled. Neville was a man of charm, and the more Riggs looked at him the more he felt certain that the charm was of a sort that could expand into tact, even policy, even deception.

"Well," he said, after a moment's pause, "I believe 'cards on the table' was your phrase. Spread your hand."

"Why, my dear fellow, I meant your cards. I haven't any. I'm not in this, as I told you. What I meant was, spread your cards, so I may know what you're after, from me."

"I've practically asked you all I am trying to learn from you; that's as to Garrett Folsom's side-lives. Straight goods: now, do you know of his being conversant with

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details of other people's lives, that said people would give almost anything not to have known?"

"And did give almost anything?" "Yourself among them?"

"Yes."

"You know of others?" "If I do, I don't propose to tell of it."

"Very well, and thank you for your frankness. This is not news to me, of course. But I will not ask you any more than you want to tell."

"You've reached your limit, then."

The Riggs smiled. He began to like the man, though against his better judgment.

"What became of that valet of Folsom's, that Ross?" Neville asked.

Again Riggs smiled. He would so often read silent connective thought.

"You mean he knew about his master's business?"

"Geo, Riggs, you're uncanny! That's early Doyle work."

"Only to a mild degree. Why the nephew, Dan Pelton, one of your co-heirs, accumulated Ross as part of his inheritance. I suppose he had a right to."

"Oh, hardly a question of right. Yes, I do rather think that Ross knows a lot about Garry's doings under the roof as well as out in the moonlight."

"But, faithful and loyal, as I

see it."

"All of that. Old Ross is said of the earth, if you ask me. And I don't believe you could get him to squeal on Folsom to the extent of one single sentence."

"That's the conclusion I've come to, after several attempts. Now, for a parting shot. What do you know of Croydon R. Sears?"

"Nothing but good."

"I hate that expression 'nothing but good.' There's no man of whom that can truthfully be said."

"No, I suppose not. But Sears is, then, the average—or above average, as you like—honorable, upright citizen. The square business man, the courteous gentleman, and the man of intellect—with a hobby."

"The hobby is of no interest save as it implies upon the case we have in hand. Could he have done in Garry Folsom?"

"Not for a minute! He didn't buy that wicked old knife."

"How do you know he didn't?" "He said so."

"Wouldn't you have said so if you had been the murderer?"

"Like a shot! But Sears? Why, he had no motive."

"Look here, Neville, if these things we've just spoken of are true bills, about 'other people's secrets,' any man may have a motive."

"—yes, I suppose so."

"Or Carmelia Valdon?"

"Oh, don't take that too seriously. Carmy's nips were—just what you called them."

"To come back to Sears, then. Doesn't the mere fact that the weapon used was an antique curio seem to have a bearing?"

"Not a definite one—at least, not as yet. Besides, I understand it, Sears was handed feet or more away from Folsom."

"We've only Sears' word for that."

"By the Lord Harry, Riggs, you make me, darned uncomfortable! You may like this sort of probing, but I don't! If you suspect Croydon Sears, go and tell him so, but let me alone!"

Neville was on the verge of being angry, so, being a diplomatic man, Riggs made some laughing retort and laughed away.

Seeing Sears and Ned Barron, who had returned together, he went to speak to them.

"Might as well put it through," he told himself.

"Riggs, in 27 he asked, noting the vigorous glow that seemed to flow as an aftermath the salt-water dip."

"Rather!" answered Barron. "None of the timider sex along, and we swam—how far did we swim, Croy?"

"A million miles, at a rough guess. And uphill all the way."

"You look it! You two ought to make for an advertisement picture of somebody's."

"Soap," laughed Barron. "No, salt, I guess."

"I suppose we look like a pair of Lot's wives. And there's my own wife, and Barron left them abruptly to go, toward Madeline, who had just come in sight."

Riggs snatched his chance. "Great old swimmers, you chap," he said heartily. "Can you give me a bit of help in my work, Mr. Sears? That young hopeful of yours has laid down on the job."

"Why—that is, I don't see how I can, Mr. Riggs. I know nothing about it, you see. I was 'way off; I didn't see the 'think' at all."

"You know, but I'm only checking up facts, but who was the man in the green bathing suit who stood near you?"

"I haven't an idea, and—excuse me, sir—I shouldn't tell you if I had." And Croydon Rochester Sears, with a slight, formal bow, turned and walked away to where the Barrons were standing.

The Riggs looked critically at Mr. Sears' back and said, "Whew!"

(To be continued.)

Riggs can't put Sears out of his mind when he thinks of the murder. Why do so many people act suspiciously? Who killed Folsom, anyway?

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VARMIN'T HUNTER FUND Douglas county has been allotted \$425 as its share of state funds for the employment of predatory animal hunters. The money is made available to the counties engaging in this work contingent upon the expenditures of similar amounts of county funds. The apportionment of state funds for 1927 aggregates \$17,000, with \$15,000 set aside for this work in 1928.

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THEATRES

LIBERTY THEATRE

"Summer Bachelors." Fox films version of Warner Fabian's sensational novel, exposing the frailties of the modern husband, had a first showing at the Liberty theatre yesterday.

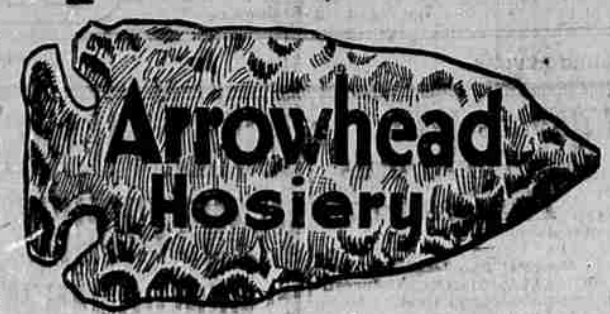
Directed by Allan Dwan, and with a cast of stars in the principal roles, including Madge Bellamy, Allan Forrest, Charles Whiting and Matt Moore, this is one picture that is calculated to please every taste.

It is not often that one sees such a swift-running story as this, nor one more starred with dramatic as well as comic situations. No one should miss it who can possibly see what is one of the best entertainments of the season.

There is a light, airy innocence to this story that flows spontaneously, infectious. The director must have imbued the cast with that spirit, for they have it in full measure, and the audience is

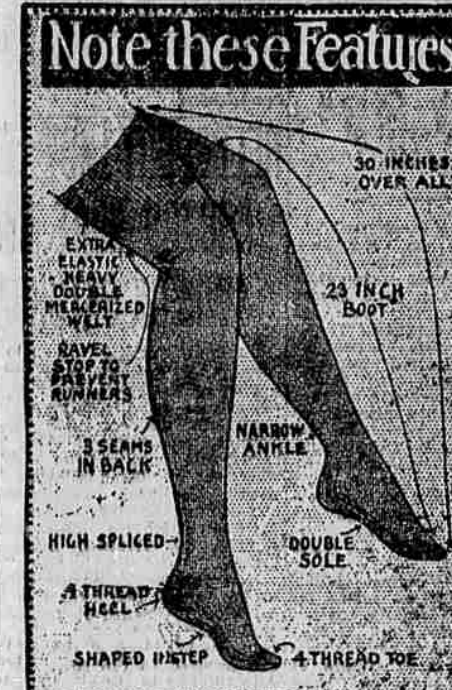
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certain to be inoculated with the same pleasant microbe.

ANTLERS THEATRE

Norma Talmadge and Thomas Meighan both have roles in "The Only Woman." Norma's latest First National photoplay.

Meighan, who was last seen in "The Heart of Wetenah," recently arrived in Los Angeles and came over to Norma's set to visit with her. Director Olcott immediately fixed Meighan up with a job.

Norma was making a scene aboard a yacht and Meighan became a member of the crew. Meighan jumped into his role with such great fervor that Olcott told him to stick around and I'll build your bit up into a good part.

"The Only Woman" is Norma's first photoplay since "Secrets." Reversing the theme of a parent's sacrifice for a son or daughter, "The Only Woman" tells the story of a girl who surrenders herself in marriages for her father's sake.

Eugene O'Brien has the leading male role. The picture is at the Antlers theatre today and tomorrow.

MAJESTIC THEATRE

Somewhat statistician in the home office of Rayart Pictures Corporation, producers of "The Dixie Flyer," which will be shown at the Majestic theatre today, with Cal Landis and Eva Novak in the leading roles, has figured out that the picture contains fifteen actual thrills, thirty-nine tangles, twenty-seven guttaws, nineteen hearty laughs, eleven sighs and a tear or two. It seems to us that this is an ideal blending of all the elements necessary to manufacture real screen entertainment.

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SPORT BRIEFS

Eugene high school won the state basketball championship at Salem Saturday by defeating Salem high school 25 to 19, in a hard battle.

Welker Cochran, 30-year-old Hollywood, Cal., real estate dealer, won the world championship 18.2 ballline billiard tournament at Washington Saturday, defeating Jake Schaefer, of Chicago, 400 to 180.

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Our shareholders come from all walks of life. Some own substantial amounts of our Preferred Stock—others only single shares.

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