

THE BLACK PIGEON

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THIS HAS HAPPENED

"Handsome Harry" Borden, promoter of dubious stock companies, is murdered some time between half past one and four o'clock on Saturday. His body is found sprawling on the floor of his private office. Mervyn morning by his pretty secretary, Ruth Lester, who is engaged to Jack Hayward, whose office is just across the narrow airshaft from Borden's.

Ruth runs to Jack's office to tell him of the tragedy and, finding him out, searches for his pistol, which he had purchased at the same time he had bought an identical weapon for her to keep in her desk. His gun is gone! Ruth then recalls his threatening behavior of the past Saturday and his angry threat against Borden.

Jack comes in and accompanies Ruth back to Borden's suite. While he phones for the police, Ruth, fearing Jack shot Borden, across the airshaft, hurries into the private office to close the window. She gasps with relief, for it is already closed! Ruth tells Detective McMann of Borden's two Saturday morning visitors: Rita Dubois, night club dancer and Mrs. Borden, his wife and mother of his two children, who called for her monthly alimony check. Mrs. Borden comes in during the questioning and McMann mercilessly accuses her of the murder. She says she left Borden alive and saw only one person near his office: Minnie Cassidy, the scrub woman.

NELSON, MEDICAL EXAMINER, ARRIVES

When search is started for a weapon, Ruth tells of the pistol in her desk. McMann looks for it, but it, too, is gone. While McMann is questioning Micky Moran, elevator operator, a black pigeon flies through the window pane. McMann looks out the window and his exclamation of surprise startles his listeners.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XIII

Dr. Nelson, with his little black bag of instruments, and Ferber, the fingerprint expert, with his camera, were crowding the detective at the window as McMann pushed up the sash. Ruth, still not knowing what had caused the detective's jubilant excitement, stepped forward slowly, a cold, little hand dragging at Jack Hayward.

"Look, doctor! What would you say that is—and that—that?" McMann pointed from spot to spot on the white stone ledge of the window which opened upon the airshaft.

Nelson smiled his diffident, wintry smile. "I'd say, unofficially, that it is blood, my dear Sherlock, but only a laboratory test—"

McMann burst out a laugh. "And what would you say, made those peculiarly shaped blood spots, Ferber? You don't have to be so confidently cautious in your opinions. Look!"

"I'd say they are the footprints of a pigeon, made in blood," Ferber answered, awe in his voice.

"Now—how the deuce, if the window was closed—"

McMann drew in his head and dropped to his knees, going over every inch of the strip of bare floor which bordered the rug, from the farthest corner of the room to where the stiff, crumpled body of Harry Borden lay. A sharply triumphant explanation announced discovery.

"Look, Ferber—Nelson! The same identical tracks—two of 'em, between the body and the window! Three-pronged tracks, as clear as

the nose on Doc's face! Funny I didn't notice them before, but naturally I was working on the theory that the window was closed when Borden was shot. Let's see the fingerprints you got off this window, Ferber. If I'm half the Sherlock that Nelson is so fond of calling me, those fingerprints will be as good as a picture of the man or woman who put a bullet through Borden's heart. Right, Ferber?"

"You might be if there were any fingerprints," Ferber grinned. "It happens that the window had been wiped clean. I'm afraid Borden's murderer was a little too clever to leave a calling card, McMann."

McMann scowled. "He—or she—may not have left a calling card, but the pigeon did. Nice, obliging bird, that black pigeon!"

"It was then that Ruth Lester re-joined 'Satan' in horror and fear she christened him Nemesis."

"I'm afraid my sordid, scientific mind fails to follow your brilliant deductions, McMann," Dr. Nelson edged mildly. "I'll play Watson to your Sherlock. Just what do those alleged footprints of a pigeon in blood tell you, my dear Holmes?"

McMann flushed with resentment at the doctor's mild raillery, but decided to answer.

"I should think it is obvious, doc, even to a stodgy, scientific mind. This window was open before and after the murder, and possibly while it was being committed. Certainly it was open afterwards, or the pigeon could not have flown into the room and walked about in Borden's blood. Also, Borden's body was alone in the room when the pigeon entered, unless—by George!"

"Please don't be so mysterious on me, Sherlock," Dr. Nelson begged. "I assure you I'm all agog. Unless—"

"Unless," McMann explained impressively, "the room was occupied by someone the pigeon was not afraid of—to whom it was accustomed!"

On the last portentous word, the detective swung about so that he was facing Ruth Lester, who involuntarily cried out, as if he had accused her then and there of the murder.

Jack Hayward flung a protective arm about the shoulders of the trembling girl. "McMann, I repeat the indignation you have made against Miss Lester!"

"Please, Jack!" Ruth begged, in a panic of fear as to what his next words might be. She turned to McMann then, her pale face lifted bravely to meet any verbal blows he might give her. "The pigeons are accustomed to no one but me, Mr. McMann, and I was not in this room when Mr. Borden was shot, or afterwards, until I found him this morning."

"In the next office, perhaps, with the door open?" McMann shot at her.

"No!" She was trembling no longer, was almost glad that his suspicions were directed against her, rather than against Jack Hayward. She knew she was innocent.

"Gee!" an awed voice broke the tension.

McMann answered instantly to the red-headed elevator operator, who was regarding Ruth with a curious mixture of awe, admiration and fear.

"All right, Moran! Snap out of it! You've got to do a lot of plain and fancy remembering, my lad, if you don't want to spend a night in jail to refresh your memory," McMann snapped at the instantly terrified boy. "First, I want you to give me the name of every person who used your elevator after one o'clock Saturday."

Micky Moran rumbled his red hair in despair. "Gee! At's gonna be a big order, boss. Nearly every tenant and steno on this side of the building beat it at one o'clock. Car was jammed, boss, for two or three trips."

"Give me as many names as you can," McMann ordered, seating himself at Borden's desk, to make notes. "Wait a minute! . . . You're getting samples of blood from those pigeon footprints outside and inside, aren't you, doc? And Ferber, you'd better photograph 'em before the doc scrapes 'em up. . . . Now, Moran—"

The boy drew a deep breath and then rattled off a dozen names, which McMann listed, with the number of the office to which each belonged. "Now, Moran, when did Miss Lester leave? With the others at one o'clock?"

"The boy shot an apologetic glance at the girl who was waiting, breath drawn in, hands tightly locked over Jack Hayward's right arm. "No, she didn't get off till the rush was over. Musta been about a quarter past one. Mr. Hayward was waitin' for her at the elevator. He usually goes down in Otto's car, on the other side, but when he's got a date with Miss Lester—"

"All right, Moran," McMann interrupted. "Mr. Hayward was waiting for her and they got in the elevator about 1:15—"

"One-twenty," Ruth corrected. "I had looked at my watch several times, as I knew I was keeping Mr. Hayward waiting. Mr. Borden had to sign some letters before I could leave, and Mr. Adams stayed until after one."

"All right—1:20," McMann accepted the correction and made a note of the time. "Anything unusual happen as the couple went down in your elevator, Moran? Did Miss Lester or Mr. Hayward seem upset or worried, or anything out of the ordinary?"

Micky considered. Then his face lighted up. "Gee! Guess I did most of the talkin', boss. I just couldn't get over how different Miss Lester looked, and I kept tellin' her so—"

"Different?" McMann pounced. "Was she crying, or pale?"

"Gee, no! She was lookin' swell! If I hadn't seen her when she went out on an errand in the middle of the mornin', and spoke to me so's I'd recognize her, I'd never a-knowned her, honest! Like I told her, she looked like a movie star, only swellier. And I said to Mr. Hayward I had to hand it to him—he could pick a winner that anybody else woulda passed up."

McMann knit his brows in a puzzled frown. "I'm afraid I can't see why anyone would have 'passed up' Miss Lester, Moran. What do you mean?"

The elevator operator chuckled. "If you'd a-seen her Friday or any day before that, boss! Hair all slicked back so's her ears showed, and great big yellow spectacles over them swell blue lamps of hers, and old-fashioned clothes that looked like they come from the Salvation Army. Guess she was disguised so's 'Handsome Harry' wouldn't make no passes at her."

"I see!" McMann commented dryly, his narrowed eyes flicking from Ruth to the amaryllis, tight-lipped man to whom she was engaged. "And this amazing transformation had taken place for the first time on Saturday, Moran?"

"It wasn't no transformation. It's her own hair. Any guy with half an eye could see that! She'd just had it slicked back tight till Saturday," Micky corrected indignantly.

McMann had been answered, in the utter stillness of the room, the tapping of the detective's pencil upon the edge of the dead man's desk sounded as loud as hammer blows. Then suddenly McMann spoke, and his words were directed to Ruth Lester:

"Twice this morning you've used the phrase, 'until the day of his death.' Borden, you said twice, had been a considerable employer—'until the day of his death.' But what about the day of his death, Miss Lester?"

Every vestige of color left Ruth's cheeks and lips, but her blue eyes were steady as she answered: "I meant, of course, until and including the day of his death."

McMann rose slowly from the desk and stroled toward the girl, towering over her as he summed up: "You feared the effect of your beauty on a man like 'Handsome Harry' Borden. You were a sort of disguise to keep him from wanting you. Saturday, happy in your engagement to Mr. Hayward, you left off your disguise of homeliness and let Borden see what he'd been missing. He made love to you, just as Mr. Hayward had feared he would—"

"Mr. Hayward!" Ruth repeated indignantly. "He himself didn't know I was any prettier than I seemed until Friday night after we became engaged! It never occurred to him that Mr. Borden—"

"But he gave you an automatic pistol to protect yourself against a man who was notorious where women were concerned," McMann interrupted sharply. "And Saturday, when Borden saw you as you really are, you were glad you had means of protecting yourself, weren't you, Miss Lester?"

"Gee!" Again Micky Moran's awed exclamation shattered a moment of intolerable suspense. "You didn't shoot him when you got back, did you, Miss Lester?"

"Gee! A little frail like that, and a big guy like him!" And Micky's wholly admiring eyes popped from Ruth to Borden's body and back.

"When she came back?" McMann repeated triumphantly. "Suppose you tell me all about Miss Lester's return to the office, Moran."

Ruth's blue eyes were so pitiful with fear and frantic appeal that the elevator operator flushed and stammered as he began his story.

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SPECIAL SHRINE TRAIN PLANNED FOR CEREMONIAL

Word has been received by the Roseburg representative of the Shrine of the Mystic Shrine which embraces all of southwestern Oregon, that the temple will have a special train to Los Angeles for the coming session of the imperial council. If sufficient Roseburg Shrines and their wives are interested in making this trip the train will be made up as a second Shasta leaving Roseburg about 2:30, May 21st, in order that those making the trip may attend the ceremonial of Ashmies Temple at Oakland on Saturday evening. All day Saturday the Shrines of southwestern Oregon and their wives will be the guests of the Oakland Shrines. Saturday evening, after the Oakland ceremonial, the Oregon special train will proceed to Los Angeles for the imperial session of the shrine. The exact railroad fare for this trip has not yet been ascertained but it is known that it will be less than the ordinary fare for one way. Only Shrines and their families will be permitted to make the trip upon this special train. All who are interested in making a trip should communicate with George Smith, Ray B. Compton or with J. E. Clark, local Southern Pacific agent.

It is Ruth who comes under McMann's suspicion now. Who will be next?

BLURTON BAKER TRIAL RESUMED IN PORTLAND

(Associated Press Local Wire)

PORTLAND, Ore., Mar. 18.—Trial of Burton Baker, Klamath Indian charged with the murder of Russell Riddle, fellow tribesman on November 28, last, was resumed in federal district court at 2 p. m. today.

The trial was temporarily suspended last week because of the illness of a juror.

The government expected to complete its case this afternoon and the defense was preparing to introduce witnesses when court convenes tomorrow.

RECENT ARRIVAL FROM FLORIDA TO OPERATE CAFE

Opening of the Camp View cafe, under the direction of Jack Murphy, a recent arrival from Florida, was announced today by the management of Camp View, the auto camp located just north of Roseburg at the junction with the Garden Valley road. The cafe located in a new building which has been constructed by the owner, John Ewell, adjoining the grocery store. The cafe is electrically equipped throughout and is modern in every respect.

Mr. Murphy, the proprietor, came to Roseburg from Florida about a month ago on a tour, and was so well pleased that he decided to remain in the locality. He has had a great deal of experience in the cafe and restaurant business in Ohio and Florida, where he has been in business for several years. The cafe will be open all day and in the evenings, observing the tourists hours.

The new cafe is one of several additions being made at the camp in preparation for the coming tourist season. Mr. Ewell is building additional rest rooms and is improving the grounds and is painting and renovating the cabins.

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Plan to attend the third anniversary program of the Out and Out Club tonight at the South Methodist church at 8 o'clock.

General tires go a long ways to make friends. Big discounts for a short time. The Roseburg Garage.

Another shipment of a thousand pounds of Pioneer brand of alfalfa seed has arrived at Wharton's.

Eat barbecue sandwiches and live forever. Brand's Road Stand.

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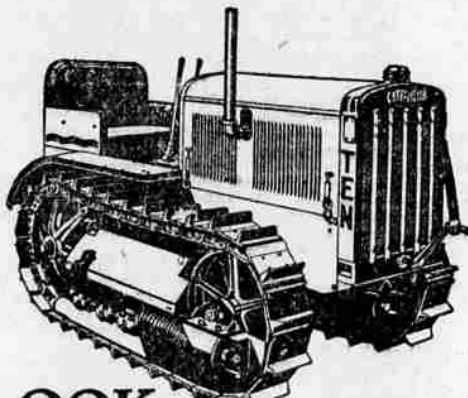
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Plow (disk)	3 disk	2 1/2
Plow (one-way disk)	6 ft.	1 1/2
Lifter (or lister-planter)	2 row	2
Disk Harrow (standard weight)	8 ft. double	2 1/2
Disk Harrow (heavy cover crop)	5 ft. double	1 1/2
Spike tooth harrow	4 section (20')	8
Spring tooth harrow	8-10 ft.	2 1/2-3
Load rollers, light weeders	12-17 1/2 ft.	5-9
Rotary hoes		
Grain drills	One 12-14 ft.	3 1/2-4
Mowers	Two 7 ft.	4 (second speed)
Grain binders	Two 7-8 ft.	4-5 (third speed)
Combined harvester	One 10-12 ft. (on fairly level land)	2 1/2-3 1/2
Corn picker	One or two row	1 1/2
Potato planter	Two row	1 1/2
Potato picker	Two row	1 1/2

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