

WHERE'S EMILY?

by Carolyn Wells

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"And as to big questions—moral questions, say?"

"Oh, there she was like adamant. If she thought a thing was right, I mean if she knew it was right, nothing could change her, either."

"What we may call a decided character, then?"

"Most decided, always," and feeling she had given her evidence, Betty sank back in her chair, waiting the next move.

As Stone sat silent, Everett Craven, always a bit eager to be in the limelight, spoke up.

"I suppose you want any side-lights on Miss Duane that you can get, Mr. Stone," he said, "so as her lawyer, I'll tell you a little about her determined way. It is her habit to make a new will every few weeks."

"As often as that?" said Stone, surprised.

"Yes, her whimsical disposition leads her to change her mind continually as to the disposition of her property."

"It is not in the hands of trustees?"

"Yes, so far as investments and that sort of thing. But Miss Duane is in full control of it all, and she may leave it as she chooses. There's no real reason why she should make a new will every week if she wishes, but I thought you'd be interested in such a peculiarity."

"I am. How did such matters stand at the time of Miss Duane's disappearance?"

"Her main bequests are rarely changed. She has bequeathed large sums to the church here, also to the hospital, and to some other institutions. She has made ample provision for her aunt, Mrs. Bell, and she has remembered her girl friends and the household servants."

"Are these latter items large bequests?"

"Rather large, yes, sir. I didn't bring her latest will with me, but you can see it tomorrow. I suppose you are thinking it might be to the advantage of some of the legatees to put Miss Duane out of the way, and so collect their inheritance."

"We have not the slightest suspicion that Miss Duane has been put out of the way," Stone reminded him, speaking a little coldly.

"He did not especially like this young man, and he especially disliked having thoughts attributed to him that he had not announced."

"No," Craven agreed, not a whit abashed by the other's manner, "but you know if she has been, it may not be known for some time."

"Then how can your suspicious wicked legatese benefit by her will?"

"After a time she will have to be adjudged dead and her will brought to probate."

"There is no gaining your statements, Mr. Craven, but I think they are not in line with our present course of inquiry, which is the assumption that Miss Duane is living, perhaps in captivity, and the necessity of immediate effort to

find her."

"Oh, well," returned the undisturbed Craven, "have it your own way. I only thought you ought to know about the wills, and, too, there is the Swami."

"Who or what is the Swami?" asked Stone, noting the restlessness suddenly evinced by the younger members of the group.

"Mr. Stone ought to know about the Swami," Sayre said, "so why not let Craven tell the story?"

"No," objected Pete Gibby, who had been more than ordinarily patient and quiet. "Why let Evie have all his own way? Let me tell about the Swami."

"Go ahead," Mr. Gibby, and Stone smiled encouragingly. "I like to hear from different observers."

"Well, this Swami is a heathen fake, who has come into this community here and bamboozled most of the women and some of the men into thinking he is a real priest or whatever these holy theosophists call themselves."

"Are you certain he is not, Mr. Gibby?"

"Well," Pete wilted a little, "well, he hasn't the earmarks of the real thing and he has all the effects of a fraud. He hangs around the women, and fawns on them, and picks up meals wherever he can—wonder he isn't here tonight—and gets contributions from them for his cause, which, to my way of thinking, is his unholy self."

"Mr. Gibby, I am afraid you are prejudiced against this mystic, or whatever branch of religion he calls his own. Perhaps some more disinterested observer—"

"Wait a minute, Mr. Stone; let me tell you this one thing. Old Swami—Lal Singh, he calls himself—persuaded Emily Duane to leave him a large sum in her will, fifty thousand dollars, to be exact, and so, if there's any getting out of the way to be done, what price Lal Singh as the guiding spirit?"

"This legacy appears in Miss Duane's latest will, Mr. Craven?"

Stone asked, in quiet, even tones.

"Yes," Craven admitted, though for some reason seeming unwilling to give the agent.

"And if you please," Pete was almost sputtering now, in his indignation, "already His Holy Nibs has tried to discount the sum and have Emily's estate pay him a part of the legacy and call it square!"

"This may or may not have any bearing on the matter of Miss Duane's disappearance," Stone said, "but it is assuredly an item of importance and must be thoroughly looked into. Was the Swami here at the time of Miss Duane's going away?"

"I think he was just about leaving," Sayre said, as no one else replied. "He had been here for some time, and at the time Emily went off almost all the people were leaving or had left."

"At the time Miss Duane went out to go to the hospital the guests of the evening were leaving," Stone queried, looking thoughtful.

"Yes," Sayre agreed, "and Emily came to tell me where she was going and bade me tell no one else."

"Then she ran off."

"And others were going away at the time?"

"Yes."

"Then, how could Mrs. Pennington and Miss Duane meet on the ravine bridge and stay there, a few moments at least, while Mr. Pennington was over at the Wallace shop, without some of these departing guests seeing them?"

Everybody looked blank. To be sure, how could that be accomplished?

Stone checked a smile at the awe-struck faces that stared into his own.

"It is an interesting point," he said, "but not a very important one. At least, it is important only if some departing guest did see the two ladies there. If nobody saw them, and I am inclined to think that, then the point is of no value."

"But, as you said yourself, Mr. Stone," Gibby ventured, "how did all these people pass over the bridge and not see the girls there?"

"I know only what you've told me," Stone replied, "but I fancy all the guests that left at about that time had gone when Miss Duane went out. If you think hard you may remember, Miss Bailey, what do you think?"

"I think they were about all gone," Betty said, "for, though Emily whispered to me to say good-by in her place, there were only two or three people to say it to and they were on their way out. Of course, a lot of people stayed on."

"Yes, that's what I mean," the detective told her. "Mrs. Bell, do you see it that way?"

"Yes, I do," and Aunt Judy's curls bobbed forward. "I looked about after I had said good-by to the Penningtons and there was only old Mrs. Maraden and her niece left, besides the people who were staying on."

"Have you spoken to Mrs. Maraden or her niece on the subject?" asked Stone. "Would they remember if they had seen Miss Duane run out past them or ahead of them?"

"I'm sure they'd remember it if they saw her," said Aunt Judy. "I don't know whether they've been asked about it or not."

"Your local detective isn't strong on inquiry, perhaps?" and Stone looked a little quizzical.

"Lawlor's all right," Craven spoke up, defensively, "but you see, Mr. Stone, he had the Pennington death to look into, right away, and so—"

"Yes, I see. I know of course, about the death of Mrs. Pennington, but I only know what I have read in the papers. And apparently your citizens here are in league to keep the whole affair as quiet as possible."

"That's it," declared Abel Collins. "They're not in league exactly, but it's one of the canons of Hilldale society to keep out of the papers at all costs. I doubt if the most insinuating reporters could get much information out of any Hilldale citizen."

"But that information must be forthcoming," Stone said austere.

"The people have no right to conceal knowledge that might help in running down a criminal. From what little I have already learned I am certain that Miss Duane's disappearance is due to foul play. I have not the slightest belief that she is away voluntarily, either playing a prank or carrying out some whimsical or freakish plan. There is possibility of an accident!

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COMPROMISE PLAN ON VETERANS' PAY BILL IS REJECTED

(Associated Press Leased Wire)

WASHINGTON, June 23.—With a final vote due before midnight, Senator Reed, republican, Pennsylvania, today proposed an amendment to the World War veterans' relief bill providing for a maximum allowance of \$40 a month to an estimated 300,000 veterans who cannot trace disabilities to service origin.

Denying he spoke for the administration, Senator Reed nevertheless vigorously opposed the pending finance committee measure. He had read President Hoover's letter to Senator Watson of Indiana, the majority leader, saying enactment of the bill would result in increased taxation next year.

Reed said the committee bill would mean an additional cost of about \$102,000,000 the first year while his amendment would cut this to \$25,000,000.

Hopes for the Reed amendment were jolted when Senator Shortridge, republican, California, opposed it and urged the passage of the bill opposed by President Hoover.

Shortridge said he respected Secretary Mellon but he could not agree with him on the veterans' bill.

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T. B. KAY SAYS HE'S WILLING TO ENTER GOVERNOR CONTEST

(Associated Press Leased Wire)

SALEM, Ore., June 23.—State Treasurer T. B. Kay will accept the republican nomination for governor if it is offered him, says a statement released by Mr. Kay Sunday.

The nomination of a candidate to take the place left vacant on the ballot by the death of George Joseph will be made by the republican state central committee, composed of members from the several counties elected following the May primaries, according to an opinion by Attorney General Van Winkle.

The statement made by Kay follows: "So many inquiries have been made as to whether I would accept the nomination for governor that I feel it my duty to say that I would be glad to accept the honor if it is offered to me by the republican state central committee. I have recovered fully from my recent illness and am now able to make the race and perform the duties of the office."

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The first contest between local members of the American Model League of America, a recently formed organization sponsored by Umpqua post of the American Legion, will be held Wednesday night at 8 o'clock at the armory under the direction of Perry Smith, adjutant of the post and chairman of the committee having charge of this activity. A large number of local boys have entered in this league and are building model planes on specifications furnished by the league. The contest will be for the purpose of demonstrating the work done.

This league, national in scope, is growing to enormous proportions. It is given the support and cooperation of leading aviation concerns, who offer numerous prizes to winners. The various contests, and tournaments are held on an elimination basis, and winners receive trips to Europe, scholarships in aviation schools, instruction in various phases of aviation, and numerous other awards. Proficiency on the part of some local model builder may result in a scholarship that will prove of great value, Mr. Smith states.

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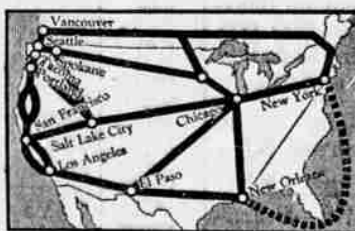


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