

"THERE'S MURDER IN THE AIR"

By ROY CHANSLOR

CHAPTER XVII
"Isn't it lovely?" she said softly. "The night—and that heavenly music!"

Nat looked into her eyes. "Yes—lovely," he said huskily. The smile left her face and she raised it, looking curiously at him. "What is the matter?" she whispered. "Why—why did you rush off like that awhile ago?"

"Why—like me?" he began.

"Nat," she breathed, "what is it? Don't you—like me?"

"Like you?" he echoed. "Of course I do! Why, you're the love of my life! You're—your're—your're—"

"But I'm rich, and you're poor—is that it?" she said.

"Something like that," he said, trying to say it lightly.

"Silly," she smiled.

She came close to him, her face raised, lips parted.

"Doris!" he said. "Doris!"

He reached out his arms, felt her in them. Then his lips were on hers. He held her closely and looked down at her radiant face.

"Doris," he whispered, "I love you!"

She smiled up at him.

"Silly," she said again. "Couldn't you see I rather like you?"

Above them, from the dark window of the bungalow, the music swelled clearer. They both raised their heads, listening. A chill clutched at Nat's heart. But the music continued. Nat's lips parted.

The chill, suddenly. The strains of that love-song, uninterrupted, clear, pure, were like a benediction.

In the cool of the early morning, before even the servants were stirring, Nat rose. He whistled as he shaved, took a tingly shower, donned a business suit. He had made a decision, and the prospect of action pleased him.

When he had made all his preparations, he knocked softly at Tyler's door; then at his employer's quick, "Come in," Nat pushed his way into the room, and grinned at Tyler's look of astonishment at sight of his city clothes.

"I'm running into town to check upon a little hunch," Nat explained. "Please make my excuses to the family and tell them I'll be back this evening. Stall Gordon if he gets curious. Say it's a business matter."

Tyler nodded. "And what about my own curiosity?" he smiled. "Is this hunch a secret?"

"Not exactly," said Nat. "It's about the mysterious Mr. Gaudio. I'll want to spend considerable time in the files of one of the newspaper morgues. I suppose you could fix that by a phone call?"

"Certainly," said Tyler. "I'll give the city editor of the Star a ring. He'll give you the freedom of the reference room."

He glanced inquiringly at Nat, but he did not question him.

"Here's the hunch," said Nat: "It may be all wet, but I think it's worth riding. The mention of this Gaudio by young Gordon means something. And the fact that your friend Crandall, who's by way of being a walking encyclopedia on crime and criminals, has never heard of him, or at least doesn't recall the name, means even more."

"It may be the key to the whole business," Tyler agreed.

"Well, my hunch is this," Nat said: "Gaudio belongs to Gordon's past, that peculiar past which seems to extend back only to 1916. If my hunch is right, Gaudio, for some reason, heaven knows what, wants to do away with Gordon. It must be a mighty powerful reason to have lasted all these years. The Gordons know that reason, all right, but they're darned well determined that no one else shall."

Tyler nodded, interested.

"If Gordon were a different sort of man," Nat continued, "I'd say his extreme secrecy was pretty good evidence he had something shady to hide. Possibly a criminal record—and an underworld feud growing out of that. But if I'm any judge of character, Paul Gordon didn't come from the underworld. There's breeding in the man—and integrity."

"Right," Tyler agreed. "He's a gentleman."

"But I do believe, from what little the Gordons let out before they were on guard, that Gaudio is actually the man behind this underworld threat they fear." Nat resumed. "What I don't believe for a minute, is that this threat is the result of Gordon's campaign against gangsters. That's a red herring. Why they should draw it across our trail, I don't know. That's what I hope to find out."

"That's all very well," said Tyler. "But how do you propose—"

"I propose to search the files before 1916 for the name Gaudio," Nat interrupted. "Paying particular attention to Chicago news stories. And to pictures. It's my hunch that the Gordons were involved somehow with a man named Gaudio, probably in Chicago, and almost surely before 1916."

He paused and then added, significantly:

"And here's the point: A man of Gordon's present wealth and power could cope with any known enemy, unless that enemy has something on him. We don't think Gordon is that kind of man. Therefore the present identity of that enemy, who must be Gaudio, is not known to Gordon. Because if he were, Gordon would have him behind the bars in short order. That can only mean that the man who was called Gaudio, who was known to the Gordons as Gaudio, is now no longer known under that name. And whatever identity he has since assumed, is not known to the Gordons."

"I believe you've hit it!" Tyler exclaimed. "The Gordons' hunch is the mind behind their peril. And yet they can't lay hands on him. Because he has covered his tracks so well! So, in effect, he is actually an unknown enemy. Which makes their problem mighty tough."

"Right," agreed Nat. "Gaudio has changed his name and identity and unless I'm very much mistaken, the Gordons have changed theirs. But Gaudio has the particular advantage of knowing their secret, while they simply don't know his. They are tangible targets while he is just a shadow."

Only a single window in the great house was lighted as Nat turned the car at the entrance to the estate and came to a stop to wait for Cooke to open the gate. With satisfaction he saw that was Gordon's window.

Cooke turned a powerful flashlight on him from the security of the lodge, and Nat grinned reassuringly and identified himself. Cooke called a greeting to him, and the gate swung open.

As Nat swung around the house, he saw that the lights in the living-room of the cottage were on. Tyler was waiting for him. He put the car away. As he came out of the garage, he heard the music from the first time.

Ruth was up in her dark room, playing. He stopped, gazed at the window. She was playing softly, serenely. And yet his spine tingled, as it always did, probably as it always would, at the sound.

Tyler sprang to his feet eagerly as Nat entered the cottage. His eyes went to the manila folder under Nat's arm.

"I've got it," Nat said quietly. Tyler curbed his curiosity as Nat hung up his hat, then going to the phone, called Gordon's private number. Gordon himself answered.

"This is Benson," Nat said. "There's something of the utmost importance. We must see you at once. . . . No, no, it has nothing to do with the music. . . . What? No, it would be better if you came here. . . . Yes. Alone, please. . . . Thank you. We'll be expecting you."

He hung up and returned to Tyler's questioning glance. "If you don't mind waiting just a minute?" Nat said.

Tyler nodded. Above them, Ruth still played softly, another song now. Nat raised an inquiring look toward the sound.

"She's been playing for ten minutes or more," Tyler said. "No interrupting, though. I think the music soothes her."

The two men fell silent, waiting. Presently they heard Gordon at the door. Tyler admitted him. He had replaced his dinner jacket with a black velvet smoking-coat.

The man sat down, after a searching look at Nat's face. Nat paced up and down as he began to talk, hardly glancing at Gordon. Tyler, however, never took his eyes from the man's curiously inexpressive features.

"I've spent the whole day and evening in the files of the New York Star's morgue," Nat began. "I was looking for one Gaudio. I found him."

Tyler, watching Gordon, saw no change in the man's countenance.

"I just had a hunch," Nat went on. "And that hunch was that I might find that name in newspaper stories out of Chicago—some time before 1916. . . . I did."

He turned and looked squarely at Gordon for the first time. There was a flicker of the man's eyes, no more. The face was a mask. He did not even nod for Nat to continue. He just waited. Nat resumed his pacing.

"Joe Gaudio," he said, "was convicted in the year of 1916, in the city of Chicago, together with his brother Vito, and their father, Tony, of the crime of kidnapping. The victim was an eight-year-old boy, the son of a wealthy resident of the city, James Morison."

He stopped and again looked at Gordon. The man was looking straight ahead, as if not seeing. Nat, staring quiet now, facing Gordon, resumed:

"The Gordons demanded one hundred thousand dollars ransom and threatened death to the boy if the police were notified. James Morison did, however, notify the police; but he made very sure that this did not leak out. He left the ransom money, unmarked, at the spot designated by the kidnapers. Detectives watched, with orders to follow whoever came for the money, but to make no move until the boy was safely returned."

"After forty-eight hours a man did come for the money, and they trailed him. The boy was returned safely. And next day the three Gordons were arrested. Shortly after their conviction, which was speedy, the three men, with the aid of underworld friends, made a spectacular jail break. In the light which followed this, Tony Gaudio and his son Vito were killed. Joe Gaudio escaped."

Gordon, who had been sitting stiffly on the edge of his chair, now sank back and passed a hand over his face.

"Within a week," Nat continued, "the house of James Morison was bombed. His wife was killed. Morison himself, his son and his baby daughter, were miraculously uninjured. Morison, nearly frantic with grief, posted a reward of one hundred thousand dollars for the capture of Joe Gaudio. The country was ransacked. He was not found. Within another week, despite a heavy police guard, Morison was twice shot at through the windows of his home. Then an attempt was made to kill his son. The very next day James Morison, his son and his infant daughter disappeared."

(To be continued)

NOTICE ODD FELLOWS

Initiatory degree will be conferred Friday evening, June 5th. Good attendance desired. Order of Noble Grand.

A. J. Geddes, Secretary.

R. L. Odum of Jasper, Tex., started a counter attack on borers in his peach grove, losing \$4,000 parasites, called trichogrammas, to fight them.

**ALL-CHURCH FUND
URGED BY DAGWELL**

PORTLAND, Ore., June 4.—(AP)—Bishop Benjamin D. Dagwell startled the Portland council of churches today with a proposal that churches cease their competitive effort and throw all their financial resources into a central treasury.

Then, said the Episcopalian bishop, the churches should set out in earnest to acquaint the unchurched populace with the message of Jesus Christ.

"The churches of today are too respectable," he said.

"They have moved away from the poorer areas, leaving those people unchurched and unheeded. There is a cry that goes up from the human soul for spiritual nourishment. If we are not responsive to these people we listen to others."

He said churches should submit budgets and then join in raising the common fund, as do some 50 Portland institutions who are agency members of the community chest.

Such a plan, he said, was "quite in keeping with the Biblical injunctions 'bear ye one another's burdens,' and the 'strong ought to encourage the weak.'"

The present method of church financing hinges somewhat on selfishness, he said, in that it encourages the "putting of our own interests first."

"One church makes very little impression on a community today," he continued. "But when all of us unite we attract attention, we get publicity and our opportunity for service is increased."

AZALEA

AZALEA, June 3.—Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Jantzer visited here Friday, on their return trip from Portland to their home in Central Point. Mrs. Jantzer had been receiving medical care there.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Morgan and son, Justin, of Pulga, Calif., arrived here Saturday and spent the weekend visiting. The Morgans are former residents of Azalea.

Frank Jantzer Sr. and son, Frank, spent Friday in Roseburg on business.

Mrs. Bert Gilpatrick left Saturday for Myrtle Point, where she will visit with her son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Hal Gilpatrick.

Mrs. E. L. Johns returned to her home here Friday evening after spending the past week in Portland and Bonneville.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Dodge of Canyonville, visited Saturday with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Jantzer, Jr.

Mrs. F. W. Miller, of Portland, and Mrs. Izeta Hamilton, Mrs. Norman Duncan and son, Dicky, of Canyonville, spent Memorial day with Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Smith.

Ohioan Marks 111th Birthday

John H. Davis and his 100th grandchild.

Instead of offering a formula for longevity, John H. Davis celebrated his 111th birthday at his home near Washington Court House, O., by playing cards for three hours, greeting relatives and friends and telling pioneer stories to several of his 100 grandchildren. Davis is pictured here with Joe Francis Hansford of Wilmington, O., his 100th grandchild. He reads without glasses and has voted in every presidential election since 1846.

and family.

Denn Paulson, Aca Jones and Charlie King left the latter part of the week for Union creek where they have employment.

Mrs. Hattie Shiltz of the Benton mine spent Saturday evening visiting with her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Alden Swan.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Smith and baby, Miss Mabel Eakin of Powers spent Saturday and Sunday visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Eakin.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Brown and daughter, of Hill, Calif., spent several days this week at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Virgil McCollum.

Mr. and Mrs. F. N. Harrel spent the week-end attending to business and visiting in Cottage Grove.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Goetz of Portland visited Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Johns.

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Farnam and sons, Donald and Keith, of Salem, visited over the week-end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Forest Farnam.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Waterworth and baby of Los Angeles visited here Sunday with relatives and friends en route to Eugene, where they will visit with his parents.

**PAYMENT RATES
OF AAA EXPLAINED**

"What payments can I qualify for under the new federal agricultural conservation program?"

The answers to this basic and important question are still desired by many Douglas county farmers, who are not clear as to the distinction between the two types of payments provided, according to County Agent J. Roland Parker. Here are the latest official condensed definitions of the two payment systems as contained in a recent leaflet of the triple A:

"Class I (soil-conserving) payments—For shifting in 1936 to soil-conserving crops some of the acreage formerly used for soil-depleting crops.

"Class II (soil-building) payments—Made to farmers who in 1935 use approved soil-building practices on their crop land or pasture.

"A farmer may qualify for either payment, or for both."

The announcement recently made in Oregon as to rates to be paid per acre for soil building practices referred to the rates of the class II payments. They have nothing whatever to do with the class I payments, even though they may apply at times to the same land, states County Agent Parker. They are the smaller payments.

Announcement has just been made of the rates for the class I payments. These are set so that each county has its own rate, the Douglas county rate being \$10.50 per acre. County rates are determined on the basis of the average yield in each over the past 10 years of a group of selected soil depleting crops. Counties with a high average production are granted a correspondingly high class I payment rate, in accordance with the figures arrived at by the Triple A from soil depleting crop data. Within the county, each farm will also be rated according to its comparative productivity with other farms.

in that county. A farm with land producing above the average in crop yields will receive benefits greater than the county average of \$10.50 per acre and land less productive than the average will receive smaller benefits per acre than the county average.

Enjoys Outing—Miss Frances Howlin, nurse at the veterans administration facility, spent the week-end enjoying an outing at Sitcoos lake.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the County Court of the State of Oregon for the County of Douglas.

In the matter of the estate of James Jackman Medill, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned, James Medill, has been duly appointed by the County Court of Douglas County, Oregon, as administrator of the estate of James Jackman Medill, deceased, and any one having a claim or claim against said estate are hereby notified to present same, duly verified as by law required, to the undersigned at the law office of H. A. Canaday, Roseburg National Bank Bldg., Roseburg, Oregon, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice.

First publication of this notice is June 5, 1936.

JAMES MEDILL, Administrator of the estate of James Jackman Medill, deceased.

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Lurline, floating soap, 3 for 10c

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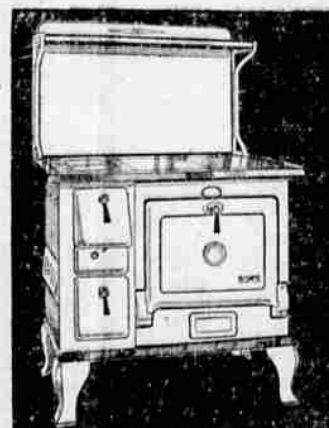
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