

"THERE'S MURDER IN THE AIR" By ROY CHANSLOR

CHAPTER XXVIII
Nat shook his head desperately. "Let's," he said, "if the police could only locate Collins!"

"What then?" he asked. "They could sweat the truth out of him!" said Nat savagely. "Or break him apart!"

Tyler paused and looked at Nat. "Collins doesn't know anything, son," he said. "He's as innocent as you are."

Nat stared at him incredulously. "Keep your shirt on," said Tyler composedly. "I know where he is."

"You—" Nat began, then stopped, recalling the scene he had witnessed between Tyler, Collins and Nelson.

"I sent him away," Tyler said. "But why—" Nat began. "To throw suspicion on him," said Tyler calmly. "It seemed to work too."

He grinned. "Even you were taken in," he said. "Well, I'll be—" said Nat. "That's why I didn't let you in on it," said Tyler. "I wanted to see whether I could build up a case against Collins that everybody would swallow."

He laughed. "Pretty sore at me for a while, weren't you, son?" Nat grinned sheepishly. "I still don't understand what good," he began.

"It's like this," Tyler said patiently. "When I heard Nelson was going to town, I had a hunch. I talked with Collins and Nelson. Collins was willing to help out. Nelson took him to my own house. Nobody would think of looking for him there. But just to play safe, in case Collins wasn't as innocent as I thought, I phoned Kiltz. Before Collins got to my house, the phones there had been tapped. If he tries to communicate with anybody, that will be that!"

"But suppose he sneaks off?" "I took care of that too," said Tyler composedly. "If he moves an inch out of that house, there'll be a central office man telling him. If he's guilty, he'll lead us right to Gaudin. I don't think he is guilty, though."

"But why all this camouflage?" "I just want to lure Gaudin's real accomplice into a false sense of security," said Tyler calmly. "He—or she—may overplay his or her hand now."

"But if Collins is innocent, won't the real accomplice know—" Nat began. "I don't think so," said Tyler. "I think the real accomplice will believe Collins is in on the general plot—and has skipped to draw the dogs off the scent."

It was seven o'clock by Helene's tiny platinum wrist-watch when the door to her windowless room was opened by a slim man bearing a tray, covered with a napkin. Through the door she heard the sound of music, gay dance-music, apparently coming from somewhere downstairs.

The man closed the door and grinned at her. "Hello, sister," he said. "Like to tie on the nose-bag?"

She recognized the man called Nicky. He eyed her speculatively. She shrank under his bold stare. He grinned and advanced with the tray, threw back the napkin. An appetizing aroma came to her nostrils. Nicky laughed, and set the tray on a chair.

"It's good chow, babe," he said. "We got the best chef in the Bronx county. Hop to it."

He waved toward the tray, then took another chair, tilted back comfortably and lighted a cigarette. The girl felt hungry, but she didn't move. Somehow she couldn't with those hard eyes fixed upon her.

"Not hungry, eh?" said Nicky. "Please," she said pleadingly. "I— I'd like to be alone."

Nicky's eyes narrowed. "Don't be like that, baby," he said. "I'm your friend. I might be able to do you a lot of good."

The girl glanced at him sharply. He was grinning. She shuddered. Nicky stood up suddenly. He strode to the couch and looked down at her. Then he sat down again, and surveyed her appraisingly. The door opened. Helene and Nicky turned quickly. The man with the dark mustache, Jim, stood there.

"You, Nick," he said curtly.

"Scram!" Nicky shrugged philosophically and stood up. Jim jerked his thumb over his shoulder imperiously. Nicky went to the door. Jim opened it, waved him out. Then he turned, without a word, and followed. Helene seized the tray and began to eat. The food was surprisingly good. With it she found a small bottle of Chablis. She looked at the label curiously. It looked like imported wine.

Jim and Nicky proceeded silently to the front of the long hallway, entered a well-furnished apartment, with large windows. An electric sign blinked just below. The strains of dance-music were loud and clear.

Jim glared at Nicky. "Stay away from her!" he snapped. "Just takin' her some grub," Nicky grumbled. "Tony'll take care of that," said Jim.

"Kayo," said Nicky resignedly. He stretched out his legs. "Got a job for you," said Jim. "Take one of the autos and drive downtown. First edition of the Star's off the presses at ten forty-five. Get one and look for that ad. I don't want to wait till it gets up here. Phone me. Understand?"

Nicky nodded, took a hat from the table and went out. Jim grunted. Then he went down the hallway, stopped in front of Helene's door, listened a moment. He heard nothing. He hesitated, then opened the door. The girl glanced up, worriedly, from her dinner. Jim grinned.

"Just to make sure you didn't have company," he said, and closed the door. He continued down the hallway, passed the second door without pausing and stopped in front of the third, the last of the doors in the hall. He unlocked this door and peered in.

It was exactly like the room where Helene was. Carlotta Gordon sprang to her feet and ran toward the door. He blocked it. "My lord!" she said. "How long are you to be cooped up in here?"

"The papa comes," he said grimly. He pushed her back from the door, closed and locked it, grunted and went on down the hallway to the stairs. He descended, led himself into the small room, heard the door to the stairs click. Then he opened the door which led to the front of the building.

The music swelled up. Jim stood in the doorway a moment. A waiter came forward. Jim nodded curtly, and the waiter showed him to a table at the rear of the room. He sat down and watched the couples elbowing each other on the crowded floor.

In a few minutes the same waiter approached, bowed over him and said: "Platform." Jim raised his eyebrows inquiringly. "Flaherty," said the waiter. Jim grinned. "Okay, Tony," he said. "Send him over."

A broad-shouldered man in plain-clothes came toward the table. Jim indicated an empty chair, grinned. The man sat down. "What's on your mind, Flaherty?" asked Jim goodnaturedly. "Nothing," Flaherty grunted. "Just a routine check-up, Jim."

"The commissioner just won't give up, will he?" said Jim. Flaherty shrugged. "Can't rule him off for tryin'," he said.

"He ought to know I'm not in the racket," said Jim. "Oh, yeah?" said Flaherty. "Look, I'm kinda thirsty—"

"How about a nice cold bottle of beer?" said Jim hospitably. He paused and grinned. "The real stuff. Three and two. Just got in three new barrels last night."

Flaherty grunted and shook his head. "I don't want any of that mungo-cure," he said. "Save it for the sap."

"Sorry," said Jim. "It's all I got. This is a high-class place. We're gettin' a great play these days. I'd

Will Be Feature of Legion Convention in Roseburg



Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Britton (center and left), photographed with Gilmore VIII, musicians, clowns, and the solemn big-heads at a recent showing of the Gilmore circus parade Portland. All the grotesque rubber animals, figures and clowns of this famous circus will parade in Roseburg at the American Legion Mardi-Gras August 12th.

be an awful sucker to dish out booze." "Sure you would," said Flaherty. "Guess I'll be movin' along."

"Tell you what I'll do," said Jim indulgently. "I'll buy a right guy a drink any time." Flaherty smiled. "Suits," he said. He beckoned to the waiter.

Jim shook his head. "I don't soil it," he said. "But I may have a bottle upstairs— just for my friends."

He stood up, and Flaherty followed suit. Jim led the way out of the dining-room, down the main hallway, unlocked the door. He waved Flaherty ahead of him, followed with a grin. His lips tightened ever so little as they walked past Carlotta's door, then Helene's. Flaherty looked back inquiringly. Jim nodded ahead of him.

Flaherty looked about the front apartment appraisingly. "Nice little diggin', Jim," he said. "Now what's the angle?"

"Angle?" said Jim, pained. "No angle, Flaherty." He opened an ornate sideboard, took out a bottle, two glasses. He handed the bottle to Flaherty. The detective looked at the label, sniffed the uncorked bottle, poured himself a full glass. Jim took the bottle, barely wet the bottom of his glass, replaced the bottle.

"To the finest," he said, with a wide grin. The men drank. Jim jerked his thumb at the bottle. Flaherty shook his head. "Thanks just the same," he said. "But I'll be toddlin'. Don't trouble

me. I can find the way." "Kayo," said Jim indifferently. He extended his hand. Flaherty took it, turned and started down the hallway. Jim stood in the doorway, watched the man until he had reached the steps, had disappeared from sight. He picked up the house phone.

"Mr. Flaherty is leaving," he said quietly. He waited for a moment. The voice on the wire said: "Sure enough." Jim hung up with a smile. Then he went back downstairs.

At ten minutes to eleven, the waiter called "Tony" came to his table, bearing a portable phone. He plugged it in and handed the instrument to Jim. It was Nicky on the wire.

"Two ads," said Nicky briefly. "The one you expected and another." "Read the other one," said Jim. "Here it is," said Nicky. "O,

Schilling cure Vanilla The flavor lasts

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Phone WE-10001 at eleven. D. M. "Jim gave a sharp exclamation. "That'll be Davis," he said. "Phone him from a booth. And call me back from another!" "Aw, listen, Jim," Nicky pro-

tested. "It may be a plant." "Do an you're told!" snapped Jim. "Kayo," said Nicky resignedly.

Tyler sat on the couch, thoughtfully staring at Helene's note. It must mean something. He went over it again, for the hundredth time, at least, shook his head puzzled, and irritably stuck the note in his pocket. He rose, stretched and walked to the door.

Across the garden Gordon was hurrying, almost stumbling, a newspaper in his hand. Tyler stepped out quickly to meet him. Gordon's face was a death-mask. He was breathing heavily. With his trembling hand he held out the paper, pointing with his finger.

Tyler read: "Okay, J. M." Then his eyes followed Gordon's and he saw the other ad. "G. Phone WE-10001 at eleven. D. M." He looked up, bewildered.

"D. M. is Dave!" Gordon cried, his voice full of bitter anguish. "I just checked up on him. He left the place at ten o'clock last night. Hasn't returned! My God, man, don't you see what this means?" (To be continued)

MANY NEVER SUSPECT CAUSE OF BACKACHES

This Old Treatment Often Brings Happy Relief Of Pain Many sufferers relieve nagging backaches quickly, once they discover that the real cause of their trouble may be tired kidneys. The kidneys are one of Nature's chief ways of taking the acids and waste out of the blood. If they don't pass 3 quarts a day and so get rid of more than 2 pounds of waste matter, your 15 miles of kidney tubes may need flushing. If you have trouble with frequent bladder passages with scanty amount which often smart and burn, the 15 miles of kidney tubes may need flushing out. This danger signal may be the beginning of nagging backaches, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills—used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help flush out the 15 miles of kidney tubes.

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