

Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Nan, her husband, Jervis, and Ferdinand, Francis, their guest, are saved almost miraculously from death beneath their car, which overturns because of a mysteriously loosened wheel. Two days before Nan and Jervis nearly fell to death through a weakened bridge. Robert Leonard is hovering near, yet Jervis sees nothing strange although Ferdinand describes a chemical to rot wood about which Leonard could have known.

Chapter 31
DAMAGING PROOF
Jervis turned to Francis. "So Leonard put your friend Elsen- that's stuff to weaken wood on the bridge, and then—did you happen to think out how he was going to arrange that it was Nan and I who would cross the bridge at the psycho- logical moment?"

"It didn't require much arrang- ing. You brought Nan down here on a pouring wet evening. It was a certainty that you weren't going to wander round and show her the sights in the rain. It was certain that as soon as it stopped you'd show her around, and one of the first things you'd show her would be the water- fall."

"And what does everyone do when they're being shown the fall? Don't they stand in the middle of that bridge and look down into the pool? Robert Leonard knew that just as well as I know it, and he'd only got to slip over to the bridge any time in the night to arrange things so that the next person who walked over the bridge would give an exhibi- tion of high diving."

"You only want that convenient witness of yours! Can't you produce him? He ought to have seen Leon- ard at the fatal spot."

"I did see him," said Nan. "I told you I did."

Jervis laughed.

"Oh, yes—I forgot—Nan saw him! The case is complete! She looked

out of her window in the middle of the night, and saw him by a flash of lightning! He must have been the best part of a couple of hun- dred yards away—but what is that to the eye of faith? We couldn't have an accident without Leonard, so somebody's bound to have seen him hanging round."

"Come on, F. F. It's going to be a job to saddle him with the wheel coming off my car, but I suppose you're going to try."

He tilted his black head and looked at them both. His frown was gone. His look had a surface bril- liance of amusement, but under it Nan, at least, was aware of some- thing fiercely challenging.

She thought, "He hates me. I can't help him."

And then Ferdinand was speak- ing.

"Well," he said, "if Robert want- ed to tamper with your car, you made it easy for him."

"Attaboy!" murmured Jervis.

"Well, didn't you? After you'd put us down at the front door you ran way back into the shade. I located the place after I'd cleaned up. Your oil had dripped some. There you were, half way down to the garage with the left front wheel in a lot of bushes."

"And where was Robert till about the middle of lunch? Messing about with his car in the garage, wasn't he? And what was to prevent him stepping into the bushes on his way up to the house and operating on that wheel of yours with a wrench? He was going to be late for lunch anyhow, so he wouldn't be in a hurry. As a matter of fact he wasn't in a hurry."

"Go on F. F., you're doing it awfully well."

"I am going on. I'm going to tell you how I know he wasn't in a hurry. I stepped down to the garage and I had a look at his car. There were a couple of chauffeurs there, and we got chatty-conversa- tion flowed. I wanted to find out just how much time Robert had

really wasted over his old wreck. He didn't waste so very much. He left that garage at one-fifteen pre- cisely. The second chauffeur hap- pened to notice the time, because he'd got a date with a girl—at least that's what I gathered from the way he looked when the other one chafed him about being so sure of the time. So you see Robert didn't hurry."

"Well played!" said Jervis. "That's a very good effort, but I'm afraid it's not quite good enough. If Leonard had been up to any monkey business with the wheel, the last thing he'd do would be to ask for a lift in a car that might go to glory at any moment."

"Say first instead of last, and I'm with you."

Jervis gave a short laugh.

"So he's suicidal as well as homici- dal?"

Ferdinand sat back in his chair.

"We've got to take some risks in this world," he replied. "Isn't it obvious he'd have left the wheel so that it would have run you well away from the Tetterleys? And if he'd been in such a hurry as he said to reach those incubators would he have stood mopping his face and watching us out of sight when we put him down?"

"Humph! And F. F., can you give one single reason why Leonard should want to kill me?"

Ferdinand glanced quickly at Nan, but she was looking down into her lap. Jervis went on:

"It's not up to me to unravel your mystery. But I might say that if I had been killed this afternoon Leonard would not have profited one cent."

"Who would?" asked Ferdinand.

"You, if you'd been a survivor. Are you carrying a wrench today? Because you're down for \$10,000 in my will, and there's about as much evidence against you as against Leon- ard. You were present the day I al- most drowned; you knew the chem- ists; you were in New York when the taxi ran me down."

Francis laughed, and held up his hand.

"There are anybody who might in- herit your property whom you could- n't cut out of your will?"

"Rosamund Carew."

"And whom is Leonard with almost

constantly the last few weeks?"

"Rosamund, but—"

P. F. shrugged.

"There you are, Jervis."

Chapter 32
JERVIS GETS A JOINT

"There you have it," said Ferdi- nand. He swung round in his chair and addressed Nan:

"Haven't I given him Leonard's motive?" he asked her.

Nan slowly got to her feet. She stood with one hand just touching the table and looked across the grapes and oranges at the two men. Her eyes snapped and her voice was vibrant with tension:

"Jervis won't listen to either of us. He doesn't want to hear any- thing against Leonard. Perhaps he really thinks you loosened the wheel so we'd all die together. Or I—do you think I had a wrench in my pocket- book this afternoon, Jervis?"

"Somebody's trying to kill you. If it's not Leonard then it must be Ferdinand or I. Don't you know there's something between Leonard and Rosamund? I don't know what it is but I've known it was some- thing since the other night at the hotel."

"Why didn't Rosamund marry you?" she wouldn't tell, would she? You should have asked Robert Leonard."

She stopped speaking, bending over the table with her flashing eyes on Jervis. Suddenly he flung out of his chair, strode to the door, and opened it. Then he stood back, hold- ing it conventionally.

Nan went out with her head up, and a burning rose in each of her cheeks.

Jervis came back to the table.

"We'd better shift out of here, or Monk will be coming in. Come into the study."

He did not speak until they were shut in together. Then he walked to the window, which was open to- wards the sunset, frowned at the blue and golden sky without seeing it, turned round, and said:

"Robert," he replied succinctly.

"Damn Robert!"

"Well, that's not my business."

"Look here, F. F.," he broke off. "There are things I can't say, even to you." He walked to the end of the room and back again. "That business ten years ago—you say Leonard was seen coming from the place where I'd fallen?"

"Well, I didn't say fallen. It's my belief he laid you out."

"And left me to drown?"

"You've said it."

"What grounds have you?"

"I'm going to tell you, because I think it's about time you knew."

"How long have you known?"

"For about a week."

"Well, what is it?"

"It's a very curious thing. The child who saved your life by hold- ing you up in that pool when you were unconscious—well, she just happened to have seen Robert com- ing away after he'd laid you out."

"What did she see?"

"She saw you go around behind the rocks, and she saw Robert come down the cliff close beside her. He didn't see her. He went after you, and by and by she saw him again walking away. That's why she knew his back view when she saw it again—it's peculiar, you know, the way

he walks with that big head of his pushed forward. He went up the next path on to the cliff, and when she got worried about your not coming back, she went behind the rocks and found you lying in the pool with a hole in the back of your head."

"This is very convincing—ten years after!" Jervis laughed. "I could make up a better yarn than that if I'd ten years to do it in!"

"There's no one making up a yarn."

"Why didn't she say all this at the time?"

"She was down at Croyston with some kind of an aunt, and they were leaving for the train and soaked through, and the aunt punished her. And when they got back to where they lived, the poor child was in a fever and sick for weeks."

"And you met her again?"

"Last week."

Jervis paused. The room filled with silence. Ferdinand did not break it. He kept his bright dancing eyes on Jervis' face and say the color rise in it to the roots of the black hair.

Jervis said, "Nonsense!" sharply. "Have it your own way."

"What are you talking about?"

"Nan," said Mr. Francis. Jervis made a step towards him.

"If you're fooling—"

"I'm not."

"Nan!" said Jervis. "You mean it was Nan?"

"I recognized her at once. When I saw the scar on her arm, that clinched it. I've told you about that before. She'd cut herself pretty deep to the bone holding your head off the rocks every time a wave came into that pool. It was her arm or your head, and she made it her arm every time. There was bound to be a scar, and when I saw that scar on your wife's arm at the Luxe, I thought I'd stumbled upon a very pretty romance."

Jervis stood for a moment with a perfectly blank face. Behind it his mind, like a shuttered room, was being violently shaken as if by an earthquake. His thoughts slid together, collided, broke.

With a violent effort he turned about and walked to the window. The sun was gone; a kind of gold- en haze tinged the dusk. There was no wind at all; each tree and bush stood up dark and solemn without the slightest movement. The whole scene might have been painted on glass. The contrast be- tween its stillness and the turbu- lent confusion of his thoughts gave him a sense of being in some remote and unfamiliar place.

He did not know how long he stood there. The gold went out of the air and left it yet more grey still. A very faint green light came from the horizon. This too faded. An impalp- able stream of darkness flowed be- tween him and all the world.

Suddenly he crossed to the door and switched on the light. The room had been quite dark. As the light came on the windows seemed to re- cede. All the shades and degrees of the outside darkness vanished. The straight crimson curtains framed blank, blank windows.

Ferdinand had not moved. He was sitting on the arm of one of the big chairs with his hands in his pockets.

"You're sure it was Nan?"

"Quite," F. F. answered.

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"She told you so?"
"No, she did not. I recognized her. And then, when we were at dinner, I told the story of the plucky kid who saved your life, and I watched her. I could see she didn't want you to know. I'm an in- quisitive man and, though I'd like to get to the bottom of why you didn't know and why she didn't want you to know, I haven't got to the bottom of it yet." Those bright, yellow-brown eyes of his twinkled with questions. He crossed one leg over the other and leaned sideways against the back of the chair. "Well?" he said.

Jervis stood by the jamb of the door. He looked at a bare, blank window and spoke.

"Did she know—when she married me?"

Ferdinand twinkled more notice- ably.

"What do you think?"

Jervis made a gesture. There was no expression on his face.

"Why not ask her?" suggested Ferdinand.

"I'm asking you," said Jervis. "You seem to be well behind the scenes. Did she know when she married me—or did she find out afterwards?"

"Know? Of course she knew! Why do you suppose she married you?"

Jervis set his jaw and was silent.

"Better ask her!" said Ferdinand with a short laugh.

Jervis turned abruptly, flung open the door, and went out. Ferdinand watched him with a quizzical smile. He went impetuously through the hall and out at the front door, shut- ting it hard behind him.

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(To Be Continued)

S. H. Weimer Is Elected Mayor By Cove Voters

(By Mrs. A. G. Conklin
(Observer Correspondent)

COVE (Special) — Election day was a busy day here despite the rain. The streets were full of people dis- cussing the all-absorbing topic. The city election resulted as follows: S. H. Weimer, mayor; S. G. French, re- corder; Bease Kelley, treasurer; C. W. Clark, marshal; Oscar Gorman, L. J. Chadwick, Karl J. Blackland, W. J. Hallmark, Burt Peterson and Lewis Laird as councilmen. Leve Bloom received a very flattering vote and was a close contestant for the mayoral- ty with 58 votes to S. H. Weimer's 61. The voting was brisk and nearly every registered voter cast his bal- lot with a total of 314 votes. In the second precinct where there was a vote of 145, there were only three registered voters who were in town and failed to vote. Two or three were out of town. Miss Maxine Murchison naturally felt a little cheated out of a vote as her 21st birthday fell on the 9th of November.

At the completion of the school census this year, a total of 190 — 98 boys and 92 girls—was found. This is a decrease since last year as sev- eral families have moved away. Last year the census totaled 204. The boys showed the greatest loss as there were 113 boys last year and 91 girls. The previous year, 1930, showed a total of 222, 120 boys and 102 girls.

The regular meeting of the school board was held Monday with the usual routine of business. The walk- ing in front of the school was found to be in need of repair and this work will be given to the lowest bidder.

Mrs. Archer Antles was hostess at a small party at her home Monday evening celebrating Halloween. Games were played. Guests were Katherine Davis, Anna Hacker, Mary Dahl, Ward Paige, Bob Coad and Emory Hartley.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Rollins entertain- ed Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wells at a small dinner party Sunday.

A game of volley ball will be played between Cove and Union at Cove Friday evening.

ENGRAVED SOVIET STAMP SHOWS DIRIGIBLE DESIGN

MOSCOW (4) — The People's Com- missariat of Communications is issu- ing a new 15-kopecks postal stamp commemorating dirigible con- struction and finely engraved. It is gray. This is the first engraved stamp issued by the soviet union.

The first, of 40 roubles denomina- tion, was put out in 1919. The second, bearing Lenin's portrait, ap- peared in 1924.

The "Knights of the dinner table," both small and tall, will find greater nourishment and greater enjoyment eating the foods with the Red & White label. It's your assurance of the utmost in QUALITY, PURITY and CLEANLINESS. Your purse will tell you you'll SAVE shopping at the Red & White Stores.

LOOK IN NEXT WEEK'S AD FOR PROOF OF THIS STATEMENT

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GOLDEN HALLOW Dates	2 lbs.	19c
Vegetable Shortening Flakewhite	4-lb. pail	55c
BLUE & WHITE Tomato Sauce	5 cans	23c

Cocoa Blue & White 2-lb. pkg. **23c**

Molasses Dixie Bell 2½-lb. **15c**

Seedless Raisins 4 lbs. **25c**

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Tomatoes With Puree **10c**

Wheat Cereal **19c**

RED & WHITE STURDY - CREAMY Hot Cereal for the Kiddies.

Flour
Fancy Patent Red & White 40-lb. **1.15**
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Lard 4-lb. pkg. **35c**

Bacon 6 - 6 Slice Mild Sugar Cured 1b. **19c**

COMMUNITY CASH STORE

SPECIALS FOR SATURDAY, NOV. 12

Sugar Pure C & H Cane 10 lbs. . . . 55c	Milk Tall Cans 6 for 29c
Tomatoes Solid Pack No. 2½ Tins 3 for 33c	Corn Extra Standard White No. 2 Cans 3 for 25c

Sperry's Hard Wheat FLOUR
49-lb. Sack \$1.05
Bbl. 4 Sacks \$4.19

Raisins
New Crop Seedless
4-lb. Pkg. . . . 25c

Salt
Leslies Iodized
2 Cartons. 15c

Soap
Peep Gramulated Regular 40c size
Pkg. . . . 19c

Pineapple
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3 Cans . . . 33c

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Per lb. 35c

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Beginning Monday, Nov. 14, we will allow 5c for return of milk bottles.

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Date Nut Layer Cakes, Each 25c	Chocolate Doughnuts, Dozen 30c
Fresh Apple Pies 17c	Petti Fores, doz. 60c
Chocolate Nut Cup Cakes, doz. 15c	Apple Turnovers, Each 5c

Sweet Cream Ice Cream, 16% Butterfat, 35c Quart.