

Deaths BRIGHT DIAMONDS

THE STORY: Nick Trent, the Inspector Marks everything he knows about the Calavestri case and turns over the amulet to him. Marks later learns that the diamond is probably the 25-stone of the \$5,000,000 Ostermann collection which disappeared when the Nazis invaded Poland. A plane which Nick and Charley take up has been tampered with and they crash-land.

SPECULATION

VIII

BACK at the hangar we couldn't find the mechanic. But we found Joubert. He was in the tool locker and the back of his head was a dreadful sight. He had been slugged with a Stillson and he was quite dead. Meanwhile in the distributor head of the plane they found graphite which had fouled the points, killing the motor but giving me nothing more than a few added gray hairs.

We went up into Cuddy Naylor's office where the Venetian blinds made prison bars on the floor. Charley sat in a big leather chair smoking with intense preoccupation as if he felt that he was lucky to have the cigarette.

"Look, Nick," he said, "there's getting to be something unpleasantly fatal about you."

"I'm like Typhoid Mary," I answered. "I carry the disease and other people die of it."

"What were you doing for those 16 months in London, Nick, or in it any of my business?"

I sighed.

"I don't blame you, Charley. I think even Pat imagines that I spent most of my time at The Claridge with shoe-eyed Mata Hari. I don't know what it's all about."

"As a matter of fact today's little incident, it seems to me, is pretty obvious."

"How?"

"Somebody must think you still have Calavestri's diamond."

"Even so," I said. "Why kill me?"

"Imagine the Ostermann diamonds in some vault in, let us say, Warsaw." Charley locked his hands behind his head and stared at the ceiling. "Word comes that the Germans are breaking through and on the verge of taking the capital—and, of course, the Ostermann collection. That's five million dollars. They go out of Warsaw in a car or a motorcycle or on a hayrack that someone has stolen or murdered for. By now that five million dollars is anybody's who has the courage to take it. But they're still just amazingly hard and shiny pieces of stone that you can't eat. So someone puts them in a velvet sack or in a belt around his waist and takes a boat from Liverpool. Maybe he has to give two or three stones away as a bribe. He gets to America and in order to give the whole deal the odor of sanctity he engages the services of an internationally known person who might very plausibly have come into possession of the stones legally."

"Calavestri," I said.

"Very likely," replied Charley. "And she knows the ferns are stolen and is not above stealing them for herself. In the collection is this talisman with the ironic word PAX scratched on the back. That's the key to the whole plotting match. She lifts it, or may be they let her take it as a sample, and she has it in her bag when she meets a credulous gentleman from the New World."

"All right," I said. "Credulous or not, I take the amulet and give it to the police and Calavestri gets her throat cut. Go on from there."

Charley took his hands from behind his head.

"I can't. Unless—" He frowned as he stared at his knuckles—"unless Calavestri might have

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"Perhaps if I slipped off quietly for a few days—alone—"

"Alone!" Pat broke in and shook her head. "No, Nick!"

"A little solitude might work wonders."

"A little solitude might kill you. Unless—"

Then out of Pat's pretty head came an enchanting idea. I fell in love with it and later learned how faithless the objects of first love can sometimes be.

"Unless," she said, "you went to The Ledges."

"The Ledges," I said and I grinned with pleasure. "Pat, you've got something."

(To Be Continued)

thought you were privy to the whole thing. She might have been trying to make a deal with you leaving Booker out in the cold." But that's as far as we got.

PAT and I had dinner in sight of a marsh that sometimes heard, in the early morning, the echoing sound of a hunter's gun. And I held my tongue until on the way home we struck the Sunday traffic near the refineries and a couple of planes from the airport drifted over the storage tanks.

"Pat," I said, "I'd better tell you about this morning now before somebody else does."

She faced me questioningly.

"Charley's plane was tampered with," I said. "We landed in the marsh."

Her eyes widened. I continued grimly.

"Somebody slugged Joubert, the mechanic who had serviced Charley's plane, put him in the tool locker, and then put graphite in the distributor head. Joubert died."

Now Pat closed her eyes and shook her head.

"But Nick, why?"

"I don't know. Maybe they've got me mixed up with somebody else. Maybe they think I know something that I ought not to know. Or maybe someone just thinks that I killed Calavestri and is looking for revenge. At any rate, I've got to do something about it."

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(To Be Continued)

Our Boarding House

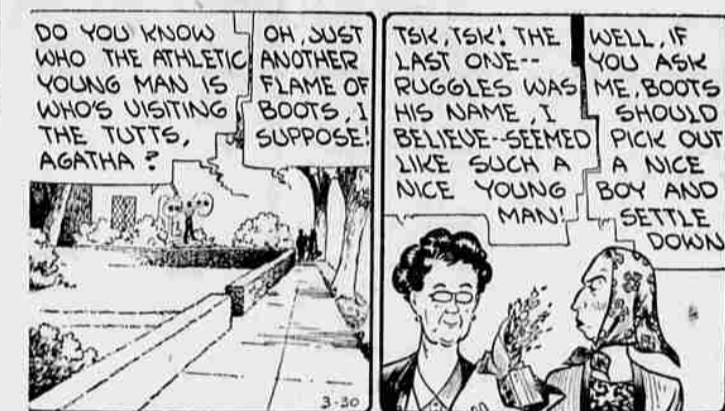
With Major Hoople Out Our Way

J. R. Williams



Boots and Her Buddies

By Edgar Martin



Freckles and His Friends

Merrill Blosser



Red Ryder

Fred Harman



Wash Tubbs

By Leslie Turner

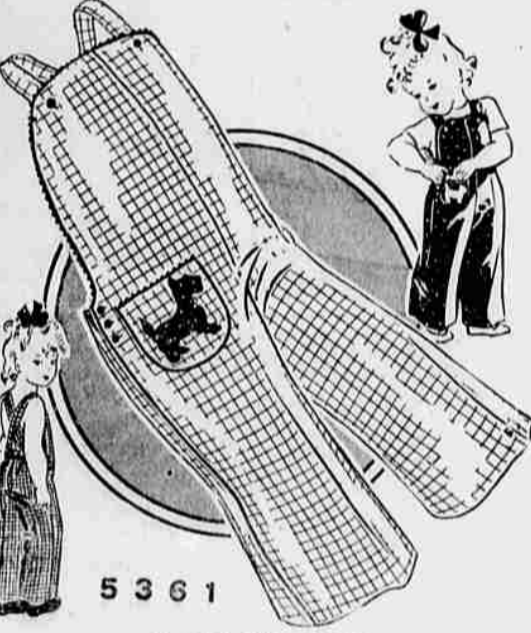


Alley Oop

By V. T. Hamlin



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Official Records

Water turned off, March 28: A. K. Parker, 1904 Third; Mrs. S. T. Keffler, 2013 Second; L. B. Stilwell, 305 Spring; Lee A. Powell, 901 G.

Water turned on: A. K. Parker, 305 Spring; Mrs. S. T. Keffler, 1912 Cedar; L. B. Stilwell, 1904 Third.

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8763 26-52

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A good looking house frock that's smart and practical and a marvel of simplicity to sew--just four pieces in the pattern.

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One newer church in London is used for religious services on Sundays and as a motion picture theater the rest of the week.

Hold Everything



"Step outside and say that!"

Former Official

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|-------------------|-------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| HORIZONTAL | (ab.) | 1 Pictured for- | 50 Point mer Canadian |
| | | 2 Defense Min- | 62 Required ister J. L. |
| | | 3 He was ap- | 63 He was in pointment of |
| | | 4 Beam of light | 24 Long fish |
| | | 5 Musical note | 26 Iridium |
| | | 6 Toward | 28 International language |
| | | 7 Seine | 29 Tablet |
| | | 8 Dress hair | 30 High card |
| | | 9 Measure of area | 32 Compass point |
| | | 10 Year | 33 Distress signal |
| | | 11 Cupola | 34 Transpose |
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| | | 13 Unusual | 39 Observe |
| | | 14 Late Amer- | 40 Crimson |
| | | 15 can humorist | 41 Part of "be" |
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| | | 17 Accomplished | 61 Any |
| | | 18 Before | |
| | | 19 Father | |
| | | 20 Bottom of shoes | |
| | | 21 Alternating current (ab.) | |
| | | 22 Negative | |
| | | 23 Obligations | |
| | | 24 Speed contests | |
| | | 25 Anger | |
| | | 26 Australian bird | |
| | | 27 Pint (ab.) | |
| | | 28 Print measure | |
| | | 29 Editor (ab.) | |
| | | 30 Pair (ab.) | |
| | | 31 Italian river | |
| | | 32 At a distance | |
| | | 33 Siles (symbol) | |
| | | 34 Kind of tree | |
| | | 35 Rhode Island | |

