

Death's BRIGHT DIAMONDS

by Lionel Mosher

THE STORY: Nick stops to eat at a tavern on his way to the Ledges when he runs into Brenda Temple and her father. Both are strangely. When he arrives at the Ledges he is surprised to find the electricity turned on and the icebox stocked. He steals a tour of the supposedly empty house and his flashlight beam falls on the face of a man.

SURPRISE PARTY

IF I'd had a gun I should surely have pulled the trigger. I looked along the barn which I strove in vain to hold steady. I opened my mouth to speak. Then I looked at the face again and snatched off the light. Eric Woolf! I had raised the flashlight and was ready to let drive when the lights went on.

"Disembowel," someone said. "But, darling, don't," I heard. "It's only us."

And a voice that clinaxed it all said weakly: "Surprise." I swore. Charley was behind the master's chair and Pat came out from behind the sideboard. Eric Woolf was standing against the opposite wall, an ironic smile on his thin lips. He had one eye on the flashlight.

"Don't throw it," he said. "It's the only flashlight in the crowd."

The door opened and in strolled Phineas Hudson himself and, of all people, Brenda Temple and her father. I felt like a fool. Everyone was smiling at me except Pat and Charley. Pat came forward and took my arm. "Happy birthday, Nick. Did we really surprise you, darling?"

She gave me a desperate I-can-explain-it-all look. Phineas Hudson stared at me for a moment.

"Hello, son," he said. "B-r-r-but it's cold in here."

And he went back into the library followed by Bruce Temple. "I've got some beer on ice," said Charley. "Who'll have some?"

"A good stiff jolt of whiskey would be more like it," I said. Woolf came up behind me as we fled into the kitchen.

"Gave you a turn, did we, Trent? It was only a surprise party."

I turned around. "I've had my belly full of surprise parties," I said.

CHARLEY got out the beer and put the cold chicken on a platter.

Woolf gravitated quite naturally toward the food. He took a knife and sliced a thick slice of breast meat from the bird. But when Charley thrust a glass of beer at him, he looked at it dubiously, tasted it and shook his head sorrowfully.

"That is not beer," he pronounced solemnly. "That's what it says on the can," said Charley dryly.

"A bit of American exaggeration," Woolf smiled thinly. "Munch where I was born is famous for its beer."

"And its sell-outs," remarked Brenda Temple. She sat on a table swinging her slim legs gamine-like and looking provocative. There was a pregnant silence. And I saw it all tracking again toward the inevitable bottleneck.

Woolf held up the glass of beer, looked at it through the light, and set it down, untouched.

"About the beer in Munich, my dear lady, I know a little. About sell-outs in Munich, I know nothing." Then he walked out through the dining-room door and we all watched it swing slowly to a stop.

"Pat," said Brenda, "you turned on that light a fraction of a second too soon. I should like it better if Nick had thrown the flashlight."

"I don't want to be noisy," I said. "But what gives?"

Charley went over and took Brenda by the arm.

"Come, Brenda. There's a magnificent view of the sea from the solarium."

"Do I have to look at it?" she asked as she slid off the table.

WHEN they had gone, I turned to Pat.

"I'm still surprised," I said. "You didn't suppose I was actually going to allow you to stay in this God-forsaken place alone, did you?"

"It was your idea."

"I know, but when I thought it over, I didn't like it."

"I can't see that you've improved it any by reflection," I said.

Pat's dark eyes grew sober. "Eric, you mean."

Pat dropped her hands and went back to the stove. I saw her staring down at her nails. Then she said:

"When I told father what had happened, why you had come up here and why I thought you ought not to stay here alone, he said: 'You are quite right, my dear. Nicholas should not stay at The Ledges alone. As a matter of fact, I should enjoy a few days at Sandy Point myself.' And when we were ready to leave, there was Eric standing in the front hall, dripping rain all over our best Oriental rug, and saying: 'I was afraid I might be late!'"

"You mean your father asked him?"

"Who else? So I called Charley and then we ran into the Temples at Minot and father dragged Mr. Temple along and, of course, Brenda."

For a moment she paused. Then she turned.

"Every time there's been any kind of function in the Hudson household for the past six months, father has rung Eric in on it. I don't understand it, Nick."

"Why don't you ask your father, Pat?"

Her eyes flashed ironically. "You don't ask father to give an account of himself. Besides I'm afraid of what I might hear."

I took her arm. "Come on, Pat," I said. "Let's get back into the party. It may be fun after all."

(To Be Continued)

Our Boarding House

With Major Hoople

Out Our Way

J. R. Williams



BUT DID YOU GET THAT HUNDRED DOLLARS?



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

J. R. WILLIAMS

Boots and Her Buddies



By Edgar Martin

Setup for Playtime!



By MRS. ANNE CABOT

Have a couple of pairs of these cunning little overalls ready for the long summer days ahead—little sister and brother will be very happy and very pretty in these one-piece, easy-to-get-into cotton overalls. Don't forget to trim them in bright tie-dye and to applique the Scottie onto the pocket!

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650,000 Soldiers to Return to College

CHICAGO, March 31, (UP)—Surveys by the army and the University of Illinois show American colleges can expect a heavy postwar enrollment.

C. E. Hostetter, vocational rehabilitation officer of Edward Hines, Jr. hospital here, says an army survey shows 650,000 soldiers expect to return to college after the war.

Another survey shows 75 per cent of 17,000 University of Illinois servicemen intend to return to school.

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Official Records

Water turned off, March 31. Mrs. Don L. Smith, 1618 Oak.

Water turned on. C. H. H. Hendrickson, 702 Main. Fred E. Grievens, 2001 Ash.

Hold Everything



You wait! I don't care if we are late—I can't go into the station looking like that!

Freckles and His Friends



Red Ryder



Wash Tubbs



Alley Oop



Merrill Blosser

Fred Harman

By Leslie Turner

By V. T. Hamlin

U. S. Army Leader

HORIZONTAL 55 Western sports competition chief of staff, 56 He is chief of staff of the U. S. 2nd Service Command, Brig.-Gen.

VERTICAL 1 Spain (ab.) 2 Vase 3 Lying at anchor 4 Great Lake 5 Raced 6 Direction 7 Pressed 8 Five and five 9 Editor (ab.) 10 Registered nurse (ab.) 11 Attorney (ab.) 12 Native metal 13 Bone 14 Dry 15 Diminutive of Wilson 16 Supreme Headquarters, American Expeditionary Force (ab.) 17 Bards 18 Exclamation 19 Turkish hat 20 Friend 21 Street (ab.) 22 Tellurium (symbol) 23 Facility 24 Epistle (ab.) 25 2000 pounds 26 Disorder 27 Portuguese

Answer to Previous Puzzle

U. S. ARMY DIVISION

22 Within 23 Paid notices 24 Inquire 26 Far Eastern nation 28 Weird 31 Type of tree 32 Greek letter 33 Offer defense 34 Spanish dance 35 Lieutenants (ab.) 36 Type of landing ship

38 Iron (symbol) 39 Father 40 Nothing 41 Diminutive of Peter 42 Also 43 Three-toed sloth 44 Distress signal 45 Writing tool 46 Transpose (ab.) 47 Hypothetical

48 Distress signal 49 Writing tool 50 Transpose (ab.) 51 Hypothetical

52 Distress signal 53 Writing tool 54 Transpose (ab.) 55 Hypothetical

56 Distress signal 57 Writing tool 58 Transpose (ab.) 59 Hypothetical

60 Distress signal 61 Writing tool 62 Transpose (ab.) 63 Hypothetical

64 Distress signal 65 Writing tool 66 Transpose (ab.) 67 Hypothetical

68 Distress signal 69 Writing tool 70 Transpose (ab.) 71 Hypothetical

72 Distress signal 73 Writing tool 74 Transpose (ab.) 75 Hypothetical

76 Distress signal 77 Writing tool 78 Transpose (ab.) 79 Hypothetical

80 Distress signal 81 Writing tool 82 Transpose (ab.) 83 Hypothetical

84 Distress signal 85 Writing tool 86 Transpose (ab.) 87 Hypothetical

88 Distress signal 89 Writing tool 90 Transpose (ab.) 91 Hypothetical

92 Distress signal 93 Writing tool 94 Transpose (ab.) 95 Hypothetical