

Death's BRIGHT DIAMONDS

P. A. X.

XXI
AFTER the movies Charley had taken Brenda home and the tail lights of the station wagon with Phineas Hudson at the wheel had already winked out of sight on the Sandy Point road.

Pat and I were just going through the door of The Wagon Wheel when a taxi drove up. I looked casually, then looked again. It was a Boston taxi. Boston cabs were rare in Minot and they meant either fun or trouble. After a glance at the taxi's occupant, I decided that this one didn't mean fun. He carried a brief case with undistinguishable gold initials on the side.

He came briskly through the door and it was only by hurrying that I beat him to the desk. While I registered Pat and myself, he stood there, a smallish round man, obviously important and impatient. I passed him the pen; he stared at me with big eyes through incredibly thick lenses and smiled without warmth.

"Thank you," he said in an accent which I could not identify.

But I saw that his hair needed cutting, and his overcoat was much too long. I saw also that he preferred them that way, for his clothes were patently expensive. I was conscious of watching that white, fat hand writing floridly in the register, when suddenly it stopped. He stared up at me, his thick lips pursed reflectively, and I moved off. The last I saw of him was his yellow spots twinkling beneath his too-long coat as he went to the elevator. I was amused and faintly disturbed when he availed himself of another look at me.

There was no thought of going to bed. We sat on the big leather divan in front of the fireplace and talked. Charley joined us at 11:30, quipped aimlessly for awhile, then sensing our mood, relapsed into

a gloomy silence. By 12 o'clock the room was cold. I got up, turned over the log, and strolled over to the desk to glance at the register. I found the name right under my own.

PETER A. XAVIER—
NEW YORK CITY

the little round man had written. I had got halfway back to the divan when it hit me. Peter A. Xavier! And before I got all the way back, the Minot fire horn let go. Its banshee wail chilled my blood. Pat started up and Charley turned curiously.

"Well," I said and went to the window, the name Peter A. Xavier still ringing in my brain. Nonchalantly, I looked out. Suddenly I stiffened. Charley was peering over my shoulder.

"Nick—" he began, but I cut him off.

"After all, we've reserved rooms. Why not use them?"

"Not I," said Pat. "See any signs of the fire?"

She went to the window, and there, plainly visible about four miles to the east, was an angry red glow from a rousing a fire as I ever hope to see. Pat turned, her face white.

"That could be The Ledges," she said.

WE tailed the last piece of apparatus up to the hose lines and pulled up. The last half mile of the drive had killed our last hope that it might be some other building than The Ledges. We could see the whole south wing alive with flame.

I sat just sat, stunned. Charley and I got out and drifted around, seeking some sign of Phineas Hudson. I ran into Cass Hapes. He stared at me oddly.

"Anybody in there?" he asked.

"I don't think so," I said. "We were all at the movies in Minot."

He looked at his watch. "What time did you get out?"

"The usual time."

Hapes still held his watch, rubbing his thumb thoughtfully over the crystal.

"A little late getting back, aren't you?"

"I suppose you'd be happier if we'd all been in there asleep," I said tartly.

"I'd have been a little more certain you didn't know it was coming," answered Hapes.

For a while we sat and watched the fire reduce a stately mansion to a pile of rubble. Then we took Pat back to The Wagon Wheel where Brenda met us.

"I heard the siren," she said, "and they told me it was The Ledges. I'm taking Pat home with me."

"I'll love you for it," I said.

"This is too much," she smiled wanly. "The most I had hoped for was that you wouldn't hate me. Where is Mr. Hudson?"

She uttered the question under her breath. I shrugged and shook my head. She gave me a veiled look and turned away. Pat and Brenda gone, Charley and I started back for Sandy Point. And Peter A. Xavier got back into my consciousness.

"Charley," I said, "a Peter A. Xavier registered at The Wagon Wheel tonight."

"What an odd name," Charley said.

"He arrived in a Boston cab, registered from New York City, and he was an unusual-looking an assasin as I've ever seen."

"Probably an official of the S. P. C. A. with a record for charity as long as your arm."

"My arms are quite short," I replied. "He carried a brief case. I didn't see, but I bet his initials were on it."

"Initials," I said. "Peter A. Xavier."

"P. A. X." answered Charley. "So what?"

Then he straightened slowly and repeated the letters deliberately.

"P. A. X. Those are the letters that were on that setting Calaversti gave you."

"Sure," I said. "Peace. You remember?"

(To Be Continued)

Our Boarding House

With Major Hoople Out Our Way



Boots and Her Buddies



By Edgar Marth



Freckles and His Friends



Merrill Blosser



Red Ryder



Fred Harman



Wash Tubbs



By Leslie Turner



Alley Oop



By V. T. Hamill



"Good Neighbor"



By MRS. ANNE CABOT

These seven embroidery designs give the authentic costumes of Guatemala, the Dominican republic, Bolivia, Panama, Brazil, Paraguay, and Costa Rica. Each design measures 5 inches. Use the transfers on towels, place mats, summer tea cloths or porch pillows. The colorings are lovely.

To obtain 7 transfer designs, color chart for working the "Good Neighbor" designs (pat-

Washington Merry-Go-Round

Continued From Page 2

O'Konski, who used to lecture in Wisconsin about his trip to Russia, although he had never been there, completely forgot himself in his rage, shouting that he "never said such a thing."

Wisconsin's highly-respected octogenarian Republican Governor, Walter Goodland, recently repudiated O'Konski's stand on Yalta, saying O'Konski does not represent the Wisconsin Republicans in his stand.

City News In Brief

Roy Bell and Mrs. L. F. Green were fined \$15 each in municipal court yesterday afternoon for exceeding the speed limit in a school zone.

George Francis McCann was arrested by city police last evening, charged with being drunk, and Glenn Graham was arrested on a charge of drunk and disturbing the peace.

Official Records

Water turned off, April 13: E. S. Rovent, 1816 Penn avenue; Mrs. E. L. Bryant, 503 N. avenue.

Water turned on: C. C. Ellis, 3002 Oak street; E. S. Rovent, 1311 X avenue; Bernard W. Wise, 501 Fourth street.

tern No. 5872) send 15 cents in coin, plus 1 cent postage, your name, address and the pattern number to Anne Cabot, La Grande Evening Observer, 709 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.

For Afternoons



By SUE BURNETT

Soft, casual daytime frock for the slightly larger woman. Designed with figure-flattering lines and interesting shoulder detail.

Pattern No. 8646 is designed for sizes 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46. Size 34, short sleeves, 3 3/4 yards of 35 or 39 inch fabric.

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If the highways in the United States were laid out end to end in a single long line, there would be a filling station for each mile.

Hold Everything



"I know this town—I was here once on a good will tour!"

U. S. Army Group

1 Depicted in	3 Rodent
2 Insigne of U. S. Army	4 Within
5 Division	6 Czar
7 Condition	8 Steamship
9 Collection of sayings	10 Capable
11 Face part	12 Shaded tree
13 Leaf of the calyx	14 Certain
15 Rot by exposure	16 Doctor of Science (ab.)
17 Spokenard	18 Crimian
18 Small particle	19 Age
19 Chaldean city	20 South Carolina (ab.)
20 Flowers	21 Epistle (ab.)
21 Bowling term	22 French capital
22 Female ruck	23 Symbol for iridium
23 Worried	24 Regular building in vogue
24 Snake	25 Employers
25 Of the thing	26 Material
26 Symbol for iridium	27 West (ab.)
27 Quotes	28 Indo-European language
28 Regular building in vogue	29 Genus of plants
29 Employers	30 Stellar body
30 Material	31 Correct
31 West (ab.)	32 Direction
32 Indo-European language	33 Frigate bird
33 Genus of plants	34 Guide
34 Stellar body	35 Completely
35 Correct	36 Distant
36 Direction	37 Individual
37 Frigate bird	
38 Guide	
39 Completely	
40 Distant	
41 Individual	