

Death's BRIGHT DIAMONDS

by Lionel Mosher

INQUISITION

XXII

BACK at The Wagon Wheel I flirted with the idea of sitting up for Mr. Hudson. But somehow I had a feeling that this wouldn't be necessary. So I went to bed.

The next morning I was up early. I dressed and went immediately to the desk to ask if Mr. Hudson had come in. The clerk looked at me oddly.

"Mr. Hudson?" he asked reaching for the phone.

"Mr. Street, please," he told the operator.

"Not Mr. Street—Mr. Hudson," I said.

"Mr. Street is the manager," the clerk explained frigidly. Then into the phone:

"Mr. Street, Mr. Trent is asking for Mr. Hudson."

The desk clerk was still eyeing me warily when he hung up.

"Mr. Street wishes you to step into his office, Mr. Trent."

So with the little ditty about the spider and the fly running through my brain, I stepped into the manager's office and the moment I did I knew we had reached another milestone. There sat Inspector Marks. That crooked little smile sat on his lips, but somehow it looked slightly forced.

"Well, Inspector," I said, "aren't you a little off your beat?"

"A little," he nodded. "Sit down, Mr. Trent."

The manager was looking worried and nervous.

"You asked for Mr. Hudson?" went on Marks.

I nodded.

"Why?" asked the Inspector.

"He didn't come in last night. I was worried about him," I said.

"He planned to stay here at The Wagon Wheel?"

"Yes."

"Do you know why?"

"We were closing the house at Sandy Point. We intended to re-

turn to Boston this morning."

"Why not last night?"

"It didn't seem wise."

In the silence that followed, Marks pinned that remark to a board and dissected it. With an acid smile he resumed:

"What was the reason for this little junket down here?"

"It was a party," I said and I couldn't keep a twinge of irony out of my voice.

"Who was at this party?"

"I think that before answering any more questions I'm entitled to a question of my own. Why the inquisition?"

Marks studied me. Street, the manager, sensing that he was superfluous, departed.

"The usual reason," Marks said. "The thump of another body, Mr. Trent."

"Anyone I know?" I asked weakly.

Marks nodded. "Phineas Hudson," he said.

I SAT down. The clock on the wall clicked. Two little doors flew open; a synthetic-looking cuckoo sailed out, cuckooed eight times, and slid back behind the doors again. Marks paid no attention to the clock. With the single-mindedness of a snake, he fixed his eyes upon my face.

"Who were the guests at this party?"

"There were seven of us; besides Mr. Hudson and his daughter, Charley Strand, Eric Woolf, myself, and Bruce Temple and his daughter Brenda."

"Eric Woolf?" The Inspector speared the name. "Where is he now?"

"I don't know. He left yesterday after lunch."

"What time was it when you left The Ledges to come to Minot?"

"About six I should say. We had dinner at The Cook and Kettle, went to the movie; then, while

Mr. Hudson returned to The Ledges for our luggage, we went to The Wagon Wheel to get rooms for the night. While we were waiting for Mr. Hudson to return, the fire alarm sounded. From the glow in the sky we suspected it might be The Ledges, drove over, looked for Mr. Hudson, then came back here again."

"Did you return to Sandy Point?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Look," I said. "I'm trying to be cooperative, but you will have to use your imagination a little."

"I'm a detective, not a writer of mystery stories," answered Marks. "Mr. Trent, I have been in touch with Cass Hapes."

"Oh," I said.

"Exactly."

"Do you think I killed Mr. Hudson?" I asked, looking Marks in the eye and daring him to meet my stare. But Marks wasn't looking at me.

"What I think is unimportant."

"How was he killed?"

"With a bullet," Marks sat up. "Would you care to see?"

"Not especially," I said, "but I'll look."

We went out through the lobby, and I saw the top of the Hudsons' station wagon parked under the porte cochere. I looked inside and turned green. Evidently, Phineas Hudson had just been getting out of the car, when the murderer had stuck the gun in his face and let him have it. Half-turned to get out of the car, he looked curiously pathetic. I turned away and Marks said:

"Not a very pretty sight."

"Marks," I said, "do you think I could do a thing like that?"

He lifted one eyelid at me. "If you're going to stay in this game, you'll have to learn."

We went back into Street's office. Marks faced me across the manager's desk.

"Son, I think it's about time you talked, because either you've killed a man and the state will kill you, or somebody is going to kill you first and save the state the trouble."

(To Be Continued)

Our Boarding House

With Major Noops

Out Our Way

J. R. Williams



Boots and Her Buddies



Freckles and His Friends



Red Ryder



Wash Tubbs



Alley Oop



By Edgar Martin



Merrill Blosser



Fred Harman



By Leslie Turner



By V. T. Hamlin



For Summer Fun!



5850

The very tiny girls will love the looks of this summery frock—their mothers will be pretty pleased over the way it opens out perfectly flat for ironing. It is completely practical! Four-inch duck with little gingham sunbonnet is appliqued of scrap material. Pattern includes sizes 2, 3, 4 years.

To obtain complete pattern, finishing instructions for the frilled-sleeve frock (Pattern No. 5850) send 15 cents in coin, plus 1 cent postage, your name, address and the pattern number to Anne Cabot, 709 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.

Washington Merry-Go-Round

Continued From Page 2

Actually, Switzerland has been a perfect refuge for Nazi loot, has also been very careful to do nothing to offend the Germans until the last few weeks, when an Allied victory has become apparent even to a blind man. One backstage reason behind the barring of neutrals from the San Francisco conference is that Russia will not sit in any diplomatic conference with the nation until Dr. Von Steiger, president of the Swiss confederation, is ousted from office. The Russians feel Von Steiger is pro-Nazi. Here is their evidence:

Several years ago, the Russians established a secret intelligence organization in Switzerland to watch Nazi operations there. The organization was headed by a Russian general who hid out in Geneva and broadcast to Moscow over a carefully hidden short-wave radio.

But when the Nazis occupied southern France, they managed to chart the location of the Soviet sending set, informed the Swiss police of its existence, and ordered the Swiss to crack down on the Russians. President Von Steiger, then head of the justice and police ministries, was so anxious to fawn before the Nazis that he ordered the Swiss police to seize the set and try to use it to send false false information to Moscow. However, the Russian general escaped to the Balkans and managed to inform Moscow of what was up before any further damage was done.

Now, it is the Russians' turn to get even. And they won't play ball with Switzerland until the Swiss house-clean their president.

Francisco, Calif.

Flower Print



8709

12-42

For those spare moments of relaxation—a charming negligee to make you truly elegant. It will be lovely in big flower prints or delicate pastels.

Pattern No. 8709 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 40 and 42. Size 14, requires 3 1/2 yards of 35 or 39 inch material; 2 1/2 yards ribbon for trimming.

For this pattern, send 20 cents, in coin, your name, address, size desired, and the pattern number to Sue Burnett, La Grande Evening Observer, 709 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.

Official Records

Water turned off, April 13:

Ina Keltner, 1311 N. Mrs. J. O. March, 1519 T; G. W. Driskell, 1413 T; Ed Dlasout, 2206 Jefferson; Florence Caldwell, 2707 Depot.

Water turned on:

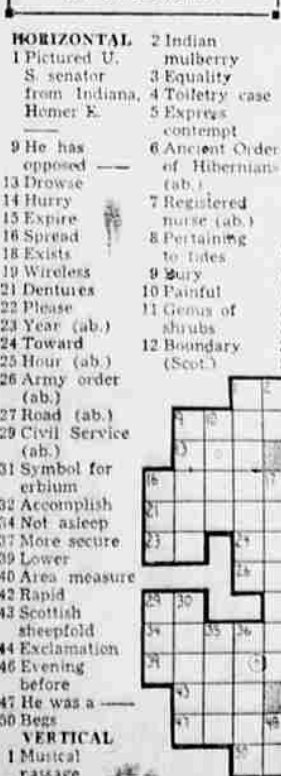
Mrs. J. O. March, 1413 T; Geraldine Guffy, 704 A; G. W. Driskell, 1519 T.

Hold Everything



"Now I can throw away the dirty ones I left in the sink."

U. S. Senator



Answer to Previous Puzzle

