

The Whisperer Murder

by SAMUEL SPEWACK

CHAPTER I A DIVORCE PARTY

Midnight at the Club New York, and Lucy Lally, most genial of hostesses, prepared to welcome her gullible guests. A word with the head waiter, a word with her chef, a word with Lucy Lally's Jazz Harmonists, two words with her unofficial bartender and wine steward, and three words with her little girls—for these last were the chief attraction of the Club New York, and Lucy knew it.

Lucy was what her patrons called a "hot sketch." A born clown and sycophant, she had won peculiar distinction by confiding in each one of the gaily-seekers that they were dubs and she was out to swindle them. This tickled their vanities, and they came back for more. So Lucy watered her champagne and commanded her little girls to supply the necessary fizz, which was cheaper, and as the guests were concerned, more effective. Her profits were so enormous she never complained of the heavy toll of graft paid to enforcement officers. The Club New York, in consequence, was never raided, and the guests feared no sudden and sometimes unwelcome notoriety. And Lucy grew rich and fat.

You could find at Lucy's a sociological cross-section of New York; debutantes and demimondaines, bankers and bootleggers and buyers, thieves, actors, screen daines, bankers and bootleggers and a goodly number of stupid but otherwise harmless bourgeoisie, who looked at Lucy as they looked at their books, plays, newspapers and love affairs—as a source of color to singularly colorless lives.

And Lucy went from one to the other, back-slapping and hand-shaking, surveying each one with her shrewd blue eyes, laughing constantly in overflowing good nature, and calling for cheers, applause and noisy merriment until the dawn.

At 1 a. m. you could hear Lucy's guffaws above the rhythmic wailing of the band. It was then she presented her dancing girls, whom she underpaid and overworked and with whom gentlemen could sit at tables for the price of a hundred-dollar bill, and feel they were gay dogs, indeed.

On this particular morning Lucy was in better form than ever. She had an eye to the pliant and the news had reached her that an extraordinary spectacle—extraordinary even for the Club New York—would be unfolded at one of her treasure tables. Any moment now she expected the principal players. She awaited them eagerly.

It was not every day that a young society woman, her husband but recently divorced, and an elderly roue who was the main cause of the divorce would foregather at the Club New York and celebrate the event together. It was to be a merry party of three.

Only one factor spoiled Lucy's anticipation. She had been explicitly warned to keep the secret, and she could see the commercial value of whispering the joyous news to her grateful guests. It would be a bigger event in the lives of the dubs than anything she herself



The Three Seemed Oblivious to the Whispering, Although They Must Have Felt They Were Being Talked About. Perhaps They Were Absorbed in Their Own Bizarre Conversation.

could plan. And she would have enjoyed the telling. But Lucy knew when it paid to keep a secret. And this, decidedly, was one occasion when it did pay.

Now the guests were coming in singly, in pairs and in parties of six. Lucy called them by name so all should hear and the guests strove to maintain that easy nonchalance of celebrities accustomed to being pointed out in the thoroughfares. And most of them were celebrities only to their stenographers—and some to the finger-pointers. The common denominator of Lucy's mixed society was the dinner packet.

"Hello, honey!" Lucy guffawed. "How's that?" "Why, Mrs. Van Swinthon!" So glad to see you (this to a grisette who had married a young college rouser and had been paid off liberally). And Jimmy! (who was a buyer and knew his New York). "How's every little thing? That's good. Coming back to get yapped proper? Oh—excuse me!"

Lucy hurried down the corridor leading to the cloak room, for her quick eye had caught the eagerly waited three-some. She paused before them, beaming.

"Well!" she boomed. "This is—Oliver Sewell smiled slightly. 'Lucy,' he said, 'this is Mrs. Edison.' . . . and . . . Mr. Edison. Neither of them, I believe, has been here before."

"But I've heard lost about you," Mrs. Edison confided. Her divorced husband merely bowed. Lucy escorted the three to a table from the orchestra, where they could see without being unduly stared at themselves. She wondered why Mrs. Edison pretended this to be her first visit to the club. Lucy had welcomed her on countless occasions and Mrs. Edison had always come with Sewell. "But what the hell!"

them saw an elderly red-haired individual, probably in his fifties, and young woman and a young man. The young woman had ash-blond hair, rather expressionless large brown eyes and full, pouting lips. Her complexion was well made. She smoked incessantly one

Lucy had seated a strange triangle. The guests who marked them saw an elderly red-haired individual, probably in his fifties, and young woman and a young man. The young woman had ash-blond hair, rather expressionless large brown eyes and full, pouting lips. Her complexion was well made. She smoked incessantly one

gold-tipped cigarette after another, and her smile was mechanical, except when she looked at the older man. Then even the most casual observer could see she was infatuated with him. And the casual observer would wonder why.

Fully thirty years older than the woman, rumor insisted the red hair was part of a wig, and rumor was quite correct. And if this did not lend sufficient of the burlesque to the strange passion, the white even teeth, which he took out every night and put in a glass of water, capped the comedy. And yet this man was credited with more conquests of silly women than the more ambitious and younger blades in the room. He was slight of build. His eyes were of hard, calculating gray. Only his hands were interesting; long, white, with very quick fingers.

The casual spectator would be still more puzzled after studying the young divorced husband, who

It happened one day that the shadow-children heard the real children's mother remark, "Why, if you did that, you'd feel just like a fish out of water."

"How is that?" asked Knarf, who was very curious about these things. Mother didn't answer him. That was because she didn't hear him. Shadows, you know, don't speak particularly loud. Knarf turned to the other shadow. "How does a fish feel out of water?"

"It feels thirsty," said Yam. "I think it feels dusty," said Flor.

"Dusty and hot," added Mij, who was Flor's twin. "If you're so eager to know," said Knarf, "why don't you ask Gaspard?"

"Of course!" exclaimed Knarf. "I was just about to think of that myself." Thereupon they all trooped over to Gaspard, who was always to be found at home in his aquarium, by which you may guess that he was a gold-fish.

"Good—morning, Gaspard," greeted Knarf. "how do you feel out of water?"

"I feel very well, thank you," said Gaspard, who didn't hear very plainly through the thick glass.

"No, not how do you feel, but how do you feel out of water?" "I imagine I should feel very airy," said Gaspard.

"You mean full of air?" inquired Yam. "—or very light, like a bubble!" asked Mij and Flor.

"I'll have to think it over," said Gaspard. "That's a hard question, you know." With that he swam behind a clump of water-shrubs and gulped several times in quick succession, which meant he was thinking. At length he swam out in front again.

"I can't quite make up my mind," he said. "I've asked myself a dozen times, but I don't seem to get any answer. Perhaps if I stand on my nose for a while, it'll come to my head." Then he stood on his nose, but with no better luck.

All at once Knarf exclaimed, "I know how you can find out instantly."

GOOD-NIGHT STORIES

By Max Trel

Knarf Learns About "Fish Out of Water"

It isn't wise, as Mij, Flor, Hanid, Yam and Knarf discovered, to take things too literally. That is to say, to expect that persons mean exactly what they say.

(To be continued tomorrow)

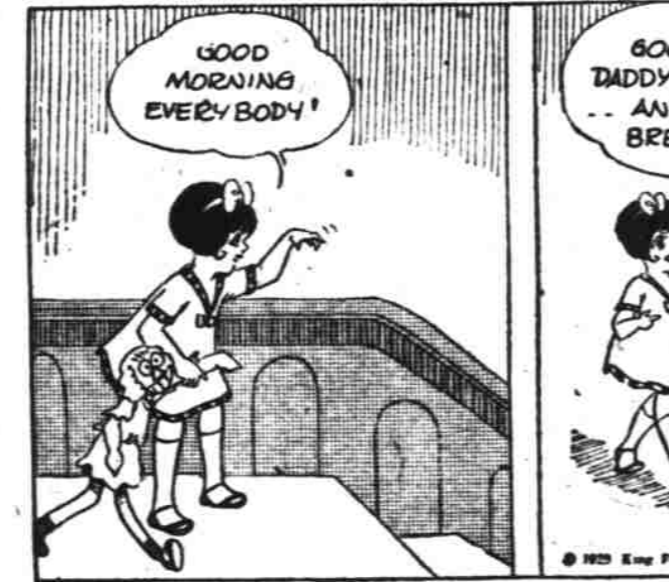
POLLY AND HER PALS



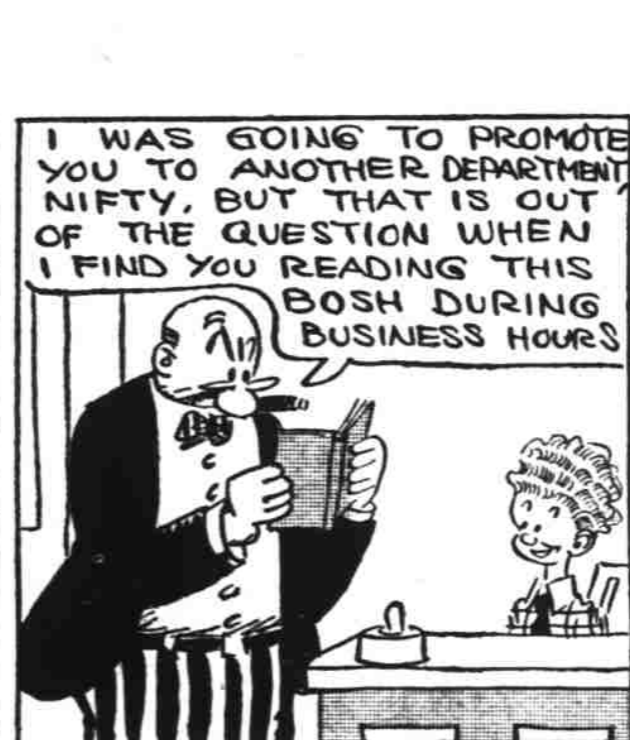
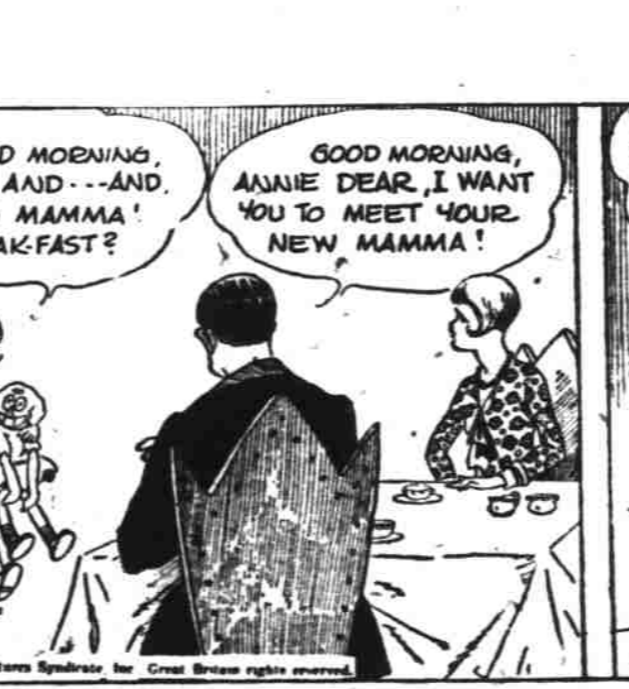
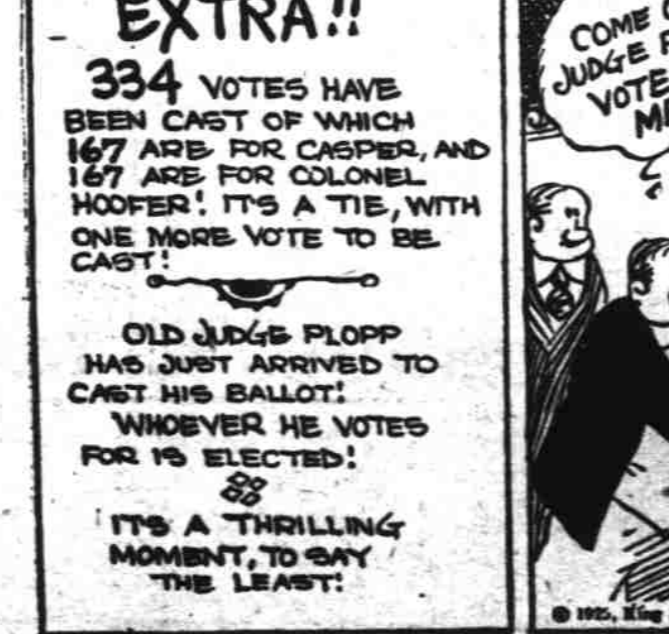
TILLIE, THE TOILER



LITTLE ANNIE ROONEY



TOOTS AND CASPER



Home-Making Helps

By ELEANOR ROSS

FANCY SERVICE FOR PLAIN DISHES

Tommy's mother tried to put excitement into her voice as she told about Jack-and-the-Beanstalk, for the hundredth time, so that Tommy would keep his eyes fastened expectantly on her face, and his mind off the coddled egg she was feeding him. Tommy is one of those little cherubs who doesn't like to eat, and the only way of cramming nourishment into his ill-fed body is to paralyze his resistance by story-telling at meal-times. Red Riding Hood helped to down cereal for a while, but now it bores him. Tommy is getting bigger and requires stronger stuff, literally speaking. It takes all of All Baba's Forty Thieves to distract him from the string beans he's eating, and even Stevenson can divert him from his active objection to carrots.

Of course, Tommy's mother laid up trouble for herself when she started the story-telling anaesthesia at meal-times. The not-eating habit has to be nipped in the bud, right at the start. Occasionally a child really suffers a disorder which affects the appetite, and requires medical treatment, but more often it is just plain perversity which can be disciplined away, by gentle or sterner measures.

One easy way, frequently found successful is to do something to make food attractive. We have to remember that while, to adults, most food looks better than it tastes, there are many foods which taste better than they look, particularly the things fed to children. And children are far more affected by the appearance of a dish. Color and shape and resemblance to favorite objects make all the difference in the world in what the child will and will not eat. A dish of custard or junket really does taste pleasant, not many degrees removed from the ever-desired ice-cream. But as it is sometimes served, in

shapeless lumps or plain rounds, it is not particularly good-looking, and once "I don't want it," is said, arguments may be futile. A set of molds may remove a lot of infant debate, and perform miracles to Tommy's appetite. You can get charming little molds in all sorts of fancy—shapes—some imitating fruit or flowers or other pleasing objects. Some are of metal suitable for baking, others are of glass, paper, or earthenware and can be chilled in the refrigerator.

All the vegetables can be given a final heating in the molds and then turned out on a plate, without comment. Oh, this is a little green fish, says Tommy to himself. And he may eat it all before it dawns on him that it's spinach. Cereals, custards, junket are completely camouflaged by different molds, instead of always being served in bowls, or in the little round pudding shape.

If puddings are made of cereals and are to be eaten when cold, another attractive service is to set the ridged paper dishes into muffin rings and bake. Then they can be served in their paper containers, leaving it up to the child to eat it that way or remove it, as preferred, but always adding thereby a special touch, which interests.

As a matter of fact, even grown-ups are affected more or less consciously by appearance. Many of the handsome dishes served in fancy shapes at restaurants are nothing but common foods—foods which may be disliked at home where they are served without adornment. Recently at a Turkish restaurant, the proprietor recommended a very special dish. He brought it himself to the table, unadorned it from its little casserole, thereby revealing what proved to be a lamb stew, with vegetables colorfully and cunningly arranged in an attractive shape. But it tasted much better than just lamb stew.

By CLIFF STERRETT

LIGHTER DIET IS BEST DURING HOT WEATHER

Take Precautions Against Overeating in Summer, Warns Dr. Copeland—Make Up in Delicacy What the Food Lacks in Gross Quantity

By ROYAL S. COPELAND, M. D.
United States Senator from New York.
Former Commissioner of Health, New York City.

WITH the first really hot day every housekeeper thinks of a change of food. Heavy foods and rich desserts seem too much for the season.

There are many delicious dishes which can be prepared with little effort. Salads, chicken and vegetables in aspic, and ice-box desserts add to the tempting qualities of the meal.

Salads made of fresh fruits and cheese, served with thin graham bread and butter sandwiches, form a well-balanced luncheon. Tea, coffee, milk or buttermilk will round out the meal.

There used to be a prejudice against canned foods. During the Spanish War, the "Em-balmed Beef Scandal" shocked the nation. But that was long, long ago. Such a thing could not happen now. Canned meats are not preserved with chemicals in these enlightened days. Preservatives are unnecessary, because sterilization and improved methods of canning have done away with the need of drugs and chemicals.

When you buy the products of some known establishment, you may be confident the food is just as pure as the label claims to be. You know it is against the Federal Law to falsify a label and, if there were no higher motives than to escape the penalty of the inexorable law, the food would be as represented.

So, for your summer meal you have the choice of many varieties of canned meat, fish and fowls. Then you have delicious cuts of dried beef and veal loaf.

Salads can be made without the slightest trouble. Canned fruits and vegetables are at your disposal. The green stuff for the salads grows everywhere. The salad dressings come in bottles, ready for instant use.

Sandwiches with some of the canned materials for fillings, are quickly made. Delicious cheeses are on sale everywhere. Bottled beverages, above suspicion as to quality, are at your disposal.

You need not worry about the light meals of the hot days. The food manufacturers have made easy provision for you.

What about the healthfulness of these foods? You need give yourself no concern on this score. In many respects they are more wholesome than the uncooked and unprepared raw foods sometimes sold. In nutritional value they equal the home-cooked and prepared foods.

In hot weather you should not overfeed your family. Make up in delicacy and attractiveness what the food lacks in gross quantity. Be particularly so in summer.

Extra care must be taken on hot days to avoid overeating. If you proceed as I have suggested today there is no danger. Food precautions are important always, but particularly so in summer.



DR. COPELAND

Answers to Health Queries

L. F. D. Q.—Will crying cause my baby boy to become ruptured?

A.—No.

R. T. L. Q.—Where can I buy 1 per cent yellow oxide of mercury ointment? My druggist does not carry it.

A.—I would suggest that you have your druggist order it for you.

W. M. B. Q.—What effect does coffee have on the system?

A.—Coffee is a stimulant and if not taken in moderation will play havoc with the nerves.

K. R. Q.—Will a teaspoonful of borax in the rinsing water harm the hair?

A.—I doubt it.

S. F. Q.—What causes a substance to accumulate in the eyes over night?

A.—It would be wise to have your eyes examined by a specialist.

V. A. Q.—Would a girl of 16 years be susceptible to infantile paralysis?

A.—Yes, but it usually occurs in persons 200

By VERD

By JIMMY MURPHY