

# Murder Masquerade

BY Inez Haynes Irwin

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## PRELUDE

My name is Mary Avery. I am forty-six years old and a widow. I have lived all my life in the little harbor town of Satuit, Massachusetts, the scene of the famous Second Head murder. The old Avery house on Second Head has been my home for the twenty-five years that have elapsed since I married Mark Avery. It was on my place that the murder was committed. Because of that and for other reasons I have decided to write the whole story of that murder. I say the whole story because some of its details have never reached the newspapers. Those facts are buried deep in my memory and in that of one other person. I shall put this manuscript in my safe deposit box with instructions that it may not be opened until my death.

Murder in Satuit!  
It seemed almost as fabulous as a communistic uprising among the flowers in an old-fashioned garden. And indeed when the murder occurred we, the citizens of Satuit, became almost as helpless as a gardener in the face of such a revolution. Thitherto, our equipment for handling crime had been meager. We had a police station, a chief of police, a few policemen, mainly engaged in traffic duty; everything in short but crime. Patrick O'Brien, our chief of police, who bore the leading part in solving the mystery, is of course a citizen of Satuit, known and loved by all of us. Indeed Patrick and I were graduated the same year from high school. Patrick was president of the class and I was treasurer. It was always a race between us two in the matter of marks. In the end Patrick won out and finished at the head of the class.

I have noticed that all mystery stories begin with a description of the crime; then of the locale. I, an amateur, am going to reverse that process. First of all, I am going to describe Second Head where the murder occurred. Second Head is one of four cliffs, rather unimaginatively named First, Second, Third and Fourth Head, which stretch east into Massachusetts bay. To the west of Second Head runs a road, ending north at First Head and south at the Indian river which separates Second and Third Head. Beyond this road, to the west stretches broad marsh, penetrated at high tide by a tiny estuary from the harbor; and beyond the marsh the rest of the big township.

Roughly speaking, the houses on Second Head which are most intimately connected with this story lie in a big oval—the center of this big oval is a small oval—a kind of Common. Here a marble basin, filled with water, supports a colony of goldfish. Every family on Second Head pays a small fixed annual sum to keep this scrap of Common mowed and orderly. We adults call it The Egg. Successive generations of children have always called it Cat Park—although as far as I know, only a few cats ever sunned themselves there.

Next to me—a wide field bordered by high lilac hedges, intervening—live a childless couple, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Stow. I am very fond of the Stows. Peter is a painter and a good one. Mattie Stow is perhaps the plainest woman in God's world; she is also perhaps the nicest. Their house, an old one and a big one, its lower floor amplified by wide galleries in piazzas adapted perfectly for the purpose of entertaining, is one of the most charming in Satuit. Every summer for twenty-five years, the Stows have given a masquerade. It is the social event of the season.

It was one of the guests of this year's masquerade who was murdered.

Next up the slant of Second Head toward the ocean—to the east—come two houses belonging to Doctor and Mrs. Geary. Doctor Geary is a surgeon with an office in Boston. The Gearys occupy the one nearest the ocean and their married daughter Edith and her husband, Alfred Bray, the one nearest the Stows. I have always known the Gearys and of course I

have watched Edith grow up. I like them all, although none of them thrills me especially; at best they are a little innocuous. The blond Brays are an average happy young couple. Both the Gearys and the Brays went to the masquerade. Their first connection with the murder was when we called Doctor Geary after my maid, Sarah Darbe, found the body of the murdered man.

Next to the Gearys, and still on the ocean side, is the house occupied for the summer by Doctor Marden and his step-granddaughter. Big, very beautiful, more modern than the rest and hence naturally more convenient and infinitely less interesting, it looks forward onto a "moon-light" garden.

An interesting pair these: Doctor Myron Marden and his step-granddaughter. He, a widower, a middle-westerer by birth, has practiced in Paris for twenty-five years. Caro Prentiss, the step-granddaughter, was born in France, had never visited America before. Her mother had died soon after Caro was born. Caro Prentiss is a new type in the Satuit garden of girls. She has had a continental education and she possesses the most beautiful type of continental manners. In conversation, she displays a kind of swift, wide-flung intelligence very different from that of our Satuit girls. Grandfather and granddaughter fitted admirably into our social life. Both went to the masquerade.

Next beyond the Howard house—wide hedged lawns separating them—is the Eames house. Equally with the Stows, I love the Eameses. Paul and Lora Eames went to school with me, and I am god-mother to their only child—Molly. Paul is one of our leading citizens, the president of our bank. Lora busies herself in every good work in the community. They are solid people; fine people. As for Molly—

The Eames house is a little like my own—old, what most people call "quaint," which, whatever else it may signify, certainly means inconvenient. It is at present the most popular house on the Head; for wherever Molly is, the young of her generation congregate. The main connection of the Eames family with the murder is that Molly Eames was engaged to the murdered man. Though why she was engaged to him constituted the most recent of Satuit's social mysteries—he was twenty-five years older than she. In addition, everybody in Satuit believed that Walter Treadway was the man whom Molly really loved. Walter Treadway had been for two years secretary to the murdered man. Molly had been engaged to Walter for six months. A year before the murder, the engagement was suddenly broken off and Walter left town; six months after Walter's departure and six months before the murder, Molly became engaged again—and to a man who was destined to be murdered. All three of the Eameses attended the masquerade.

Coming around the curve of the circle and down the slope of the Head, we reach the pretty little house of the Fair-weather sisters. Flora, the younger, is dying from cancer and Margaret, the older, nurses her with a passionate devotion. Naturally, neither was present at the Stow masquerade.

Coming still farther down the hill, we close the circle with my house, which, separated from it by gardens, lawn, trees and road, overlooks the marsh; a big, old place, built in 1710 by my husband's first ancestor in the country—the original Mark Avery. It consists of what in the family we call the Old Place and the New Place.



My Estate Numbers a Generous Dozen Acres.

The New Place is a little brick ell to the Old Place, quite modern and extremely convenient, to which I retire for the winter. I built it in the first year of my marriage. The New Place bears no part in this story for it is always closed during the summer; but many scenes of what was known as "the Satuit case" played themselves out in the Old Place. Inside, it follows on a largish scale the plan of many colonial houses—broad hall running from fan-lighted doorway past the fine broad staircase ending half-way down the width of the house. On one side of the hall is the library, on the other, a small living-room. Back of the hall and back of both these rooms, lies what was formerly the ample kitchen and is now my big living-room, stretching across the whole width of the house. Back of this—and now we are in the ell—are dining room and kitchen. Upstairs is a colonial tangle of big rooms and small. Brown screened-in piazzas augment both ends of the house.

Outside, the place is a little haphazard and complicated. But it is, I think, utterly charming. In front are a pair of gardens, one on each side of stepping stones which lead to the front door, all surrounded by a white picket fence. Beyond that is smooth, velvety lawn running down to the stone wall which protects me from the road. To my right the driveway comes up past my side door, turns in a great loop, rejoins itself, so to speak, and flows back to the road. To my left is a small wood which I call the Spinney. My estate numbers a generous dozen acres and the Spinney takes up perhaps a half dozen of them.

A grassy path runs from my left-hand piazza to the edge of the Spinney. There it becomes a broad gravel path, and pursuing a course irregularly oval, runs through the Spinney, curves upward and around and ends at my back door. In the Spinney, farther toward the ocean—not in sight from my house—is a tiny wooden log-cabin which we have always called the Little House. Years ago two of my nephews built the Little House. They sleep there by preference whenever they come to visit me and entirely through sentiment I have always kept it in repair. The Spinney path runs past the Little House. Down near the stone wall, within sight of my house, there is a tiny pond. It is circular and no larger than a small room. Until I came here, everybody called it by its hereditary name—the cow well. But when my nieces and nephews began to grow up about me, we decided that it should have a more agreeable name. Some of them had visited in Connecticut in a house situated on the Mad river. We adored the name. After long debate I decided to call the pond the Merry Mere. The Merry Mere is fed from a spring in the hillside; it is perhaps three feet deep in the center. Near it is a big, gray lichened rock which, from time immemorial in the family, has been called Mud-Pie Rock.

Here I live all the year around; alone except for my maids Bessie Williams and Sarah Darbe, colored women who have been with me for years. At the time of the murder, my eight-year-old niece, Sylvia Sard, was visiting me. She spent most of her days playing on the shore of the Merry Mere with her little friend Nancy Burton. Both Sylvia and I went to the masquerade; and both my maids were helping that night in the Stow kitchen.

## FRIDAY

As I have said, the Stow masquerade is an annual fete. The first summer after they were married, twenty-five years ago, Peter and Mattie sent out invitations for a masked party. It was so great a success that, thereafter, they gave one every year; ultimately it became the social event of the season. This success is in part due to the fact that Mattie and Peter take such pains to make it so. They leave no stone unturned to give the affair glow, gayety, gorgeousness—picturesque quality of every kind. The Stows themselves always say that the success of the party is due to the fact that we, the invited, take as much pains as they, the inviters, to make it so. We are, I am sure, as far as masquerades are concerned, a rather special group. We have always enjoyed dressing up. A dinner party will, at the request of the hostess, turn at the last moment into a costume affair. No one of us but has in the attic a trunk crammed with the costumes we have worn on such occasions. At house auctions, we bid feverishly on old clothes, hats, boots, shawls.

It is a point of honor to disguise ourselves from each other as thoroughly as possible. We keep an inviolable secrecy in regard to our plans. On the night of the masquerade, families separate to dress in alien households and to arrive at the Stow place at different times. Husbands fool wives and wives hoodwink husbands.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

# Bob Davis Reveals

Greatest Adventurer Is Unaware of Right to Title.

NEVER in history has there been a lack of courageous men; at least, never a shortage of intrepid souls who were willing to break a lance with fate. There are the sagas that survive the ages, to be told wherever men congregate to swap tales of danger and daring.

Years ago, New York boasted an Adventurers' club. Those who had come to grips with life and lived to tell the tale asked nothing more than a few listeners. When a man held the floor he had his say to the end and none took exception to the form or content of his narrative. One night the chairman, in this case Arthur Sullivan Hoffman, invited those present to relate dramatic chapters from their own experience.

Robert Ritchie, a visiting international journalist, called upon to contribute a yarn, had this to say:

"Adventure is not necessarily based upon thrilling eventualities. What is adventure to one man may be deadly monotony to another. It resolves itself into a point of view. The greatest adventurer I ever knew was quite unaware of his right to claim such title, and yet, when one takes into consideration the details of his magnificent intrepidity, nothing, in my opinion, compares. His name was Hermann Bland; dead or alive today you know. I met him on a steamer out of Liverpool, en route to India via the Mediterranean, through the Suez and down the Red sea. Small, wizened and retiring was this man, difficult of approach and, despite my persistent efforts at ice breaking, hard to crack. Not until the second week out did he evince the slightest inclination to fraternize. I had gone out of my way to break through the crust of his retreat. His surrender was complete. This was his story: Born in Hamburg of an English mother and German father, he came to England with his parents, shopkeepers, provisioners, I believe, and got a fairly good education, excelling in draftsmanship, which led to map making.

Fate Tricks Hermann Bland.

"At twenty-eight, Bland, orphaned, but reasonably prosperous, married a Welsh girl, who died without issue after twelve years of married life, leaving her husband a parcel of real estate in Cardiff. Twenty years of uneventful life for the map maker followed. Bland, now sixty, with a snug deposit in a savings bank, to which he added 5,800 pounds, by the sale of the Cardiff property, making 11,000 pounds for a grand total, resigned from the map making establishment and made preparations to see some of the world that he had been charting on paper for thirty-two years. Where to go? Why not leave it to chance? That would be an idea worth trying. Fate should decide for him, and in the dark. So, Hermann repaired to his sitting room, switched off the light and groped his way to the center table, upon which lay an atlas. Opening the book at random, he stuck a pin haphazard into the page under his hand. Light! Which way now? The gleaming pin stood upright in the vitals of a small lumber town in northern Michigan. Well, if that was destiny's plan, Hermann Bland would let it ride.

"Within a fortnight, lugging two Gladstone bags and a Burberry duster, Hermann landed in the lumber town, took a room in a depot hotel, and for a period of one month, with never a complaint upon his lips, stayed on at this capital of vast inconvenience, sweltering heat and boredom.

"Three years elapsed before this tourist-minded man took another shot with a pin at the atlas. This time, again in the Stygian dark, he perforated the town of Irkutsk, Siberia, into which, with a trunk and a heavy ulster, he plunged by the shortest possible route. One week was enough.

Patience Rewards Traveler.

"And now, gentlemen of the Adventurers' club," said Ritchie, glancing at Hoffman and steadying his voice, "I have brought you to Hermann Bland's third trip out of London in search of the great adventure, which he alone possessed the vision to perceive. 'My friend,' said he to me as we emerged from the Red sea, 'I have given you the Michigan, and my trip to Siberia, the memory of which kept me in England for five years before I decided to resume my travels. This time, still in the darkness, I used a map of the world, turning my face toward the east. Long did I delay, fearing lest destiny desert me for the third time. Finally, with high hopes that the hour had come for me to plant the point, I did so with a firm hand, and then, confidence restored, with faith at high pitch, I turned on the light. Behold! There in India, my pin, on a blue field stood like a sentinel in the very heart of the Vale of Kashmir.'"

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## Offers New Opportunities



THE modern woman who sews is really an enviable person. She has at her finger-tips an endless array of fashions from which to choose for her own and her daughters' wardrobes. Today's trio affords her new opportunities in several size ranges; in fact, there's something here for the mature figure, size 42, right on down to the tiny tot who just manages to fill an "age 4."

Pattern 1987—This diminutive frock is for Miss Four-To-Twelve. Its easy lines, flaring skirt, and pretty sleeves are perhaps second only to its thru-the-machine-aptness, so far as the woman who sews is concerned. But this is all too obvious to mention. Better cut this pattern twice for all 'round practical reasons. It's intriguing in taffeta—a winner in gingham and linen. It comes in sizes 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 years. Size 6 requires 1 3/4 yards of 39 inch material plus 3/4 yard contrasting.

Pattern 1211—It is a smart frock like this that will turn the most immune young lady into an ardent seamstress almost overnight. And rightly so, for it's plain to see how becoming are its princess lines, how flattering the wide shoulders and slim waist, yes, and how spicy the swing skirt. A pretty and colorful motif can be had in the use of velvet for the buttons and belt. Monotone broadcloth, black or royal blue, with the collar and cuffs of white linen, is a startlingly chic material for this model. It is available in sizes 12 to 20 (30 to 40 bust). Size 14 requires 2 3/4 yards of 54 inch fabric plus 3/4 yard of 39 inch contrasting.

Pattern 1210—Which would you have, Madam, an artistic smock or a glamorous house coat? This pattern allows you to make this interesting choice and it has what you'll need to make either of the models illustrated here. The house coat has become woman-kind's most desired "at home" attire; so rather than be among the minority, why not turn your talents to this princess model—you'll have it complete in a mere few hours and think of the count-

less days it will stand you in good stead as a really good looking wardrobe asset. It is designed in sizes 14 to 20 (32 to 42 bust). Size 16 (in full length) requires 5 3/4 yards of 39 inch material plus 3 3/4 yards of bias piping and 3/4 yard contrasting material for pocket.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., 149 New Montgomery Ave., San Francisco, Calif. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

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## Household Questions

A felt blackboard eraser is best in cleaning the top of the kitchen stove. If grease gets on the stove it should be rubbed over the top of the stove while it is still hot. The eraser is much more satisfactory than a cloth and it keeps the hands from getting soiled.

Wash chiffons in a soap solution. No rubbing will be required, just rinsing up and down. Don't have the water too hot.

Fish is sometimes broken through overboiling. If this happens, remove all skin and bone and flake it. Mix it with a sauce, and sprinkle it with chopped parsley, chopped hard-boiled egg, or breadcrumbs and cheese, and serve in fireproof glass dishes.

Chilled, diced oranges mixed with pineapple and sprinkled with coconut make a delicious dessert. © Associated Newspapers—WNU Service.