

# Murder Masquerade

BY  
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THURSDAY—Continued

I kept reminding myself that I really knew—of my own knowledge—nothing about Myron Marden and his granddaughter. I had accepted them on their face value. I had accepted them on the acceptance of Ace Blaikie and Bruce Hexson. But now I recalled to myself how easily friendships were made between men who were in the World War . . . out of nothing . . . out of anything . . . fleeting as a whisper . . . strong as iron cables . . . Yet every instinct I had, every intuition, every ounce of that judgment which comes from experience of the world kept telling me, kept shouting to me that these two were everything I thought they were. That last feeling arose so strongly in me when Myron Marden soon entered the room that again the tears pricked for a salty instant in my eyes. He came immediately over to my chair, bowed in his courtly continental way over my hand, turned with a "Good morning, Mr. O'Brien!" to Patrick.

I had not seen him since the funeral. I noted how pale and tired he was then. This day he looked ravaged.

"Won't you sit down?" I asked. Doctor Marden did not sit down. He stood—his whole graceful easy length subtly emanating question—and looked at Patrick.

Patrick, who had risen as he entered and was still standing, steadily returned that gaze. Rarely have I seen a greater contrast in men. Marden exuded that unanalyzable suggestion, alien in manner and clothes, which expatriates so often acquire unconsciously; his deep dark coloring; his distinguished, irregular aquiline; Patrick with his perfect athlete's figure, so light in pose, so perfect in poise and balance, his sun-shot Irish coloring, his regular Celtic features.

Patrick explained, "I want to ask you some questions, Doctor Marden. I ventured to suggest that you come here as I have been using Mrs. Avery's home as a sort of annex to the police station. It makes the whole business a little less unpleasant and we have no kibitzers. You realize that more evidence in this Blaikie case comes in from time to time. Then we have to go over what everybody else has said and check up. I wanted to ask you a few more questions in regard to Mrs. Stow's masquerade."

"Quite!" Doctor Marden assented. He sat down.

"I must tell you, Doctor Marden," Patrick added, thrusting his keenest glance across the space between them, "that in case of suspicion being turned upon you, anything you say here may be held against you and that there is a witness present."

Doctor Marden made a deprecatory gesture outward of his long, slender hands. "Ask me anything you want, Mr. O'Brien. I shall answer only the questions I wish to answer."

I became conscious of mounting excitement. Everybody else who had submitted to Patrick's interrogatories under my roof—Sarah Darbe, Bessie Williams, Molly Eames, Walter Treadway, Margaret Fairweather—had said in effect: "Ask me anything you want. I shall tell the whole truth."

Perhaps Doctor Marden felt that he had made a false step; for he immediately added, "I have no anticipation that you will ask me any question that I shall not prefer to answer fully."

"Doctor Marden," Patrick began, "at what time did you go to the masquerade?"

"Somewhere between half-past nine and ten," Doctor Marden answered.

"How did you get there? By car?"

"No. It was such a beautiful night and as there is only concrete road between our house and the Stow house, my granddaughter suggested that we walk. Besides she thought that there might be some difficulty in parking."

"What time did you get home?"

"I left earlier than my granddaughter. Half-past twelve I should say."

"Doctor Marden, between the time you arrived and the time you went home, did you leave the Stow house?"

Doctor Marden answered instantly, "Yes."

"Why did you leave it?"

"Well, for no reason or several, just as you choose. I am not much of a dancing man, Mr. O'Brien, and after I'd been there about an hour, I began to find it very hot and also I wanted a smoke."

He smiled and Patrick met his

charming candid amusement with a warm Irish appreciation.

"What time was this?"

"I should say about half-past ten—certainly not much before and certainly not much later."

"By what door did you go out?"

"Through the kitchen and out the little door in Mrs. Stow's garage."

"Why did you go out so secretly?"

"In order to be alone. My head was buzzing a little with the warm air and I didn't want anybody to come with me."

"Did you put on your outer clothes?"

"Yes. I retrieved my long cape and beret from the garage where I left them when I came in."

"Did anybody see you go out?"

"No! Yes!" Doctor Marden reconsidered; smiled reminiscently; smiled with that tender gentleness which I might describe as my favorite of his many charming expressions. "Mrs. Avery's little niece, Sylvia. She had gone out into the kitchen. For some reason, none of the maids was there."

"Did she recognize you?"

"Yes. I lifted my mask."

"Did she speak?"

"Before she could say anything I put my fingers to my lips and she kept perfect silence."

"Where did you go?" Patrick asked next.

"I took a little stroll," Doctor Marden answered, "through the meadow which stretches between Mrs. Stow's and Mrs. Avery's house."

"You were in costume, Doctor Marden. Did your walk injure it? I mean, dew, vines, weeds, etc.?"

"There's a very pleasant little path between the two places," Doctor Marden informed Patrick politely.

I had a feeling that I was watching the preliminaries to a duel of two skilled fencers.

"I went through the opening in the hedge, across Mrs. Avery's drive, across the lawn in front of her gardens and onto the path leading to what Mrs. Avery calls the Spinney."

"Did you see anybody on the place or on the road?"

"Nobody."

"Go on!"

"I walked into the Spinney. As I entered I heard voices." He paused politely. "Does this interest you, Mr. O'Brien?"

"Very much. Whose voices were they?"

"There were two voices. One was a woman's. I did not recognize it. The other was a man's—Doctor Blaikie's."

"Did you hear what they said?"

"I heard nothing!"

"But as you got nearer—"

"When I realized that there was a tete-a-tete going on in the Spinney, I stopped, started to turn back but the voices stopped and I heard footsteps retreating. I waited a minute and kept on until I came across Doctor Blaikie."

"You did not see the lady at all?"

"No."

"You spoke with Doctor Blaikie of course."

"Yes—for several minutes."

"And then you went on?"

"Yes."

"Was your conversation a long one?"

"A very brief one."

"What was the nature of your talk?"

"It's one of those talks that you can't reproduce because really nothing was said. I knew that a lady had just left the Spinney. I think he knew I knew that. I don't know whether he was embarrassed or not. I was a little conscious of the situation. I think I told him that I'd come out because the house was so warm and that I wanted to smoke—"

"Had you lighted a cigar yet?"

"No. But I told Doctor Blaikie that I was going back to the house and I asked him to join me in a smoke."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said no; that he was returning at once to the dance."

"Did you go after that?"

"As I remember, that was my last remark."

"You left Doctor Blaikie in the Spinney?"

"Yes."

"Had he turned—had he started to leave the Spinney?"

"No."

"By what path did you go out from the Spinney?"

"I continued along the path that runs beside Mrs. Avery's Little House; then up onto the road and then back to the Stows."

"Did you smoke on the way back?"

"Yes—one cigarette."

"Did you meet anybody else on the way back?"

"No."

"How did you enter the house?"

"By the garage door—as I left it."

"Did you leave your cape and cap there?"

"Yes."

"Did anybody see you come in?"

"I think nobody noticed it; for the reason that the kitchen was full of masks. They had come out, I think, for water. There had been plenty of punch about, but no water and apparently a big group had suddenly invaded the kitchen. Nobody paid any attention to me and I went back to the dance."

"You were there then at the unmasking?"

"Yes."

"And what time did you say you went home?"

"About half-past twelve."

"You walked home?"

"Yes."

"Did you go straight up the Head?"

"Yes—exactly the way I came."

"When you were in the Spinney, did you hear any noise in the bushes, let us say, or among the trees?"

"I heard nothing."

"Don't you yourself think, Doctor Marden, that it's a little strange that you did not volunteer this information the first time I talked with you?"

Doctor Marden smiled. "I think it might seem so. But what would you have done, Mr. O'Brien? There was a woman involved. I didn't know what sort of trouble I might get her into."

"Well, of course you realize," Patrick advanced, "that some people might say that you invented the woman to save yourself."

Doctor Marden bowed in a polite acquiescence. He made no comment.

"What to your best knowledge and belief was Doctor Blaikie's frame of mind while you talked with him? Did you get any impression?"

"He gave me the impression that he was extremely happy—triumphant, definitely triumphant. I might say, he breathed, he emanated triumph."

Patrick's thick-lashed eyelids dropped. He seemed to reflect deeply. "Well, I guess that will be all," he said. "Wait a moment though. I'm the poorest hand in the world at remembering figures." He reached into his waistcoat pocket, brought out the little red leather notebook. "I'd like to take down the hours as you remember them—of your arrival and departures from the Stow house."

He reached into one pocket and then another, another and another. "I cannot keep a pencil!" he muttered.

I moved in the direction of my desk. Before I could reach it however, Doctor Marden had offered Patrick a fountain pen. Patrick busied himself a moment or two writing, handed the pen back. "Thank you very much, Doctor Marden. I won't detain you any longer."

"Oh by the way, Doctor Marden—" Patrick reached into his



"Do You Recognize That?"

pocket again—"do you recognize that?"

Doctor Marden answered instantly, "Yes."

"Does it belong to you?"

"Yes."

"When did you last see it?"

"The last time I noticed it was when I put on my slippers to go to the masquerade. It's one of a pair of old paste buckles that I bought some years ago in Paris. I lost it that night."

"Had you any idea where you lost it?"

"I thought it must have dropped off in that walk I took. It seems to me that had it been lost in the house, I would have noticed it."

"Did you make any attempt to find it?"

"Yes. I got up very early Sunday morning and went over the road I took, to see if I could find it."

"Don't you think that that might look suspicious?"

"Perhaps. But I suppose I would also think that whether it looked suspicious or not would depend on my standing in the community—I am perfectly willing to admit that I didn't want to be involved as a witness in this case. Naturally I did not want to get into it. Moreover, the buckle is an extremely valuable one. It is part of a set and although that was not, in view of the great tragedy, of momentous importance, it was of some importance."

"Well," Patrick decided, "I guess that will be all."

Doctor Marden arose. He bowed to Patrick; came over to my side; bent low over my hand. "Dear lady," he said, "I cannot tell you how much I think of you in these distressing days."

Something in his voice brought the tears to my eyes again. Then with his quick, light step, he started to go.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## AROUND the HOUSE Items of Interest to the Housewife

**Outer Leaves of Lettuce**—The outer leaves of lettuce, often trimmed off and thrown away, are more than 30 times as rich in vitamin A as the inside leaves.

**Hanging Pictures**—Never allow picture frames to touch the wall if it is damp. The frame will soon become damaged. With a small tack or gramophone needle, attach two small corks at the bottom of your frame. These will keep the frame off the wall.

**Removing Mustard Stains**—Mustard stains can be removed from table linen by washing in hot water and soap and rinsing in warm water.

**Boiled Whitefish**—Clean a whitefish. To sufficient water to cover add salt and vinegar and a bunch of parsley and a quartered onion. Cook until the flesh separates easily from the bones. Drain and place on a hot platter, garnished with parsley and serve with a sauce.

**Beef Juice**—To make beef juice add 1 pound of fresh, raw, finely chopped round steak without fat to 6 ounces of cold water. Add a pinch of salt, put the beef and water in a glass jar and stand it on ice, over night. Shake and strain it through coarse muslin, squeezing hard to obtain all the juice.

**Butter Layer Cake**—When raspberry jam that is not of firm consistency is to be used for filling a sponge sandwich cake it is advisable to butter the inner surface of each layer before spreading it with jam. This will prevent the moisture from soaking into the cake and making it sodden.

**Soaking Salt Fish**—When soaking salt fish add a small glass of vinegar to the soaking water and it will draw out more of the salt.

**Washing Windows**—Add a little starch to the water used for washing windows. It not only helps remove the dirt, but gives a lasting polish.

**Tomato and Lima Bean Casserole**—Drain the liquid from a No. 2 can of green baby lima beans and combine the beans with a can of tomatoes. Add a little butter and seasoning, then mix. Place in buttered casserole. Cover.

**With Fancywork**—Before starting to draw the threads on linen for hemstitching, wet a small brush, rub it over a bar of soap until a lather is produced, scrub the threads of linen that you wish to draw, and they will pull out easily.

**Foreign Words and Phrases**

Filius nullius. (L.) The son of nobody; illegitimate.

Rus in urbe. (L.) The country in town.

Sub judice. (L.) Under consideration.

Sturm und drang. (Ger.) Storm and stress.

Villegiatura. (It.) A summer vacation.

Belles-lettres. (F.) Refined literature.

Cause celebre. (F.) A court trial of wide popular interest.

Creme de la creme. (F.) The pink of perfection.

Dies infastus. (L.) An unlucky day.

Pioupou. (F.) A private soldier; the French "Tommy Atkins."

Pro forma. (L.) For the sake of form.

Sui juris. (L.) In one's own right.

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## JOYS and GLOOMS

**BAH! EVERYWHERE I LOOK I SEE JOY AND HAPPINESS! IT'S GOT TO STOP!**

**HE'S RIGHT! GLOOMS... GET AFTER THOSE JOYS!**

**OH, DADDY... MOTHER SAID YOU WOULD BUILD ME A PLAYHOUSE!**

**WHAT! ME BUILD A PLAYHOUSE? I SHOULD SAY NOT! I'M DEAD TIRE!**

**TEAR INTO 'EM, BOYS!**

**WHY... WHY... WHY... LEN! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!**

**OH, YOU WOULDN'T! YOU NEVER SHOW ME ANY CONSIDERATION! YOU KNOW I NEED REST! I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING WELL... BUT WHAT DO YOU CARE?**

**I WORK HARD ALL DAY... LIE AWAKE ALL NIGHT... AND ALL YOU DO IS THINK UP MORE WORK FOR ME!**

**WELL... IF YOU'D DO AS THE DOCTOR SAID, YOU'D NOT ONLY SLEEP BETTER, BUT YOU'D BE A WHOLE LOT EASIER TO LIVE WITH!**

**HE TOLD YOU COFFEE-NERVES WAS CAUSING YOUR SLEEPLESSNESS! WHY DON'T YOU QUIT COFFEE AND DRINK POSTUM INSTEAD FOR 30 DAYS...**

**AS HE SUGGESTED?**

**OH, ALL RIGHT... I WILL!**

**BEAT IT MEN... WE'RE LICKED! POSTUM ALWAYS DRIVES US OUT!**

**30 DAYS LATER...**

**SINCE HE GOT RID OF HIS SLEEPLESSNESS, HE'S BEEN A NEW MAN!**

**YOU SAID IT! SWITCHING TO POSTUM SURE DID THE TRICK FOR HIM!**

**YOUR MONEY BACK... IF SWITCHING TO POSTUM DOESN'T HELP YOU!**

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(This offer expires December 31, 1937.)