THE BOOMERANG CLUE

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS: Bobby Jones and Frankie Derwent have been lured to a lonely cottage, bound, and threatened with death by a man they believe is Dr. Nicholson. They also believe Nicholson murdered Alan Carstairs, and had a hand in other devilment. But now they learn that the man who has been talking to them as the doctor is really their friend Roger Bassington-ffrench, who was their first suspect. Just as they are facing the fact that in a little while they die, the stuttering Badger drops into their prison through the skylight.

Chapter 39

THE TABLES TURN

The voice of Badger rose plaintively.

"W-what are we going to do next?" he inquired.

"We're going to take up a comfortable position behind this door," said Bobby. "And when our friend returns you and I are going to give him the surprise of his life. How about it, Badger? Are you game?"

"Oh, absolutely."

"As for you, Frankie, when you hear his step you'd better get back onto your chair. He'll see you as soon as he opens the door and will come in without any suspicion."

"All right," said Frankie. "And once you and Badger have got him down I'll join in and bite his ankles or something."

"That's the true womanly spirit," said Bobby approvingly. "Now, let's all sit close together on the floor here and hear all about things. I want to know what ciracle brought Badger through that skylight just in the nick of time."

"Well, you s-s-see," said Badger, "after you w-w-went off, I got into a bit of a m-m-mess."

He paused. Gradually the story was extracted—a tale of liabilities, creditors, and bailiffs — a typical Badger catastrophe. Bobby had gone off leaving no address, only saying that he was driving the Bentley down to Staverley. So to Staverley came Badger.

"I thought p-p-perhaps you m-m-might be able to let me have a f-f-fiver," he explained.

Badger had no wish to endanger Bobby's mysterious enterprises, but he was of the opinion that a car like the green Bentley would not be difficult to find in a place the size of Staverley. As a matter of fact he came across the car before he got to Staverley, for it was standing outside a pub—empty

"S-s-s-o I thought," went on Badger, "that I'd give you a little s-s-surprise, don't you know? There were some r-r-rugs and things in the back and nobody about I g-g-got in and p-p-pulled them over me. I thought I'd give you the s-s-surprise of your life."

What actually happened was that a chauffeur in green livery had emerged from the pub and that Badger, peering from his place of concealment, was thunderstruck to perceive that this chauffeur was not Bobby. He had an idea that the face was in some way familiar to him but couldn't place the man. The stranger got into the car and drove off.

Badger was in a predicament. He did not know what to do next. Explanations and apologies were difficult, and in any case it is not easy to explain to someone who is driving a car at 60 miles an hour. Badger decided to lie low and sneak out of the car when it stopped.

The car finally reached its destination—Tudor Cottage. The chauffeur drove it into the garage and left it there, but on going out he shut the garage doors. Badger was a prisoner. There was a small window at one side of the garage and through this, about half an hour later, Badger had observed Frankie's approach, her whistle and her admission into the house.

The whole business puzzled Badger greatly. He began to suspect that something was wrong. At any rate he determined to have a look around for himself and see what it was all about.

With the help of some tools lying about in the garage he succeeded in picking the lock of the garage door and set out on a tour of inspection. The windows on the ground floor were all shuttered, but he thought that by getting onto the roof he might manage to have a look into some of the upper windows.

The roof presented no difficulties. There was a convenient pipe running up the garage, and from the garage roof to the roof of the cottage was an easy climb. In the court of his prowling Badger had come upon the skylight. Nature and Badger's weight had done the rest.

Bobby drew a long breath as the narrative came to an end.

"All the same," he said reverently, "you are a miracle—a singularly beautiful miracle! But for you, Badger, my lad, Frankie and I would have been little corpses in about an hour's time."

He gave Badger a condensed account of the activities of himself and Frankie. Towards the end, he broke off.

"Someone's coming. Get to your post, Frankie. Now then, this is where our play-acting Bassington-ffrench gets the surprise of his life."

Frankie arranged herself in a depressed attitude on the broken chair. Badger and Bobby stood ready behind the door.

The steps came up the stairs, a line of candle-light showed underneath the door. The key was put in the lock and turned, the door swung open. The light of the candle disclosed Frankie drooping dejectedly on the chair. Their jailor stepped in through the doorway.

Then, joyously, Badger and Bobby sprang. The proceedings were short and decisive. Taken utterly by surprise, the man was knocked down, the candle flew wide and was retrieved by Frankie, and a few seconds later the three friends stood looking down with malicious pleasure at a figure securely bound with the same ropes that had previously secured two of them.

"Good evening, Mr. Bassington-ffrench," said Bobby, and if the exultation in his voice was a little crude, who shall blame him?—"It's a nice night for the funeral."

The man on the floor stared up at them. His pince-nez had flown off and so had his hat. The face of Roger Bassington-ffrench.

He spoke in his own agreeable tenor voice, its note that of pleasant soliloquy.

"Very interesting," he said. "I really knew quite well that no man tied up as you were could have thrown a boot through that skylight. An interesting light on the limitations of the brain."

As nobody spoke, he went on still in the same reflective voice.

"So, after all, you've won the round. Most unexpected and extremely regrettable. I thought I'd got you all fooled nicely."

"So you had," said Frankie. "You forged that letter from Bobby, I suppose?"

"I have a talent that way," said Roger modestly.

"And Bobby?"

"I knew he'd gone to the Grange. I was just behind him there when he retreated after rather clumsily falling off a tree. I let the hubbub die down and then got him neatly on the back of the neck with a sandbag. All I had to do was to carry him out to where my car was waiting, shove him in the dickey and drive him here. I was at home again before morning."

"And Moira?" demanded Bobby. "Did you entice her away somehow?"

Roger chuckled. The question seemed to amuse him. "Forgery is a very useful art, my dear Jones," he said.

"You swine," said Bobby.

"Why did you pretend to be Dr. Nicholson?" Frankie asked.

"Why did I now?" Roger seemed to be asking the question of himself. "Partly, I think, the fun of seeing whether I could spoof you both. You were so very sure that poor old Nicholson was in it up to the neck."

"And really," said Frankie slowly, "he was quite innocent?"

"As a child unborn," said Roger. "But he did me a good turn. He drew my attention to that accident of yours. That and another incident made me realize that you mightn't be quite the innocent young thing you seemed to be. And then I was standing by you when you telephoned one morning and I heard your chauffeur's voice say 'Frankie.'"

"There's one thing you must tell me," said Frankie. "I've been driven nearly mad with curiosity. Who is Evans?"

"Oh!" said Bassington - ffrench. "So you don't know that?"

He laughed—and laughed again.

"That's rather amusing," he said. "It shows what a fool one can be."

"Meaning us?" asked Frankie.

"No," said Roger. "In this case, meaning me. Do you know, if you don't know who Evans is, I don't think I shall tell you. I'll keep that to myself as my own little secret."

(To be continued).

Pension Talk Slated

Jefferson—W. L. Cobb, president of the Townsend club, has announced a mass meeting to be held Thursday evening at 8 o'clock in the Masonic hall. E. E. Coulter of Cottage Grove will speak on "The Truth About the Townsend Plan."

NEEDY PERSONS AIDED

Silverton—The Woman's Missionary society of the Christian and Missionary Alliance church met Wednesday afternoon at the country home of Mrs. Fred Towns. The devotionals were led by Mrs. Art Pederson. A miscellaneous shower was given Mrs. Roscoe Cogswell. Sewing was done for needy ones.

Spring Assemblies Prove Attractive

Monmouth—The coming assemblies for the spring quarter of O. N. S. promise to be of great interest. Among the most outstanding will be those of a musical nature. Miss Jean Ulrich, a prominent soprano, will be heard April 20. She has given many concerts in Portland as well as in other parts of the state. On May 6, G. Marston Haddock will sing folk songs, ballads and traditional songs of England. He is well known, particularly in California, having appeared at a number of junior colleges there. Plans are still being made to secure other singers and speakers for future assemblies.

Musical Tea Held

Brooks—Mrs. Cecil Ashbaugh gave a musical tea in honor of her cousin, Mrs. Sadie Bowden of Seattle. A solo by Lena Riggl, duet by Mrs. Barker and Mrs. Streeter and three original compositions for piano, played by Mrs. Barker, were given. Additional guests were Mrs. V. C. Bishop, Mrs. H. H. Eesch, Mrs. Joe Fitts, Alice Joan and Muriel, Mrs. Howard Ramp and Neva, Miss Andrus and Miss Kronberg.

JOHNSON FARM SOLD

Silverton — The Hans Johnson farm on the Mt. Angel highway was sold Wednesday through the Walter Fry agency to Mr. and Mrs. Torkel Tufteskog and their son, Melvin, who arrived here during last week from Tama county, Iowa.

RADIO PROGRAMS

MONDAY, P.M.
KGW—620 Kilocycles

11:45—Oregonian News.
12:00—Camay, NBC.
12:30—Vic and Sade, NBC.
1:00—Betty and Bob, NBC.
1:15—Gene Arnold Ranch Boys, UBC
1:45—Grandpa Burton, NBC.
2:00—NBC.
2:35—Quartet, NBC.
2:45—Portland Council Churches.
3:00—Woman's Magazine of the Air, NBC
4:05—Orchestra.
4:30—Lehn and Fink, NBC.
4:45—Lanzendorf Pictorial, NBC.
5:00—Fibber McGee and Molly, NBC.
5:30—Bourjois Program, NBC.
6:30—Studio Party, NBC.
7:00—Contented, NBC.
8:00—Amos 'n' Andy, NBC.
8:15—NBC.
9:30—NBC.
10:00—News Flashes, NBC.
10:15—Ben Alexander, NBC.
10:30—Organ.
11:00—Jackie Souders Orchestra
11:30-12—Orchestra, NBC.

TUESDAY, A.M.
KGW—620 Kilocycles

7:00—Press Radio News, NBC.
7:05—Happy Jack, NBC.
7:15—Dan Harding's Wife, NBC
7:30—Sweethearts of the Air, NBC
7:45—Gale Page, NBC.
8:15—Jerry Grannon, NBC.
8:30—Your Child, NBC.
8:45—Piano Recital, NBC.
9:00—Oregonian News Flashes.
9:15—Honeyboy and Sassafras, NBC.
10:15—Cabin Club Orchestra, NBC.
10:30—Music Guild, NBC.
11:30—Rhythm Octet, NBC.
11:45—KGW News Flashes.

MONDAY, P.M.
KEX—1180 Kilocycles

12:00—Western Farm and Home Hour, NBC
1:00—Forum Luncheon.
1:30—Radio Church.
2:00—Financial & Grain.
2:15—Junior Radio Journal, NBC.
2:30—Baseball.
4:30—Console Capers, NBC.
4:45—Popular Singer, NBC.
5:15—Oregonian News Flashes.
5:30—Pair of Pianos, NBC.
6:00—Sports Talk.
6:15—NBC Programs.
6:30—Crossroads, NBC.
7:00-8—Silent.
8:00—KEX Flashes.
8:30—Rainbow Room Orchestra, NBC.
9:00—Homicide Squad.
9:30—Wrestling Bouts.
10:35—Orchestra.
11-12—Paul Carson, NBC

TUESDAY, A.M.
KEX—1180 Kilocycles

6:30—Musical Clock.
7:00—Calvary Tabernacle.
7:30—Financial Service, NBC.
7:45—Nuts and Bolts, NBC.
8:00—Breakfast Club.
9:00—Simpson Boys, NBC.
9:15—Toley and Glenn.
9:30—String Time, NBC.
10:00—Keyboard Capers.
10:30—Band music.
10:30—Oregonian Home Institute.
10:45—Orchestra.
11:00—Concert Hour.
11:30—Golden Melodies, NBC.

MONDAY, P.M.
KOAC—550 Kilocycles

12:00—Noon Farm Hour.
1:00—Music.
1:15—World Book Man.
1:30—Music.
1:30—Programs on Parade.
1:45—Music.
2:00—Lesson in Spanish.
2:15—Music.
2:30—What the Educators are Doing.
3:45—Maude Pratt Lewis.
3:00—In the World of Women.
3:30—Music.
3:45—The Monitor Views the News.
4:00—Musical Stories.
4:30—Stories for Boys and Girls.
5:00—On the Campus.
5:30—Corvallis High School Senior Circus
6:00—Science Stories.
6:15—Dinner Concert.
6:30—Evening Farm Hour.
7:30—4-H Club Meeting.
8:00—With Oregon State Engineers.
8:15—The Book of the Week.
8:30—The Oregon Lumbermen.
9:00—United Press News.

MONDAY, P.M.
KOIN—940 Kilocycles

12:15—The Meier and Frank Company Store Reporter.
12:30—Book of Life.
1:15—Concert Miniatures, CBS.
1:45—Sons of the Pioneers.
2:00—Jack Shannon, CBS.
2:15—Wilderness Road, CBS.
2:45—The Goldbergs, CBS.
3:30—The Journal Newspaper of the Air
4:00—The Journal Newspaper of the Air
4:45—Renfrew of the Mounted, CBS.
5:30—Leon F. Drews, Organ.
6:45—Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen.
6:00—Lux Radio Theatres, CBS
7:00—Wayne King's Orchestra, CBS.
7:00—President Roosevelt, CBS.
8:00—Myrt and Marge, CBS.
8:15—Singin' Sam, CBS.
9:00—Musical Moments.
10:00—Dorothy Dix, the Journal.
10:30—Laurie Higgins Orchestra, DLBS.
10:45—Kelly's Kaballeros.
11:00—Orchestra, DLBS.

TUESDAY, A.M.
KOIN—940 Kilocycles

6:30—KOIN KLOCK, Ivan and Walter.
8:00—KOIN News Service.
8:05—Harmony Time.
8:15—Ramblers in Rhythm.
9:00—Voice of Experience, CBS.
9:15—Betty Crocker, DLBS.
9:45—Five Star Jones, CBS.
10:15—KOIN News Service.
10:45—This and That with Art Kirkham.
11:30-12:00—CBS.

ANSWERS to QUESTIONS

A reader can get the answer to any question of fact by writing The Capital Journal Information Bureau, Frederic J. Haskin, Director, Washington, D. C. Please enclose three cents for reply.

Q. In da Vinci's painting, The Last Supper, in what sequence are the disciples seated? G.A.S.

A. Left to right — Bartholomew, James the Less, Andrew, Judas, Peter, John, The Christ, James the Greater, Philip, Matthew, Thaddeus, and Simon.

Q. How is a test-tube rabbit developed? G.M.

A. The semi-octogenetic offspring is born of a female rabbit that is not its mother. The original cell is taken from the body of the true mother and placed in a glass tube, where it is fertilized. When development reaches a certain stage it is transplanted to the body of another female rabbit or host-mother, where the embryo is developed and birth takes place in the usual way.

Q. Did Walter Hampden ever play with Nazimova as his leading lady? E. H.

A. He appeared with Nazimova at New York in 1907 in the Comtessee Coquette.

Q. How large have watermelons grown in their wild state? C.B.

A. The Bureau of Plant Industry says that there is no exact information on the maximum size and weight of watermelons in their wild state. One authority writing in 1556 remarked "that wild watermelons were sometimes so large that a man could scarcely embrace the fruit with his expanded arms."

Q. How many typewriters are in use in the House of Representatives at Washington? C.R.

A. The House has more than 1200 typewriters.

Q. Who is the patron Saint of lawyers? G. D.

A. St. Ives. The American Bar association has presented a memorial window in his honor to the Cathedral at Treguier, Brittany, France. It will be dedicated on May 18.

Q. How many times has Madame Schumann-Heink been married? G. M.

A. Three. Her first husband was Heink. He deserted her and their four children. The second was Schumann. Four children were born to them. This was a very happy marriage. After his death, Madame Schumann-Heink married William Rapp. This marriage was dissolved, but made her an American citizen.

Q. Who won this year's Eichelberger Award? E. H.

A. Miss Viola Larsen of Chicago is the latest recipient of the annual Eichelberger International Humane Award for outstanding work in behalf of animals.

Q. Who was speaker of the House of Representatives when it was decided to count all members present to establish a quorum, although not all voted? A. M. G.

A. Thomas B. Reed was chosen speaker in 1889, and inaugurated the "Reed rules" which counted quorums in this way.

SUNDOWN STORIES

PROUD HONEY BEAR

By Mary Graham Bonner

Now Honey Bear walked along with Jelly Bear and Blacky and Jupiter, with the little cub Chubby following along. Yes, he was able to walk out and see the world.

Honey Bear wanted to show him everything. She was so proud of him, and so proud of what she had for him to see.

First there was Willy Nilly's house

to be seen, and Chubby thought it very fine. Particularly did he like the honey that Willy Nilly gave all of them.

Honey Bear was pleased that Chubby liked honey so much, too. Then they walked to Sweet Face's meadow and there they had a little rest. Next they went to see Top Notch's general store, and Top Notch gave them some crumbs from his counter.

After this they went down to see the ducks' pond and Chubby was allowed a short swimming-bath.

He was so bright that he learned in no time at all.

Then they went back to Willy Nilly's again and took a look up at Christopher's nest, and Chubby felt almost strong enough to try climbing a little bit.

But he fell and then Willy Nilly gave them another meal.

This time there was jelly to be had, and Chubby liked jelly as well as he did honey. In fact he found it hard to decide if he liked one better than the other.

Rip was following after them, too, and he escorted them back to the cave. Chubby's first real walk had been a real Puddle Muddle one. Soon now there would be lessons.

Tomorrow—"Lessons and Games."

LEAVE FOR ALASKA

Mt. Angel—Frank W. Fisher returned to his home in Hyder, Alaska, Wednesday evening after spending about two weeks at the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Paul F. Schwab, and other relatives and friends.

Down, DOWN through the sky hurtles Puff and his friend.

They started from MARS and their journey will end

At some spot on earth, though just where it will be

They really don't know. (They MIGHT plop in the SEA!)

THE NEBBS — By Sol Hess — MRS. VAN MIDAS

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE — By Harold Gray — CUTHBERT JONES

REG'LAR FELLERS — By Gene Byrnes — IN THE BAG

THE GUMPS — By Gus Edson — SOB STUFF

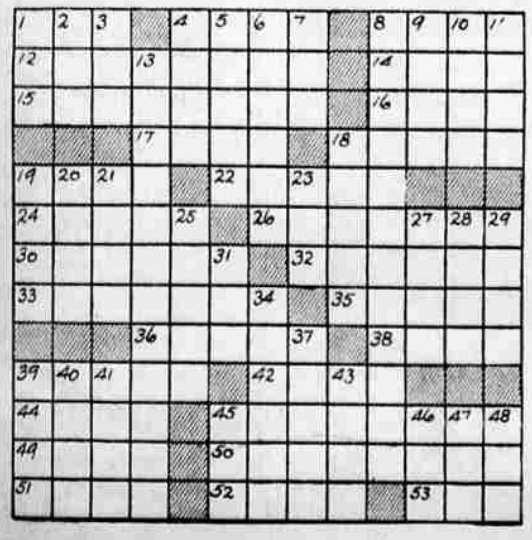
TAILSPIN TOMMY — By Hal Forrest — THE HOODED FLYER APPEARS HOSPITABLE!

ACROSS

1. Harden
4. Lose luster
8. Was carried
12. Apertures
14. Ireland
15. Plant with a medicinal root
16. Thin piece of pasteboard
17. Most ancient Hindu scripture
18. Strong winds
19. Wings
22. Odor
24. Strike and rebound
26. Folded like a fan
29. Ancient Roman officials
32. Wore an expression of approval or amusement
33. Tells
35. Severe
36. Leases
37. California rockfish
39. South American animal
42. Volcano
44. Medley
45. All a spoon will hold
49. Kind of balsam
50. One who forsakes a faith or principles
51. Long fish
52. Cancel
53. Clear gain

DOWN

1. Sun
2. Silkworm
3. Nervous twitching
4. Conflagration
5. Sour substances
6. Depart secretly and suddenly
7. Compass point
8. Obstinately refusing to comply
9. Pertaining to the mouth
10. Calamitous
11. Purposes
12. Having small pits or depressions
13. Lamps: slang
19. Genus of the maple tree
20. Place cargo on a vessel
21. Accessory seed covering
23. Elevated railroads: colloq.
25. Measuring instrument
27. Toward the sheltered side
28. Bird of the gull family
30. Feminine name
31. Japanese coin
34. Russian prairie
37. Backless seat
38. Carry: colloq.
40. Medicinal plant
41. Pallet
43. Organ of scent
45. Mournful
46. Device for stirring the air
47. American Indian
48. Permit

Solution of Saturday's Puzzle

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