

It's Death, My Darling!

By AMELIA REYNOLDS LONG
(AP Newfeatures)

Chapter 13
Shortly after that, the sheriff and the coroner both left, taking with them Claude's body.

After they had gone, Uncle Boun-Mful served a breakfast which some of us ate through sheer nervousness and others were unable to touch for the same reason.

When the meal was about half over, Uncle Raoul spoke for the first time since sitting down at the table.

"Why did you do it, Beau?" he asked abruptly.

Beau glanced up from his plate. "Do what?" he asked.

"Le about finding Claude."

Pick spoke before her brother could answer.

"I think I know," she said. "When the sheriff brought in those flowers, Beau thought that—that I might know something about Claude's death. So he made up that tale to protect me. Isn't that it, Beau?"

Beau nodded carelessly. He had assumed something of his old devil-may-care attitude again.

"Why did you go downstairs, Pick?" Lee asked unexpectedly.

"Was it actually to get a book, or—"

"If she says she went to get a book, then that's why she went," Beau interrupted him almost roughly. "For God's sake, Lee, can't you learn to let well enough alone?"

Lee flushed.

"I didn't mean—" he began.

"Why disturb ourselves with unimportant trifles?" Cousin Jeff, the peace-maker, put in diplomatically. "The question of Claude's death has been settled—if there ever was a question in anyone's mind except the sheriff's—and that's all that matters."

But was it, I wondered? Was it either settled, or all that mattered? I wandered out onto the south gallery, where presently I was joined by Amedee.

"What do you think of it all, Peter?" he asked, sitting down beside me.

"I don't know, Dede," I answered. "There still seem to be a lot of things that could stand explaining."

"And one of them is, how Claude could have stumbled over the end of the sword when it was thrust through his belt," he said. "I was inside just now experimenting with one of Grandpere's canes, and I'll be hanged if I could find out how he did it."

"Thank Heaven you had sense enough to use a cane instead of the sword!" I exclaimed. "You might have found out."

He looked so pleased at that, I was afraid we were going to get sidetracked from our subject. But we didn't.

"You mean that the sword must

already have been drawn. "I asked.

"That looks like the only logical explanation," he replied gravely.

"But what difference would it make?" I asked. "It wasn't the sword that killed Claude; it was a heart attack."

"Didn't it occur to you to wonder," he countered, "whether it was the heart attack that caused the wound with the sword, or the shock of the wound that caused the heart attack?"

"You mean—Beau?" I ventured as he paused.

He didn't answer directly.

"We may as well face the facts before somebody else faces them for us," he said. "Even if Claude did die around half past two, it still doesn't give Beau a clean bill of health. Come to think of it, when Lewis and Henri and I went out to the garconieres, I can't remember seeing him with us."

"Oh, but he did go out later," I said. "I saw him."

I explained about seeing the three shadows leaving the lighted room downstairs, and about Pick's strange vigil in the upper hall. "But here's the part I can't understand," I finished. "How did he get back into the house? Aunt Minerva put on the night latch just before she went upstairs."

"Maybe Beau took it off again when he went out," Amedee suggested.

"Then he must have deliberately planned to come back," I pointed out. "And that makes it look more than ever as though he was lying when he said—"

"Thanks," Beau's voice cut in unexpectedly. "I've been called a liar so many times today, it's beginning to look as though I'm getting something of Aunt Delphine's reputation."

He had come out upon the gallery without our noticing him. Now he stood looking down at us with one of his impudently ironic grins.

"Beau," I asked before I could stop myself, "when you planned to come back last night, was it to meet Pick?"

"What makes you think I planned to come back to meet anybody, Peter?" he inquired.

"Because you took the night latch off the front door when you went out," I replied.

"That took him by surprise," he said. "I see! The grin, which had vanished temporarily, returned. "All right; you win. I did plan to come back, and I took the night latch off so that I could. But it wasn't to meet Pick or anyone else."

"Then why was it?" Amedee asked point blank.

Beau leaned lazily against one of the white pillars.

"Sorry, Dede," he said. "But I'm afraid we'll have to skip that. It had nothing to do with Claude's death, which the coroner says—God bless him!—was due to heart failure."

He turned then, and walked nonchalantly back into the house.

"Of course, this is only a hunch," I said to Amedee when he had gone. "But I believe Beau came back to the house for the same reason that Pick went downstairs; and that, in spite of what he says, that reason had something to do with Claude's death, may even have been the thing that brought on his heart attack."

"That sounds possible," he agreed thoughtfully. "The question is, why did Pick come down stairs?"

"I only wish I knew!" I exclaimed fervently.

(To Be Continued)



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Refreshes! Delicious!

SHUT UP! I WANT THAT RING AND YOUR WALLET-- AND THE HACKIE'S CASH!

THE POLICE TAKE A PRETTY HAZY VIEW OF PEOPLE WHO USE GUNS TO HITCH RIDES, BUD!

AW PLEASE! YOU'RE BREAKIN' MY HEART!

YOU'RE BREAKIN' MY HEART!

ALL RIGHT! MAKE THIS HEAD LEAD! -- AN' DON'T LOOK BACK!

WELL, I IS ALL READY TO JOIN CL' ALBERT AN' GO OFF TO THE BERMWOODS TO WATCH THE ONIONS AN' THE BELLS.

HOW YOU GONNA AFFORD THAT WATCHIN' ONIONS COMES HIGH!

ALBERT MADE \$10,000 ON A BIG DIRT DEAL.

UNCLE BALDWIN SOLD HIM A MILLION BONES OF DIRT AN' KNOCKED A PENNY OFF EACH SO ALBERT SAVED A GOOD TEN THOUSAND.

BUT FIRST HE GOTTA PAY FOR TH' MILLION BONES OF DIRT.

WHY NOT HE GONNA SEND 'EM BACK! HAD WANTS THEM!

DEY AN'T FLIM FLAMMIN' ME!

TEX BANTAM, EH? FROM TEXAS, EH? WELL, YOU'RE JUST A BIG FARMER TO ME-- ONE SIDE, BEFORE WE--

BASY, MISTER-- IF THIS THING GOES OFF IT TEARS A FANFUL BIG HOLE--

WHY, YOU-- HERE! USE THIS BADGE?

YEP! RIGHT PURTY-- YOU SEE THE 'UN, MISTER?

UNITED STATES MARGARL! WELL-- I-- THAT IS-- SO WHAT?

AH THOUGHT A VISIT WIF MAMMY MIGHT TAKE MAH MIND OFF THE PITCHER O' D' YOKUM-- BUT SHE SEEMS T' HAVE SOMETHIN' ON HER MIND, TOO--

NOT 'TOS UP THE PITCHER O' D' YOKUM UNTIL MAH DYIN' DAY-- BUT AH JUST SEEMS T' GO ON LIVING CUSS ITT--

PANSY! HAIN'T ET NOTHIN' FO' THREE DAYS--

YO' MUST BE NEARLY STARVED TO DEATH!

--THASS RIGHT!-- AH MUST BE IT!

C-CAIN'T EVEN LIST TH' STORIES IT YASSUM-- AH IS A DYIN' WOOMIN ALL RIGHT-- CHUCKLE! CHUCKLE! --GASP!

MELODY'S GUN... STILL WARY/HES BEEN BY HERE ONLY MOMENTS AGO, AND IN HIS EXCITEMENT LOST THE WEAPON!

SO LET YOUR HAIR DOWN AND CRY!

WHAT A RACKET!

BUT, MUTT-- THAT'S RONNY JAY-- THE NATIONS NEW SINGING SENSATION!

I DON'T CARE! SHUT UP-- THAT NOISE OFF!

THE WOMEN LOVE HIM! LAST NIGHT WHEN HE WAS SINGING A WOMAN FANITED DEAD AWAY!

SHE SWOONED, EH?

NO, FANITED! SO DID HER HUSBAND-- SHE GAVE BIRTH TO TRIPLETS!

MAYBE I'D BETTER JUST DROP IT-- I WONT ASK ANY MORE QUESTIONS!

HELLO, WALLACE! HOW'S MY FAVORITE SLEUTH?

FINE, REX! WE FOLKS HERE AT F.D.A. ARE BEGINNING TO THINK YOU'VE FORGOTTEN US!

AS USUAL, I'M CALLING BECAUSE I HAVE A PROBLEM, WALLACE!

LET'S HAVE IT! F.D.A. THEVES ON PROBLEMS!

AND AT CITY HOSPITAL... THEN YOU CAN'T PINPOINT THE CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE TUBERC CASE, DOCTOR?

NO! THOSE TISSUE CHANGES CAN BE CAUSED BY A DOZEN DIFFERENT CONDITIONS!

FOR \$150 IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A WENCH!

SMOOTHEST-RUNNING PEPPERST MOST POWERFUL!

...CAR YOU EVER OWNED THAT SOUNDS FAIR! IT'S A DEAL!

JUST A SECOND, SON-- TO SAVE YOU A TRIP...

...HERE'S YOUR TWENTY BUCKS!

WELL, MR. MITCHELL! ...YOU'RE TAKING ENGLISH 2-A?

UH...YEAH!...THAT IS-- IF YOU ARE! WHEN I HEARD DR. THACKERY WAS TEACHING IT I PLANNED TO DROP THE COURSE-- BUT-- IF YOU-- I-- I MEAN--

YOU'D BETTER SIT HERE BESIDE ME-- JUST IN CASE THE OLD GIRL STARTS PICKING ON YOU!

THANKS!... I'M NOT ALLOWED TO CHOOSE MY OWN SEAT!

WILL THE CLASS PLEASE COME TO ORDER?

BY CARL ANDERSON

Henry

REDUCED RATES! ROUND THE WORLD CRUISE ONLY \$2975

TRAVEL

YEAH!

TODAY'S TRAVELGUE "A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD"

Exchange Student Guest Of Middle Grove Women

Middle Grove — Miss Ursula Glaeser who was a student in Vienna, Austria, was guest speaker for the Monday night meeting of the Middle Grove Mothers clubs.

She is now an exchange student at Willamette university giving special attention to a comparison of our schools with those of European schools.

At the business meeting Mrs. Charles Roberts gave the report of the Salem Parent Council. The grades of Wallace Turnidge won the attendance award with half of the mothers present.

The boys Cooking 4-H club held their meeting Monday night at the home of Billy Jo Slimak. The demonstration, making a French omelette, was given by Harry Scharf and Dennis Scharf discussed the value of egg as food.

Boys present with their teacher, Mrs. John Cage, were Tom Latham, John Anglin, Dennis Scharf, Don Anglin, Charles Wyatt, Harry Scharf and Billy Jo Slimak.

The regular monthly meeting of the Middle Grove Associated clubs will be held at the school house Friday, Feb. 20, at 7:30 p.m. For the refreshment hour lunch baskets will be exchanged. The Associated clubs ways and means committee with Mrs. Lewis Patterson as chairman served the lunch for the swine show at the fair grounds last week and will have one in March for two days.

The large new service station at the corner of Silverton Rd. and Lancaster Dr. has two Middle Grove men in charge, Bill Thompson and Chuck Wenger.



Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

- Fearful
- Arrange a variety of
- Without solidity
- One who keeps tally
- Final
- Test one
- Mother; colloq.
- Flatboat
- Quantity of yarn
- Coal scuttle
- Myself
- Corrodes
- Compound ether
- Marked with an asterisk
- Patron saint of lawyers
- Sleigh
- Wingless
- English city
- Ringing instrument
- Heelless slippers
- Proposed international language
- Dined
- Water flying in fine particles
- Arm of a crane
- Note of the scale
- Matter with which to talk with enthusiasm
- Everlasting; poetic
- One who makes off secretly
- Nicked
- Staircase posts
- Burning signals
- Hazard

DOWN

- Norwegian territorial division
- Aboriginal inhabitants of Borneo
- Help
- Scrutinize
- Kind of bean
- Goid; heraldry
- Fur removed
- Bartered
- Adjusts
- More certain
- Throng
- Take delight in
- Large woody plants
- Name
- Narrow city street
- Tried
- Humbled
- Small and trim
- Decoy
- Senseless talk
- Make serious
- Fraught
- Mathematical ratio
- Yawn
- Knack
- Propel with oars
- Type measure
- French article

ROOM & BOARD

By Gene Ahern

I HEAR BUNNY WRESTLED A GUY WHO'S RATED AS WASHED UP AS A BROKEN CAR, BUT HE NEATLY TIED BUNNY IN A CUPID'S BOW!

YEH...FIRST BUNNY PUTS DA GUY DOWN AN' GETS A TOE HOLD ON HIM-- THEN SOME FELLAS GIVE BUNNY A CHEER... AN' Y'KNOW WHAT DA HAM DOES?-- GETS UP AN' TAKES A BOW! DA OTHER GUY COMES IN BACK OF BUNNY AN' GOAT-BUTTS HIM OUTA DA RING ON HIS HEAD KNOCKIN HIM COLDER THAN A PENGUIN'S HEEL!

AND AFTER ALL THE EARL 'LEARNED' HIM