

# It's Death, My Darling!

By AMELIA REYNOLDS LONG  
(AP Manufacturer)

**CHAPTER 25**  
Bobby gave a little, terrified whimper, and hid her face against Henri's coat.  
"So that's why you went tearing out of there!" Amedee exclaimed. "Henri, you infernal idiot!"  
"It's easy enough for you to ridicule the idea of the supernatural," Henri said defiantly. "But, how do you explain the opened casket?"  
"I'd have sense enough to realize that those screws couldn't have been unfastened from the inside of the casket. They'd have to be removed from the outside."  
"That doesn't explain why the screws were removed in the first place," he said doggedly. "Or who did it."  
"Uncle Raoul did, probably," Amedee replied. "I can't tell you why, because I don't know. Now you can go inside and telephone the coroner without going into a trance!"  
Henri rose with an air of injured dignity, and went into the house. Bobby, with a half reproachful glance at Amedee, followed.  
"Did you know about the screws before he mentioned them, Dede?" I inquired.  
"Yes," he answered. "The sheriff discovered that they'd been removed."  
"What does he think about it?" I asked.  
He hesitated, then replied reluctantly. "He thinks Lee did it."  
Amedee came over and sat down upon the gallery floor at my feet.  
"I'll tell you the sheriff's theory, Peter," he said soberly, "and you can see if it makes sense to you. He thinks that Lee, inspired by Claude's death, killed his father in order to get the double inheritance; that he started to hide the body in the coffin with Grandpere, then he lost his nerve; that later he fell to brooding over what he had done, and in remorse killed himself with the same weapon he had used to kill his father."  
"Dede, you don't actually believe that, do you?" I demanded.  
He passed his hand through his tousled hair.  
"I hardly know what I believe," he answered wearily.  
An hour or so later, the sheriff came and asked to speak to us all together.  
"I only wanted to tell you that the coroner's agreed to let Mr. Raoul's death pass as suicide. So when we hold the inquest—"  
He got no further than that. Beau shot out of his chair as though it had been a catapult.  
"What do you mean, you'll let my father's death pass as suicide, Jeff Wilkes?" he demanded savagely.  
"It was suicide," the sheriff didn't answer directly.  
"After I left here this morning," he began, "I made some inquiries about that will of your grandpa's."

I found he'd left orders that if any of the estate was to go to his next of male kin, in your cousin Claude's case, that was your father. In his own case, it could have been both you and your brother Lee; but according to strict reading of the law, it might have been just Lee."  
Beau stared at him for a minute. Then he gave a short, harsh laugh. "You fool!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "You complete, damned fool!"  
The sheriff's face flamed.  
"I tried to be decent about this," he said. "But if that's the way you feel about it, I'll not hash anything up. We'll see how smart you are, Mr. Beau Dumont, at explaining to a jury why your father and your brother should have committed suicide."  
"That won't be necessary, Sheriff," Pick said quietly. "I can tell you."  
"Beau is right," she went on, gently putting Lewis Haye aside as he attempted to stop her. "My father and my brother Lee both did commit suicide. You see they both believed that I had killed Claude, the same as Beau did at first when he tried to lie that morning to protect me."  
The sheriff was looking utterly dumfounded.  
"It's just the sort of fool thing these Dumonts would do, too, don't you see?" he muttered to himself.  
With a brief nod of farewell, he turned and left the room. A moment later, he heard the front door close behind him.  
While Pick had been speaking, Beau had stood staring at her as though he had been frozen into immobility. "I didn't know you thought that, Pick," he said. "But you're wrong. Father's and Lee's deaths had nothing to do with you. There was another reason."  
"What other could there have been?" I can't tell you that," he answered. "But you've got to believe me, Pick. A reason did exist."  
"If you know the truth, you'd better tell her, Beau," Cousin Jeff put in.  
"I can't," he groaned. There was desperation in his voice now. "I can't tell any of you. Oh, not because I think it might drive the rest of you to suicide. But for you to have to live with the knowledge—"  
"With what knowledge?" Henri demanded suddenly. "Beau, what's wrong with you Dumonts? I want to know. I've got a right to."  
"That's true," Amedee said. "Remember, Henri and I are planning to be married."  
"All right," he flung out with a sort of brutal defiance. "You've both asked for it, so here it is: You can't get married; none of us can. We've got to let the Dumont line die out. There's a curse on the family—the curse of insanity!"  
"What!" Amedee was out of his chair as though there had been a steel spring inside of him, and somebody had released it. "Beau, you're—"  
"Crazy?" Beau finished for him, his mouth twisting with the word into the bitter mockery of a grin. "Yes, Dede, I am. Or I shall be before I die. This is the thing Grandfather had found out."  
(To Be Continued)

**HUBBARD PAINTING CLASS**  
Hubbard—The second day of textile painting will be held at the Rebekah hall all day Thursday, March 5, at 10:30 a.m.

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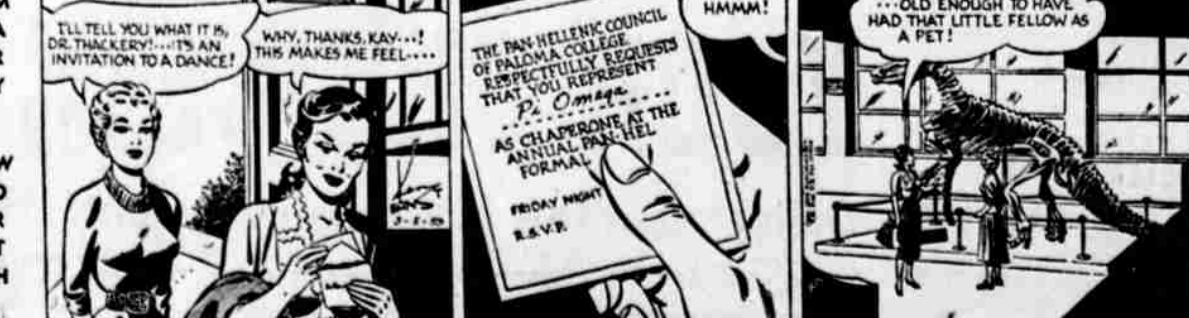
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**East Salem**  
East Salem—Observing the 16th anniversary of the organization of the club, members of the Swegle Womens club entertained with a guest day dinner Monday in the dining room of the Mayflower hall.  
Guests were Mrs. Carl Heutenroeder, Mrs. B. G. Kliever, Mrs. Conrad Hofstedt, Mrs. L. R. Curry, Mrs. James Pickersgill, Mrs. William McKinney, Mrs. William Swain, Mrs. Jesse Rauch and regular members Mrs. Rex Peffer, Mrs. Otis Dawes, Mrs. George Shull, Mrs. Robert Parker, Mrs. Alfred Pauli, Mrs. William Damery, Mrs. Menno Dalke, Mrs. Ralph Hein, Mrs. R. T. Dixon, Mrs. H. J. Conklin, Mrs. Albert Patz and Mrs. William Hartley.  
Only three who have been members since the first meeting were present, but two other charter members had a continuous membership.  
Singing, with Mrs. George Shull at the piano, and social games followed a short business meeting in the afternoon.

**KEIZER RUMMAGE SALE**  
The dining room tables were centered with vases of spring daffodils and a large basket of daffodils and flowering tree branches were on the green cloth covered serving table.  
Mrs. Melvin LaDue observed the sixth birthday of her son, Mark (Dicky), with a party Saturday afternoon at their Hollywood Dr. home. His guests were Glenn Robinette, Frank Holler, Steven Buck, Edward Gibb,

**Crossword Puzzle**

ACROSS  
1. Postcard hanging thing and needle  
2. Form of greeting  
3. Asiatic palm  
4. Biblical king  
5. Epoch  
6. Yewned  
7. Disconcerted: colloq.  
8. Dash  
9. Masculine nickname  
10. Roman date  
11. Remaining  
12. Behind a vessel  
13. Leaf of a palmyra palm  
14. Change  
15. Suitable for expression in poetry  
16. Unwilling  
17. Racks for hanging thing  
18. Old musical note  
19. American Indian  
20. Incentive  
21. Pronoun  
22. New Testament spelling of Sten  
23. Move about  
24. Merrymaker  
25. Author of "The Christian"  
26. Sesweed  
27. Unit of work  
28. Feminine name  
29. High pointed hill  
30. Small peg used in golf

DOWN  
1. Urchin  
2. Placid  
3. Pay  
4. Humor  
5. Hairless  
6. S-shaped molding  
7. Matrices  
8. Appellation of dignity  
9. Soft mineral  
10. Damp  
11. Pertaining to the sea-fighting force  
12. Likely  
13. In favor of  
14. Having confidence in  
15. Superlative ending  
16. Female sandpiper  
17. Witnessing clause of a writ  
18. Astringent salt  
19. Come forth into view  
20. French river  
21. Custom  
22. Jogging gait  
23. Brave man  
24. Declare  
25. Kind of arrow poison  
26. Repeat  
27. Bent  
28. Public vehicle

