

The Leading Lady

By GERALDINE BONNER

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STORY FROM THE START

While dependent over the enforced hiding of her fiancé, Jim Dallas, slayer in self-defense of Homer Parkinson, Sybil Saunders, popular actress, is engaged to play Viola in a charity performance of "Twelfth Night" on Gull Island, on the Maine coast. After the play Hugh Bassett, Anne Tracy's fiancé, tells Joe he has heard he is spying on Sybil to learn the whereabouts of Jim Dallas and earn the reward offered by the Parkinson family. The boy denies it. To Anne he betrays his enmity toward Sybil. Stokes tells Sybil he has news of Dallas, and to secure privacy they arrange to meet in a small summer house. Flora Stokes tells Bassett she saw Sybil shot but did not see her murderer. Bassett notified the sheriff, Abel Williams. The latter suspects Flora Stokes.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"I'd rather Mrs. Stokes went up to the second floor," he turned to Bassett. "You have space up there, I suppose?"

"Space!" It came from Miss Pinkney before Bassett had time to answer—these hirelings of the law did not realize where they were. "We've put up more people here than you could get into one of those sea-bitten hotels up your way."

"Take her things up there. You help her."

Flora turned stricken eyes on her husband. He said nothing but very gently loosened her fingers on his arm. They trailed away, Miss Pinkney stalking ahead. Mrs. Cornell and Anne made their exit by the opposite door. Both were silent as they climbed the stairs. Mrs. Cornell's door opened and closed on her, and Anne farled on to hers on the side stretch of the gallery. She looked down into the lighted room, saw Shine move toward the entrance, heard his voice, loud and startled:

"Why, there's someone down by the dock!"

The other men wheeled sharply, on the alert. She stopped, head bent, listening.

"Patrick—the d-d fool." It was Williams. "Told to watch the causeway and standing up there like a lighthouse."

"Oh, it's your man. I'll go down and tell him." Shine wanted to help all he could before his retirement to the butler's bedroom. "He ought to be where he won't show, is that it?"

"Yes, tell him to stow his carcass somewhere out of sight. He ain't there to advertise the fact he's on guard."

"If he gets in the shadow under the roof of the bonthouse," said Bassett, "he can command the whole length of it and not be seen from either side."

"That's the dope. The neck of this bottle's the causeway and it's going to be corked good and tight tonight."

Anne's door closed without a sound.

The three men turned back from the entrance. "Is that woman gone upstairs yet?" Rawson murmured to his assistant as Williams stepped to the middle of the room and watched the gallery. He continued to watch it till Flora and Miss Pinkney appeared and finally were shut away behind their several doors, then he looked at Rawson and nodded.

"Now," said the district attorney to Bassett. "I want you to show me where that pistol was."

Bassett indicated the desk:

"In the third drawer of the desk. Miss Pinkney is certain it was there this morning."

"And you know it wasn't there when you looked after the shooting?" Rawson went to the desk as he spoke.

"I can swear it wasn't."

Rawson pulled out the drawer and thrust in his hand.

"Well, it's here now," he said, and drew out a revolver.

He held it toward them on his palm. They stared at it, for the moment too surprised for comment. Rawson broke it open; there was one empty chamber.

"Can we get into some room where there's more privacy than this place?" he said. "I want some more talk with you, Mr. Bassett."

Bassett directed them to the library. He put out the living room lights and followed them.

CHAPTER VI

Bassett was prepared for what he had to tell. During the long wait for the officers of the law his mind had been ranging over it, shaking bare from unnecessary detail the chain of events that had ended in murder. It was impossible to conceal the situation between Sybil and the Stokeses; he could not if he had wished it, and he did not wish it. A girl had been brutally done to death, a girl innocent of any evil intention, and his desire to bring her murderer to justice was as strong as either Williams' or Rawson's. And they could get the facts better from him than from the muddled stories of the others, their minds clouded by prejudice and hearsay. He hoped that what he said would be coolly unbiased, the naked truth as he knew it. That his revelations would involve a woman whom he liked and pitied would not induce him to withhold what ought to be known. Chivalry had no place in this great drama.

Sitting by the desk in the library he revealed the situation, what he had

heard, seen and knew. The men gave an unwinking attention, now and then stopping him to plant a question. The trend of Williams' thoughts was soon revealed—he suspected Flora Stokes. When the matter was thrashed out he came to an open admission with the remark:

"Well, you have only one person here who had the provocation necessary to commit murder."

Bassett made no answer. If his duty required him to tell all he knew, it did not require him to give his own opinions.

Rawson, who was smoking, his long, loose-jointed frame slouched down in an armchair, took his cigar from his mouth:

"Of course the woman's the first person you'd think of. She had the necessary provocation and the state of mind. But the way she came in and told them—as Mr. Bassett describes it—doesn't look to me like a guilty person."

"Why not?"

"Sounds too genuine, too like real excitement."

"Don't you think it's natural to get excited if you've killed someone?"

"Yes, but not just that way." Williams leaned over the arm of his chair:

"You got to remember something about these people, Rawson—and it counts big—they're all actors."

Bassett spoke up quickly:

"No, she wasn't acting. You'd have known that if you'd seen her. What



And the Boat—the Boat With Only Gabriel in It.

she did was natural—a woman suffering from a fearful shock."

"Couldn't an actor put that on?"

"Yes, some could, but I'm certain she wasn't."

"When Stokes came into the room after the shot," said Rawson, "how did he behave?"

"He seemed all right. But I can't honestly say that I noticed him much."

"Oh, rubbish!" Williams made a rolling motion in the scoop of the big chair. "You can't suspect the man; he was in love with her. He didn't want to kill her, he wanted to keep her alive."

"Men do kill the women they love, especially when they can't get her."

"Yes, they do. I've known of such cases. But that's impulse. This was premeditation." The sheriff pointed at the revolver lying on the desk. "Some time to day somebody located that gun, took it for a purpose—not to shoot seagulls as you thought, Mr. Bassett."

Rawson looked at the pistol:

"Premeditation, all right. Was there anybody in the outfit who didn't know you'd opened that drawer and found the revolver gone?"

Bassett considered:

"Stokes didn't know. He came in after I'd shut the drawer. I didn't speak of it because just as I'd got through asking him if he'd seen anyone, we heard Mrs. Stokes' scream."

Few Have Ever Found Humming Birds' Nest

Comparatively few people ever have the pleasure of peeping into a humming bird's nest, to behold two tiny eggs like round white beans, or to see two birdlets which somewhat resemble little beetles.

In the first place, the nest is so small and so resembles the surrounding shrubbery that it is easily overlooked. Then, too, it is so cleverly hidden by its wise builders and so disguised in its construction as to require an experienced eye to discover it.

Built of soft, pliant hairs and adorned with bits of moss and feathers, it forms a downy, cuplike, secluded home. The fairy hummer of Cuba, the smallest of all the humming birds, builds a nest so tiny that it can be covered completely with a copper cent. Its eggs look like two little pearls.

The humming bird, more than 500 species of which have been classified, is distinctly American. In the main, it is a tropical bird, as fewer than 20 species are found in the United States. The one known to residents of states east of the Mississippi is the

"And she didn't, of course," commented Williams.

"While you were running round at the point the house was empty?"

"I think Mrs. Stokes was here all the time. I never saw her outside."

"Any of the others come up?"

"I'm not certain of all of them. I know Shine did; I sent him back to phone over to Hayworth for the boats. And Stokes did, he came up for the electric torch when I was in here telephoning to you."

"Then neither of them knew the loss of the revolver had been discovered and they had plenty of opportunity to return it to the desk?"

Bassett nodded, and after a minute's cogitation Rawson went on:

"Doesn't it seem odd to you that no one saw Miss Saunders when she came back to the house?"

"No. They were all in their rooms, except Shine, who was down at the Point, and Mrs. Stokes, who was reading on the balcony. I asked her particularly if she'd noticed Sybil pass and she said no, she'd been interested in her book and wouldn't have noticed anybody."

"I'd give a good deal to know what Miss Saunders did in that time. I think it would let in some light."

"How so?"

Rawson narrowed his eyes in contemplation of an unfolding line of thought:

"Well, what took her out again to the Point after she'd come in? She hadn't a good deal of time and she wanted to change her clothes before supper. It looks to me as if she met someone in the house, someone who wanted her to go down there with them."

"Mrs. Cornell says she was alone."

"She might have started alone and gone to meet them."

"Then it couldn't have been Stokes," said Williams, "for Mr. Bassett says she wouldn't speak to him if she could help it."

"That's right," Bassett nodded in agreement. "She'd never have made a date with him. She shunned him like the plague. If you knew her you wouldn't see anything in that going out. She was restless and unhappy and the place here—the sea, the views—fascinated her. It was our last evening and it was like her not to want to miss any of it, slip out for a minute to enjoy the end of it."

"And came upon someone waiting for her—lying in wait and—"

Rawson did not finish. A thud and crackling crash came from the living room. The three men rose with a simultaneous leap and ran for the door.

CHAPTER VII

Of all the people gathered in the house that evening Anne had been the most silent. Her ravaged face, the contours broken by gray hollows, bearing the stamp of shock and horror, had been unnoticed among the other faces. Now and then a pitying glance had been directed to her, grief as Sybil's friend must have added a last unbearable poignancy to the tragedy.

After her question to Flora her mind had seemed to blur and cease to function. She had run from the house not knowing what she did, gone hither and thither with the others, looking, speaking, listening in a blind daze. It was not till they returned to the living room that her faculties began to clear and co-ordinate.

Her thoughts circled round the image of Joe as she had last seen him—the vision of him as someone strange and sinister. And the boat—the boat with only Gabriel in it—it kept coming up like a picture revolving on a wheel—going and returning, going and returning. Had he stayed, and what for? That question revolved with the picture of the boat.

She thought of telling Bassett and gave that up—with the police expected she could not get him alone, and why add to his burden with her suspicions? Yes, that was what it was—nothing but a suspicion. She had no certainty; Joe might have been in the boat, Joe might have got off the island some other way. Tomorrow something might come to light that would make these hideous fancies seem like the dreams of delirium. That was the state of mind she tried to maintain when she went upstairs and overheard a man was on guard at the causeway.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Conditions in the Balkans Give Rise to Fear of Another Great War

By DR. FLOYD SPENCER, Ohio Wesleyan University.

A THREAT of another great war, menacing the peace of all southern Europe and the Near East, hangs like a sinister storm cloud over the Mediterranean.

The most casual observation makes it apparent to the traveler that many things are wrong. Italy is fiercely bitter over Yugoslavia's refusal to use the port of Fiume. The Yugo-Slavs will not use the harbor because they want to develop their own ports along the Adriatic.

Then, Salonika, the finest harbor on the Mediterranean, is guarded jealously by the Greeks. Yugo-Slavia and Bulgaria, adjoining on the north, are looking with longing eyes at Salonika.

If they should unite—they would have a combined population of 17,000,000, twice that of Greece and about equal to that of Rumania, still further to the north.

On the other hand, Rumania, under Premier Averescu, is not only envious of obtaining Yugo-Slavia but has been holding hands with Italy.

Furthermore, the Greeks resent the Italian occupation of Rhodes and are dissatisfied with their relatively unimportant possessions in the Cyclades islands to the west. Also, Mussolini has not been building naval bases for sport.

Thus—should Italy make a suggestive gesture, or should Rumania play politics too openly with Russia or Bulgaria, or should Yugo-Slavia and Bulgaria enter a compact or should Turkey threaten Cyprus, a cataclysm could readily result. Of course nothing may happen—but the pressure there is terrific.

Larger and Wider Distribution of Wealth Solution of Economic Problem

By CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW, Veteran Financier.

We are the extremely practical people in the world and judge everything by results. When I was a boy everybody on Thanksgiving day or Sunday went to church and the churches were full. But they were not really temperate, for everybody ate too much at the Thanksgiving noon-day meal. Stomach-aches became popular because they were evidence you had enjoyed Thanksgiving.

I reckon we shall have the glutton with us for many years, but as a nation we are getting a finer standard of self-control.

Danger of excess riches does not exist in this country. We never can get too rich. We must seek a larger and wider distribution of wealth. We are getting that in a way through high wages, but more rapidly through liberalization of great industries. Workers as shareholders is one of the best solutions of the problem.

The Biblical picture of a rich man getting into heaven with the utmost difficulty no doubt was true when the metaphor was coined, but it is not true now. I don't know of any time or age when great fortunes were working more intelligently night and day than the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations.

Wealth in America is at work. It doesn't rust. Moths do not corrupt it. It no longer gives to the possessor any wonderful power, but it finds useful employment, sharing its benefits in larger degree than ever before.

Mothers, of All Denominations, Must Unite to Preserve Sanctity of Home

By VERY REV. F. S. M. BENNETT, Dean of Chester, England.

American mothers should band in a mothers' union to preserve the sanctity of marriage, the preciousness of the home and the religious upbringing of children. The home is the most precious possession of civilization and it is worth the maintaining at all costs. Nothing can so save it as a union of mothers without distinction of wealth, or poverty, class or creed, pledged to strive for its preservation.

Washington cathedral will be a symbol of the welding together of the groups of nations living together in the United States in peace and amity, even as the cathedrals of the Fourteenth century in England marked the welding together of the Norman-Saxon races in that country.

Washington cathedral, I believe, will be a means of splendid education in beauty for the people and a witness in the capital of your nation of the spiritual side of your race. The builders of Washington cathedral have a largeness of vision and a magnificence of faith and they are building carefully for the generations.

Too Much of Santa Claus, and Too Little Jesus, in Christmas Spirit Today

By DR. NATHANIEL SCHMIDT, Cornell University.

As a celebration of the birth of Jesus, Christmas seems to be gradually disappearing. The name is indeed more popular than ever, but the hero whose advent is celebrated is no longer the Jewish prophet. It is Santa Claus.

Whatever the evidence regarding the existence of Jesus there can be no question as to the tremendous challenge the spirit associated with His name presents to the order that prevails in the world today.

In view of the devastating wars between nations and sinister preparations for still more terrible wars, a social system that allows multitudes of men to perish in misery and starvation while enormous wealth is concentrated in private hands, and a deadening formalism and sectarianism in religion, there is need of a prophetic voice that humanity will recognize as coming from its inmost self.

American Colleges of Today Training Youth to Become Submissive Slaves

By DR. DONALD J. COWLING, President Carleton College.

If our forefathers had been trained in the colleges of today they would have remained submissive subjects to the king of England instead of becoming freemen.

This dodging of the liberalizing cultural subjects, this pursuit of the so-called practical studies by the majority of students, is taking all the spunk out of the younger generation. Our forefathers were able to fight for ideals of liberty in the Revolution only because the colleges of the day were liberal enough to foster such ideals.

In the colleges of today the students are taught to be submissive slaves to those who tyrannize over our personal freedom. When the young people study only practical subjects they forget that there are standards of personal liberty that must be maintained.

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