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Dayton, Ohio

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Dayton, Ohio

THE CASE OF JENNIE BRICE

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

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SYNOPSIS

Jennie Brice and her husband, Ladley, quarrel. She disappears from Mrs. Pitman's boarding house during a Pittsburgh flood.

Mrs. Pitman tells Holcombe, an amateur detective, that she believes Ladley has killed Jennie Brice.

Holcombe finds incriminating evidence in Ladley's room. An onyx clock is missing. Mrs. Pitman's knife has been stolen and broken.

Mrs. Pitman recalls that Howell, a reporter, was with Jennie Brice and Ladley shortly before Jennie disappeared.

Ladley is arrested, but as no body has been found he is released for lack of evidence.

Holcombe believes Ladley is guilty. Ladley returns to Mrs. Pitman's. Holcombe watches him through the ceiling.

A woman's headless body is found. Howell was seen with a veiled woman resembling Jennie Brice the night she disappeared.

No one can identify the headless body, which has an odd scar on the breast. Ladley is re-arrested.

CHAPTER IX.

HAVE said before that I do not know anything about the law. I believe that the Ladley case was unusual in several ways.

Mr. Ladley had once been well known in New York among the people who frequent the theaters, and Jennie Brice was even better known. A good many lawyers, I believe, said that the police had not a leg to stand on, and I know the case was watched with much interest by the legal profession. People wrote letters to the newspapers protesting against Mr. Ladley being held. And I believe that the district attorney in taking him before the grand jury hardly hoped to make a case.

But he did, to his own surprise I fancy, and the trial was set for May. But in the meantime many curious things had happened.

In the first place, the week following Mr. Ladley's arrest my house was filled up with eight or ten members of a company from the Galey theater, very cheerful and jolly and well behaved. Three men, I think, and the rest girls. One of the men was named Bellows, John Bellows, and it turned out that he had known Jennie Brice very well.

From the moment he learned that Mr. Holcombe had left him, he walked to the theater with him and waited to walk home again. He took street car rides in the mornings, and on the last night of his stay, Saturday, they got gloriously drunk together—Mr. Holcombe, no doubt, in his character of Ladley—and came reeling in at 3 in the morning, singing. Mr. Holcombe was very sick the next day, but by Monday he was all right, and he called me into the room.

"We've got him, Mrs. Pitman," he said, looking mottled, but cheerful. "As sure as God made little fishes, we've got him." That was all he would say, however. It seemed he was going to New York and might be gone for a month. "I've no family," he said, "and enough money to keep me. If I find my relaxation in hunting down criminals, it's a harmless and cheap amusement, and it's my own business."

He went away that night, and I must admit I missed him. I rented the parlor bedroom the next day to a school teacher, and I found the perspective affair very handy. I could see just how much gas she used, and although the notice on each door forbids cooking and washing in rooms, I found she was doing both; making coffee and boiling an egg in the morning, and rubbing out stockings and handkerchiefs in her washbowl. I'd much rather have men as boarders than women. The women are always lighting alcohol lamps on the bureau and wanting the bed turned into a cozy corner so they can see their gentlemen friends in their rooms.

Well, with Mr. Holcombe gone and Mr. Reynolds busy all day and half the night getting out the summer silks and preparing for remnant day, and with Mr. Ladley in jail and Lida out of the city—for I saw in the papers that she was not well, and her mother had taken her to Bermuda—I had a

rather a dull time. I had a letter from Mrs. Bellows, and she had written a letter. The letter was not mailed until Wednesday. All of Tuesday Mrs. Bellows had spent in her room, and Mrs. Shaeffer had driven to the village in the afternoon with word that she had been crying all day and bought some headache medicine for her.

On Wednesday morning, however, she had appeared at breakfast, eaten heartily and had asked Miss Shaeffer to take her letter to the postoffice. It was addressed to Mr. Ellis Howell, in care of a Pittsburgh newspaper.

That night when Miss Eliza went home, about half past 8, the woman was gone. She had paid for her room and had been driven as far as Thornville, where all trace of her had been lost. On account of the disappearance of Jennie Brice being published shortly after that, she and her mother had driven to Thornville, but the station agent there was surly as well as stupid. They had learned nothing about the woman.

Since that time three men had made inquiries about the woman in question. One had a pointed vandyke beard; the second, from a description, I fancied must have been Mr. Graves. The third, without doubt, was Mr. Howell. Eliza Shaeffer said that this last man had seemed half frantic. I brought her a photograph of Jennie Brice as "Topsy" and another one as "Juliet." She said there was a resemblance, but it ended there. But of course, as Mr. Graves had said, by the time an actress gets her photograph retouched to suit her it doesn't particularly resemble her. And unless I had known Jennie Brice myself I should hardly have recognized the pictures.

Well, in spite of all that, there seemed no doubt that Jennie Brice had been living three days after her disappearance and that would clear Mr. Ladley. But what had Mr. Howell to do with it all? Why had he not told the police of the letter from Horner? Or about the woman on the bridge? Why had Mr. Brown, who was likely the man with the pointed beard, said nothing about having traced Jennie Brice to Horner?

I did as I thought Mr. Holcombe would have wished me to do. I wrote down on a clean sheet of note paper all that Eliza Shaeffer said—the de-

scription of the black and white dress, the woman's height and the rest—and then I took her to the courthouse, chicks and all, and she told her story there to one of the assistant district attorneys.

The young man was interested, but not convinced. He had her story taken down and she signed it. He was smiling as he bowed us out. I turned in the doorway.

"This will free Mr. Ladley, I suppose?" I asked.

"Not just yet," he said pleasantly. "This makes just eleven places where Jennie Brice spent the first three days after her death."

"But I can positively identify the dress."

"My good woman, that dress has been described to the last stilled arch and colonial volute in every newspaper in the United States!"

That evening the newspapers announced that during a conference at the jail between Mr. Ladley and James Bronson, business manager at the Liberty theater, Mr. Ladley had attacked Mr. Bronson with a chair and almost bruined him.

Eliza Shaeffer went back to Horner after delivering her chicks somewhere in the city. Things went on as before. The trial was set for May. The district attorney's office had all the things we had found in the house that Monday afternoon—the stained towel, the broken knife and its blade, the slipper that had been floating in the parlor and the rope that had fastened my boat to the staircase. Somewhere—wherever they keep such things—was the headless body of a woman, with a hand missing, and with a curious scar across the left breast. The slip of paper, however, which I had found behind the baseboard, was still in Mr. Holcombe's possession, nor had he mentioned it to the police.

Mr. Holcombe had not come back. He wrote me twice asking me to hold his room, once from New York and once from Chicago. To the second letter he added a postscript:

Have not found what I wanted, but am getting warm. If any news, address me at Des Moines, Ia., general delivery. H.

It was nearly the end of April when I saw Lida again. I had seen by the newspapers that she and her mother were coming home. I wondered if she had heard from Mr. Howell, for I had not, and I wondered, too, if she would send for me again.

But she came herself, on foot, late one afternoon, and the school teacher being out, I took her into the parlor bedroom. She looked thinner than before and rather white. My heart ached for her.

"I have been away," she explained. "I thought you might wonder why you did not hear from me. But, you see, my mother—she stopped and fished. 'I would have written you from Bermuda, but—my mother watched my correspondence, so I could not.'"

So, I knew she could not. Alma had once found a letter of mine to Mr. Pitman. Very little escaped Alma.

"I wondered if you have heard anything?" she asked.

"I have heard nothing. Mr. Howell was here once, just after I saw you. I do not believe he is in the city."

"Perhaps not, although—Mrs. Pitman, I believe he is in the city, hiding."

"Hiding? Why?"

"I don't know. But last night I thought I saw him below my window. I opened the window, so if it were he he could make some sign. But he moved on without a word. Later, who ever it was came back. I put out my light and watched. Some one stood there, in the shadow, until after 2 this morning. Part of the time he was looking up."

"Don't you think, had it been he, he would have spoken when he saw you?"

She shook her head. "He is in trouble," she said. "He has not heard from me, and he thinks I don't care any more. Just look at me, Mrs. Pitman. Do I look as if I don't care?"

She looked half killed, poor lamb. "He may be out of town searching for a better position," I tried to comfort her. "He wants to have something to offer more than himself."

"I only want him," she said, looking at me frankly. "I don't know why I tell you all this, but you are so kind, and I must talk to some one."

So, I knew she could not. I put out my light and watched. I saw she was about ready to break down and cry. I went over to her and took her hand, for she was my own niece, although she didn't suspect it, and I had never had a child of my own.

But, after all, I could not help her much. I could only assure her that he would come back and explain everything and that he was all right, and that the last time I had seen him he had spoken of her and had said she was "the best ever." My heart fairly yearned over the girl, and I think she felt it, for she kissed me shyly when she was leaving.

With the newspaper files before me it is not hard to give the details of that sensational trial. It commenced on Monday, the 7th of May, but it was late Wednesday when the jury was finally selected. I was at the courthouse early on Thursday, and so was Mr. Reynolds.

The district attorney made a short speech. "We propose, gentlemen, to prove that the prisoner, Philip Ladley, murdered his wife," he said in part. "We will show first that a crime was committed; then we will show a motive for this crime, and finally we expect to show that the body washed ashore at Seville is the body of the murdered woman and thus establish beyond doubt the prisoner's guilt."

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned Administrator of the estate of David J. Lowe, sr., deceased has filed his final report with the County Court of Coos County State of Oregon, and that the judge thereof has set Monday the 6th day of July at the County Court room in the Court House Building at Coquille City Coos County Oregon, at the hour of ten o'clock A. M. of said day as the time and place for the hearing of objections thereto and of the settlement thereof. Now all persons having objections to said final report and the settlement thereof are hereby notified to appear and file the same on said date and at said time.

Dated this 9th day of May 1914.
FRANK L. LOWE,
Administrator of the estate of David J. Lowe Sr. deceased.
5-12-5t

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF COOS.

In the Matter of the Estate of MATHA J. NOSLER, Deceased.

NOTICE OF PRIVATE SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Notice is hereby given that under and by virtue of authority given me, by an order of the County Court for Coos County, Oregon, duly made and entered of record in the Probate Journal of said Court on the 5th day of May, 1914, I shall from and after the 10th day of June, 1914, offer for sale and sell at private sale, the following described real estate belonging to the estate of Martha J. Nosler, deceased, to-wit: a 6-10 interest in the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4, and Lots 6 and 7 in Section 7 Township 28 South Range 13 West of the Willamette Meridian in Coos County, Oregon.

Also Lot 3 in Block 3 in the Town of Riverton, Coos County, Oregon, as per plat thereof on file and of record in the office of the County Clerk of said Coos County.

That the terms of said sale shall be for cash or credit, to-wit: either all cash, or one-half cash at time of sale and one-half in not more than one or two years time, with interest at not less than 6 per cent per annum, interest payable semi-annually.

That any offers for same may be presented at the office of Geo. P. Topping at Bandon, Oregon, or sent there by mail.

This notice is published in the Coquille Herald for four successive weeks or five times, the first May 12, 1914, and the last June 9, 1914, by order of the Hon. John F. Hall, County Judge, as above mentioned.

Dated this 12th day of May, 1914.
FLORENCE URQUHART,
Executrix of the estate and last Will and Testament of Martha J. Nosler, deceased.
GEO. P. TOPPING,
Attorney for Estate.
5-12-5t

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON IN AND FOR COOS COUNTY

Robert Dollar, Trustee, Plaintiff, vs. Seeley-Anderson Logging Company, a corporation, and E. O. Clinton, Defendants. SUI IN EQUITY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against the Seeley-Anderson Logging Company are hereby required to present same to the Circuit Court of Coos County, Oregon, duly verified, and with all proper and necessary vouchers and proof to satisfy said court of the validity of said claims, within six weeks from the date of this notice.

That this notice is published by the order of the Circuit Court for Coos County, Oregon, which said order is dated the 12th day of May, 1914.

Dated this 12th day of May, 1914.
R. STANLEY DOLLAR,
Receiver of Seeley-Anderson Logging Company.
5-12

REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

Reported for The Herald by the Title Guarantee and Abstract Co.
May 7

Bertha Brooks et vir to Maggie Neilson war deed lots 11 & 12, blk 12 plat A Coos Bay. \$750

C. F. Thielmann to Dell Saunders q c deed placer mining claim described as 1/2 of NW 1/4, sec 25 tp 26 s r 14 w m. \$1

Herman Fisk to Lillian Saunders q c deed placer mining claim described as 1/2 of NW 1/4 of sec 25 tp 26 s r 14 w m. \$1

Henry Sengstacken Co. to H. H. Winter, war deed lots 1 & 2 blk 76, Steamboat add to Yarrow. \$10

Albert V. Baird et ux to Margaret Hill, war deed lot 10 blk 36 Woodland add to Bandon. \$1

Darl K. Perkins to Emma O. born war deed lot 4 blk 18 Dunhams add to Bandon. \$1

Reynolds Development Co. to City of Marshfield, dedication of Easement, over lot 15, blk 10 First add to Marshfield.

Matilda Isaacson et vir to Hattie L. Hale, war deed lots 23 & 24, blk 61, Railroad add to Marshfield, \$10.

Walter C. Hill to Jeremiah Pacific Kenney, war deed lots 9 & 10, blk 11, Edmonstons sec. add to Marshfield, \$5.
May 9, 1914

J. D. Benham to Aasen Bros., deed timber on 1/2 of NW 1/4 sec 18, twp 27 s r 11 w m., \$3187.50.

U. S. A. to Marie A. Taylor, patent NW 1/4 sec 29 tp 29 s r 13 w m

U. S. A. to John R. Taylor patent NW 1/4 sec 29 tp 29 s r 13 w m

W. R. Whipple, trustee, et ux to Michael Kunkel war deed lot 30 blk 5 Idaho Add to North Bend \$100.00

Peter A. McNabb et ux to Roy Smiley war deed lots 5 & 6 blk 10 Bay View Add to Millicoma

Northern Pacific Railway Co to J. C. Aiken q c deed lots 5 & 6 & 1/2 of NW 1/4 sec 29 tp 24 s r 11 w m \$1343.92

Chas. W. Michael et ux to H. B. Moores et al war deed lots 8 to 12 blk 11 lot 3 1/2 Montgomery Add to Bandon \$10.00

May 11 1914

John R. Herron to John F. Hall trustee assignment of lease given by Isaiah Hacker et ux on lot in North

A. J. SHERWOOD Pres. R. E. SHINE, V.-Pres.
L. H. HAZARD, Cashier O. C. SANFORD, Asst. Cashier

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Main Office Marshfield, Oregon

Marshfield

U. F. Snow et ux to W. M. Nay war deed part of lot 2 blk 61 Elliotts add to Coquille & parcel adjoining same \$10.
May 12 1914

John H. Stadden et ux to Oscar Rosen war deed lot 17 blk 7 Bunker Hill Add to Marshfield \$10.00

C. A. Smith Timber Co. to Frederick A. Warner trustee war deed right of way for railroad up South Fork of Coquille River \$10.00

R. E. Shine et ux to Mary Eugenia Lorenz war deed 1/2 of lots 7 & 8 blk 44 Elliotts Addition to Coquille \$10.00
May 13 1914

P. A. Wilson to A. J. Austin deed lots 4 & 5, blk 7, Ocean View, \$10.

A. J. Austin to Bert Campbell, deed lots 4 & 5, blk 7, Ocean View, \$10.

Pillsbury Lumber Co. to C. A. Smith Timber Co., deed right of way for railroad over lot 4, sec 11, tp 31 s r 12 w m. \$1.

U. S. A. to Mabel R. Adelsperge,