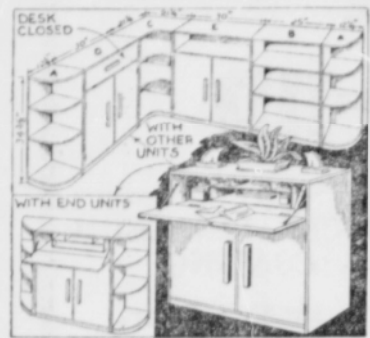


### Simple Desk Unit To Match Shelves

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The desk is shown closed at D between an end unit, A, and a corner unit, C. The E unit is made with the same pattern as the desk and is the same in every way except that the top front and stationary compartments are omitted. The use of nuts or screws, with modern glue makes it possible to construct these sturdy pieces with joinings that require no special tools.

Units A and B are made with pattern 270; the corner unit with 271; the desk with 272. Patterns are 15c each or all three patterns for 35c when mailed to one address. Send requests for patterns direct to:

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# OVERNIGHT GUEST

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS W.V.N.U. FEATURES

THE STORY THUS FAR: Adam Bruce, FBI operator, Inspector Tope and Mrs. Tope met in the Maine woods. Tope found a man murdered, who was at first identified as Ledforge, head of New England utilities. When a car believed to have been used in the murder was raised from the quarry it was found to contain the body of a murdered woman, Mrs. Kell. Her husband committed suicide. Joe Dane, assistant D.A., accusing Tope of bungling the case, took complete charge. Eberly met Ledforge to go on a fishing trip. When they got in the canoe, Ledforge upset the canoe. He knew that Eberly could not swim. When he saw that Eberly was not sinking he started toward him but was stopped by Tope

## CHAPTER XIV

Eberly said steadily: "He overturned the canoe, swam away. Then he looked back, expecting to see me drowning. He knew I couldn't swim. But when he saw me still afloat—Mr. Tope had made me wear a life-preserver—he started back to finish me!"

Ledforge, a bitter hurt in his tone, cried: "Nonsense! I came to help you, Carl!"

"There was murder in his eyes," Eberly insisted, not speaking directly to the other man at all.

Ledforge whirled toward Tope, furiously. "You put this idea into his head! Of course he's shocked, doesn't know what he's saying!"

"He had a blackjack on a thong on his wrist," said Eberly.

Ledforge wore a strap watch on his left wrist. He held it up. "Carl must have seen this," he insisted; and he said sympathetically: "Gentlemen, Mr. Eberly is hysterical. He has always been afraid of the water."

Tope, after a moment, spoke. "Well, you see, Mr. Ledforge," he explained, almost apologetically, "there's more to it than just this. The whole thing started with a man that left New York last Friday morning with Mr. Holdom, in Holdom's car, and with Holdom's chauffeur driving. And the next time anybody saw that man, he was dead under a bed in one of the cabins at a roadside camp up here."

The others—save young Adam Bruce—were watching Tope. Adam watched Ledforge. He saw the man's pupils faintly dilate, saw his eyes become fixed in a concentrated attention. Tope paused, and in the instant of silence, Adam heard Mr. Eberly's teeth chattering together. And he had an impression of racing thoughts behind Ledforge's outward calm. Then the man asked curtly:

"What of it? What has that to do with me?"

"Why, Miss Ledforge hasn't seen him yet," Tope explained. "But—the dead man looked mighty like you."

Ledforge cried, in quick horror: "Looked like me? Dead? Heavens, man, do you mean Christopher?"

"Why, yes, dead," Tope assented mildly. "I didn't know his name was Christopher, but he looked enough like you to be your twin."

Ledforge nodded gravely. "Gentlemen," he said then, "we can't stand here. Carl is freezing, and I'm cold myself. Suppose we go down to the house. I must hear the whole story." Tope asked: "You know who the dead man was, then?"

"Certainly," Ledforge assented. His eyes clouded with grief. "You said he looked like my twin brother. Well, gentlemen, he was."

At the house, Whitlock and Beal by Tope's direction stayed outside. Eberly disappeared with a serving man, to drink hot grog and find dry clothes. Ledforge asked for Miss Ledforge; and the servant reported:

"She had a turn, sir, and is lying down. Two ladies are with her."

"Good," said Ledforge. "Don't disturb her."

Tope suggested: "You'll want to get dry, yourself."

But Ledforge negated this. "There's a good fire on the hearth," he pointed out. "I'll be all right. Come in."

So they gathered in the big living room, richly paneled like a baronial hall; and Ledforge said: "Now then; My brother dead, and some one else too, you said?"

"Mrs. Kell," Tope told him. "But Joe Dane could no longer endure that Tope should dominate the scene."

"And Kell too, Tope," he cried. "Dead as a herring! And Holdom dying, so we'll never get a word out of him."

Tope saw Ledforge's eyes quicken in a sort of triumph, and the old man turned to Joe almost roughly. "Joe," he said, "you've a real gift for talking out of turn. Mr. Ledforge, here, can lie all he wants to now, knowing Kell and Holdom can't contradict him."

Cumberland and Adam were silent, strictly listening; even Joe did not for a while interrupt again. And Ledforge spoke, a little sadly.

"It's hard to speak openly about it," he confessed. "We've kept it an absolute secret for so long that silence is a habit now."

And he said earnestly: "But you know, every important man needs a double. Did that ever occur to you? Imagine how much easier it would be for the President, for instance, if he were twins. With one twin to attend to the business of the office, the other to handle the social side,

attend banquets, make speeches, display himself."

He continued: "But it was more chance than anything else that led us into it. Some years ago the heavy demands upon my time and my energy began to weary me. I had something like a nervous collapse, and I went away quietly to my boyhood home—a remote little town in Manitoba—for a vacation.

"Christopher lived there. He was a doctor—surgeon and doctor, too, as small town practitioners must be; and he took me in hand, cured me. But he reproached me for overworking; and he suggested that a man as busy as I ought to have a personal physician to watch over his health. I persuaded him to come back with me in that capacity. He suggested also that I ought to have a social secretary or an assistant, to whom I might delegate some less important activities; and the fact, which we discovered before we left home, that not even our intimate friends could distinguish one of us from the other, led naturally to the arrangement which has continued till now."

He looked from one to another. "It was very simple," he said "once



"But you know, every important man needs a double."

we began. A little attention to such details as clothes, haircuts, and so on. . . . Christopher, ever since, besides taking care of my health, has lived the social side of my life, leaving me free to attend to business without distraction."

Tope wagged his head. "I declare, that's a queer one," he admitted. "I don't suppose many people knew about this thing?"

"Not a living soul," Ledforge declared confidently, "except my sister Alice—and even she can't tell us apart, to this day."

"How about servants, and all that?"

"It was simply a matter of never appearing anywhere together," Ledforge assured them. "One of us always stayed out of sight when the other was to be visible. Of course, we used some simple disguises at times, to give the one who for the moment did not exist a little freedom of movement." And he said suddenly:

"But now it's my turn to ask questions. Who told you the dead man, Christopher, looked like me?"

"Mrs. Tope had seen you—or your brother—at a stockholders' meeting once."

"Probably she saw Christopher," Ledforge suggested. "But tell me what happened? Where is Christopher? How was he killed?"

Tope said gravely: "Why—all right, Mr. Ledforge. I'll tell you: I found your brother under a bed in a cabin called Faraway at a roadside camp called Dewain's Mill, up above here. He was dead when I found him."

"He had on an old sweater and a pair of overalls. His hands and feet were tied with wire. He was gagged and blindfolded with tape. His hands and feet and head were muffled in pieces of blanket."

"He'd been alive when he was put there. He died of a ruptured appendix."

"He'd been brought there in a coupe belonging to Holdom, by a man and a woman. I found their tracks. Afterward the man killed the woman—it was Mrs. Kell—and left her in the car and ran the car into an old quarry up in the hills. We found the man's tracks there."

Ledforge made an explosive gesture. "Hideous!" he cried. "Incredible!"

"Pretty bad," Tope assented; he added implacably: "And my notion is that you did it, Ledforge."

Ledforge shook his head abstractedly. He seemed not to resent this accusation. "Wait a minute, please," he said. "Of course, I know nothing of what happened up here; but

I can make a guess. Let me think a minute."

Tope nodded, and waited, and calmly filled and lighted his straight black pipe; at last Ledforge lifted his head. "It's part guess and part certainty," he confessed. "But I think I see the answer."

The fire had burned low. "I'll take off this wet coat," he remarked, and stood before them in flannel shirt, vest, khaki trousers and light woods shoes with rubber soles; a spare, gray, small old man.

"It was Holdom," he began then. "I can see what was in his mind, what he tried to do."

And he explained: "A week ago. I would have been as mystified as you, because I had always trusted Holdom. But I know now that he was a thief and a rascal. I learned last Monday that he had been using my collateral to trade in an account under my name, to sell my own stocks short. I have already reported the matter to the Exchange authorities."

He paused, but no one spoke. So he went on:

"Holdom did not know, you understand, that there were two of us; Christopher and I.

"Now gentlemen, Christopher was sick. Being a doctor, he of course knew that he had a bad appendix; but he was devoted to me. For him to go to a New York hospital would have been to risk the discovery of our duality. He was willing to take some risk to avoid that, so he decided to come up to Holdom's home here for the operation. Mrs. Kell had been a trained nurse. Dr. Naason would come from Boston to do the operation, in the rooms above Holdom's garage."

"Christopher himself, pretending to be me, made all these arrangements with Holdom; so Holdom would naturally suppose that I was about to be incapacitated for a week or ten days. Perhaps he thought I was likely to die. Perhaps he already intended my death. At any rate, before leaving New York—and trading in my name—he sold my stocks short."

He hesitated, then continued: "So they left New York on Friday morning, Christopher and Holdom, and Kell driving. I protested, but Christopher assured me the drive would do him no harm. Before starting, he took a sedative in order to sleep, to escape the pain."

Tope prompted him. "And you say you can figure what happened?"

"I can guess," Ledforge agreed. "When Christopher fell asleep in the car—Kell was Holdom's man, of course—they laid Christopher on the floor, and Holdom too got down out of sight, so no one saw them as Kell drove past the house to the garage."

"Holdom was completely unscrupulous. He dressed Christopher in that old gray sweater and overalls, gagged him, swaddled his hands and head in pieces of the dog blanket so that he could make no noise, and stuffed him into the rumble of the coupe."

"He sent Kell away with orders to meet him later at some agreed spot; then Holdom put on a pair of Kell's shoes. Their prints would be easily recognized because of the heel-plates. He knew that when Christopher's body was identified as me, Vade—because of his threatening letters to me, and because he lived there at the Mill—would be at first suspected; but if Vade were exonerated and Kell's footprints found, then Kell would be the next suspect."

"So then Holdom and Mrs. Kell—she was his mistress—drove to Dewain's Mill, in the coupe, with Christopher hidden in the rumble." He looked at them all, challengingly. "Doesn't that fit the facts?" he demanded.

"Well, so far," Tope agreed. "But—go on!"

"They took a cabin for the night, and Holdom hid Christopher where you found him. But Mrs. Kell must have protested at the inhumanity of leaving him there alive, till Holdom, in rage or desperation, strangled her!"

He hesitated, and the color for an instant left his cheeks as though that word had shocked and frightened him. "It's sickening!" he exclaimed then, hurriedly. "But—after that, Holdom would go on to dispose of the car, and of Mrs. Kell's body, and meet Kell, and make Kell give him a rap on the head and leave him to be found beside the road. As an alibi!" And he said in a low furious tone: "It is incredible; and yet something like that must be the truth!"

He finished and Joe Dane started to speak, but Adam touched his arm and hushed him.

Tope rapped his pipe on his heel, chuckled the ashes on the hearth. "We showed Kell the dead man," he remarked. "He said it wasn't you!"

"Kell would lie, of course. To save himself."

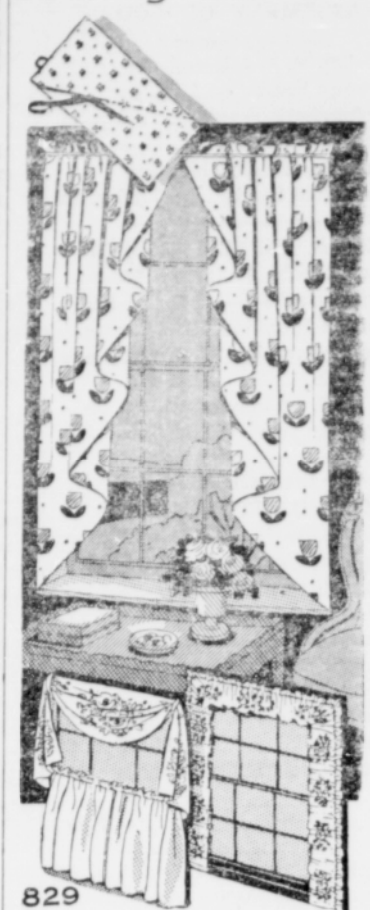
"Yes, I figured that," Tope assented; but he said then in a sort of irritation: "Shucks, Mr. Ledforge, all that's too complicated for me. Holdom was in it, sure; but my idea has been right along, that whatever Holdom did, he did because you told him to."

"It?" Ledforge cried angrily. "Why should I tell Holdom—"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

### NEEDLECRAFT PATTERNS

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water. It will make the rice white and the grains will be separated when it is boiled.

The easiest way to season a plain hot vegetable in addition to salt and pepper is to add meat drippings or melted fat. Add just before serving.

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