

Murder at High Tide

By CHARLES G. BOOTH

SYNOPSIS: The hated Dan Parados is murdered on his isolated island estate. At first Claude Annersley, whom Parados has ruined financially, is suspected, but the case against him weakens as clues are lacking. It is discovered that a maid phoned Parados' back signal, disappeared shortly before his death. Allan Hunt, who came to check on Parados' art collection, is tried because the beautiful Caroline Brent is suspected. Hunt tells the story. At midnight Samuels, the deputy, discovers the group scrambling them to stay on the island. No one's alibi is totally satisfactory. Samuels stays up to consult with Antoine Flique, a French detective who found Parados dead.

thing." By this time I was sure Annersley was guilty, despite contrary clues. I pushed on, into the library. Flique, Samuels and Kirk looked up from a litter of papers on the writing table. "Hello," the deputy exclaimed. "I said good night to you once." "Come, monsieur," Flique interposed. "We must work together. M. l'Antiquaire has something to say. Is it not so?" Samuels waited for me to go on. "It's about Annersley," I began. "Trying to get him in wrong again?" "Monsieur!" Flique said sharply. Clearly the man was on edge. His manner became attentive as I told my story. "It certainly comes back to Annersley," he muttered, as I displayed the oil stains, "but there's still that alibi Miss Jahries gave him."

Chapter 13 BLOOD STAINS

THERE was no thought of sleep in my mind as I entered my room. Samuels' suspicion of Caroline bothered me. Finding paper and pencil, I proceeded to draw up a summary of the whereabouts of each of us between 6:30 and 7 the night before. Parados was killed, shortly before 7, that was sure: Annersley: Smoking on north terrace. Miss Jahries saw and heard him there. Insists he could not have left chair long enough to kill Parados without her knowing it. Has strong motive.

"Come, let us consider evidence against the suspect," Flique said. "Two motives—money and the girl—and what Hunt has just told us." "And that rose petal?" "It doesn't mean anything in face of the rose you found in the waste paper basket." "Ah, that rose! We shall speak of that again," Flique chuckled.

"Look on this rose," Flique exclaimed. "On one thorn is—a redness!"



dos without her knowing it. Has strong motive. Miss Jahries: Annersley insists she was in her room all of time. May have motive. Mrs. Parados: In her room. Manning with her. May have motive. Professor Johns: In his tower room. Hendricks confirms this. May have motive. Hendricks: En route from launch to fort via house with mail and book. See above. Alibi incomplete. Celia: In her room reading. Not confirmed. Has strong motive. Caroline: On the cliff. Not confirmed. Has strong motive. Flique: Walking on the island. Unconfirmed. Grainger: Having supper in kitchen. Lum We confirms. May have motive. Lum We: Preparing dinner. Grainger confirms. May have motive. Hunt: In bedroom. Unconfirmed. There was also the possibility that the hated Parados had been shot by some person who had come to the island to kill him. Annersley's alibi looked sound, but his motive was powerful and Miss Jahries might have lied. I remembered the newspaper clutched in his hand as he burst into the library while I was with Parados. The way he had held it—as if something were concealed—was what bothered me. I began to walk the floor. Annersley had backed out through the patio window between 6:25 and 6:30. If Annersley's newspaper had concealed a pistol— Somehow I figured that paper might still be around—perhaps Annersley had left it in the patio or on the terrace. I wanted that newspaper. I was too excited to sleep, so I left the room by the window and outside stair. I found no trace of Annersley's Times on the terrace. It was dark as pitch, but I was able to make out another outside stair to my left. It ascended one side of a wing to a roof above the sun roof. As I stepped into the patio, something rustled under my feet. I bent down. It was a newspaper—a copy of the Times. My hands trembled as I struck a match. I saw nothing at first, then—two small stains the size of a dime were on the center of the sheet. Oil stains! "It may not have come from a pistol," I reflected, "but it's some-

Let us consider the clues. That petal, now. "You shot holes in that." "The rose I found in the basket, then?" "Who put it there?" Samuels muttered. Flique twirled his mustache. "What would you say if I informed you that my rose was not in that basket ten minutes before I found it there?" We looked at him in astonishment. "Who put it there?" "Look upon the rose." Flique picked up the second rose. "It has two thorns on its stem. Upon one of the thorns is a small moisture—a redness." He held the lens over the stem of the rose and Samuels, Kirk and I glanced through it in turn. "Blood!" the deputy exclaimed. "I don't know how I missed that." "Also this," Flique beamed triumphantly, and he waved his enormous handkerchief in our faces. Four small red stains spoiled the whiteness of the handkerchief. "Whose blood is this?" Samuels demanded curtly. Flique laid the handkerchief and rose on the table. "This is what I know. When madame opened the safe and the petal was revealed, the rose was not in the basket. It was then that Grainger left the room. A moment, and he had returned. I did not see him come in, when on his hands I saw—blood. I dropped the handkerchief and Grainger picked it up. You see? Then I saw the rose in the basket and blood was on its thorn. I was astonished!" This information staggered us. Grainger's hatred of Parados had been stressed less than anyone's else. "Let me get this straight," Samuels muttered. "We find the petal. It involves Annersley. Then you find the second rose—that lets him out. Now you tell me that Grainger dropped the rose into the basket just after we found the petal." "That makes it look as if Grainger knew Annersley did not kill Parados, and wanted to do him a good turn or he knew Annersley did kill Parados and was trying to switch us off his trail. And that leaves Annersley about where he was!" (Copyright, 1930, William Morrow and Company)

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