

# Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

**SYNOPSIS:** Nan wears, investigating with Ferdinand Francis the disappearance of Jervis Weare, her husband, again runs against a stone wall. She has learned only that Raymond Croton and Robert Leonard, both of whom could gain by Jervis' death, each have good alibis. Fear for Jervis' life lingers on.

## Chapter 40 NAN IS LEFT ALONE

NAN had braced herself against the possible ringing of the telephone bell so long she had lost account of time. It might have been half an hour, or three hours that she had been pacing uneasily from end to end of the great drawing room at Weare—she had even persuaded herself that if the telephone did ring, it must be Jervis on the other end.

A prolonged and acute strain such as Nan was undergoing has the effect of etching out thoughts, fixing them as frost does a landscape sometimes, with an unnatural rigidity. The thoughts tended to separate from each other, and might bob up anywhere.

Nan had walked perhaps fifty times from the door to the table, from the table to the door, and from the table back to the door, when she became aware of such an impression among her frozen thoughts.



Nan rang the bell. Then she turned toward the door.

At first her awareness of it was vague and inattentive, but gradually her attention began to focus itself. It puzzled her, and her attention once focussed, she felt a slight relief in having something definite to think about.

The impression was that of Mrs. Mellish looking at her with eyes like windows with the blinds pulled down. She had asked Mrs. Mellish whether she had seen or heard anything between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning. Mrs. Mellish had said no.

The very tone of that dry "No, ma'am" beat at Nan's ears. She had asked Mrs. Mellish to find out whether the maids had seen or heard anything; and it was while Mrs. Mellish was out of the room that the impression had been made—a slammed door, eyes with the blinds drawn down—something to hide. Mrs. Mellish came back, and reported that nobody had noticed anything.

Between two and half-past seven Jervis had walked out of the house. No one had seen or heard him go—no one had seen anything—no one had heard anything. Then why had Mrs. Mellish slammed her door and pulled down her blinds? The impression that she had done so was clearer now than it had been at the time. The ice had set and defined it sharply.

Nan walked quickly to the hearth, and rang the bell. Then she faced round towards the door and waited until Alfred appeared.

"Will you ask Mrs. Mellish to come and speak to me here, please." She would see Mrs. Mellish here. In the housekeeper's room, with its photographic enlargements of Mrs. Mellish's husband and Mrs. Mellish's respected and respectable parents, with Mrs. Mellish's sweet-grass workbox and Mrs. Mellish's photograph album on a small rose-

wood table, and a large illuminated text hanging over the mantelpiece, Nan had been made to feel an alien and an intruder.

The very china dogs, white porcelains with baskets in their mouths, had gazed at her slyly from either end of the mantelshelf. The old-fashioned wall-clock had a disappearing tick. Here she could meet Mrs. Mellish upon neutral ground. This was Jervis' room.

Alfred went away, and presently came back again. Mrs. Mellish had just stepped out.

"I would like to see her when she comes in."

Nan went back to her pacing. At six o'clock the telephone bell rang with a startling loudness and set her heart thumping. She was by the door. She turned, ran back, and picked up the receiver.

"Who's there?"  
"Ferdinand."  
"Yes?"

"Look here, Nan, there's something I want to follow up. I'm leaving in a hired car. It mayn't be anything at all, but I feel bound to follow it up."

"What is it?"  
"It doesn't amount to much. There's a new garage the far side of Croyston. Well, the man says a little black car stopped to fill up at seven o'clock Wednesday morn-

ing. He was about because he was doing a job on his own car. He says there were two men in the car, and from the description one of them might be Jervis, but it's very vague.

"It was the other man who did the talking. He was the driver, and he'd red hair, so it oughtn't to be hard to trace him. He talked about going to New York, so I'm off looking for him. Don't you worry."

Nan felt dazed and weak. The receiver was heavy in her hand. She said:

"Jervis hasn't a small black car."  
"The car was the other man's—he was driving. They may have met by appointment, or Jervis might simply be getting a lift. It mayn't have been Jervis at all. The garage man only said, 'a gentleman with black hair.' That's about all he noticed—his first name isn't Sherlock."

Ferdinand rang off, and Nan began walking up and down again. She walked for a long while, and then sat down by the window and let time flow past her like a sluggish stream, so slow that though it moved, the movement was imperceptible.

At seven the dressing-bell rang, and Alfred came in. He hovered for a moment by the door and then came nearer. Mrs. Mellish had missed her bus from Croyston—and would it be convenient for Mrs. Weare to see her after dinner?

Nan said, "Yes—it doesn't matter," and Alfred withdrew.

When the dinner-bell rang, she realized that she had not changed. She went upstairs, washed her hands, and came down again, to sit alone at the big table in the dining-room and take a spoonful from each dish that was offered to her.

Nan puts Mrs. Mellish on the grill, tomorrow, with remarkable results.

said, and jumped the fence. He was captured.

The defendants Solomon Higginbotham and George W. Gourson, listened intently as the convict proceeded with his story.

"I heard Higginbotham say that he would rather kill Mallefert than eat," Roberts continued.

## Douglas County Asks R. F. C. Loan

ROSEBURG, Ore., Oct. 7. — (AP) — Application for a loan of \$25,000 to provide relief during the coming winter is being made by Douglas county to the reconstruction finance corporation, County Judge W. S. Hamilton stated here. The money, he says, would be used for the emergency road employment program and for food relief. The county agrees to repay the loan from collection of delinquent taxes.

## Wilson To Attend Masonic Meeting

Mayor E. M. Wilson left today for Salem, where he will attend the meeting of Grand Lodge trustees of the Masonic order. He will continue from Salem to Heppesport for another Masonic meeting and will be joined there by George Alden, Fred Strang and Antonio Schoepen of this city. The four will return to Medford Sunday.

## KOSTKA'S INJURY WORRIES OREGON

EUGENE, Ore., Oct. 7. — (AP) — Oregon's hope of victory over University of Washington in Saturday's game at Portland underwent a setback today when it was learned that Stan-

ley Kostka, 200-pound halfback, will probably watch the game from the bench.

Kostka, who scored Oregon's only touchdown against Santa Clara last Saturday, and who made 120 yards from scrimmage, suffered a dislocated shoulder in scrimmage yesterday.

Prink Callison, coach, said today Kostka's shoulder is falling to respond rapidly to treatment and he fears the big ball carrier may be out of the game entirely.

## BARBER SLASHES CUSTOMER'S NECK

EL DORADO, Ark., Oct. 7. — (AP) — M. Jackson started shaving Marvin Albritton, but recalled his customer had been spreading gossip about him, so the prosecution charges, and slashed his throat from ear to ear.

Albritton died and now Jackson is on trial for murder. The case went to the jury last night but the verdict has not been reached.

The barber tells a different story. He testified Albritton refused to pay him for the shave and attacked him with a bottle, and the razor slashing was done merely in self-defense.

Be correctly corrected by ETHELWYN B. HOFFMANN'S Sixth & Holly streets

## BAROMETER RETURNS TO BASIS OF DAILY

CORVALLIS, Ore., Oct. 7. — (AP) — The return of the Barometer, Oregon State college student newspaper, to a daily basis was announced in today's issue, following a week during which it appeared only every other day.

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## Dairymen Plan Finance Study

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 7. — (AP) — Delegates to the 15th annual convention of the National Co-operative Milk Products' federation, were homeward bound today, after having directed a study be made of the country's monetary system with a view to returning the dollar to pre-war purchasing power. All officers were re-elected. The president is Harry Harke of Covington, Ky.

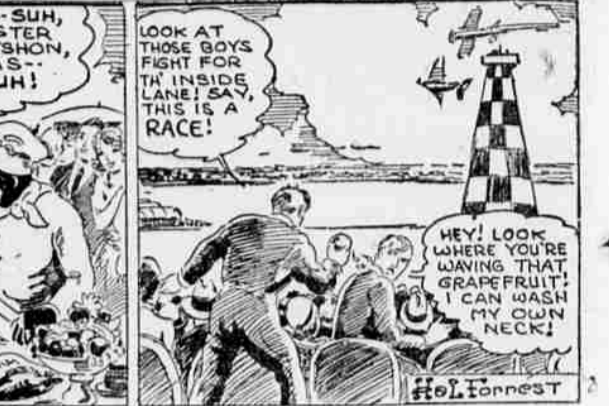
## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Field Entertainment!



## BOUND TO WIN—More Details



## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Field Entertainment!



## S'MATTER POP—A New Instrument For The Jazz Band



## THE NEBBS—Revenge



## MUTT AND JEFF—Mutt's Always Right



## PRISON CRUELTY BARED AT TRIAL FORMER GUARDS

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Oct. 7. — (AP) — William Roberts, a convict who served in Sunbeam prison camp at the time Arthur Mallefert died, related today at the murder trial of two former guards how Mallefert, naked, had been locked in a sweatbox, his arms confined by a heavy barrel placed over his body and fastened from the shoulders by boards and straps.

## BRINGING UP FATHER



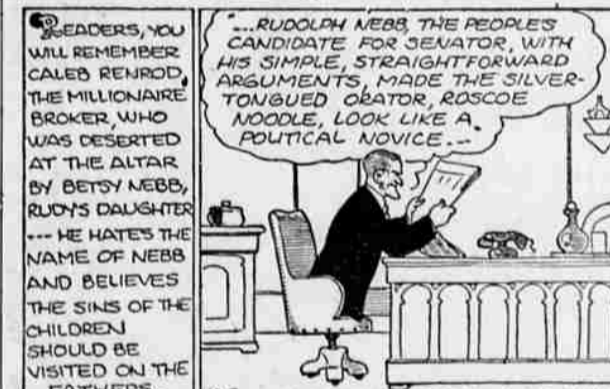
## THE NEBBS—Revenge



## MUTT AND JEFF—Mutt's Always Right



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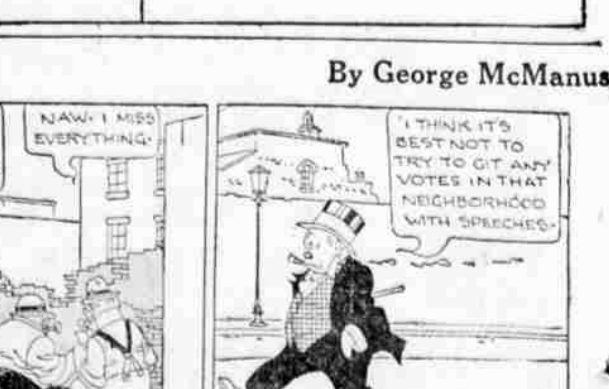
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