

The White Cockatoo

by Mignon G. Eberhart

SYNOPSIS: Sue Tally, an American girl, is the only guest in a summer hotel in Southern France. He distrusts the manager Lovschlem, and finds the hotel itself an eerie place filled with distressing noises — most of them caused by the wind. Blowing relentlessly out of the north. Then Sundean is spoken from a door by Sue Tally's sounding on his door. She has escaped an abductor; he calms her and goes to the lobby for the key she had forgotten. The key is gone; returning he stumbles over a bloody corpse. Sue has disappeared; Lovschlem appears and is reluctant to call the police.

Chapter 7 SUNDEAN'S DANGER

I KNEW Lovschlem lied when he said he did not know the dead man. "You'd better call the police then," I said.

Lovschlem, satisfied that I had accepted his word, was leaning over the man again. "Ho — look here. Someone's robbed him. Pockets emptied, nothing anywhere." His hands no longer shrank; they were instead ghoulishly eager in their search. It was as if Lovschlem expected to find something that had been overlooked. If so, he failed, for presently he looked at me again. This time his eyes were angry and little and vicious. He said: "Who are you?"

Later I was to ponder over that crazy inquiry. Then it enraged me; I was angry, shaken, tired, cold, and I was still in the grip of a night-mare experience. "You know very well who I am. If you are innocent of this affair, call the police at once. If you don't, I will keep your hands off that man!"

I had spoken too late. He had dragged out the knife and was holding it up into the stream of light so we both could see it. It was



dark, and a slow drop was forming on it. But it wasn't a knife at all. It was a small dagger like a toy sword. It was a toy sword, and I had seen one like it only a little before.

Lovschlem recognized it, too. He got heavily to his feet. I preceded him, however, into my room, and we both stood at the fireplace staring at the bronze clock. The little bronze soldier's gauntleted hand was empty, and the sword was in Lovschlem's fat hand. Or at least, I thought, a sword just like it.

But Lovschlem dispelled my sprouting hope of that at once. He said with just a gleam of ugly triumph:

"THERE'S only one like it in the house. No, Mr. Sundean, you killed him yourself. You were very stupid about it. More stupid than I should have believed of you, for you've the face of an intelligent man. But you killed him."

There are things that leave you so stunned that for just a moment you feel numb—as if suspended in a void. The thing that was so unreal and made everything else unreal was his accusation.

"And you want me to call the police," he added, with what appeared a smile.

It was still difficult to speak. But all at once things were real enough. A sudden memory had come to me with all the reviving influence of a stream of icy water. Sue Tally had stood there, almost where Lovschlem was now standing, holding that sword and running her pink fingers along its sharp edge and saying that it was like a dagger.

Then I had left her alone in the room. I had gone through the long corridors to the lobby, and from it I had seen her figure cross the light from my door and vanish into the

darkness of the corridors. And immediately afterwards I had found a murdered man beside that very door, and he had been murdered with the dagger I had last seen in Sue Tally's fingers.

But the trouble was I didn't know what to do. So I stood there looking at Lovschlem and said nothing. A small satisfaction was that my look irritated Lovschlem and apparently made him uneasy. He said: "You Americans, you are all alike. How can anyone tell what you are thinking? Poker faces, that's what you call them. Now then, shall I call the police?"

There was only one thing to say.



"Call them at once." He was visibly disconcerted. He stared at me and then took another step toward me peering into my face. "Who are you?" he said again. Again, somehow, the question touched off my smouldering fury. I stepped quickly nearer.

"SEE here, Lovschlem, I told you once who I am! And that I didn't kill this man!" He backed away a step or two and someone from the corridor gasped shrilly: "What is it? For the love of God—" "Grethe — hush!" Lovschlem's voice smothered the woman's cry. I whirled.

It was a woman, now, kneeling by the murdered man. A woman in a yellow shawl whose fringes dropped from her shoulders. Her red hair was drawn in a great knot at the back of her neck.

Lovschlem, the dagger still held carefully between two fat fingers, left me and advanced quickly toward her. I followed him and saw her turn her horrified face up toward him and heard her gasp: "So, you've killed him."

By that time he had bent over her, and I could not see past his bulk. I could, however, hear his voice. "He was found dead on the landing, there. I do not know who he is. I am just going to call the police. This man with me found him."

He turned to me: "My wife can go and telephone for the police, since you insist."

The red-haired woman, then, was Madame Lovschlem. I could see her now as she rose. She clutched the yellow shawl about her. The tight folds hugged her full breast and narrow waist and curving hips; even



at the moment I was conscious, as a man is, of a kind of attraction about her.

In the very act of rising she had caught sight of the dagger with its ominous wet stain. Her shining eyes fastened on it, and widened, and held their gaze so fixedly that both Lovschlem and I looked at it, too. But she did not scream. She did not make any motion of fright. She said finally:

"Lovschlem, you're a fool." (Copyright, 1933, Mignon G. Eberhart.)

Madame Lovschlem conceals a hurried scheme of her own, tomorrow.

AKRON HAD WEAK SPOT IS CLAIM

LAKEHURST, N. J., April 13.—(AP)—Lieutenant Commander Edwin F. Cochrane, assembly and repair officer at the naval air station, testified today at the naval hearing on the loss of the Akron, that it had been planned to strengthen the ship's structure in the area in which two of the survivors said they saw two longitudinal girders break.

One of those girders was to have been strengthened, he said, on the ship's return from her last flight. The work was to have started April 7, Cochrane said, and was to have covered the area where Richard Deal and Moody Erwin, the two enlisted men survivors, said they saw girders break before the crash.

Don't extend credit to Mr. New Customer until you find out from the Southern Oregon Credit Bureau how he paid the other fellows.

DRY DEMO WOMEN URGED TO BATTLE

WASHINGTON, April 13.—(AP)—Mrs. Jesse W. Nicholson, president of the National Woman's Democratic law enforcement league, today urged her group to organize for a final fight to retain the eighteenth amendment.

In a keynote address opening the league's convention, Mrs. Nicholson said: "The time has come when we must speak out in no uncertain terms. We must leave this convention with the determination of going back into the states and there putting up the fight of our lives, for it only takes 13 states to prevent repeal and already we have a guarantee of 26 states."

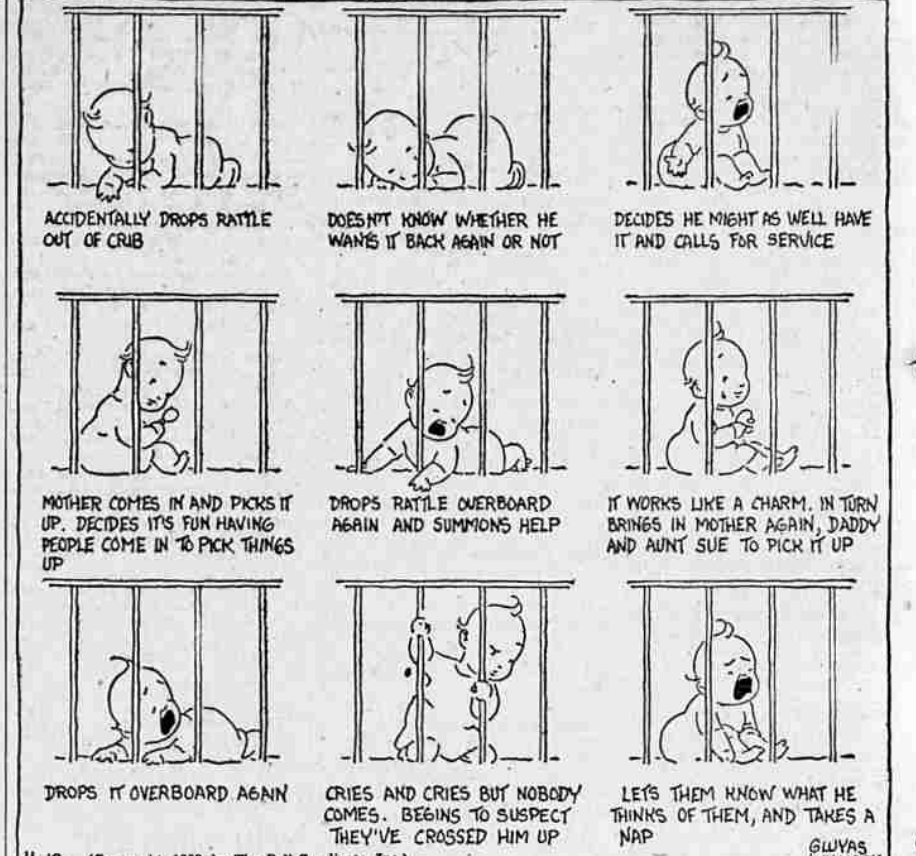
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S'MATTER POP—



By C. M. PAYNE

SERVICE



By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Squeezing Information From Ferdinand's Butler!



By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

BOUND TO WIN—The Jig Is Up!



By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBES—The World's All Wrong



By SOL HESS

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

KOLLOCK NEW LEADER OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

PORTLAND, April 13.—(AP)—John K. Kollock of Portland was elected grand commander of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar of Oregon,

at the session which concluded here yesterday. An invitation was received from the knights templar of Astoria to hold the next year's convolve there. Other new officers include: H. L. Toney of McMinnville, deputy grand master; E. O. Potter of Eugene, grand junior warden; Percy B. Kelly, Salem, grand warden.

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