

The White Cockatoo

by Mignon G. Eberhart

SYNOPSIS: Sue Tully, Jim Sun-
dson and the detective David
Lorn have decided that the murder
of the Russian, the attempt on Sun-
dson's life, and the attempted ab-
duction of Sue all are part of a
plot to secure the money by means
of which Sue must prove title to
her share of her father's millions.
But they are unable to find a clue
to the identity of the murderer.
Marcel, porter in the Little French
Hotel which is the scene of the
tragedy, suddenly volunteers to
tell Sundson what he knows.

Chapter 24 THE SHOT

"FIRST," Marcel said—he would not be hurried, and I thought he had rehearsed the whole telling of his tale, and his bright eyes were sparkling—"First, the town."

"There were used towels in an unused room the morning after the murder. There was also a round—" he described it with his lively little hands—"hollow on the alderdown as if someone had sat there for a moment. I ask you—who was that?" I started to speak and checked myself for fear he would stop if I interrupted.

"Then," he held up two fingers. "Second. Father Robert was not sick during the night. I was not with him. I slept. Wait—you will ask why I permit the police to think I was with him. But what would you?"

"He, a holy father, to ask such a small favor of me and me refuse. Never! And for the police—" He shrugged his shoulders in a manner which left little doubt as to the opinion he held of the police.

"Then, third—" He paused and then went on slowly: "It is of Miss Tully, and you will know what to do. There is danger. Danger of the gravest."

Afterward it seemed to me I had been faintly conscious of some sort of murmuring sound, but I actually heard only the words coming from the little porter's mouth.

"Third," he said, "I saw that night—" And then it happened. Though I didn't know at once what had happened, I was only conscious of a sharply spitting sound and a smell, and of Marcel's face, which sagged and was surprised and held wide black eyes and an open mouth. Both his hands went to his back, and he tried to speak, and moaned and fell forward against me.

I caught him. He'd been shot. There was no one in the lounge—no one on the galleries, no one anywhere.

I eased him downward onto a chair; and then I knew that the murmur was the elevator. The shot had come from there, and the elevator was crawling upward toward the first gallery.

I stepped backward until I could see the entrance from the elevator to the first gallery, and the entrance to the second gallery.

The thing crawled upward. The sage was dark. The two little doors blank.

I neared the first gallery. Would it stop there or go on?

The elevator slowly came to a stop. There was for a moment nothing but silence; then the doors trembled.

The narrow black space between them widened almost imperceptibly.

Curiously, I heard the shot and felt the hot sting in my shoulder before I saw the muzzle of the revolver. Then things happened all at once.

I SAW the short nose of a revolver poking out from behind one of the little doors, I was conscious of a furiously sharp pair in my shoulder somewhere, I was dodging instinctively, and there was the sound of another shot. The door to the lobby was just behind me, and I had leaped to shelter behind the wall and, using the key board for a shield, was peering around it, determined to see who was in the elevator.

I saw the gleam of the revolver flying through the air downward, but not the arm that had thrown it. It fell with a clatter on the floor of the lounge, and at the very instant that I was leaning forward, sure now of seeing the murderer, someone seized me from behind; I struggled, twisting, straining my eyes toward the doors of the elevator.

But I was jerked aside.

There were two policemen hanging to my arms and my waist, and the more furiously I struggled and tried to make them understand that the murderer was in the elevator and that he was even now escaping, the more energetically they pulled me away from where I could see.

My shoulder hurt like hell, I was cursing with rage and pain and baffled fury, another policeman was running into the lobby from out-

side, and a woman was screaming from somewhere in the well of the lounge.

It was the screaming that drew one of the policemen into the lounge; at his about the two holding me dragged me after them to the door again and then into the lounge. Mrs. Byng, hanging over the gallery rail, stopped screaming to stare, and then suddenly people were coming. Lovachien and Grethe and little Sue with her face like chalk were running along the gallery and down the stairs and into the door of the lounge.

All at once the lounge was crowded. Even the priest he turned up, panting, his red beard agitated, and Lorn, breathless, was hurrying through the lobby and was at my side, and the little maid, Marianne, was kneeling and sobbing, and the center of it all was the small white-aproned figure sprawling in the frivolous wicker chair.

In all the commotion and hubbub and torrents of French and Marianne's sobs, it was Lorn who remained fairly cool, and I'm sure it was Lorn who kept them from dragging me immediately to jail. I don't know what he said, though I guessed, from the way he pointed at my shoulder, and the blood that was soaking my coat, and the lack of powder burns.

One of the policemen had picked up the gun and was holding it gingerly by the tips of his fingers when Lorn suddenly turned toward me.

"Have you touched the gun?" he barked sharply. He was, under fire, like another man, quick, sharp, decisive, his eyes no longer dull.

"No." That much I was sure of. "Whoever was in the elevator threw it on the floor."

"In the elevator? What do you mean? Tell me quickly."

I TOLD him quickly, and one of the policemen ran upstairs to the elevator. The two remaining still held me tightly, as if that were the only thing they understood must be done.

And just then Sue perceived my wounded shoulder. (she'd been stooping over Marianne, and there were tears on her white face when she turned). She came swiftly to me and put her hands on my arms and said something quickly to the police and I thought pleadingly. But they would not relinquish their hold.

I was beginning by that time to feel a little giddy and sick. Lorn said:

"Leave it to me. I may be able to get you off. Your fingerprints can't be on the revolver, and there are no powder burns so you couldn't have done it yourself. Your being wounded may help."

It must have been only a few moments before more policemen arrived, and all at once policemen were searching the hotel, and I was being questioned at length.

It developed there were no fingerprints to be found on the revolver at all. This I argued that the murderer had worn gloves. It was at this point that I and my clothes and the lobby and the lounge and finally even the elevator were thoroughly searched for gloves, and to my great relief no gloves were found.

They seemed to be talking of it heatedly when the doctor arrived. He examined the little huddle on the chair first and very swiftly; ordered Marianne to a chair in the corner, where she sat sobbing helplessly while the slender body of the little porter was carried away. Then at Sue's request he turned his attention toward me.

Sue helped him; I remember the set look about her white face and the firm touch of her fingers. I think she was relieved at the doctor's muttered comments; and I'm sure I felt better when she said that the doctor had said it would be painful and I had lost a lot of blood but that there was no reason why it should not heal perfectly.

"What have they decided to do?" I asked her, glancing toward the police.

"I don't know," she said. "You see the police ran to the door of the lobby and caught you apparently escaping. They both launched themselves at you."

"And kept me from discovering the murderer," I said bitterly.

The police were coming toward me again. I said rapidly:

"Sue, you must take no chances. Marcel was telling me that you are in danger, when he was shot."

Before she could speak, they were questioning me again.

What turn will this fantastic tragedy take Monday?

BANKS INTERESTS ARE SUED AGAIN

Two petitions in bankruptcy were filed against the L. A. Banks interests

yesterday. The first is against Mr. Banks and his wife, Edith R. Banks, the hearing upon which is set for May 13. The second is against the Suncrest Orchards, Inc. and the hearing will be May 17.

Attorney Frank DeSouza represents the petitioners in the case against Mr. and Mrs. Banks, and Attorneys Roberts and McAllister, those against the Suncrest Orchards. Attorney A. G. Hough of Grants Pass represents the defendants in both cases.

The hearings will determine whether or not Mr. and Mrs. Banks and the Suncrest Orchards, Inc. should be adjudicated involuntary bankrupt.

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

RALPH TURPIN IS KILLED IN SMASH

Telegram was received here today from Lewiston, Idaho, reporting the

death of Ralph Turpin, 24, son of Tom Turpin, formerly of this city, now of Bremerton, Wash. Young Turpin was killed in an auto wreck April 30.

The Turpins are well known in this city, where they made their home for many years. It was just two years ago that one of the boys was killed, when diving in a shallow stream.

News of the death of the second boy

came as a great shock today to relatives and friends in southern Oregon.

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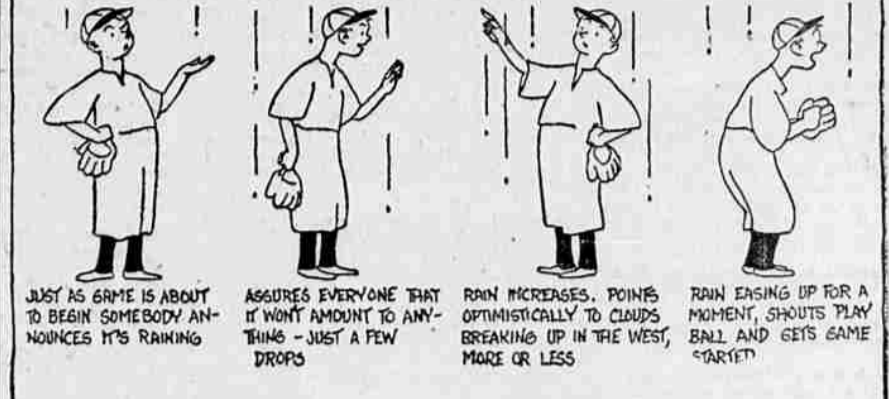
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RAINED OUT

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THE NEBBS—It's Different Now

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BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



New Port Orford Station Started

MARSHFIELD, Ore., May 3.—(AP)—Work was under way today on the new coast guard station at Port Orford, a project which will involve an expenditure of about \$40,000. The station will include a complete coast guard unit and is the culmination of years of effort on the part of Port Orford people to interest the federal government in the need of the development.

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There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation