

# The White Cockatoo

by Mignon G. Eberhart

**SYNOPSIS:** Two murders have been committed in Jim Sundeau's little hotel in Southern France, and two attempts have been made on his life. It all is linked, Sundeau and David Lorn, the detective believe, with an attempt to secure the token with which Sue Tally must prove her right to half of her father's millions. The police suspect the wounded Sundeau of the murders, but his chief concern is for the welfare of Sue Tally. With Lorn, he goes to look after her.

**Chapter 26**  
**THE CONFERENCE**  
SHE went with us back to my room. We chose that room with out thinking about it. I suppose because we had met and talked there before and because it was warm and the wing was deserted and thus we would be apt to have no observers. The police, Lorn said dryly, were stationed at various places around the hotel.

"We're like rats in a trap," said Sue suddenly and caught her breath. And so began another strange conference in that old-fashioned room in the cold, deserted wing, with the fire crackling now and then, and the wind blowing in the court below and outside the windows.

Lorn and I did most of the talking. Sue was very quiet and pale, and there had been tears on her cheeks. Our talk was not long, for we were all desperately weary and shaken with the ugly affair of the afternoon. It was, however, important; particularly important in view of what happened later.

"See here," I said abruptly. "I know you consider the Lovschlems your friends. But I want to suggest something. Why don't you tell Madame that you've put the token in a bank? A bank in Paris or London or somewhere."

"Don't tell me where you have it—perhaps that's exactly what you did—at any rate, I think you're wise to keep its whereabouts a secret. But that will put them off—"

"Always providing," interrupted Sue dangerously, "that my friends who have been my only friends for a long and hard year are planning to murder me for an inheritance that they don't even know I've got."

"Always providing that," I said, wishing I could shake her. It was curious how easily a little flame of queer antagonism could leap up between us; it was as if for a flash each resented something in the other. I resented her not agreeing with me, and then I knew that somehow she had a kind of hold upon me or I had a kind of hold upon her, and so then I resented that hold upon me.

And in another second there was no feeling of resentment at all, only a warm kind of pleasure because she was there, sitting quietly before me, her bright head bent, and the fine angle of her chin faintly pink against the black velvet of her tightly buttoned coat, her slender feet on the rug, her whole lovely body slim and fine and yet beautifully rounded.

I said in a matter-of-fact way: "We can scarcely help wondering about the Lovschlems. You admitted that your mother might have told them something. They are here—managing the hotel. Who else is there to suspect?"

"We've been over all this before," said Sue. "And, anyway, you have no evidence against either of them."

"That's quite true," said Lorn dryly. "There's not one definite thing we've got against Lovschlem."

"Unless we can prove he knew the man who was first murdered. As for Marcel's murder—anyone—everyone in the hotel is open to suspicion."

"Do you still feel it may be limited to the hotel?" asked Sue. "That—surely that can't be true. I can't believe that the Lovschlems are involved. You and Mr. Lorn and Father Robert are self-explanatory. The cook is just a fat and rather stupid cook—and anyway, he wasn't here the night of the first murder. Marianne—that's absurd. Mrs. Byng—equally absurd. And I didn't do it."

"And there's no one else—No, it can't be limited to us in the hotel. After all, someone could easily have got into the place this afternoon—no reason at all why he shouldn't have walked boldly in, either front or kitchen entrance, shot Marcel, and escaped without being seen."

Her voice trembled over Marcel, and I experienced a strange little surge of tenderness toward her.

"And as to the night of the first murder?" I said.  
"Oh,"—she spread out her hands in a hopeless gesture—"I don't know. Anything could have been done that night. Perhaps that way through the hotel gate was known to more people than I thought. At any rate it's not to be thought of that the murderer is here, now, in this hotel. But I promise you, Mr. Sundeau, that I shall be very careful."

Her breath caught in what was very near a sob. "How could I help being careful after what I've seen?" Her face was tired and white. There were slender blue marks under her eyes. I said:  
"See here. We'll cut this talk short. We can finish it tomorrow. The main thing is for you to keep your door locked and bolted tonight. And the first thing in the morning—"

I hesitated, for after all what I was about to say was Lorn's business, not mine. But I continued: "The first thing in the morning it might not be a bad idea to get the papers that you gave to Lovschlem out of his safe and take them to the bank."

"That's what Mr. Lorn advised," said Sue wearily. "Very well, I'll do it. But the Lovschlems—" She broke off abruptly and said instead, "I'm going now."

We both went with her to her room. Lorn stood with her at the door while I searched her room; there was, of course, no one hiding in the great wardrobe or behind the curtains or in the bathtub, and there was little other place in which to hide.

But I wanted to be certain, and had whispered "Good-night" and vanished and I heard the key turning and then immediately the bolt slipping into place.

THE corridors were deserted, and there had been no one to see us. Lorn turned in another direction. I walked toward the north-wing corridor again. The halls were half dark, as usual.

It was just as I turned suddenly around the angle above the steps that I thought I saw a darker shadow down the length of the corridor ahead of me which moved quickly out of sight beyond the angle of the intersecting corridor.

I ran lightly and rapidly toward where it had been, but when I reached the angle there was nothing but blank doors and narrow hall leading back to a window at its end.

Probably, I told myself, turning finally into the long bare corridor of the north wing with its cold shining windows all along the court side and its bitter draft—probably a mere optical illusion composed of nothing but shadow.

The court was crazy again that night; though the wind was not as strong as it had been, and the gusts were not as wild with their flying shadows. Still, it did not look inviting; neither did the little room stairway descending into darkness.

In the turmoil of the day I had again neglected to ask Lovschlem for a key, and I again, with a kind of grim amusement at myself, propped the table against the door. I was determined to stay in that room, but I never liked it.

Neither did I like the cold, deserted wing with its mysterious creaks and rustles. And neither, I confessed to myself, had I liked that flying shadow.

It had had, somehow, a substantially one does not associate with mere shadows.

My shoulder was aching and throbbing damnably, and I took one of the pills the doctor had left me and finally went to sleep.

I awoke with a start. I'd been dreaming wildly of Father Robert's black soutane with its full black skirt and of Sue's red slippers and the wind. The wind had lulled again into such quiet that probably the mice in the old walls were noisy again.

I listened, but if a noise had awakened me I heard no further sound. And if a prowling ghost had come to visit me, awakening me with a passing touch or sigh, then it was a lively ghost indeed, for I smelled very definitely the odor of tobacco.

I sniffed again and sat up. There was no ghost about it. Someone, somewhere near me, was smoking.

(Copyright, 1933, Mignon G. Eberhart)

Racked with pain from his wound, Sundeau tries, tomorrow to solve the mystery of the tobacco smoke.

## SHEEP LONG DEAD DEPUTY DECLARES

Some of the sheep reported killed at the Westerlund Orchards, belong-

ing to C. J. Phillip and John Rohr, had been dead several weeks, according to a report made by Ed Leach, deputy sheriff, who investigated the scene of the reported killing. Phillip and Rohr reported to the county court that police dogs had killed 83 sheep last Sunday night, and made claim to the county for compensation for that number of sheep.

Investigation showed that 19 ewes, 11 lambs and one buck had been killed Sunday by the dogs, and that the remaining 32 had died at an earlier date. Claim was made for three dollars each for the lambs, which were ready to go to market; two dollars each for the ewes, and ten dollars for the buck.

## LADS WILL GET BUSINESS TASTE

Following a precedent established last year, the Chamber of Commerce

will assist the boys of the high and Junior high schools in carrying out Boys' Business Experience day, which is scheduled for Thursday, May 11. Firms and business houses willing to cooperate in the program designed to give business experience to the youth of the city are asked to get in touch with the Chamber of Commerce immediately. Quite a number of firms have already signified their

intention of assisting in the program and it is hoped that many others will join the movement to let the boys obtain some real practical business education. Phone 542. We'll haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service. PERMANENTS—\$1.50, \$2.50, \$4, \$5.00. Bowman's. Phone 57.

## S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



## SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



## TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Mysterious Shot!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORBES



## BOUND TO WIN—"Lojonie"

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—The Secret

By SOL HESS



## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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

### CATHOLICS POSTPONE SANCTUARY CONGRESS

PORTLAND, May 5.—(AP)—Postponement for one year of the first Marian congress to be held in the United States, was announced her yesterday by the Rev. A. M. Mayer, president of the congress and director of the Catholic Order of Servite Fathers here. The congress, to be held at the sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother here, will be held in August, 1934. Father Mayer said the meeting was postponed at the express wish of Pope Pius XI.