

The White Cockatoo

by Mignon G. Eberhart

SYNOPSIS: A third murder in the gloomy little French hotel has at last crumbled Sue Tally's resolution to stick by the ship. They are connected with an attempt to secure the taken which entitles her to share a huge fortune. She agrees to leave Armand, but, wonder Jim Sundeen and David Lorn, the detective, what could a priest like Father Robert have known that would have led the killer to murder him?

Chapter 35

SUE'S PREDICAMENT

"WELL," said Lorn slowly, "there are two hypotheses. Either he was an honest priest who accidentally knew too much about one of the other murders and his knowledge was so dangerous and so incriminating that he had to be silenced at once; or he was, as Mr. Sundeen thinks, no priest at all."

"If not a priest, then what?" Lorn shrugged.

"If not a priest, then certainly a conspirator."

"Remember his searching Miss Tally's room?"

Lorn looked at me soberly.

"You are sure that he carried nothing in his hands when you saw him come from her room?"

"I saw nothing."

Lorn turned to Sue.

"And you are sure nothing was gone?"

"Yes," said Sue at once. Her eyes met Lorn's steadily, and her expression did not change, although it seemed to me that Lorn's gaze became sharper.

"If he had come upon the object—whatever it is that is to prove your identity," ventured Lorn speculatively and rather guardedly, "his eyes still searching Sue's face, then that would provide a motive for his murder."

"Of course," said Sue briefly. "Although that would presuppose several different people trying to obtain the—token."

"Two, at least," said Lorn. "Not counting your eventual substitute."

Sue shivered. "I think now you are both right," she said. "I will go to the police this afternoon."

There was a short silence.

The lounge was empty except for us, and bare and chilly. Above us were those blank gallery railings, and all around us the secretive dark old hotel.

The Lovschisms were in the lobby. I had watched them carefully during the morning's inquiry and excitement, but they were guarded, both of them—guarded and wary and inscrutable, although Marcus looked frightened under his mask and glittered more than usual.

But Grethe was cool and calm, her face set in properly and innocently shocked lines, and her green eyes shining and cool and unfathomable.

Mrs. Byng had promptly—or as promptly as the police would permit—retired with her shawls and her temperament to her own room, where she was, I had no doubt, well barricaded.

Marianne, no longer hysterical but dark and sullen and remote, was in some nether region with, I supposed, the chattering cook.

ONLY the cockatoo remained diabolically unperturbed. As I watched he hopped awkwardly to the floor from Grethe's graceful shoulder, waddled along to the door to the courtyard, and paused to examine with handsomely fared crest and a knowing and speculative eye the boot heel of a policeman who stood there. He opened his curved beak dubiously, paused to scratch with vigor under one wing, and I said thoughtfully:

"If we only knew exactly where the danger lies."

"When we discover that, we will have the murderer," said Lorn. "It may not be as complete a mystery as you seem to think. Things have a way of breaking suddenly."

"Perhaps. But yesterday I felt sure the man pretending to be a priest—"

"You don't know yet that he wasn't," said Lorn softly.

"Do you want to bet that the police won't discover his papers to be forged?"

"Oh—no," said Lorn temperately. "He probably was no priest. But it's better to be quite sure of these things before resting a case on them."

"Well, in any case, I felt he was the murderer. Now—I don't know—somebody certainly killed him. And there's the nicotine again, to link it with the murder of the man called Stravsky."

"Yes," said Lorn slowly. "If the priest had taken anything yesterday"

from Miss Tally's room we might come nearer to understanding the affair."

SUE said nothing. Presently he continued:

"But since Miss Tally assures us that he found nothing—" He shrugged again and left the obvious conclusion unspoken.

"In the meantime," I reiterated, "the thing to do is to go to the police and tell them all that we know and beg them to permit Miss Tally to leave."

"Unless," said Sue rather tremulously, "it would only be to take myself also away from protection."

"I'll go with you," said Lorn.

"Oh, I'm not changing my mind again," said Sue at once. "Surely

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YOUTH CONFESSES SHOOTING FATHER

CORFAX, Wash., May 16—(AP)—Ernest Kirkland, 16, accused of killing 12, Ernest's younger brother, who witnessed the tragedy, was held as a material witness.

WASHINGTON, May 16—(AP)—The Southern Pacific railroad has asked the interstate commerce commission for permission to abandon a portion of its Monmouth branch line between Monmouth and Dallas in Oregon, a distance of seven miles.

BROTHER-IN-LAW SHOT IN QUARREL

BAKER, May 16—(AP)—Jim Willie, 27, shot and killed his brother-in-law,

Claude Stover, 51, in what was described as a drunken quarrel on the Idaho side of the Snake river four miles below Huntington Sunday evening.

SALEM, May 16—(AP)—Dr. Richard Cartwright, head of Willamette sanitarium of Salem for the past 32 years, is dead at his home here at the age of 82 years.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Unwelcome Visitors—But Who?—Or What?

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Abell's Alarm

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Oh—Well—That's Different

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



BALANCED DIET FOR BIG FROGS PLANNED

STATTON, May 16—(AP)—A balanced diet will be provided for frogs which E. R. Olds plans to raise here.

He has constructed a concrete pond, 12x24 feet and two feet deep, with an island in the center. Cattails, lilies and other water plants needed to give the frogs a balanced diet will be planted.

He plans to place in his pond a variety of frog which will grow to an average length of 15 inches for males and 18 inches for females. He said the legs will sell for \$2.75 a pound.

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WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT THE PERFECT GUM

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