

# The White Cockatoo

by Mignon G. Eberhart

**SYNOPSIS:** Three murders have entered around an attempt to secure the token by means of which Sue Tully must identify herself to her brother, whom she has not seen since childhood. The token represents her share of her father's fortune. Francis Tully suddenly arrives, is refused permission by the police to take Sue to a sister's place. Back in the hotel that is the scene of the crime, Jim Sundeen himself only just relieved of suspicion, learns from Sue that she has lost the token. He finds that his signature on the hotel register is a forgery. Sundeen goes upstairs.

er. And your brother's interests would come first with him." "Exactly," said Sue. "And I couldn't search the priest's room this morning myself. I was still, somehow—" she paused, and her breath caught a little as she admitted—"afraid—afraid—you had warned me too well. But I was just going to tell you, in the White Salon, you know when—" She stopped completely there.

**Chapter 22**  
**SCARLET SLIPPER**  
LORN and Tully had drifted into the chilly parlor again, and Sue had made some excuse about taking off her coat and was also coming upstairs. I did not wait for her until I had passed beyond the gallery and into the corridor and thus was beyond the range of vision of anyone on the first floor.

When we reached the little niche in the corridor I stopped. There was no one in sight; we were visible from only one or two doors, and they were closed; not even a policeman was to be seen up and down the length of the shadowy deserted corridor.

"Now then," I said, "tell me all about the token."  
"But I don't know," said Sue in what was almost a wail. "It is just gone. And I thought it was so safe."  
"When did you lose it?"  
"Sometime last night."  
"You don't mean anyone got into your room during the night?" I was frightened. I had her by the arm, gripping it so hard that she winced.

"Oh, no, no! The door was locked and bolted all night."  
"When, then?" I asked, only a little relieved.  
"I don't know. I looked at it—the token, you know—yesterday about noon. Last evening after dinner you told me the priest had been in my room, but the place where I—where I had hidden the token—"

"Your slipper," I said grimly.  
"What?"  
"Of course. One of your scarlet slippers with the silver heels. It was probably in a hollow in the heel."  
"But you—how could you know that?"

I hated taking time, especially when it was so simple.  
"Oh, you wore them so much—wore them that first night when you had been out to walk on the bridge—would you wear scarlet evening slippers with narrow high heels for a walk along cobblestones unless there was a reason?" I was impatient.

"But I didn't wear them in the daytime," she protested.  
"Naturally not," I said. "But there wasn't so much danger then—or you probably thought there was not. Or perhaps you removed it during the daytime. Or perhaps it was very well hidden. Go on—when did you discover it had been stolen?"

She looked at me a moment before she said: "It was well hidden. I felt safe about it—when I glanced at it (it was in the heel of the right slipper)—it showed no signs of being tampered with. I thought I could have told at once if it had been removed."  
"So I said the priest had taken nothing from my room. I only discovered it late last night. I felt I must be sure, of course—and I opened the heel and the token was gone."

"WHAT did you do?"  
"Nothing. There was nothing I could do then. Everyone had gone to bed; I—I was afraid to venture out into the black corridors." She shivered, and I said quickly, taking a long breath at the thought of what might have happened had she done so:  
"That was right."

"I felt rather as if I had walked without knowing it to the very edge of a precipice and only looked down at the last step. Suppose she'd gone out into the corridors—murder—haunted—back—"  
"That was right!" I repeated inadequately. Then that feeling of urgency, that there was not much time, nudged me, and I went on: "But you should have told us at once this morning."  
She hesitated, looking at me with steady but troubled eyes.  
"But I couldn't tell Lorn."  
"Couldn't—oh—oh, I see. After all, he's in the employ of your brother."

So that was why the priest was murdered. He had had the token, and someone knew he had it and murdered him. A small incident in the lust for that waiting gold.

This left three possibilities—that is, if we granted that the priest had stolen the token, and I thought I was safe in doing that—first, the murderer had taken it from the priest, and it was in his possession. Second, it had been on the body of the priest, and the police now had it; this I thought was highly improbable, as the murderer had had hours after the priest's death to search the body unobserved. Parenthetically I thought of the hideously uneasy night I had passed trying to sleep in that death-haunted wing.

The third possibility was that the priest had hidden the token successfully or had passed it immediately to a possible accomplice; this last was, also, unlikely.  
"Do you want to tell me what it is?" I asked rather diffidently.  
"You mean you want to try to find it again for me?"  
She considered this gravely.

"IT'S rather dangerous knowledge," she said at last. "And I must be able to tell Francis that I have kept it a complete secret. That, of course, is the pressing thing. I didn't intend to ask you to find it for me. I think that's rather a hopeless task now."  
"And besides—I have already placed you in too much danger. The thing I wanted to talk to you about is what to do now. What to tell Francis. Oh, it's—it's so dreadfully ironical. He'd only got here one day sooner. He's waiting now, I suppose. He hinted that when we returned from interviewing the police we would go into what he called the—'formalities.' He means, of course, the token."

It was true that that was the urgent and immediate thing. How to meet Francis' inquiries at that moment. To tell him lamely that the thing had been stolen but that we were searching for it would be to convince Francis once and for all that Sue was only another impostor. "You'll have to bluff your brother. Get the papers from Lovschlem; make him hand them over; give those to your brother to digest. Then refuse to show your own token until he shows you his—I gather they are identical! The chances are he will be reluctant to show his. He'll be afraid it is a trap. However, you'll hold out; you'll say you also are afraid of a trap—or rather you'll indicate it tactfully. Don't hesitate for an instant. Be firm and cool and sure of yourself."

"Yes, I can do that," said Sue. "And it was true; she could—no one better."  
"But suppose—suppose he believes me—suppose he is ready to match his token with mine. Suppose," she said with a ghost of a smile which did not lighten the tense look in her eyes and the taut line around her mouth, "suppose he calls my bluff?"

"He won't," I said with more confidence than I felt. "He'll want to think about it awhile—talk it over with Lorn. And in the meantime perhaps—"  
Her eyes quickened, and she grasped at the hint that I had not intended to convey.  
"Do you mean—" she whispered—"that you—that perhaps—that you know something—are on the trail of—"

"No, no," I said at once. "I've only a faint notion. Don't bank on it. Don't hope for anything. I mean I'm counting on Lorn and Lorn only. Unless the Paris detectives get here first."  
It had not convinced her. I could see by the eager, questioning look in her eyes that it had not. I felt vaguely embarrassed, for I pretended to be no ability as a detective.

Still, two and two make four, by whomever added. It was the uncertainty of the digits that troubled me.  
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## RIDLEY SECRETARY IN ROBBERY PLOT

NEW YORK, May 20. — (AP) — An agreement to split three ways a \$200,000 bequest in the questioned will of the slain Edward A. Ridley was related to police today by one of two accountants charged with an alleged conspiracy to rob the aged and eccentric millionaire.

The bequest was made to Lee Weinstein, the secretary whose body was found alongside Ridley's in the latter's subcellar office last week.

Police said both the accountants under arrest, George Goodman and Arthur J. Hoffmann, have confessed they conspired with Weinstein to rob Ridley of \$210,000.

## EUGENE MINISTER TO HEAD BAPTISTS

EUGENE, May 20. — (AP) — The Rev. Bryant Wilson of Eugene was elected president of the Oregon Baptist state convention, and Portland was selected as the 1934 convention city, at the concluding session of the annual meeting here. More than 300 persons attended the Eugene meeting.

Other state officers are Charles Roth of The Dalles, vice president; the Rev. C. S. Tunnell of Portland, recording secretary; J. E. Thomas of Portland, historical secretary, and W. O. Sims of Portland, treasurer.

The board invited Dr. Francis W. Starring of Phoenix, Ariz., to succeed Dr. O. C. Wright of Portland as executive secretary. Dr. Wright retired yesterday after 21 years service.

Mrs. M. E. Russell and Mrs. Mary E. Luckcock, S. T. Magnetic Healers and Scientific Massage, are now located at 305 East Jackson.

## 'SMATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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## OATMAN PAINTS DIAMOND LAKE

A beautiful painting of Diamond Lake by Wm. Oatman, promising young local artist, forms the background of a display for the popular southern Oregon resort now on exhibition at the Chamber of Commerce.

Oatman recently returned to Medford from northern California, where he was engaged in interior decorating and was obtained by the Diamond Lake company to paint the lake in summer setting. The value of the picture will be appreciated by all local folk familiar with the lake. Beyond the water line, forming as it does in reality a massive guardian of the lake, appears Mt. Thielen, "Matterhorn of America."

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