

# MURDER AT MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN

Three men have been murdered in the Mocking House. All the evidence points to the fact that they shot each other, but Sergeant Harper does not believe they did. He is sure that one of them is guilty and he is sure that the detective will be glad the mistake will be made.

## Chapter 13

### DOYLE'S CONTRIBUTION

"HERE'S the queer part. The Old Man acted human for once—but firm. I was off the case and that was that. It's a puzzle, because I have good reasons for doubting that Dufresne would go behind my back about a thing like that."

"Why shouldn't he, Doyle? Mrs. Dufresne was scared half to death and it led to an injury that is very serious to any woman, and especially a beautiful woman."

"Sergeant, I'm surprised! Don't you know a detective's first duty is to keep his mind free from all prejudices, favorable or otherwise?" He laughed.

Harper's face began to redden. "I don't see anything funny about a beautiful woman having her face disfigured for life," he retorted.

"Of course you don't, Sergeant, and neither do I. Don't misunderstand me. In such a situation one must cultivate a philosophic attitude, like our friend Dufresne. If that had happened to your wife, or mine, we'd have taken a poke at the chap who caused the trouble."

"But Mr. Dufresne is content to sit and murmur 'C'est la main du Seigneur.' In case your French is a little rusty, that means 'It is the hand of God.' Does Dufresne's reaction seem regular and normal to you?"

Without waiting for an answer, Doyle continued, "I'm all washed up with this case, but I'm going to let fly a couple of broadsides before I go and you'll be smart enough to profit by them."

"What has that to do with you, since you've been withdrawn from the case?"

"That's what I'm coming to. Listen, you've talked with Dufresne about those 'crank' letters?"

"Yes."

"Didn't he sort of hint around the bush that the writer might turn out to be, shall we say, not a total stranger to him?"

"Yes, he hinted something like that."

"Didn't he give you the impression that there was something that he feared, but wouldn't talk about? He was pretty well shaken up over that ambush, wasn't he?"

"Yes, but that's only natural. No one but an idiot would make light of it."

"Don't you think it odd that the first time he went out without a bodyguard he was fired on? And that it occurred on a lonely road, far from the city?"

"No. It's not odd, if some one were waiting for just such a chance."

"That doesn't say much for the ability of Barry and Markison, who were supposed to be guarding him. I've always thought they were pretty good men."

"No one is infallible, Doyle."

"I think both Markison and Barry know their business," Doyle shrugged. "But let's look at it from another angle. Who knew where Dufresne was going on that trip?"

"Only himself, Mrs. Dufresne, and the two detectives, so far as we know. Possibly Andrews, the butler, knew also."

"All right, we'll drop that line, but think it over and see if it doesn't suggest something to you. Now, after you ran out on us so mysteriously, I got to thinking about the hints Dufresne had been handing out and I guessed you had made the sudden dash to give the latest developments to the new widow, and, incidentally, to find out just how she had been spending the evening. I remembered having seen her name in the society column, so I looked up the notice. I found that Mrs. Creighton Morlock's house was only about a mile from here, so I left and walked over."

"And was I surprised when I got there and found you hadn't been near the place? And let me tell you that the lady was expecting trouble. She didn't give me half a chance to tell my story. At the first words she rushed out of the house and into a car. The rest of the story you know."

Harper stirred restively. "I don't see where that alters the circumstances."

"Wait a minute, you haven't heard all of it yet." Doyle's alert eyes were fixed steadily on the detective through the cigarette smoke. "By and by the smart detective on this case is going to call in everybody concerned, one by one, and ask, 'Where were you on the night of

January 10th? When that time comes, Harper, you're going to find that Mrs. Dufresne will have an alibi that is really no alibi at all—then what?"

"Certainly, I'm aware that there was a dinner party at Mrs. Morlock's last night and Mrs. Dufresne is a house guest there. But, you will hear that Mrs. Dufresne was so upset over the news of the attack on her husband yesterday afternoon that she developed a severe headache and remained in her room. She did not come down for dinner."

"I've found out that you tried to reach her by telephone from the Austerlitz and couldn't get an answer. Perhaps you haven't had time to find out why, so I'll tell you. By a most strange coincidence, there was a fire last night in the Morlock garage and the telephone wires, strung just outside it, were burned and put out of commission."

"When I got to the house the confusion was at its peak—fire engines all over the street, salvaged automobiles parked anywhere, guests and servants running in and out to watch the show. No one knew where any one else was, or had been."

Doyle lowered his voice impressively. "While I was looking around I saw a woman's figure going into the house through the side door. I couldn't see her face, but I got a good look at the fur coat and the shoes. This woman had come up the rear walk. I could see her footprints in the snow. Everybody was over on the other side of the house, watching the garage burn."

"WELL, I finally found a housemaid running excitedly around the hall and I asked for Mrs. Dufresne. The girl went upstairs and in a minute or two Mrs. Dufresne came down. Harper, you can imagine the jolt I got when I recognized the slippers!"

"Not only that, but they were soaking wet from the snow, as wet as my shoes were from walking over a mile in it! And when Mrs. Dufresne sent for her coat, to go along with me, there was the same fur coat I had seen disappearing through the side door, the fur still damp from melted snow. Now, what do you make of that?"

Harper was silently digesting this story of the reporter's. "That will bear a lot of thought, Doyle," he answered slowly.

"Get this—my final broadside, Harper. I don't know how far you've gone with your investigations but it strikes me that there's something in this case resembling the state of Denmark in Hamlet's time."

Doyle stood up and pointed through the window. "Do you see that stone wall? That's the boundary wall of Dufresne's property. On the other side of the wall are thick bushes. Last night some one hid there between the bushes and the wall, walked up and down and watched this house, most likely this very room. There is your witness! Find him, and you'll know what went on here last night!"

A few moments later Sergeant Harper and his assistant, LaFerty, bent thoughtfully over the sketch the former had drawn of the Dufresne house and grounds.

They just had come in from their inspection of the spot Doyle had discovered by a fortunate chance. The reporter's final broadside had been very telling, indeed, riddling into holes the inferential evidence so far provided by the killings. A witness, and a secret one, certainly substantiated Harper's doubts that the affair had been "haphazard." Here was the first hint of premeditation.

"That is certainly a choice bit of luck," LaFerty chuckled. "Wait till we blaze away with that and see whose feathers fly."

"That's exactly what we're not going to do," Harper countered. "It's an ace up our sleeve, but that's the best place for it at present. It's something to think about quietly, not brag about."

"Well, you're passing up a fine chance to put on the screws. You're giving them too much time to get their stories ready. I'm sure that smart chauffeur, Donaghy, is wise to something, and then there is old Andrews and that sour-faced Mrs. Whitmore—all likely material to work on. You can trust the servants to know things."

Harper smiled. "Don't let your patience get out of control, Jack. I'm deliberately giving these people plenty of time to think it over. If they're concealing something, they're sure to elaborate too much and take enough rope to hang themselves."

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Tomorrow, the detectives begin a cold, relentless sifting of evidence.

# 791 ARRESTS BY STATE POLICE IN MONTH OF APRIL

SALEM, May 22.—(AP)—The state police activities for the month of April resulted in 791 arrests in the three divisions of law enforcement—general, traffic and game. Sentences totaling 31 years were meted out and fines assessed were \$10,991. Fees collected in the traffic division totaled \$2819, Charles P. Pray, superintendent, reported here today.

Of the 182 arrests in the regular law enforcement, the most were for larceny under \$50, of which there were 26. One murder arrest was made, but the case was still pending. The largest sentences were also meted out to the petty larceny cases, while the greatest fines, \$1000, were for illegal transportation of liquor.

In the traffic division, most arrests, 101, were for failure to have public utilities commission permits. Fines totaling \$1452 were assessed for driving while intoxicated, also resulting in sentences of 1390 days. Failure to have license plates resulted in fees collected amounting to \$1051.

Fishing without licenses and hunting in closed season netted \$2025 in fines in the game division.

SALEM, May 22.—(AP)—Harry E. Beardsley, 61, of Salem died in a hospital here Sunday following a crash between a car in which he was riding as passenger and a Southern Pacific work train at the Wallace crossing in West Salem.

# BODY STANDS IN COLUMBIA SLOUGH

THE DALLES, Ore., May 22.—(AP)—The body of a man who carried a Portland public employment bureau registration card, made out to M. J. Finnegan of (109 N. W. First Ave.), Portland, was recovered from a slough in the Columbia river here today.

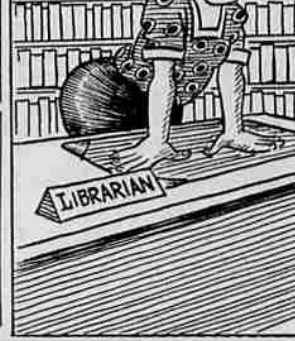
The body was standing in six feet of water, with only the top of the head showing above the surface. The body had been in the slough but a few hours, physicians said. The appearance of the body indicated the man had deliberately walked into the slough, police remarked, although an investigation was ordered to determine whether foul play was involved.

British strawberries are growing fewer, and experts have failed to discover either the cause or the cure.

# GIVE IT A WHIRL

ANTHONY ADVERSE! BUT MY DEAR MAN CAN YOU CARRY SUCH A BIG LOAD?

SURE THING—I JUST TANKED UP WITH STANDARD GAS WITH TETRAETHYL UNSURPASSED!

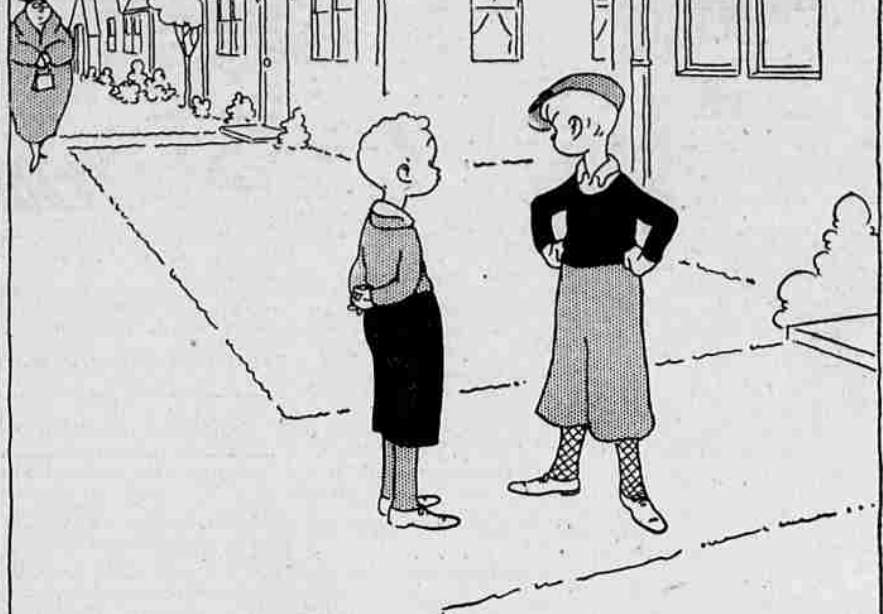


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# THE MINUTE THAT SEEMS A YEAR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS (Copyright, 1934, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)



JUST WHEN YOU'VE SOLD THE IDEA TO THE NEW BOY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT YOU'RE A PRETTY TOUGH HE-MAN SORT OF KID, YOU SEE YOUR AUNT COMING WHO IS PRACTICALLY SURE TO KISS YOU AND TELL YOU YOU OUGHT TO HAVE YOUR RUBBERS ON

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

# S'MATTER POP—



5-18-34



5-18-34

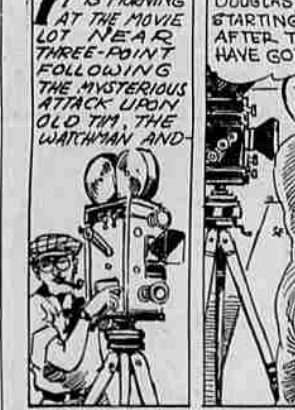


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# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Ready For Battle



5-18-34



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# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Luke's Suspicions



5-18-34



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# THE NEBBS—You Tell 'Em, Kid



5-22-34



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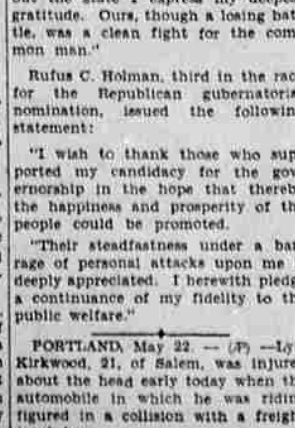
# BROWN GRATIFIED BY LARGE VOTE POLLED GOVERNORSHIP RACE

SALEM, May 22.—(AP)—State Senator Sam H. Brown of Marion county, who was runner-up to Joe E. Dunne in the Republican gubernatorial nomination, today issued the following statement:

"I wish to thank those who supported my candidacy for the governorship in the hope that thereby the happiness and prosperity of the people could be promoted."

"Their steadfastness under a barrage of personal attacks upon me is deeply appreciated. I herewith pledge a continuance of my fidelity to the public welfare."

# BRINGING UP FATHER



5-22-34

# BRINGING UP FATHER



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# BRINGING UP FATHER



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# BRINGING UP FATHER



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# BRINGING UP FATHER



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