

# MURDER AT MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN

Chapter 45  
CROYDEN'S PLEA

THE house seemed as deserted as before, but as Harper came down the stairs he realized that the dinner must be over, for he heard music from the drawing-room, indicating Richard Croyden at the piano.

Harper was passing the doorway when the playing stopped, and Croyden, looking over his shoulder, halted the detective. "Come in," he called, "if you can spare a minute, I've been watching for you."

Harper was somewhat surprised by this invitation. He eyed the pianist sharply as he crossed the floor. "Have a cigarette?" The detective declined the offer, while Croyden turned back to the piano, his fingers moving softly over the keys. "There are some passages in this I need to brush up," he explained. "Recognize it? Chopin, Polonaise in B Flat Minor."

The detective sat down in the chair by the piano bench. Croyden's whole manner was feverish and excited and though his fingers continued through rippling passages his mental abstraction showed that he was casting about for an opening for whatever he had on his mind.

Then, preceded by a nervous exhalation of cigarette smoke, he struck out boldly. "Harper, can't you call off the dogs? Must this thing go on, boring deeper and deeper into the private life of this house? You can't leave the dead by an autopsy on the living."

"A detective on a murder case has no friends, Mr. Croyden. We cannot call this case closed until we have found the killer who is hiding among you."

The fingers slipped into a jangling discord and stopped. The pianist turned to face the detective. "I think you exaggerate when you call it a 'case,'" he challenged. "I really don't see it, Harper. You've built up a scarecrow of shreds and patches. When you tear it apart you won't find your murderer, but you will expose all the poor bare bones of our family skeleton to the public gaze. The public is always roaring for that sort of stuff, but I felt that you were above that kind of show, Harper."

He drew a long breath. "Don't think I'm talking wildly, or trying to hide some deep, dark secret. Dig below the surface anywhere in so-called Society and you'll find deceit, treachery, disillusionment. And, God knows, if you're going to take those things for clues to motive, you'll finish by putting all of us in the dock. Does this make sense to you or do you think I'm being merely rhetorical?"

Through a haze of smoke the detective looked straight into the glittering, excited eyes. There was no mistaking the genuine fervor of that plea. "I think I understand, Mr. Croyden," Harper responded gravely. "Yesterday, perhaps I should not have, but today a great many things have become clear to me."

CROYDEN turned again to the keyboard, softly fingering the treble keys with muted sound. "Are you a married man, Harper?" he asked, suddenly, without turning his head.

"No."

"Then take my advice—and think well first!" he counseled. "It can do things to you, bring about conditions that no lover can survive. One's birthright of spirit can be sold out for a compromise," he added darkly. "Today, we seem to cling only to the Thirteenth Commandment—'thou shalt not be found out.' Many things can be borne in silence, indignities to the spirit as well as acts of the flesh, so long as these are kept discreetly hidden from our neighbors' eyes. But flaunt them across the horizon and then comes the end. That is why I ask you to take no further steps in that direction."

He stopped to snub out the cigarette end. "I suppose you've heard about Mr. Dufresne and Joyce Robber, to give the lady her more familiar name? And, possibly other details of the sort?"

Harper shrugged. "Servants will talk, tabloids thrive on scandal," he remarked, "and there's precious little escapes them. As I understand it, there have been dissensions and suspicions on both sides of the fence."

"I'm not at all interested in private scandal unless it touches on the case itself."

"Ah, that's what you think, Harper, but you make the other poor beggars conscious of their tatters. That public loss of dignity can never be repaired. Affairs in this social world move in a complicated rhythm on their own. The unfortunate death of two strangers in this house threatens to visit injustices on those who had nothing to do with the case."

"It's not so easy to say just who those may be," was Harper's dry comment.

"Don't let gossip run away with your good judgment," Croyden replied quickly. "If you take that line, you'll find us all in your net, accusing and accused. No doubt you've heard that Dufresne and I were rivals once and not very friendly ones, either. You could make some interesting deductions from that."

Harper was silent, puzzled by some repressed force underlying the words. Croyden paused to light a fresh cigarette. "That's the root of plenty of trouble, Harper, when women can take over the dominating role. Take my wife, for example. I love her dearly, but she has always had more money than I can ever hope to earn. Besides, what chance has the masculine ego with a girl who can outdistance you at any sport you name—swimming, golf, riding, bridge? There is only one field left in which I can exercise my masculine conceit and that is this—resting his fingers on the keyboard."

## PRICE REDUCED ON MAYONNAISE

No development in food costs during the past few years has brought such immediate benefits to the consumer as the recently announced and sensational reduction in the price of mayonnaise.

Here in the far west, where nature is at her most bountiful in supplying fruits and vegetables, the principal of eating salads daily has long been generally accepted. Now, under the new price schedules made possible in the retail market by drastic reductions on the part of manufacturers, Mrs. Housewife can serve the tastiest and most nutritious of salads at a cost which in the past would have seemed quite impossible.

This news came at a particularly advantageous time, too, because of the plentiful supply and the existing low prices of practically all fruits and vegetables that go into salad making.

We are now at the height of the season, or approaching the best season, for such salad vegetables as lettuce, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, carrots, and celery, such fruits as apples, oranges, peaches, pears, cantaloupes and many of the most delicious berries, including strawberries, raspberries, logan berries. In addition there are the usual choices of fine canned vegetables and canned fish suitable for salad making.

The consumer's cost of real mayonnaise, under the recent major reductions, amounts to approximately one-third less than formerly.

Mr. L. A. Piercy, local distributor for The Best Foods, Inc., in commenting on these sensational price reductions, said:

"Never in the history of the mayonnaise industry has the public been able to buy first quality mayonnaise at any price comparable to the very low price we have just put into effect. We believe that this low price will materially increase the eating of healthful salads, and will prove a real benefit to the consuming public."

## SOCIETY and Clubs

**Spend Week-End At Diamond Lake**  
Miss Mildred Beeson, Miss Delphine Hince and Miss Justine Miller of Medford are spending the week-end at Diamond Lake. They were joined there by Miss Margery Smith and Miss Fay Buchanan and three other young ladies of Klamath Falls.

**Building Bridge Club To Meet on Thursday**  
The building bridge club is to meet Thursday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock, dessert bridge, at the home of Miss Anne Kellnor, 1019 South Oakdale avenue.

**Visit Woodford's While in City**  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Bulman and daughter Marian of San Francisco, en route to Portland on a pleasure trip, spent several days last week in Medford as the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Woodford.

**Dancing Party At Colonial Club**  
Many reservations for dinner and dancing were made for last evening at the Colonial club, including several no-host affairs.

**Miss McGrew Given Surprise Party**  
Honoring the ninth birthday of Miss Barbara Jean McGrew, a group of her friends entertained Saturday afternoon with a surprise party at her home, 518 Beatty street.

**Those present were Jerry Morris, Jackie Morris, Kay Grantham, David Lee Wade, Melva Anderson, Joan Anderson, Shirley McCulloch, Byrna McCulloch, LaVerne McCulloch and Jean Grantham.**

**Regular Meeting Of Eastern Star**  
The regular meeting of the Eastern Star will be held Wednesday evening with a report of the worthy matron from grand chapter to be given. Visiting members are invited.

**Lady Elks Meet at Temple This Week**  
Lady Elks will meet at the Elks temple on Tuesday afternoon, for cards, pool and bowling. The meeting this week is the last until fall, it was announced yesterday.

**Pythian Club Meeting Tuesday**  
The Pythian club will meet at the home of Mrs. W. L. Walden Tuesday, June 26. All members are asked to bring a covered dish.

**Salem, June 23 (AP)—**Conditional pardons were issued by Governor Julius L. Meier today to normal B. Newell and Jack Berry, serving terms of one year each in the Multnomah county jail for assault. Both men were committed on November 15, 1933.

### SLEEPY

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS 6-23

6-23

GETS GOOD SEATS WITH HUSBAND AS FEATURE FILM STARS

REALIZES PRESENTLY THAT HE HAS DROPPED OFF TO SLEEP. NUDGES HIM

HUSBAND OPENS EYES, BLINKS AND DENIES THAT HE WENT TO SLEEP AT ALL. HE WAS JUST RESTING HIS EYES A SECOND

BECOMES AWARE THAT HE'S NODDING AGAIN, BUT DECIDES TO LET HIM SLEEP

WHICH BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE WHEN HE SUDDENLY SAGS OVER ON HER

WAKES HIM AND TELLS HIM WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN PICTURE SO HE CAN FOLLOW THE STORY

HUSBAND SAYS HE CAN STAY AWAKE NOW AND SCOWLS, TRYING TO KEEP EYES OPEN

SUDDENLY BECOMES AWARE OF A RHYTHMIC SNORE ON HER LEFT, GETTING LOUDER

DECIDES SHE WON'T SEE MUCH OF PICTURE HERSELF AT THIS RATE AND TAKES HIM HOME

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### S'MATTER POP—

OH, YES, JUST ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE SCARECROWS!

POP, LOOK!

POP, HOW COME THEY PUT AN OVERCOAT ON IT IN THIS AWFUL HOT WEATHER?

Y'OTTA SPEAK TO THA FARMAR, TUH, POP?

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### TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Picture Must Go On!

WELL, BILL, HOW IS 'MID-NIGHT PATROL' PROGRESSING?

WON'T BE LONG NOW, PAUL—WE'VE GOT THE CREAM OF IT IN THE CANS OVER AT THE CUTTING ROOM

YOU'VE SURE HAD A HARD SIEGE OF IT ON THIS PICTURE. IT'S BEEN A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

EVERY PICTURE HAS ITS TOUGH BREAKS—BUT I WANT THIS ONE TO BE AN EPIC—A STORY THAT WILL PORTRAY THE TRUTH OF AVIATION—AND DEPICT ITS TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE IN WARFARE AS WELL AS IN PEACE

BILL, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT DOUG'S CHANCES? YOU SEE—I KNEW HIM OVERSEAS—AND HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A CHAP WHO WOULD MURDER ANYONE.

THAT'S FOR THE JURY TO DECIDE, PAUL—WE CAN'T HELP HIM NOW.

HAL FORREST

### BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Always Ready With One!

GOY, ARE YOU SAYING TO SLEEP ALL DAY? WE'RE MOVIN'!

HONEST?

MORNIN', LAD! WE'LL SOON BE OFF DEAD DOG REEF, BUT NOT SO SOON AS OLD CAP'N IKE EXPECTED—

WHY SO?

I'M MINUS A SAILOR, THAT'S WHY—OH, NOTHIN' SERIOUS—SAM SCIPPINS HAD TO GO AN' LET A CRATE FALL ON HIM—

—IT TORE A GASH IN HIS LEG BUT I BANDAGED HIM UP AN' PUT HIM IN SICK BAY—NOW, LAD, DON'T LOOK SO STUNNED! CAP'N IKE WILL HAVE OLD SAM AS GOOD AS NEW IN NO TIME!

EDWIN ALGER

### THE NEBBES—Discord

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU—SNEAKING OUT BEFORE I WAKE UP? WHO AM I AROUND HERE?

YOU KNOW I WAS NEVER ANY GOOD AT JOKES OR PUZZLES AND THERE'S NO REASON TO SNEAK OUT ON YOUR SLUMBER—I COULD WALK OUT WITH A BRASS BAND FOR THATS ONE THING YOU DO WELL.

LISTEN, I MAY LIKE SLEEP AND IT'S ONLY GOOD HEALTH AND A CLEAR CONSCIENCE THAT CAN BRING THAT ABOUT AND I MAY NOT BE THE SMARTEST BUSINESS MAN BUT I DO KNOW THAT YOU'D LOOK A LOT BETTER UPSTAIRS WITH A SEWING BASKET IN YOUR LAP.

ALL RIGHT—ALL RIGHT! BUT DON'T COME UPSTAIRS AND TELL ME WHAT A HARD JOB YOU'VE GOT— IF I WAS AN ACROBAT, I COULD DO YOUR JOB STANDING ON MY HANDS!

SOL HESS

### BRINGING UP FATHER

NOW LISTEN—MY SON—I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.

THAT'S BETTER THAN HAVING TO HEAR MOTHER SING

AN' REMEMBER—SON—WHEN I'M TELLING YOU TAKE YOUR FATHER'S ADVICE—ETC.—ETC.—

I'M LISTENIN', DAD—

NO DOUBT.

AN' IN CONCLUSION—LET ME SAY—THAT IF YOU AVOID ALL THE TEMPTATIONS I'VE JUST TOLD YOU ABOUT—YOU'LL BE A FINE MAN—

BUT, DAD! HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THESE THINGS THAT YOU TELL ME NOT TO DO?

GEORGE MCMANUS

### Torture Tested Car Coming to Medford Monday

Torture tested car which has made history for the General Petroleum corporation on the coast and the Socony Vacuum company in the East will make its appearance in Medford Monday.

The well-known car will be driven on the principal streets of this city during the day and will be displayed by independent General dealers here as well as at company-owned stations, according to an announcement made by Bob Franks, manager in Medford for the General Petroleum corporation.

T. M. Higgins, southern Oregon district manager for the General Petroleum corporation, will leave Medford today for Grants Pass, where he will meet the Torture car and escort it to this city.

The General Petroleum Torture car made the transcontinental trip from New York to the Pacific coast without a radiator cooling assistance, demonstrating the performance of Mobiloil and Mobilgas under extreme heat conditions.

### PRESBYTERIAN REJECTS PROPOSAL IS REJECTED

OXFORD, Ohio, June 23.—(AP)—The general assembly of the United Presbyterian church in North America today decisively rejected a proposal to merge with the Presbyterian church in the U. S. A.

The vote was 113 to 113. A two-thirds majority was required for approval.

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