

I did not kill Osborne

By VICTOR BRIDGES

SYNOPSIS: Nicholas Trench has proof, now, that he was not the murderer of John Osborne—and he needs it, because although he had been acquitted of the deed, many believed he was guilty. And Molly O'Brien, whom Nick loves, has found the evidence that Osborne had stolen from her. But they have a fresh problem—how to escape from Peter Olin, Bolshevik spy who will stop at nothing to get the formula. Molly, Jerry, Margaret, their friends, and Nick are boarding Jerry's yacht.

Chapter 15 RACE

IT was only a short pull—forty yards at the utmost—but with the spray splashing over us at every stroke we were all four drenched to the skin by the time we got on board.

George, who was waiting for us on deck, heralded our approach by a chorus of staccato barks, his enthusiasm culminating in a frantic attempt to lick each of our faces in turn as we climbed up over the side.

"What about a hot drink and a mouthful of biscuit straight away?" suggested Jerry. "I could do with it for one, and Heaven knows when we shall get another chance."

"I'll put the Primus on," Jimmy wriggled out of his dripping mackintosh. "You'd better take this back now, sir. You'll be wanting it if we're going out amongst that lot."

He disappeared briskly through the cabin door, and after a meditative glance seaward Jerry turned to us.

"Of course," he observed, "miracles do happen occasionally, but somehow or other I don't altogether like the look of this one. Seems just a little too good to be true."

"I've the same pleasant feeling myself," I admitted.

"We're in for something—that's certain—and, what's more, it won't be long in coming. Now they know we've got the formula..." He broke off. "How's the shoulder, Nick?"

"None too gay," I replied. "Still, my left arm's sound enough."

He nodded. "That's something. I can manage all right for the present, but if we have to clear out in a bit of a hurry, I shall want you to stand by for the tiller."

"What are you going to do?" I inquired.

"Just get things ready. It will be another forty minutes at least before the bar's really safe, but there's no harm in making a few preparations. You two stay here, and for the love of Mike, keep your eyes open."

He left us abruptly, and moving forward into the bows, started to haul in the slack of the anchor chain. Down below, through the open door of the cabin, I could hear Jimmy pumping up the Primus.

"I'd give a lot to know what's happened to our dear friend Orlow," I said. "Where do you suppose he was making for when he slipped off from the factory?"

"I've been trying to work it out," Molly sat down beside me on the wet cabin top. "I believe he meant to go back to the boat. He'd finished with us—at least, so he thought—but that was no use unless he could get rid of the others too."

"I don't know how he was going to do it I expect he had some cunning and horrible plan to make it look as if we'd all been killed in the explosion. Anyhow, he certainly wouldn't waste time. He'd already sent one of his men to watch the farm, and..."

"BUT when he found we'd escaped," I broke in, "why didn't he finish us off then? What chance should we have had against a crowd of armed toughs?"

She shook her head. "It's got to look like an accident, Nick. After all this isn't Russia. You can't shoot down four people and just leave their bodies lying about on the marsh. Why, even now, when he knows..."

"Listen!"

I gripped hold of her wrist, and for a tense second we both sat there in breathless silence. Through the moaning of the wind, from somewhere far away up the creek, came a faint, unmistakable sound. It was the purring sput of a marine engine.

"Hear that?" With the swiftness of a cat Jerry was back again beside us. "A ten-horse Kelvin from the sound of it. Chuck off those ropes, man, and get hold of the tiller. If we're not out of this quick, it's all up with us."

He was gone again in a flash, and for two minutes of feverish activity

the world seemed to consist of soaked canvas and recalcitrant knots.

I was dimly conscious of the crash of the anchor, and the wild guttering of a rebellious jib; then, still in hand, I found myself crouching forward on the wet counter, while foot by foot Jerry hauled up the struggling mainsail.

"That's all right. Let her come." Round we swung, heeling over to our lee gunwale, and taking in a rush of water that surged furiously up the deck.

With only one arm at my disposal, it was as much as I could do to battle against the force of the gale. Something like a red-hot gimlet seemed to be boring vigorously into my damaged shoulder, and every wave that slapped against our bows sent a shower of stinging spray into my eyes.

Through it all the menacing throb behind us grew clearer and clearer. "I can see them now, Nick. They're just coming round the bend."

Molly's voice was as steady as usual, and glancing back up the wind-swept creek, I had a momentary glimpse of our pursuing enemy. She was a powerful looking cutter, half as large again as ourselves, and in addition to her engine, she was forging along under every strip of canvas that she was capable of carrying.

"Thanks, old man, I'll take her on now. You get down into the well, Molly."

Jerry, who had already possessed himself of the tiller, slipped deftly into my place, and edging out of his way, I peered through the flying spume at the white-crested turmoil ahead of us.

"Looks ugly," he remarked, "but it's our only chance. Now they know we've got the paper those devils won't care a curse what happens. They'll shoot us down like rabbits, and then make for that ship of theirs."

I FISHED out the revolver which I had stuffed away into my side pocket. "They'll have to hurry," I muttered. "If they don't catch us before we reach the bar..."

"That's what I'm counting on," Jerry laughed grimly. "They must draw at least a couple of feet more than we do, and with any luck there's an almighty smash coming for somebody."

He eased off the mainsheet, and with the wind dead behind us, the Seagull heaved and smashed her way joyously through the on-rushing tide. "Better lie down, Nick," he added, "it would spoil all the fun if you got a bullet through your head."

His advice struck me as sound, and stretching myself out flat I looked back over the foaming wake which spread out in a broad fan astern. With the help of her engine the pursuing cutter was overhauling us rapidly.

In the bright light of the moon which now shone down through a gap in the cloud bank, I could see her crew of four as plainly as though it were daytime. One of them, a huge, bareheaded fellow, who was steering, I recognized at once. It was my old acquaintance, the big Russian sailor.

With his bestial features and enormous breadth of shoulder he looked for all the world like some monstrous ape, but it was on the man who was crouching motionless beside him that my eyes instinctively riveted themselves.

A cold blast of hatred went through my heart as I stared at that still sinister figure. He sat there, bent slightly forward, his face a white mask in the moonlight. Except for the slight swaying of his body as the ship rose and fell, he never stirred or varied his position.

Not more than a hundred yards now separated us, and every moment the roar of the sea as it pounded against the bar became louder and more strident.

Twisting myself around, I took a glance forward over the plunging hobstap. Directly ahead of us the line of breakers that stretched from shore to shore was broken by a narrow strip of dark, swirling water.

On each side of this, over the crest of the ridge a white maelstrom boiled and bubbled, while here and there patches of black sand still showed amongst the frothing turmoil.

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Tomorrow, an accident decides the race.

TABLE ROCK PHONES COST RESIDENTS \$7 FOR YEAR'S SERVICE

TABLE ROCK, Jan. 19—(Special.) At the annual meeting of the Table Rock Telephone Co., held January 4, an assessment of \$1 per share was levied for 1934 maintenance. Including the switchboard charge of \$6 per year and the maintenance charge of a total cost of \$7 per year. Officers elected at the annual meeting were R. E. Nealon, president; E. C. Hamilton, vice president and J. L. Nealon, secretary-treasurer. A crew of CCC boys will start construction work soon on a forest service telephone line through the Table Rock community and into the Mesquite district. The new line will start at the Four Corners Service station, following the west side of the road to the Table Rock store, running west from there on the south side of the road. An agreement is being drawn whereby the wires of the Table Rock Telephone Co. can be placed on the new poles.

Communications

Stray Dogs and Humane Society To the Editor: I noticed in your issue of the 16th an item regarding stray dogs for adoption at the kennels of the Humane society. Often, I believe, a person is deterred from adopting a stray through too vivid an imagination as to what may happen. But let the doubter consider this: a stray is a stray because it is lost. A vagabond dog is not a lost dog; rather is it a happy-go-lucky prospecting canine only interested in chicken coops, rabbit hutch and garbage pails. But the lost dog has, more often than not, been reared in comfortable surroundings and trained in the ways of civilization; and like a child which loses its mother's hand in a crowded department store, is frantic with terror over the size of the world in which it finds itself alone. Blessed indeed is the stray which is brought to your wonderful Humane society and given a chance at a home with human love once more.

On the day before Christmas a distraught black dog raced madly up and down the highway in Gold Hill, dodging automobiles with a success which was heaven-sent as she very evidently was too terrified to know what she was doing. We finally caught her and brought her home, a fluffy, wistful, loving girl-dog with pretty manners and appealing ways—somebody's beloved pet. She annexed our own dog's cushion the day she arrived, (which showed that she was used to luxuries!) and she repaid the care and affection we gave her thru the few days we were able to keep her, with the most absolute devotion and self-effacement.

She, with a dozen or so other little dogs with hearts-of-gold, is at the Humane society's kennels. They need homes, and home need them. MRS. A. C. M. (Name on file) Gold Hill.

Granddaughter Bess: If I had only known when I was your age about Wrigley's Double Mint Gum, I might still have my own teeth. Grandma.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

ABORTION CONTROL TO GET UNDER WAY

The federal abortion control work for Jackson county will get underway with a meeting in the courthouse auditorium, Monday night, at 8:00 o'clock Dr. Dan B. Foster, federal veterinarian for Oregon and Roger Morse, extension dairymen, Corvallis, will be present to give the details of the campaign. "Indemnities will be paid for reactors," stated County Agent Fowler today, "and the tests are paid for by the government. Contracts must be signed by the farm operator in which he promises to do his part in freeing his herd of this disease. While Jackson county is pretty well out in front in abortion control, having started testing in 1928, there are still many herds that have not been reached. This is an opportunity for every farmer to have his herd tested free of charge and receive some remuneration for reactors." All cattle owners are invited to attend the meeting. Other meetings of similar nature will be held in various parts of the county later.

C. of C. Has Copies Legislative Bills

All house bills before the legislature in Salem are on file at the Medford chamber of commerce, according to A. H. Banwell, secretary of that organization, and may be seen by all those who care to do so. A. A. WEAR BETTER CLOTHES Suits and Overcoats to measure, \$21.50 up. Klein the Tailor, Upstairs.

THE KNOT By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POP—



By C. M. Payne

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Just Pretending!



By Hal Forrest

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Discovered!



By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBS—The Pals



By Sol Hess

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

THE GRANGE

The first business session of Applegate Grange No. 756 was held at the Orange hall January 12th with the newly installed officers presiding. Estlin Taylor, master, announced the following committee appointments for 1935: Agriculture: Charles Elmore, Bernard Andren, Carl Franzen. Finance: Herbert Elmore, S. L. Johnston, Margaret Knutzen. Relief: Mrs. Mrs. S. L. Johnston, Mrs. Hill, Walter Miller. Ways and Means: Frank Knutzen, Tom Mee, Clara O'Brien, C. R. Hill, Mildred Taylor. Educational: Ethel Ludwig, Herbert Elmore, Martha Mee. Ludvig, Charles Elmore, Margaret Mee. Legislative: Ben Ellis, Frank Knutzen, John O'Brien. H. E. C. Mrs. Louis Hansen, Della Edwards, Effie Mee. Insurance agent: Benjamin Ellis. Juvenile matron: Martha Mee. Advertising agent: Dorothy Andren. Reception: Nellie Ridings, Walter

Miller, Eva Johnston. Charles Elmore, lecturer, presented the following program during the lecture hour: Group singing. Solo, Jean Moran, accompanied by her sister at the piano. Both are from San Francisco. A committee of three composed of Benjamin Ellis, Herbert Elmore and Frank Knutzen conveyed interesting material on the Townsend old age pension plan. Miss June Moran presented a delightful piano solo number. New and exciting games were introduced by the lecturer which proved delightful entertainment. Mr. Elmore announced that the next lecture program would be devoted to Scotch varieties in memory of Robert Burns. Phone 542 We'll haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service. Warrant Call School District No. 20 Warrants \$21 to \$31 inclusive are called for payment at Farmers & Fruitgrowers Bank. Interest to cease January 21, 1935. S. S. ABBOTT, Clerk. School Dist. No. 20.