

THE BOOMERANG CLUE

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS: Lady Frances has spent, otherwise known as Frankie, has finally gotten track of Bassington-French, the perfectly plausible man she insists is connected with the death of one Alexander Fritchard, and an attempt on Bobby Jones' life as well. She tells Bobby that he must sell her a secondhand car which she will smash against the wall of Bassington-French's house, and then pretend illness so that she will be taken into the place. She is explaining to Bobby how George Arbuthnot, a young doctor, fits in.

Chapter 15

FALSE MOUSTACHE

GEORGE, being conveniently near, went on Frankie, "shouts 'I am a doctor. Stand back everybody!—that is, if there's anybody to stand back. We must take her into that house. I must be able to make a thorough examination.'"

"I am carried to the best spare room, the Bassington-Frenches either sympathetically or bitterly resisting; but in any case, George will overbear them."

"George makes his examination and emerges with his verdict. Happily, it is not so serious as he thought. No bones broken, but danger of concussion. I must on no account be moved for two or three days. After that I shall be able to return to London."

"And then George departs, and it's up to me to ingratiate myself with the household."

"And where do I come in?" "You don't."

"But look here—'My dear child, do remember that Bassington-French knows you. He doesn't know me from Adam. And I'm in a frightfully strong position because I've got a title. You see how useful that is. I'm not just a stray young woman, gaining admission to the house for mysterious purposes. I am an Earl's daughter and therefore highly respectable. And George is a real doctor, and everything is quite above suspicion.'"

"Oh, I suppose it's all right," said Bobby unhappily.

"It's a remarkably well-planned scheme, I think," said Frankie with pride.

"And I don't do anything at all!" asked Bobby. He still felt injured—much like a dog who has been unexpectedly deprived of a bone. This, he felt, was his own particular crime and now he was being ousted.

"Of course you do, darling. You grow a moustache."

"Oh, I grow a moustache, do I?" "Yes. How long will it take?" "Two or three weeks, I expect."

"Heaven! I'd no idea it was such a slow process. Can't you speed it up?"

"No. Why can't I wear a false one?"

"They always look so false, and they twist or come off or smell of spirit-gum. Wait a minute, though—I believe there is a kind you can get stuck on hair by hair, so to speak, that absolutely defies detection. I expect a theatrical wig-maker would do it for you."

"He'd probably think I was trying to escape from justice."

"It doesn't matter what he thinks."

"Once I've got the moustache, what do I do?"

"Put on a chauffeur's uniform and drive the Bentley down to Staverley."

"Oh, I see," Bobby brightened. "You see my idea is this," said Frankie. "Nobody looks at a chauffeur in the way they look at a person. In any case Bassington-French only saw you for a minute or two, and he must have been too rattled wondering if he could change the photographs in time to look at you much. You wear, just a young golfing ass to him."

"It isn't like the Caymans, who eat opposite you and talked to you and who were deliberately trying to sum you up. I'd bet anything that seeing you in chauffeur's uniform, Bassington-French wouldn't recognize you even without the moustache. He might just possibly think that your face reminded him of somebody—no more than that. And with the moustache it ought to be perfectly safe."

"Now tell me, what do you think of the plan?"

BOBBY turned, it over in his mind. "To tell you the truth, Frankie," he said generously, "I think it's pretty good."

"In that case," said Frankie briskly, "let's go and buy some cars. I say, I think George has broken your bed."

"It doesn't matter," said Bobby hospitably. "It was never a particularly good bed."

They descended to the garage where a nervous-looking young man with a curious lack of chin and an agreeable smile greeted them with

a vague haw-haw-haw. His general appearance was slightly marred by the fact that his eyes had a distinct disinclination to look in the same direction.

"Hullo, Badger," said Bobby. "You remember Frankie, don't you?"

Badger clearly didn't, but he said "Haw haw haw" again in an amiable manner.

"Last time I saw you," said Frankie, "you were head downward in the mud, and we had to pull you out by the legs."

"No, not really," said Badger. "Why, that m-m must have been W-w-w-wales."

"Quite right," said Frankie. "It was."

"I always was a p-p-p-putrid r-r-rider," said Badger. "I s-s-s-still am," he added mournfully.

"Frankie wants to buy a car," said Bobby.

"Two cars," said Frankie. "George has got to have one too. He's crashed his at the moment."

"We can hire him one," said Bobby.

"Well, come and look at what we've got in s-s-stock," said Badger.

"They look very smart," said Frankie, dazzled by lurid hues of scarlet and apple green.

"They look all right," said Bobby darkly.

Badger cast his partner a look of reproach.

"That Standard is pretty much on its last legs," mused Bobby. "But I think it would just get you there. This one is a bit too good for the job. She'll go at least two hundred before breaking down."

"All right," said Frankie. "I'll have the Standard."

Badger drew his colleague a little aside. "W-w-w-what do you think about p-p-p-price?" he murmured.

"Don't want to s-s-s-stick a friend of yours too much. T-t-ten pounds?"

"Ten pounds is all right," said Frankie, entering the discussion. "I'll pay for it now."

"Who is she really?" asked Badger in a loud whisper.

Bobby whispered back. "F-f-first time I ever knew any one with a t-t-title who o-o-c-could pay cash," said Badger with respect.

Bobby followed the other two out to the Bentley.

"When is this business going to take place?" he demanded.

"The sooner the better," said Frankie. "We thought to-morrow afternoon."

"Look here, can't I be there? I'll put on a beard if you like."

"Certainly not," said Badger. "A beard would probably ruin every thing by falling off at the wrong moment. But I don't see why you shouldn't be a motorcyclist—with a lot of cap and goggles. What do you think, George?"

George Arbuthnot spoke for the second time. "All right," he said. "The more the merrier."

His voice was even more melancholy than before.

THE rendezvous for the great accident party was fixed at a spot about a mile from Staverley village where the road to Staverley branched off from the main road to Andover.

All three arrived there safely, though Frankie's Standard had shown unmistakable signs of decrepitude at every hill. The time fixed had been one o'clock.

"We don't want to be interrupted when we're staging the thing," Frankie had said. "Hardly anything ever goes down this road. I should imagine, but at lunch time we ought to be perfectly safe."

They proceeded for half a mile on the side road and then Frankie pointed out the place she had selected for the accident to take place.

"It couldn't be better in my opinion," she said. "Straight down this hill, and then, as you see, the road gives a sudden very sharp turn round that bulging bit of wall. The wall is actually the wall of Merryway Court. If we start the car and let it run down the hill it will crash straight into the wall and something pretty drastic ought to happen to it."

"I should say so," Bobby agreed. "But one of us ought to be on the lookout at the corner to be sure nobody is coming round it from the opposite direction."

"Quite right," said Frankie. "We don't want to involve anybody else in a mess. George can take his car down there and turn it as though he were coming from the other direction. Then when he waves a handkerchief it will show that all is clear."

"Your's looking very pale Frankie," said Bobby anxiously. "Are you sure you're all right?"

"Unconscious," Frankie is carried into Merryway Court Monday.

WOULD USE LASH ON WIFE BEATER

PORTLAND, Ore., Feb. 20.—(AP)—Judge Donald E. Long, declaring the defendant deserved punishment at the now outlawed whipping post, imposed the maximum sentence on Cas-

per Millitz, convicted today of tearing the clothes from his wife and his 17-year-old daughter and brutally beating them.

Turn shreds of clothing and strands of hair from the heads of the victims were shown in evidence. Millitz was charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct.

"If it were within my power I would personally recommend the defendant be whipped publicly and then jailed," said Judge Long.

"However, in obedience to court regulations, I sentence the defendant to serve six months in the county jail and pay a fine of \$500."

Wellington, New Zealand, Feb. 20.—(AP)—Squadron Leader Malcolm MacGregor, world war ace and frequent competitor in long distance flying races, was killed at Wellington's airport today when his plane crashed in attempting to land in a gale.

Popcorn is "right" if its volume increases 20 times after popping.

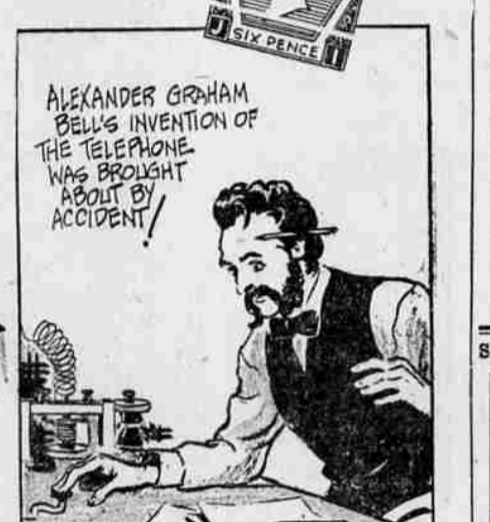
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



HENRY ASHURST—UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM ARIZONA, WAS LAUGHED AT BY PLAYMATES WHEN, AT 10 YEARS, HE SIGNED HIMSELF "HENRY ASHURST, UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM ARIZONA"

THE PORTRAIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA HAS BEEN ON STAMPS OF 1325 DIFFERENT DESIGNS AND VALUES ISSUED BY THE BRITISH EMPIRE...



ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL'S INVENTION OF THE TELEPHONE WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY ACCIDENT!

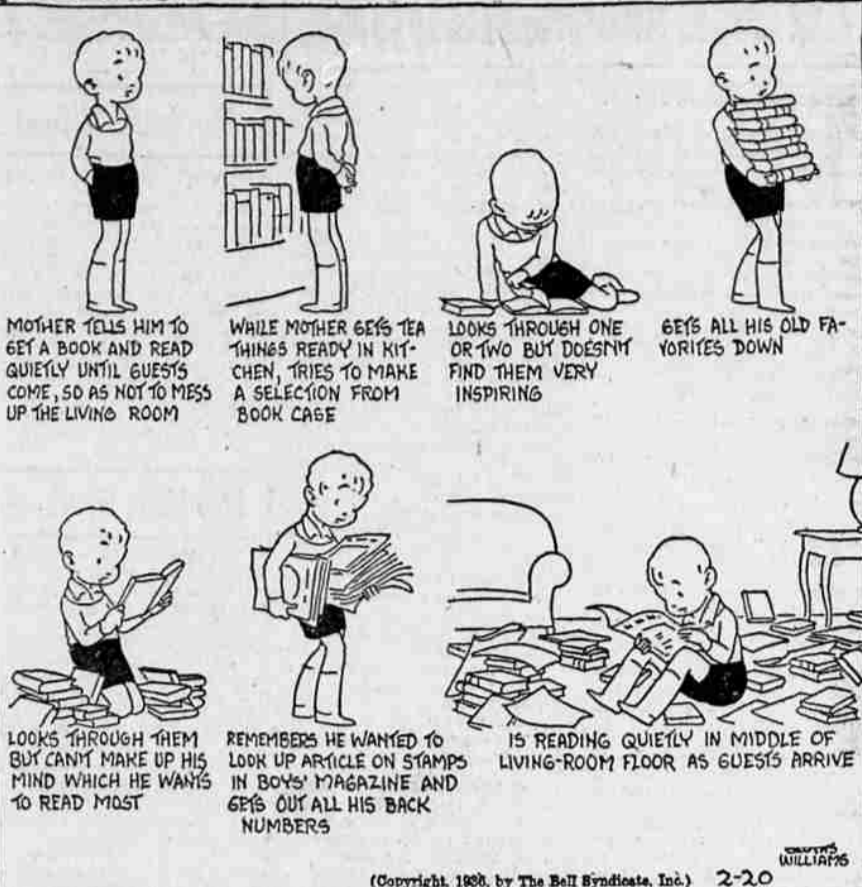
2-17-36 Although the Confederate States of America printed a great amount of paper currency, only four coins were ever minted by the southern states. These coins were half-dollars, all struck in April, 1861, at the mint in New Orleans. It was planned to mint an entire series of coins for use in the southern nation, and in April of the first year of the war the secretary of the Confederate states treasury ordered 50-cent pieces minted at New Orleans. The die was made and four pieces were minted, but after that operations were stopped because of the difficulty in obtaining bullion.

Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone had its beginning in his attempt to perfect a telegraph instrument which would send several messages over one wire, all struck at the same time. While working on this he hit upon the idea of sending human voice over the wire. His financial backers, however, felt that this was too visionary a project for them to invest in, so Bell continued with his "harmonic telegraph."

In the mechanics of the "harmonic telegraph" short lengths of spring steel were used as the transmitter—each tuned to a similar steel reed at the receiving end of the

QUIET READING

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



MOTHER TELLS HIM TO GET A BOOK AND READ QUIETLY UNTIL GUESTS COME, SO AS NOT TO MESS UP THE LIVING ROOM

WHILE MOTHER GETS TEA THINGS READY IN KITCHEN, TRIES TO MAKE A SELECTION FROM BOOK CASE

LOOKS THROUGH ONE OR TWO BUT DOESN'T FIND THEM VERY INSPIRING

GETS ALL HIS OLD FAVORITES DOWN

LOOKS THROUGH THEM BUT CAN'T MAKE UP HIS MIND WHICH HE WANTS TO READ MOST

REMEMBERS HE WANTED TO LOOK UP ARTICLE ON STAMPS IN BOY'S MAGAZINE AND GETS OUT ALL HIS BACK NUMBERS

IS READING QUIETLY IN MIDDLE OF LIVING-ROOM FLOOR AS GUESTS ARRIVE

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S'MATTER POP-

By C. M. PAYNE



HE PROMISED HE WOULDN'T TRACK ANY MORE MUD INTO THE HOUSE

BUT-

WELL! HE IS STILL DOING IT ISN'T HE?

BUT IF YOU WILL WEIGH THE RESIDUE AND COMPARE, I'M SURE IT WON'T BE A BIT MORE!

SO

AWK

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Skeleton on the Desert!



FORCED DOWN BY MOTOR TROUBLE, PANTHOPISTOLA LANDED IN A DESERT AREA ON THE INLAND SIDE OF THE ISLAND IN THE SKY—

WOW! THIS IS MOST TERRIBLE!—HOPE I CAN GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE I LOOK LIKE THAT!

THE POOR FELLOW LEFT A MESSAGE—

INDIAN GUIDES DESERTED—AFRAID OF DEVILS IN ISLAND IN THE SKY—THIS SOUNDS SILLY—BUT I AM DYING—TAKE CARE OF MY DAUGHTER, JUNE—

"DEVILS IN THE ISLAND IN THE SKY"—H-MM—THAT'S JUST WHAT THAT FISHERMAN SAID—

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Into the Woods!



YOU'VE GAVED MY LIFE, BEN WEBSTER, AND I'LL NEVER FORGET IT! NOW, HOW CAN WE GET OFF THE ISLAND?

WE'VE GOT A BOAT—

"Quite right," said Frankie. "We don't want to involve anybody else in a mess. George can take his car down there and turn it as though he were coming from the other direction. Then when he waves a handkerchief it will show that all is clear."

GOSH, WE CAN'T LET THOSE DOGS BE BURNED ALIVE—AND THAT GOES FOR MAD PETE, TOO—

YOU'RE RIGHT, SON! THE DOGS KNOW ME BY NOW—I'LL HELP!

THE HOWLS COME FROM THAT WAY, MR. THORPE—

THEN SOMETHINGS HAPPENED TO PETE AND THE DOGS ARE STAYING BY HIM—

THE NEBBS—Stormy Days



WELL, I UNDERSTAND NEBS IS GOING TO SELL OUT ON ACCOUNT OF YOU... AND WHAT WILL BECOME OF US?... AND I'LL SET YOU NEVER TRED TO MAKE UP WITH HIM

YES, I TRIED! I HUMBLIED MYSELF TO SPEAK TO HIM KINDLY. I HAD IN MY VOICE THE REGRET OF A SINNER AND HE SPURNED ME! TREATED ME LIKE HE WAS A HANGMAN AND I WAS HIS CUSTOMER!

"Unconscious," Frankie is carried into Merryway Court Monday.

AND IT WAS ALL OUR FAULT... FOR A MAN YOUR SIZE, YOU HAVE MORE MISTAKES STORED UP IN THAT CARCASS OF YOURS THAN THERE ARE IN BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES!

GO AHEAD! I'VE BEEN A MISTAKE TO YOU ALL MY MARRIED LIFE, BUT THE BIGGEST ONE I MADE YOU HAVEN'T MENTIONED... THAT'S WHEN I GOT MARRIED!

AND IT WAS ALL OUR FAULT... FOR A MAN YOUR SIZE, YOU HAVE MORE MISTAKES STORED UP IN THAT CARCASS OF YOURS THAN THERE ARE IN BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES!

AND IT WAS ALL OUR FAULT... FOR A MAN YOUR SIZE, YOU HAVE MORE MISTAKES STORED UP IN THAT CARCASS OF YOURS THAN THERE ARE IN BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES!

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G. PASS ATTORNEY SUICIDES CLIMAX MAY GET PAROLE

SALEM, Feb. 20.—(AP)—James Johnston, former Grants Pass attorney, will be paroled from the state penitentiary March 13, subject to approval or rejection of Governor Martin, members of the state parole board announced. His request for parole as soon as he served his minimum sentence was granted at the recent meeting of the board.

SUICIDES CLIMAX FORBIDDEN LOVE

OKLAHOMA, Feb. 20.—(AP)—The forbidden romance of an Oklahoma high school girl and a young wooden mill overseer ended here today, a medical examiner said, in what appeared to be a suicide pact.

Johnston was sentenced to serve three years on a charge of larceny by embezzlement. On March 13 he will have served his one-year minimum sentence.

Cleaved in each other's arms, the bodies of Ethel Kenston, 15, missing since Feb. 7, and Freeman Young, 27, formerly of Pensacola, N. H., were found in an automobile in a garage on the farm of Mrs. Aida Goodwin, whose Young boarded. A rubber hose attached to the exhaust pipe entered a window of the car.

The medical examiner reported the deaths were caused by carbon monoxide poisoning.