

THE BOOMERANG CLUE BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS: Frankie Derwent is not so sure Roger Basington-French murdered the man identified as Alexander Pritchard as she does when she stopped an "accident" with the help of Bobby Jones, and secured admittance to the Basington-French country house. She is convinced also that the victim's real name was Alan Carstairs, although that remains to be proved. Meanwhile the name of a Dr. Nicholson, a Canadian, running a drug cure nearby, has entered the equation.

Chapter 20 DR. NICHOLSON

FRANKIE attacked Sylvia the following morning. She started by asking carelessly:

"What was that man's name you mentioned last night? Alan Carstairs, was it? I feel sure I've heard that name before."

"I dare say you have. He's rather a celebrity in his way, I believe. He's a Canadian—a naturalist and big-game hunter and explorer. I don't really know him. Some friends of ours, the Rivingtons, brought him down here one day for lunch. A very attractive man—big and bronzed and nice blue eyes."

"I was sure I'd heard of him." "He'd never been over to this country before, I believe. Last year he went a tour through Africa with that millionaire man, John Savage—the one who thought he had cancer and killed himself in that tragic way. Carstairs has been all over the world, East Africa, South America—simply everywhere, I believe."

"Sounds a nice adventurous person," said Frankie.

"Oh, he was. Distinctly attractive."

"Funny—his being so like the man who fell over the cliff at March-bolt," said Frankie.

"I wonder if everyone has a double."

They compared instances, but Frankie was careful to make no further references to Alan Carstairs. In her own mind she was quite convinced that the victim of the cliff tragedy at Marchbolt had been Alan Carstairs. He fulfilled all the conditions. He had no intimate friends or relations in this country, and his disappearance was unlikely to be noticed for some time.

Very good then. The next step was to learn more about Alan Carstairs. His connection with the Basington-French seemed to have been of the slightest. He had been brought down there quite by chance by friends. What was the name?—Rivington. Frankie stored it in her memory for future use.

"I don't want to be poisoned or knocked on the head," thought Frankie with a grimace. "They were ready enough to bump off Bobby for practically nothing at all—"

Her thoughts flew off at a tangent to that tantalizing phrase that had started the whole business. Evans! Who was Evans? Where did Evans fit in?

"A dope gang," decided Frankie. Perhaps some relative of Carstairs was being victimized, and he had determined to bust it up. Evans may have been one of the gang who had retired and gone to Wales to live. Carstairs had bribed Evans to give the others away, and Evans had consented and Carstairs went there to see him, and someone followed him and killed him.

Was that somebody Roger Basington-French? It seemed very unlikely. The Caymans, now, were far more what Frankie imagined a gang of dope-smugglers would be likely to be.

THAT evening Dr. Nicholson and his wife were expected to dinner. Frankie was finishing dressing when she heard their car drive up to the front door. Her window faced their way, and she looked out.

A tall man was just alighting from the driver's seat of a dark-blue Talbot.

Frankie withdrew her head thoughtfully.

Carstairs had been a Canadian. Dr. Nicholson was a Canadian. And Dr. Nicholson had a dark-blue Talbot.

Dr. Nicholson was a big man with a manner that suggested great reserves of power. His speech was slow, and on the whole he said very little, but he contrived somehow to make every word sound significant. He wore strong glasses, and behind them his very pale blue eyes glittered reflectively.

His wife was a slender creature of perhaps twenty-seven, pretty, indeed beautiful. She seemed, Frankie thought, slightly nervous and chattered rather feverishly as though to conceal the fact.

"You had an accident, I hear, Lady Frances," said Dr. Nicholson as he took his seat beside her at the dinner table.

Frankie explained the catastrophe. "That was too bad," he said, as she finished, having perhaps made a more detailed story of it than seemed strictly necessary. "But you seem to have made a very good recovery."

"We won't admit she's cured yet. We're keeping her with us," said Sylvia.

The Doctor's gaze went to Sylvia. Something like a very faint smile came to his lips, but passed almost immediately.

"I should keep her with you as long as possible," he said gravely.

Frankie was sitting between her host and Dr. Nicholson. Henry Basington-French was decidedly moody to-night. His hands twitched, he ate next to nothing, and he took no part in the conversation.

Mrs. Nicholson, opposite, had a difficult time with him, and turned to Roger with obvious relief. She talked to him in a desultory fashion, but Frankie noticed that her eyes were never long absent from her husband's face.

Dr. Nicholson was talking about life in the country. "Do you know what a culture is, Lady Frances?"

"Do you mean book-learning?" asked Frankie, rather puzzled.

"No, no. I was referring to germs. They develop, you know, in specially prepared serum. The country, Lady Frances, is a little like that. There is time, and space, and infinite leisure—suitable conditions, you see, for development."

"Do you mean bad things?" asked Frankie.

"That depends, Lady Frances, on the kind of germ cultivated."

Idiotic conversation, thought Frankie. Why should it make you feel creepy? Yet it did! She said flippantly, "I expect I'm developing all sorts of dark qualities."

HE looked at her and said calmly: "Oh, no. I don't think so, Lady Frances. I think you would always be on the side of law and order."

Was there a faint emphasis on the word law?

Suddenly, across the table Mrs. Nicholson said, "My husband prides himself on summing up character."

Dr. Nicholson nodded his head gently. "Quite right, Mrs. Little things interest me." He turned to Frankie again. "I had heard of your accident, you know. One thing about it intrigued me very much."

"Yes," said Frankie, her heart beating suddenly.

"The doctor who was passing. The one who brought you in here."

"Yes?"

"He must have had a curious character—to turn his car before going to the rescue."

"I don't understand."

"Of course not. You were unconscious. But young Reeves, the messenger boy, came from Staverley on his bicycle, and no car passed him. Yet he comes round the corner, finds the smash, and the doctor's car pointing the same way he was going—towards London."

"You see the point? The Doctor did not come from the direction of Staverley, so he must have come the other way, down the hill. But in that case, his car should have been pointing toward Staverley. But it wasn't. Therefore he must have turned it."

"Unless he had come from Staverley some time before," said Frankie.

"Then his car would have been standing there as you came down the hill. Was it?"

"I don't remember," said Frankie.

"I don't think so."

"You sound like a detective, Jasper," said Mrs. Nicholson. "And all about nothing at all."

"Little things interest me," said Nicholson. He turned to his hostess and Frankie drew a breath of relief.

Why had he catechized her like that? How had he found out all about the accident? "Little things interest me," he had said. Was that all there was to it? Frankie remembered the dark-blue Talbot and the fact that Carstairs had been a Canadian. It seemed to her that Dr. Nicholson was a sinister man.

She kept out of his way after dinner, attaching herself to the gentle, fragile Mrs. Nicholson. She noticed that all the time Mrs. Nicholson's eyes still watched her husband. Was it love, Frankie wondered, or fear?

"Well," said Roger after they had gone, "what do you think of our Dr. Nicholson? A very forceful personality, hasn't he?"

"I'm like Sylvia," said Frankie. "I don't think I like him very much, I like her better."

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STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



THE MUSIC DOES NOT GO ROUND AND AROUND THE SOUND GOES ROUND AND AROUND BUT IT IS NOT MUSIC UNTIL IT COMES OUT HERE

HOP! INDIANS IN NEW MEXICO BURIED THEIR DEAD ON HIGH ROCK MESSAS WITH DIRT BROUGHT UP FROM THE VALLEYS BELOW

VENUS IS BEST SEEN ON EARTH WHEN IT IS NEITHER FULL, NOR BRIGHTEST, NOR FARTHEST FROM THE SUN, NOR NEAREST THE EARTH!

THOMAS FULLER—English historian—USUALLY WROTE BY PUTTING DOWN THE FIRST WORD OF EACH LINE, ALONG THE LEFT SIDE OF THE PAGE, AND THEN FILLING IN AFTER THEM

With the exception of the sun and moon, Venus is the brightest object that we see in the sky. Yet, strange as it seems, we do not see Venus best when it is brightest, or nearest us, or farthest from the sun in the sky.

When Venus is nearest us it is not at its brightest, and we can see but a crescent of it, like the new moon. When the planet presents a fully illuminated side to the earth, as the full moon, it is not at its best because when it is so far from the earth the size of it is dwarfed. When it is farthest from the sun it is not at its brightest. We see Venus best in an intermediate position, when it appears to be a well-illuminated thick crescent.

Thomas Fuller, seventeenth century English historian, had one of the most remarkable memories on record. He could repeat 800 unconnected words in order after hearing them twice, and could recite a like list of 800 strange names upon hearing them two or three times. He could also drive through London and back again over the same route, and then remember each sign he saw on the streets during the trip.

His method of writing was even more astounding. Fuller usually wrote by setting down a list of words in a column along the left hand side of the paper. Then he would go back to the beginning and fill out each line without making a change.

WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT THE PERFECT GUM THE STANDARD OF QUALITY

TAILSPIN TOMMY—An Important Discovery!



IN A SMALL ADOBE AT A FISHING VILLAGE IN THE WILD YUCATAN THREE PILOTS HAVE GATHERED TO COMPARE NOTES ON THEIR AERIAL SEARCH FOR TOMMY AND SKETER

—AND THAT'S ALL—THIS MESSAGE—I FOUND NEAR THE SKELETON—NO SIGNATURE—

PROBABLY "CONKED OUT" JUST WHEN HE WAS WRITING ABOUT HIS DAUGHTER, JUNE—

2430

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—New Job?



ALL RIGHT, THORPIE, I'LL TELL YA WHAT I WANT! THE FIRST BREAK I EVER GOT WAS WHEN I BLUMPED INTO BEN WEBSTER

I WAS JEST A POOR KID WITH A GAME LEG—WELL, I STILL GOT THE LEG, AN' THAT AIN'T BOTHERIN' ME BECAUSE I ALSO GOT SOMETHIN' ELSE—I GOT A FRIEND!

GO I DON'T WANT NONE O' YOUR JACK, SEE? ALL I WANT IS TO KEEP ON HOPPIN' ALONG WITH BEN, PROVIDIN' HELL LET ME—

Frankie sends an urgent message, tomorrow, to Bobby.

THE NEBBS—Somebody



WITH A PROSPECTIVE BUYER NEBB IS UABLE TO NAME A PRICE FOR HIS HOTEL

YOU HAVEN'T MADE MUCH MONEY HERE—IN FACT, ONE YEAR YOU WERE IN THE RED

YOUR PLACE IS RUN DOWN—NEEDS NEW FURNITURE, DRAPERIES, LINENS—IN FACT, MOST EVERYTHING NEW, AND THE PLACE HAS BEEN BADLY MANAGED

ANGUS AMPLE IS ANXIOUS TO BUY AND IS LOOKING OVER NEBB'S BOOKS SO THAT HE MIGHT MAKE AN OFFER

WHAT IS THEIR MISTAKE? THAT'S MY SOLUTION

BUT I CAN TAKE THIS PLACE AND MAKE MONEY WITH IT—BUILDING UP BROKEN-DOWN MISMATCHED HOTELS IS MY DISH—I LIKE TO SHOW PEOPLE THAT

2-22

THE FAMILY ALBUM—STAIRS By GLUYAS WILLIAMS 2-26



GOES UPSTAIRS TO GET SCISSORS FOR WIFE FROM HER WORK-BASKET

CALLS WHERE DID SHE SAY WORK-BASKET IS? CAN'T MAKE HER HEAR, AND COMES HALFWAY DOWN TO REPEAT QUERY

FLODS UPSTAIRS AGAIN

HEARS WIFE CALL AND RUNS DOWN TO SEE WHAT IT IS. FINDS SHE MERELY WANTS TO KNOW DID HE FIND IT? GOES UP AGAIN

GETS HALFWAY DOWN WITH SCISSORS WHEN WIFE CALLS TO BRING THE SPOOL OF BLACK SILK, TOO

RETRACES STEPS AND COMES DOWN AGAIN WITH SCISSORS AND SPOOL

DISCOVERS IT WAS THE EMBROIDERY SCISSORS SHE WANTED AND TRUDGES UP ONCE MORE

RETURNS WITH EMBROIDERY SCISSORS, WIFE REMARKING SHE DOESN'T SEE WHY A LITTLE ERRAND ALWAYS WEARS HIM OUT

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'MATTER POP—By C. M. PAYNE



AWK! LOOK AT THE DIRTY FACE!

HUH?

GO AWAY! I CAN'T LOOK!

WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO?

TURN OUT THE LIGHT!

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By HAL FORREST



JUST A THOUGHT—MAY NOT MEAN MUCH—BUT DO YOU CHAPS REMEMBER HAMILTON GRANT, THE NOTED ARCHEOLOGIST?

YOU MEAN—THE GRANT WHOSE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE FOURTEEN YEARS AGO MADE THE FRONT PAGES ALL OVER THE WORLD?

YES!—THIS SAME HAMILTON GRANT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS SMALL DAUGHTER WHEN HE DISAPPEARED—HER NAME—WAS—JUNE—

WE'VE MADE AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY, FELLOWS!—BUT WE HAVEN'T DISCOVERED YET WHERE TAILSPIN AND SKETER ARE—

GREAT JUMPING AIR BUMPS! YOU'RE RIGHT, HARRY!

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By EDWIN ALGER



BY JOVE, THAT WAS SPLENDIDLY SAID, ON THE PART OF BOTH OF YOU! AND I THINK YOU'RE JUST THE TWO FOR A JOB I HAVE THAT NEEDS DOING!

INDIANS CELEBRATE SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY

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CHEMUNAWA, Ore., Feb. 25.—(AP)—The best of 100-ton, games and dances executed in tribal costume ushered in the two-day celebration of the 50th anniversary of Chemunawa Indian school here yesterday. More than 250 alumni and former students were gathered here for the biggest celebration Chemunawa had ever witnessed. Alumni visitors were guests of the school and Capt. Paul T. Jackson at dinner last night, preceding the students' program featured by two plays depicting Indian legend, life and customs. "Emotion" Perfume by Vimay Chany, a favorite of movie stars. At Young's Drug Co., Main and Central.

MOVIE STAR'S CHILD UNDER KIDNAP GUARD

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., Feb. 26.—(AP)—Police guard was maintained today at the home of Virginia Bruce, screen actress, whose 3-year-old daughter, Susan Ann Gilbert, was reported threatened with kidnaping. Gladys Hall, film writer and Miss Bruce's personal representative, told detective an unidentified woman had warned her the blonde player and her child were in "greater danger and must be notified." WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass and will replace your broken windows reasonably. Townsbridge Cabinet Works. Use Mail Tribune want ads.