

THE BOOMERANG CLUE

By AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS: Frankie Derocet and Bobby Jones suspect that either Roger Bassington-French or Dr. Nicholson murdered Alan Carstairs. Frankie inclines toward the doctor, who runs a drug cure; Bobby toward Bassington-French chiefly because Frankie seems to like Roger. Bobby, posing as a solicitor, is pumping a Mrs. Rivington about Carstairs, and learns that the letter showed much interest in the Nicholson—which would be more to the point if either Frankie or Bobby could prove that Carstairs actually was the man who was murdered!

Chapter 25

TENDER SCENE

Bobby asked how the subject of the Nicholson had come up, but this Mrs. Rivington was unable to tell him.

"But what is it you want to know about Mr. Carstairs?" she asked.

"I really wanted his address," explained Bobby. "As you know, we set for him and we've just had a rather important cable from New York—you know there's rather a serious fluctuation in the dollar just now—"

Mrs. Rivington nodded with desperate intelligence.

"And so," continued Bobby rapidly, "we wanted to get into touch with him—to get his instructions. And he hasn't left an address—and having heard him mention he was a friend of yours, I thought you might possibly have news of him."

"Oh, I see," said Mrs. Rivington, completely satisfied. "What a pity! But he's always rather a vague man, I should think."

"Oh, distinctly so," said Bobby. "Well—He rose. "I apologize for asking up so much of your time."

"Oh, not at all," said Mrs. Rivington.

Dr. Nicholson was holding Sylvia's hands.



"So that's all right," thought Bobby, as he walked away down Tite Street. "I seem to have taken Dolly What's-her-name's character away for good, but I daresay she deserves it. And that charming idiot of a woman will never wonder why, if I wanted Carstairs's address, I didn't simply ring up and ask for it!"

BACK in Brook Street he and Frankie discussed the matter from every angle.

"It looks as though it were really pure chance that took him to the Bassington-Frencher," said Frankie thoughtfully.

"I know. But evidently when he was down there some chance remark directed his attention to the Nicholson."

"So that, really, it is Nicholson who is at the heart of the mystery, not the Bassington-Frencher?"

"It seems like it."

"Why only 'seems'?"

"Well, there is just one other possibility. In some way, Carstairs may have found out that the Rivingtons were going down to lunch with the Bassington-Frenches. He may have overheard some chance remark in a restaurant—at the Savoy perhaps. So he rings them up, very urgent to see them, and what he hopes may happen does happen. They're very booked up and they suggest his coming down with them. That is possible, Frankie."

"But it seems a very roundabout method of doing things."

"No more roundabout than your accident," said Bobby.

"My accident was vigorous direct action," said Frankie coldly.

Bobby removed Lord Marchington's clothes and replaced them where he had found them. Then he donned his chauffeur's uniform once more, and they were soon speeding back to Slaverly.

"If Roger has fallen for me," said Frankie demurely, "he'll be pleased I've come back so soon. He'll think I can't bear to be away from him for long."

"I'm not sure that you can bear

it, either," said Bobby. "I've always heard that really dangerous criminals are singularly attractive."

"Somehow I can't believe he is a criminal."

"So you remarked before."

Bobby drove up the drive in silence. Frankie sprang out and went into the house without a backward glance. Bobby drove away.

The house seemed very silent. Frankie glanced at the clock. It was half-past two.

"They don't expect me back for hours yet," she thought. "I wonder where they are."

She opened the door of the library and went in, stopping suddenly on the threshold.

Dr. Nicholson was sitting on the sofa holding both Sylvia Bassington-French's hands in his.

Sylvia jumped to her feet and came across the room towards Frankie.

"He's been telling me," she said. Her voice was stifled. She put both hands to her face as though to hide it from view.

"It's too terrible!" she sobbed, and brushing past Frankie, she ran out of the room.

DR. NICHOLSON had risen. Frankie advanced a step or two towards him. His eyes, watchful as ever, met hers.

"Oh, distinctly so," said Bobby. "Well—He rose. "I apologize for asking up so much of your time."

"Oh, not at all," said Mrs. Rivington.

"Poor lady!" he said suavely. "It has been a great shock to her."

The muscles at the corner of his mouth twitched. For a moment or two Frankie fancied that he was amused. And then, quite suddenly, she realized that it was quite a different emotion.

The man was angry. He was holding himself in, hiding his anger behind a suave, bland mask, but the emotion was there. It was all he could do to hold that emotion in.

There was a moment's pause.

"It was best that Mrs. Bassington-French should know the truth," said the Doctor. "I want her to induce her husband to place himself in my hands."

"I'm afraid," said Frankie gently, "that I interrupted you." She paused. "Come back sooner than I meant."

On Bobby's return to the inn he was greeted with the information that someone was waiting to see him.

"It's a lady. You'll find her in Mr. Askew's little sitting-room."

Bobby made his way there slightly puzzled. Unless she had flown there on wings he could not see how Frankie could possibly have got to the Anglers' Arms ahead of him, and that his visitor could be anyone but Frankie never occurred to him.

He opened the door of the small room which Mr. Askew kept as his private sitting-room. Sitting bolt upright in a chair was a slender figure dressed in black—the girl of the photograph.

Bobby was so astonished that for a moment or two he could not speak. Then he noticed that the girl was terribly nervous. Her small hands were trembling and closed and unclasped themselves in the arm of the chair. She seemed too nervous even to speak, but her large eyes held a kind of terrified appeal.

"So it's you," said Bobby at last. (Copyright 1935-36, Agatha Christie)

Bobby's visitor fears murder, Bobby learns, tomorrow.

Walking a straight line. Finding your ears and nose without rumbling while blindfolded. Walking around a given circle.

Then there are many other medical and psychological tests such as tapping the knee for the proper reflex and the taking of the temperature and pulse.

It was found in the more than 1,400 cases in Philadelphia that a person who had three lightbats within 40 minutes made decisions 9.7 percent slower than the test-taker. Also that the drinker made 35.3 percent more errors in problems of concentration; was 17.4 per cent slower in muscular reaction; and made 39.7 percent more errors in coordination tests of the hand and eye.

Dr. Huxley B. Owen, who helped compile the 14 tests, believes the person with one drink is worse than the inebriate because "he thinks he has not been affected."

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PANAMA INTERVENTION RIGHT DROPPED BY U. S.

WASHINGTON, March 3.—(AP)—In pursuance of President Roosevelt's "good neighbor" policy, the United States today agreed to abandon its right of intervention in Panama.

In a treaty signed by the two governments today, the United States gave up its right, held since construction of the Panama Canal began, to maintain "public order in the cities of Panama, Colon, and the territories and harbor adjacent thereto in case the republic of Panama should not be, in the judgment of the United States, able to maintain such order."

That right was conferred upon the United States in the 1903 treaty which has governed the relations of the two countries up to the present.

Yale Literary Output Grows

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (UP)—During the year 1935, Yale professors wrote 54 books, while professors and in-

structors turned out 427 articles for journals in the same period. The subjects ranged from silviculture to Sanskrit, while two volumes on practical philanthropy were also turned out.

Marshal Serves 45 Years

LOUISVILLE, O. (UP)—Frank Gustard was honored by municipal officers and leading citizens when he began his 45th year as town marshal. He was first elected in 1892 and never has been defeated at the polls. He is the only law officer in the community.

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Scientists estimate that there are about 10,000,000 species of insects in the world today. Approximately half of them are known. One group which is most common to us in the Diptera, which includes about 40,000 species of true flies—these include the house fly, gnat, blowfly, midges, and mosquitoes. All these have one common characteristic: two wings. In all the insect world there is only one other of the 5,000,000 known species that has only two wings. It is the male of a small scale insect in the Coccidae family.

At the 60th parallel, south latitude, or in its immediate vicinity, you can completely encircle the world by water in a straight line and at the same latitude. Such a water route would parallel the Antarctic Circle a few degrees north of it. It would miss the southern tip of South America by about five degrees; other continents would be far out of the line of travel. Nowhere else in the world could such a round-the-world trip by water be made all the way in the same latitude.

Tiberius, military hero at the beginning of the Christian era, followed his step-father, Augustus, to the throne in 14 A. D. An able ruler at first, he soon became a suspicious despot who feared that others of the nobility sought to rob him of his powers. For 11 years he ruled from retirement on Capri, the government being carried on by his ministers in Rome.

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DRUNKEN DRIVING PROVED BY TESTS IN PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA (UP)—"Buzze and Billy Sampson sat in the soup."

This is not the theme of the story, but if you can say that before a police surgeon you can rest assured that you have a good chance of not being classed as an intoxicated driver.

This tongue-twister is not the only test which suspected teetotalers must undergo. There are 13 others, which include:

Standing at attention with eyes closed, to see if your body sways.

Walking a straight line. Finding your ears and nose without rumbling while blindfolded. Walking around a given circle.

Then there are many other medical and psychological tests such as tapping the knee for the proper reflex and the taking of the temperature and pulse.

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