

# THE BOOMERANG CLUE

By AGATHA CHRISTIE

**SYNOPSIS:** As nearly as Frankie Derwent and Bobby Jones can tell, Dr. Nicholson is the man responsible for the death of Alan Carstairs and the attempt to poison Bobby. Now with Roger Bassington-French, Frankie has discovered the body of Roger's brother Henry; apparently a suicide. But Dr. Nicholson has appeared, soon after, and Henry Bassington-French is one of the two people in the doctor's car if it turns out to be true that he wants to marry Henry's wife Sylvia. Frankie and Bobby plot some investigation in London.

## Chapter 32 PLANS

"I KNOW," said Bobby quietly. They were both silent for a little.

"I shall have to leave to-day, of course," said Frankie presently.

"Yes, I suppose you will. How is she — Mrs. Bassington-French, I mean?"

"She's collapsed, poor soul. I haven't seen her since we—we found the body. The shock to her must have been awful."

Bobby nodded. "You'd better bring the car round about eleven," continued Frankie.

Bobby did not answer. Frankie looked at him impatiently.

"What's the matter with you, Bobby. You look as though you were miles away."

"Sorry. As a matter of fact—" "Yes?"

"Well, I was just wondering, I suppose—well, I suppose it's all right?"

"What do you mean—all right?" "I mean it's quite certain that he did commit suicide."

"Oh!" said Frankie. "I see." She thought a minute. "Yes," she said, "it was suicide all right."

"You're quite sure?" You see, Frankie, we have Moira's word for it that Nicholson wanted two people out of the way. Well, here's one of them gone."

Frankie thought again, but once more she shook her head. "It must be suicide," she said. "I was in the garden with Roger when we heard the shot. We both ran straight in through the drawing-room to the hall. The study door was locked on the inside. We went round to the window. That was fastened also and Roger had to smash it. It wasn't till then that Nicholson appeared upon the scene very suddenly."

"He'd left a stick behind earlier in the afternoon and had come back for it."

Bobby was frowning with the process of thought.

"Listen, Frankie. Suppose that actually Nicholson shot Bassington-French—"

"Having induced him first to write a suicide letter of farewell?"

"I should think that would be the easiest thing in the world to fake. Any alteration in handwriting would be put down to agitation."

"Yes, that's true. Go on with your theory."

"Nicholson shoots Bassington-French, leaves the farewell letter, and nips out, locking the door—to appear again a few minutes later as though he had just arrived."

Frankie shook her head regretfully.

"It's a good idea—but it won't work. To begin with, the key was in Henry Bassington-French's pocket."

"Who found it there?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, Nicholson did."

"There you are! What's easier for him than to pretend to find it there?"

"I was watching him—remember, I'm sure the key was in the pocket."

"That's what one says when one watches a conjurer. You see the rabbit being put into the hat. If Nicholson is a high-class criminal a simple little bit of sleight-of-hand like that would be child's play to him."

"WELL, you may be right about that, but honestly, Bobby, the whole thing's impossible. Sylvia Bassington-French was actually in the house when the shot was fired. The moment she heard it she ran out into the hall."

"If Nicholson had fired the shot and come out through the study door she would have been bound to see him. Besides, she told us that as actually came up the drive to the front door. She saw him coming as we ran round the house, and went to meet him and brought him round the study window. No, Bobby, I hate to say it, but the man has an alibi."

"On principle, I distrust people who have alibis," said Bobby.

"So do I. But I don't see how you can get round this one."

"No, Sylvia Bassington-French's word ought to be good enough."

"Yes, indeed?"

"Well," said Bobby with a sigh, "I suppose we'll have to leave it at sul-

side. Poor devil. What's the next angle of attack, Frankie?"

"The Caymans," said Frankie. "I can't think how we've been so remiss as not to have looked them up before. You've kept the address Cayman wrote from, haven't you?"

"Yes. It's the same they gave at the inquest. Number 17 St. Leonard's Gardens, Paddington."

"Don't you agree that we've rather neglected that channel of inquiry?"

"Absolutely. All the same, you know, Frankie, I've got a very shrewd idea that you'll find the birds flown. I should imagine that the Caymans weren't exactly born yesterday."

"Even if they have gone off, I may find out something about them."

"Why?"

"Because, once again, I don't think you'd better appear in the matter. It's like coming down here when we thought Roger was the bad man and I am not."

"And how do you propose to make their acquaintance?" asked Bobby.

"I shall be something political," said Frankie. "Canvassing for the Conservative party. I shall arrive with leaflets."

"Good enough," said Bobby. "But, as I said before, I think you'll find the birds flown. Now there's another thing that requires to be thought of—Moira."

"Goodness!" said Frankie. "I'd forgotten all about her."

"So I noticed," said Bobby with a trace of coldness in his manner.

"You're right," said Frankie thoughtfully. "Something must be done about her."

Bobby nodded. The strange haunting face came up before his eyes. There was something tragic about it. He had always felt this from the first moment when he had taken the photograph from Alan Carstairs' pocket.

"If you'd seen her that night when I first went to the Grange!" he said. "She was crazy with fear—and I tell you, Frankie, she's right. It's not nerves nor imagination nor anything like that. If Nicholson wants to marry Sylvia Bassington-French, two obstacles have got to go. One's gone. I've a feeling that Moira's life is hanging by a hair and that any delay may be fatal."

FRANKIE was sobered by the earnestness of his words.

"My dear, you're right," she said. "We must act quickly. What shall we do?"

"We must persuade her to leave the Grange—at once."

Frankie nodded. "I tell you what," she said. "She'd better go down to Wales — to the Castle. Heaven knows she ought to be safe enough there."

"If you can fix that, Frankie, nothing could be better."

"Well, it's simple enough. Father never notices who goes or comes. He'll like Moira—nearly any man would, she's so feminine. It's extraordinary how men like helpless women."

"I don't think Moira is particularly helpless," said Bobby.

"Nonsense. She's like a little bird that sits and waits to be eaten by a snake without doing anything about it."

"What could she do?"

"Heaps of things," said Frankie vigorously.

"Well, I don't see it. She's got no money, no friends—"

"My dear, don't drone on as though you were recommending a case to the Girls Friendly Society."

"Sorry," said Bobby.

"There was an offended pause. "Well," said Frankie, recovering her temper. "As you were, I think we'd better get on to this business as soon as possible."

"So do I," said Bobby. "Really, Frankie, it's awfully decent of you to—"

"That's all right," said Frankie, interrupting him. "I don't mind befriending the girl so long as you don't drel on about her as though she had no hands or feet or tongue or brains."

"I simply don't know what you mean," said Bobby.

"Well, we needn't talk about it," said Frankie. "Now my idea is that whatever we're going to do we'd better do it quickly. Is that a quotation?"

"It's a paraphrase of one. Go on, Lady Macbeth."

"You know I've always thought," said Frankie, suddenly digressing wildly from the matter in hand "that Lady Macbeth incited Macbeth to do all those murders simply and solely because she was so frightfully bored with life—and incidentally with Macbeth."

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Frankie has a fright tomorrow.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Strange as it seems, Premier Benito Mussolini, whose war machine is now bogged down in Ethiopia in what other world powers have condemned as a war of aggression — this same Mussolini was once so utterly against a similar military expedition that he organized a riot of protest and was thrown in jail for his trouble.

Twenty-five years ago, when it Duce was only 28 years old, the Giolitti government in Italy sent a military expedition to Tripoli after an ultimatum sent by Rome to Constantinople was not satisfactorily answered by the Turkish government. The Italo-Turkish war had the popular support of the Italian people with the exception of the Socialists, who denounced it bitterly. Mussolini was a Socialist—he was so much against it that just before actual war was declared, he incited a mob to resist authorities. He was arrested and sentenced to jail for five months.

Mussolini did not oppose war in general. It was explained, but he opposed the views of the Nationalists. They wanted a large Italy, but he wanted an Italy that was cultured, rich, and free.

When the territory that is now Colorado was being admitted to the Union, it came very nearly being named Idaho, because the name "Colorado" had been proposed by a California senator for the new state later admitted as Arizona. The Colorado representatives actually favored the name "Idaho" but further discussion of the proposed name brought up the suggestion that the state be named Colorado because of the Colorado river. Senator Gwin, California, objected because he wanted to name Arizona territory "Colorado" when it became a state. His objection was overruled—Colorado became Colorado—and Arizona later became Arizona.

Every watch repaired here is given the micrometer test. Jno. W. Johnson

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Seized for Sacrifice!

LET'S RETURN TO THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN, WHERE WE FIND THE GOLDEN GIRL WALKING INTO THE TRAP SET FOR HER BY THE FIENDISH HIGH PRIEST, TEXCOMAC—



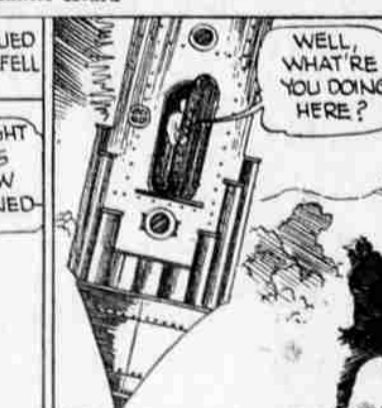
SEIZE HER!

FALSE GODDESS! FOR THY PERFDY-- THOU SHALT DIE!

THOU ART RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE OF QUETZALCOATL! THE GODS MUST BE APPEASED BY THY BLOOD!

## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What the Hunter Heard

LACEY REYNOLDS, THE HUNTER, CONTINUED HIS THRILLING DESCRIPTION OF WHAT BEFELL HIM IN THE SHADOW MOUNTAINS—



WELL, WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?

BOYS, WHEN I HEARD THAT VOICE I HAD AN ATTACK O' THE SHAKES! I FIGGERED HERE WAS SOMEBODY FROM ANOTHER PLANET— SO I SAYS—

L-L-L-LISTEN, MISTER, I WAGNT DOIN' NOTHIN', AN' I'LL KEEP ON DOIN' NOTHIN' IF YOU'LL ONLY LET ME LIGHT OUT O' HERE!

## THE NEBBS—That's Different

JUST A FEW MINUTES HAVE ELAPSED SINCE RUDY WAS GIVEN A DAZZLING CUP BY HIS FRIENDS TO VOICE THEIR LOVE AND ESTEEM, AND WHILE RUDY WAS MAKING A SPEECH OF THANKS, WE BROKE DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF IT—



WELL, FRIEND NEBB, IN ADDITION TO THIS LOVING CUP, I'M RETURNING THE DEED TO YOUR HOTEL AND I SENTENCE YOU TO REMAIN WITH US FOR THE BALANCE OF YOUR LIFE

AND HERE'S ANOTHER SURPRISE A FINE LITTLE FELLOW WHO WANTS TO MEET YOU AND ASSURE YOU OF HIS LOYALTY AND REGARD!

I DON'T WANT TO SAY WHAT'S IN MY MIND. I DON'T WANT TO START THIS THING ALL OVER AGAIN— THIS PARTY COST ME EIGHT BUCKS!

# TWO SENT TO PEN ONE PWA PROJECT IN MORALS CASE WAITING ON FUNDS

ROSEBURG, Ore., March 11. — (AP)—Alfred Moore drew a five-year sentence in the state penitentiary and George Williams was sentenced to three years when the two entered pleas of guilty in the circuit court here late yesterday on morals charges.

A sentence of one year was drawn by Victor Butterfield of Marshfield, accused of obtaining money by false pretenses, but execution of the sentence was suspended for six months, after which he will be on probation. Butterfield, with Alfred Mitts, also of Marshfield, was accused of trading a borrowed car for another used automobile, and failing to furnish transporter papers.

WASHINGTON, March 11.—(AP)—A public works administration list of pending projects for Oregon today showed only one approved project awaiting allocation of funds on March 2.

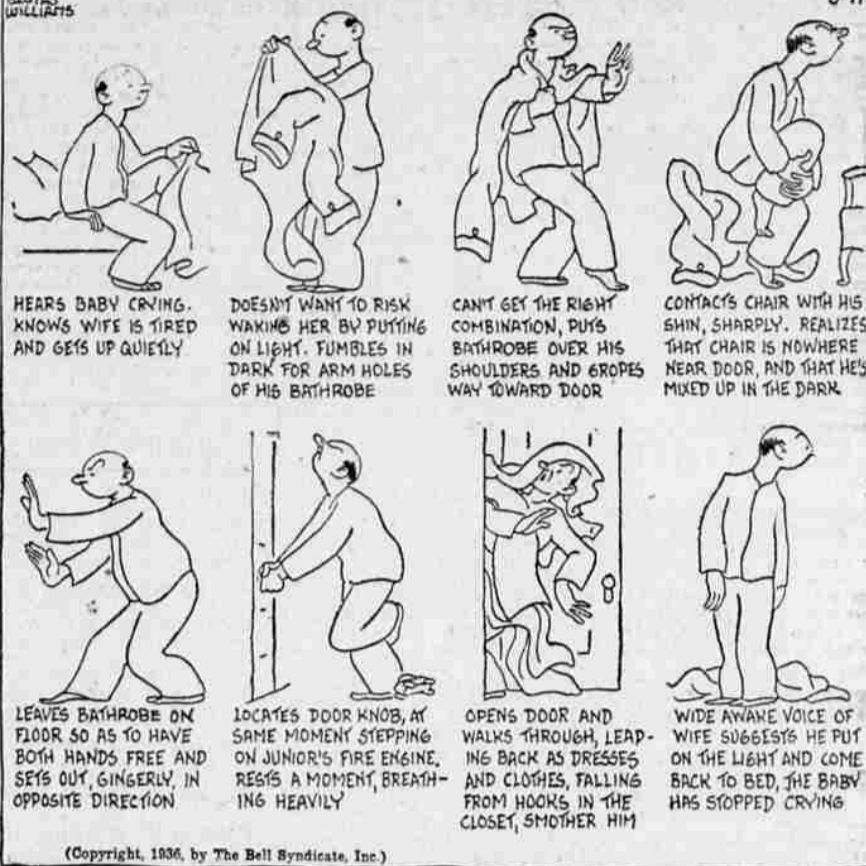
Projects awaiting final action total \$7, and their estimated costs \$14,064,849.

The list was requested by the senate.

The approved project is the Oakridge bridge, with an estimated cost of \$25,000. It calls for a federal grant of \$11,500.

Details requested for the projects awaiting final action total \$4,848,091, and cost \$9,780,603.

# IN THE DARK



HEARS BABY CRYING. KNOWS WIFE IS TIRED AND GETS UP QUIETLY

DOESN'T WANT TO RISK WAKING HER BY PUTTING ON LIGHT. FUMBLES IN DARK FOR ARM HOLES OF HIS BATHROBE

CAN'T GET THE RIGHT COMBINATION, PUSHES BATHROBE OVER HIS SHOULDERS AND GROPEs WAY TOWARD DOOR

CONTACTS CHAIR WITH HIS SHIN, SHARPLY. REALIZES THAT CHAIR IS NOWHERE NEAR DOOR, AND THAT HE'S MIXED UP IN THE DARK

LEAVES BATHROBE ON FLOOR SO AS TO HAVE BOTH HANDS FREE AND SETS OUT, GINGERLY, IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION

LOCATES DOOR KNOB, AT SAME MOMENT STEPPING ON JUNIOR'S FIRE ENGINE, RESISTS A MOMENT, BREATHING HEAVILY

OPENS DOOR AND WALKS THROUGH, LEADING BACK AS DRESSES AND CLOTHES, FALLING FROM HOOKS IN THE CLOSET, SMOOTHER HIM

WIDE AWAKE VOICE OF WIFE SUGGESTS HE PUT ON THE LIGHT AND COME BACK TO BED, THE BABY HAS STOPPED CRYING

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# SMATTER POP—



IF IT WAS A LITTLE BIGGER WOULD IT STILL BE A MONKEY-WRENCH?

OH, YES!

STILL THE SAME!

THIS IS A MONKEY-WRENCH?

NO!

COULD NEVER NEVER GET TO BE A BATBOON-WRENCH?

FROM HERE TO YOU?

IT WOULD STILL BE A MONKEY-WRENCH!

NO!

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