

THE BOOMERANG CLUE

Chapter 44
FROM ROGER

It was some weeks later. Frankie had just received a letter. It bore the stamp of one of the less-known South American republics.

After reading it through, she passed it to Bobby.

Dear Frankie:

Really, I congratulate you! You and your Naval friend have shattered the plans of a lifetime. I had everything so nicely arranged.

Would you really like to hear all about it? My lady friend has given me away so thoroughly (spite, I'm afraid—women are invariably spiteful!) that my most damaging admissions won't do me any further harm. Besides, I am starting life again. Roger Bassington-French is dead.

I fancy I've always been what they call a "wrong 'un." Even at Oxford I had a little lapse.

I fell in with Moira and her lot fairly soon. She was the real thing. She was an accomplished criminal by the time she was fifteen. When I met her things were getting a bit too-hot for her.

She and I liked each other. We decided to make a match of it, but we'd a few plans to carry through first.

To begin with, she married Nicholson. By doing so she removed herself to another world, and the police lost sight of her. England was just coming over to England to start a place for nerve patients.

She was still working in with her gang in the dope business. Without knowing it, Nicholson was very useful to her.

I had always had two ambitions. I wanted to be the owner of Merroway, and I wanted to command an immense amount of money. I had to have money.

Moira made several trips across to Canada to "see her people." Nicholson adored her and believed anything she told him. Most men did. Owing to the complications of the drug business she travelled under various names. She was travelling as Mrs. Templeton when she met Savage. She knew all about Savage and his enormous wealth, and she went all out for him. He was attracted, but he wasn't attracted enough to lose his common sense.

However, we concocted a plan. You know pretty well the story of that. The man you know as Cayman acted the part of the unfeeling husband. Savage was induced to come down and stay at Tudor Cottage more than once. The third time he came our plans were laid. I needn't go into all that—you know it. The whole thing went with a bang. Moira cleared the money and went off—ostensibly abroad—in reality back to Staverville and the Grange.

In the meantime I was perfecting my own plans. Henry and young Tommy had to be got out of the way. I had had luck over Tommy. A couple of perfectly good accidents went wrong. I wasn't going to foot about with accidents in Henry's case. I introduced him to morphine. He soon became an addict. Our plan was that he should go to the Grange for treatment, and should there either "commit suicide" or get hold of an overdose of morphine.

AND then that fool Carstairs began to be active. It seems that Savage had written him a line on board ship mentioning Mrs. Templeton and even enclosing a snapshot of her. Carstairs went on a shooting trip soon afterwards. When he came back from the wilds and heard the news of Savage's death and will, he was frankly incredulous. He was certain that Savage wasn't worried about his health and didn't believe he had any special fear of cancer. Savage was a hard-headed business man, and Carstairs didn't believe he would leave a vast sum of money to her and the rest to charity.

Carstairs came over here determined to look into the business. He began to poke about.

And straightaway we had a piece of bad luck. Some friends brought him down to lunch, and he saw a picture of Moira on the piano—and recognized it as the woman of the snapshot that Savage had sent him. He went down to Chipping Somerton and started to poke about there.

I went down to Chipping Somerton after him. He failed to trace the cook—Rosa Chudleigh. She'd gone

to the north, but he tracked down Evans, found out her married name and started off for Marchholt.

Things were getting serious. If Evans identified Mrs. Templeton and Mrs. Nicholson as one and the same person, matters were going to become difficult.

I decided that Carstairs had got to be suppressed. He was making a serious nuisance of himself. Chance came to my aid. I was close behind him when the mist came up. I crept up nearer and a sudden push did the job.

I didn't know what incriminating matter he might have on him. However, your young Naval friend played into my hands very nicely. I was left alone with the body for a short time. He had a photograph of Moira—he'd got it from the photographers, presumably for identification. I removed that and any letters or identifying matter. Then I planted the photograph of one of the gang.

All seemed to have gone off satisfactorily. And then your friend Bobby upset things. It seemed that Carstairs had mentioned Evans—and Evans was actually in service at the Vicarage.

I admit we were getting rattled by now. Moira insisted that he must be put out of the way. We tried one plan, which failed. Then Moira went down to Marchholt in the car. She seized a chance very neatly—slipped some morphine into Bobby's beer when he was asleep. But the young devil didn't succumb. That was pure bad luck.

And imagine the shock that Moira had when she was creeping out to meet me one evening and came face to face with Bobby. She recognized him at once—she'd had a good look when he was asleep; that day. Then she realized that it wasn't she whom he suspected, and she rallied and played up.

THE position was serious. We'd got the money, but you and Bobby were a menace. You'd got your suspicions fixed on the Grange. It may interest you to know that Henry didn't commit suicide. I killed him! When I was talking to you in the garden, I saw there was no time to waste—and I went straight in and saw to things.

The airplane that came over gave me my chance. I went into the writing, sat down by Henry, who was writing, and said: "Look here, old man—" and shot him! The noise of the plane drowned the sound.

Then I wrote a nice affecting letter, wiped off my fingerprints from the revolver, pressed Henry's hand round it and let it drop to the floor. I put the key of the study in Henry's pocket and went out, locking the door from the outside with the dining-room key, which fits the lock.

I won't go into details of the neat little snub arrangement in the chimney which was timed to go off four minutes later.

Everything went beautifully. You and I were in the garden together and heard the "shot." A perfect suicide.

Where Moira really showed her mettle was at the Cottage. She realized from the noise upstairs that I'd been knocked out, and she quickly injected a large dose of morphine into herself, and lay down on the bed. After you all went down to telephone she slipped up to the attic and cut me free. Then the morphine took effect and by the time the Doctor arrived she was genuinely off in a hypnotic sleep.

But all the same her nerve was going. She pretended to go up to a London nursing home. Instead she hurried down to Marchholt—and met you on the doorstep! Then her one idea was to get you both out of the way. Her methods were crude to the last degree, but I believe she'd have got away with it.

Moira would have got away back to London and lain low in a nursing home. With you and Bobby out of the way the whole thing would have died down.

But you spotted her—and she lost her head. And then at the trial she dragged me into it!

Perhaps I was getting a little tired of her. . . . But I had no idea that she knew it.

You see, she had got the money—my money! Once I had married her I might have got tired of her. I like variety.

So here I am starting life again. . . . And all owing to you and that extremely objectionable young man Bobby Jones. But I've no doubt I shall make good!

Your affectionate enemy, the bold, bad villain of the piece, ROGER BASSINGTON-FRENCH. (Continued 1911-35-38, Agatha Christie)

Tomorrow, Frankie and Bobby make a very interesting decision.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

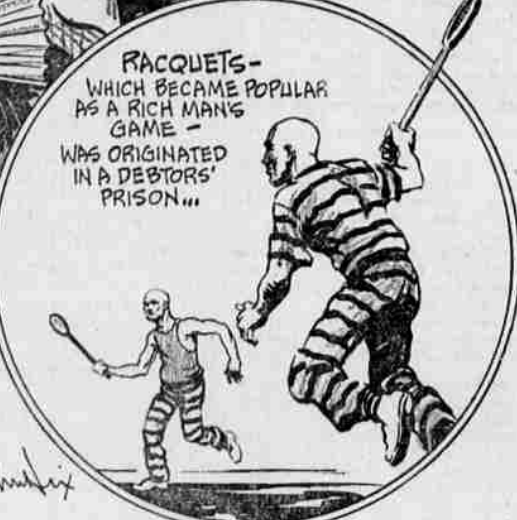


LU HOU
WAS CHINA'S ONLY REIGNING EMPRESS IN 5000 YEARS!
SHE RULED 7 YEARS - 187 TO 180 B.C.



FRANZ LISZT, COMPOSER OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST MUSIC - HAD TO PAY TO GET MANY OF HIS WORKS PUBLISHED!!!

WAKE ISLAND - in the Pacific, IS THE FIRST U.S. POSSESSION THAT SEES THE LIGHT OF DAY!!!



RACQUETS - WHICH BECAME POPULAR AS A RICH MAN'S GAME - WAS ORIGINATED IN A DEBTORS' PRISON!!!

3-23-36 McNaught Syndicate, Inc.

Wake Island, a tiny bit of land on the board Pacific, is an important station on the newly-inaugurated transpacific airline service from San Francisco to Manila. The island is the third stop on the westward flight, and is located a little east of halfway between Guam and Midway. Guam is 1500 miles to the west and Midway more than 110 miles to the east.

Being located just west of the international date line, Wake Island keeps a day ahead of lands east of the line. When day breaks on, say, Sunday morning, at a point east of the line, it will soon be Monday morning at Wake Island.

Strange as it seems, racquets, one of the most exclusive sports in the world today, was started in prison—a game to provide exercise for the closely confined inmates. It started in the 18th century in an English debtors' jail, and may have been a development of Irish handball or jail ball. An inmate of the prison, Robert Mackay, was the first recognized champion of the sport.

It was started by men who were tennis players but who did not have an area large enough for this game.

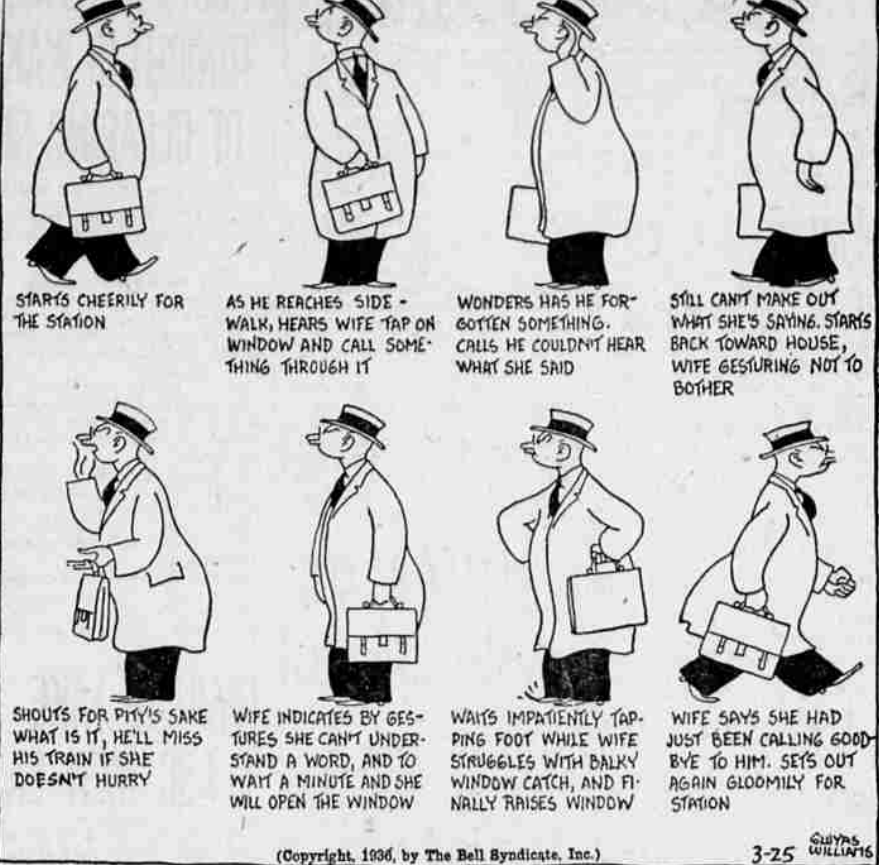
At first the game was played against a single wall. After it emerged from jail to enjoy popularity among the high-born sportsmen of England, the rules were changed to include side walls on the court.

In 50 centuries of Chinese history, only one woman ever ruled the ancient nation in her own right. She was Lu Hou of the Han dynasty, who came to the throne in 187 B. C. Two other women rulers are recorded by historians, but neither of the others was a legitimate heir to the throne, and their position was that of a puppet and not as a ruler in fact.

Tomorrow: The Upside Down Tree

WRIGLEY'S IS ALWAYS REFRESHING!
WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT THE PERFECT GUM THE FLAVOR LASTS

THROUGH THE WINDOW PANE By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



STARTS CHEERILY FOR THE STATION

AS HE REACHES SIDE - WALK, HEARS WIFE TAP ON WINDOW AND CALL SOME THING THROUGH IT

WONDERS HAS HE FOR- GOTTEN SOMETHING. CALLS HE COULDN'T HEAR WHAT SHE SAID

STILL CAN'T MAKE OUT WHAT SHE'S SAYING, STARTS BACK TOWARD HOUSE, WIFE GESTURING NOT TO BOTHER

SHOUTS FOR PITY'S SAKE WHAT IS IT, HE'LL MISS HIS TRAIN IF SHE DOESN'T HURRY

WIFE INDICATES BY GESTURES SHE CAN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD, AND TO WAIT A MINUTE AND SHE WILL OPEN THE WINDOW

WANTS IMPATIENTLY TAPPING FOOT WHILE WIFE STRUGGLES WITH BALKY WINDOW CATCH, AND FINALLY RAISES WINDOW

WIFE SAYS SHE HAD JUST BEEN CALLING GOOD BYE TO HIM. SETS OUT AGAIN GLOOMILY FOR STATION

(Copyright, 1936, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.) 3-25 GLUYAS WILLIAMS

S'MATTER POP—By C M PAYNE



TAKE, FOR INSTANCE, A COUNTRY LIKE MY UNCLE VISITED IN AFRICA—

FOUR THIRTY SIX NATIVES KIN STAND UNDER A SMALL UMBRELLA AN' NOT A DROP OF RAIN FALLS ON THEM!

I GOTCHA! IT NEVER RAINS THERE, HU4?

AW-W-

AW-W-

AW-W-

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The "Invisible Hand"



TA's TOMMY AND SHEETER WERE FLYING TO THREE-POINT THEIR MOTOR MYSTERIOUSLY FAILED... IT SEEMED AS THOUGH AN INVISIBLE HAND HAD REACHED OUT AND CLUTCHED THEM FROM THE SKY

THAT'S FUNNY—THE MOTOR PICKED UP AGAIN..... BUT MY RADIO'S DEAD, TAILSPIN!

HOW IT'S DYING OUT AGAIN... I'VE NEVER HAD A SHIP ACT LIKE THIS... BEFORE

THERE'S A DRY LAKE... WE'LL 'SIT DOWN' AND FIND OUT WHAT THE TROUBLE IS.....

HAL FORREST

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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—"The Family"



DINNER IS SERVED -

GOSH, YOU SCARED ME! HOW'D YOU GET THERE WITHOUT US HEARIN' YA?

HUGH, BRIARISIE!

DR. KILOVITCH WILL SOON BE HERE -

AH! VISITORS? YOUNG GENTLEMEN, I AM HAPPY TO MEET YOU - AND MAY I PRESENT YOU TO MY DAUGHTER, MISS OLGA?

AND GO YOU HAVE COME FROM MY DEAR PATRON, MR. THORPE?

YES, SIR, AND I HAVE A LETTER TO YOU, DR. KILOVITCH, FROM MR. THORPE -

HAL FORREST

HAL FORREST

HAL FORREST

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THE NEBBS—Poor Butterfly



THE NEBBS' VACATION BEING HELD UP FOR FANNY TO ARRAY HERSELF IN PROPER RAIMENT

SO THE NEBBS ARE GOING AWAY FOR A VACATION FOR A REST - SHE JUST WASHED A FISH OR FURNISHED ENOUGH SALIVA TO THREAD A NEEDLE IN TEN YEARS AND I SUPPOSE HE'S GOING AWAY TO GET STRENGTH TO LOAF MORE

WERE THE ONES WHO NEED A VACATION - I THINK I'M STEALING TIME OUT OF LIFE WHEN I LOOK OUT THE WINDOW FOR A FEW MINUTES - AND SHE'S GETTING A LOT OF NEW CLOTHES - WHEN I GET A NEW DRESS I ALWAYS SAY TO IT - I HOPE WE LIKE EACH OTHER WE'RE GOING TO BE TOGETHER FOR A LONG LONG TIME!

OF COURSE MRS. NEBB GETS EVERYTHING BECAUSE SHE'S GOT HER MOUTH IN THE RIGHT PLACE AND ME - I'M AFRAID TO OPEN MINE!!

GO GET YOURSELF A HALF DOZEN DRESSES AND GO VISIT YOUR SON LEM FOR A COUPLE DOZEN MONTHS AND TAKE THAT FRIGHTENED MOUTH WITH YOU - I'VE DONE A LOT FOR LEM - HE SHOULD DO SOME THINGS FOR ME!

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HENRY FORD HITS CROP CURTAILING

WAYNE, Ga., March 25.—(AP)—Henry Ford, president of correlation of industry and agriculture, today described the withdrawal of fertile land from crop production as "worse than thievery."

SNOW PROMISES SUMMER WATER

PORTLAND, March 25.—(AP)—Deep snow in mountains of Oregon and Washington promises abundance of water for irrigation and drinking purposes next summer, the forestry bureau reported today.

At Crater Lake in southern Oregon the snow depth is less than last year, 119 inches being reported now compared with 121 inches at headquarters a year ago, according to weather bureau figures.