

# The Wrong Murderer

By HUGH CLEVELY

**SYNOPSIS:** Terence Mahony has returned. Little Ruth Fraser from Ambrose Lawson's gang of kidnapers. The difficulty about the case is that Terence Mahony cannot prove anything more to his advantage, he knows Lawson murdered Elsa's uncle, and yet he finds himself suspected. He is being questioned by Inspector Kennedy, and to add to his discomfort, he finds that Elsa herself believes him guilty. Lawson is smugly watching the proceeding.

## Chapter 15 RUTH AGAIN

THERE was another brief pause. Elsa had been growing restless during this process of questions and answers. It seemed to her to be a flagrant injustice that Mahony should be standing there so very much alive, and with such an unworried air, when he had just killed her uncle.

He was guilty; he ought to be made to suffer for it, and the sooner the better.

"What are you wasting time for?" she demanded wildly. "You know he did it. Why don't you take him to prison?"

Her vindictiveness stung Mahony again.

"Miss Little," he said very earnestly, "I swear on my honor that I did not kill your uncle. Won't you try to believe me?"

It was unlike Mahony to speak in that fashion. He was not the kind of man who went about swearing things on his honor. But he wished desperately to convince Elsa that he was innocent.

He did not convince her. His outburst only seemed to her to be evidence of his consummate hypocrisy.

"Honor!" she exclaimed scornfully. "What does a creature like you know of honor? Do you think I don't realize that all the things you told the Inspector about your movements last night were lies? I know it was your voice I heard in the study last night when my uncle was killed. I know you were there and that you killed him."

"I tell you I didn't kill him," said Mahony vehemently.

There was nothing he could do. He shrugged his shoulders slightly. What was the good of going on arguing?

Lawson turned aside and busied himself lighting a cigarette. He had savored this last bit of by-play with all the enjoyment of a connoisseur of the theater enjoying a well-acted scene from an amusing play.

The Inspector was frowning slightly. As yet he had not quite made up his mind what he was going to do. He rather thought that he was going to detain Mahony on suspicion. He was just about to put these intentions into effect when the door of the room opened, and the maid's voice announced:

"Miss Fraser to see you, Miss." Ruth Fraser entered the room.

RUTH'S sudden appearance is quite easily accounted for. She awakened late that morning after a good sleep, and her breakfast was brought to her in bed. While she was breakfasting, her guardian entered her room to see her.

"Good morning, my dear," he said. "I just looked in to remind you that you'd better fix up your story about staying with an old school friend pretty quickly. As soon as you've done it I must inform the police that you have returned."

"I'll do it now," said Ruth.

There was a telephone by her bedside, and she lifted the receiver and called a number in Sussex. The number she rang belonged to a girl named Anne Dowson, with whom she had been at school. Anne was a wild, eccentric, good-natured girl, who lived in a tiny cottage on the edge of nowhere and painted landscapes for a living.

"Hallo, Anne," said Ruth. "Look here, old hag, if anybody asks, can you tell them that I've been staying with you for the last three or four days? Do you mind?"

"Dee-lighted, I'm shure," replied Anne. "But if anybody does want to ask, they'll have to do it pretty quickly, because I'm off to Berlin for a show of pictures today. I don't suppose you'll mind 'hat, though."

"That's grand," said Ruth. "Thanks ever so much, Anne. How are the landscapes going these days?"

"They've gone," answered Anne, who had rather a literal mind. "They went a fortnight ago. The show starts tomorrow."

"Oh, you're going to a show of your own pictures, are you?" said Ruth. "That's good. But what I really meant was, how is art going? Are you selling lots of stuff, and making a heap of money?"

"I'm hanged if I know," answered Anne. "Incidentally, I can hear my blood car stopping outside. So I must fly. Good-bye, my pet. Be careful."

Ruth hung up the receiver, laughing. Anne was quite mad, but a terribly good sort. She was glad she had fixed that up all right.

She told her guardian what she had arranged, and went on with her breakfast. The previous night she had been much too tired to bother much about the ways and wherefores of things; her only curiosity had been about the identity of her rescuer.

This morning, after a good sleep, that curiosity was intensified, and added to it was a curiosity about the rest of the story. Mysterious things had been happening to her. Not many girls of her age had had such adventures.

The one fly in the ointment of her bliss was the fact that she did not know her rescuer's name. That did not suit her at all. One thing she had to work on—that he had been friendly with Billy Ross. In that case, other friends of Billy would probably know him. Elsa Little, for instance, would probably know him; there was not much about Billy that she didn't know. Ruth decided to go to see Elsa, describe Mahony to her, and try to find out who he was.

After breakfast she drove round to Elsa's house in her big cream-colored sports car. The maid who admitted her knew her as a frequent visitor, and showed her at once into the drawing-room, where Elsa, Mahony, Lawson, and the two detectives were assembled.

For a moment she was astonished; she had not expected to find all these people present. But her astonishment was swallowed by her delight in meeting Mahony there.

After breakfast she drove round to Elsa's house in her big cream-colored sports car. The maid who admitted her knew her as a frequent visitor, and showed her at once into the drawing-room, where Elsa, Mahony, Lawson, and the two detectives were assembled.

For a moment she was astonished; she had not expected to find all these people present. But her astonishment was swallowed by her delight in meeting Mahony there.

"HALLO, Elsa," she said. She turned to Mahony and smiled; her eyes sparkled with mischief.

"Hallo," she said casually, "fancy meeting you."

Inwardly she was purring with glee. Mahony had said that they would not meet; she had been quite determined to prove him wrong; and by the most incredible good luck she had succeeded first shot. She could not resist the temptation to rub it in a little.

She looked at him, smiling. He had no answering smile for her. Nor had Elsa. Then, for the first time, she perceived that somewhere something was definitely wrong. Her glance travelled round the solemn circle of the people in the room.

Lawson was staring at her with an expression of the utmost bewilderment on his face, as if he could hardly believe that she was real. Nobody had yet told him of her rescue from the house near Watford; her presence in the room was his first intimation of it.

"What's the matter with all of you?" she asked. "Why are you all looking at me as if I'd come out without any clothes on? What's wrong?"

For a moment nobody answered. Then Inspector Kennedy replied to her.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you that Mr. Little, Miss Little's uncle, was murdered last night."

"Murdered!" Ruth was horrified.

"How... how dreadful, Elsa... I'm terribly sorry to hear it. Is there anything I can do? Have they... have they caught the man who did it?"

Elsa made a little gesture with her hand indicating Mahony.

"That man did it," she answered stonily. "He came in here late last night and stabbed my uncle in the back."

"I... I don't believe it," said Ruth instantly. "He couldn't have done it. He was with me nearly all last night."

Everyone except Mahony stared at her in a shocked fashion. Mahony scowled ferociously at her. Was this fool girl, he wondered, going to spill all the blasted beans when he had particularly asked her to keep her mouth shut?

Ruth guessed what he was thinking; she went on hastily:

"He came down into the country in his car, to fetch me from my friend's cottage. I've been staying with a friend named Anne Dowson in a cottage near Harfield, in Sussex. I asked him if he'd come down and give me a lift back to town, and he came."

"I am Inspector Kennedy, of the Criminal Investigation Department, and I am investigating the murder of Mr. Little," said Inspector Kennedy. "May I ask your name?"

"My name is Ruth Fraser," answered Ruth.

"Aren't you the girl who has been missing from home for several days?" he went on.

"Yes," she admitted. "But that was all a false alarm."

Temporarily, tomorrow, the situation came to Mahony.

# YOUTH KILLED IN HOMEMADE GLIDER

EUGENE, Oct. 20.—(AP)—A 70 foot crash in a home constructed glider cost the life of Harold Miller, 17, of Springfield, at the Springfield airport Sunday afternoon.

Miller, who had been making flights along with several other youths, crashed after the glider had failed to release the two rope, being jerked back to the ground after attaining a 70 foot altitude. The accident occurred at 4 o'clock.

Miller was taken to a hospital, where he died two hours later due to a fractured skull, physicians said.

Several flights had been made during the afternoon, and the release hook for the tow rope had operated satisfactorily.

# RAT GNAWS TOT'S FOOT IN PORTLAND RESIDENCE

PORTLAND, Ore., Oct. 20.—(AP)—Screams of 11-month-old Rose Marie Flores led to the discovery of a huge rat in her crib and slashes and perforations on the baby's right foot. The rat escaped. The child was treated at a trapezoid hospital.

Tilly Loesch rehearses her dances in the center of a circle of full-length mirrors to check her work from every angle.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

"INFANTRY" WAS ORIGINALLY "A BAND OF CHILDREN" (From the French "infans")

STEPHEN FOSTER DID NOT MAKE A CENT ON HIS SONG, "OH SUSANNA," THOUGH IT EARNED A PROFIT OF OVER \$10,000!

HENRY VIII. of England FORBODE THE WEARING OF BLACK FURS BY ANYONE BUT MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.

THE SWEETEST THING ON EARTH! ALPHA-PERILLA-ALDOXIME IS 4,000 TIMES AS SWEET AS CANE SUGAR!

Used in Japan under the name "Shiao" as a sweetening agent in meat substances, alpha-perilla-aldoxime is derived from the essential oils of the plant, Perilla nankinensis. The average person can detect a sweet taste in a substance containing one part of alpha-perilla-aldoxime where it would require 4000 parts of cane sugar or eight parts of saccharin to be detected, according to Albert F. Blakeslee, director of the department of genetics, Carnegie Institution, Long Island, N. Y.

The Gift Song "Oh Susanna!" the theme song of the 1936 Republican campaign and one of the most popular pieces of music ever written by an American composer, was composed by Stephen Collins Foster while a clerk in his brother's office in Cincinnati. Twenty years old at the time, the composer little visualized how successful his simple ditty was to become. Presenting it as an out-and-out gift to W. C. Peters, his old music teacher, Foster promptly forgot it. Peters cleared a profit of \$10,000 on the gift.

Tomorrow: Exploding Trees!

# DRESSING JUNIOR

TELLS WIFE HE'LL DRESS JUNIOR FOR HER, AND STRIDES BRISKLY INTO NURSERY

GETS HIM OUT OF NIGHT CLOTHES AND INTO UNDERWEAR WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE. HOLDS UP ROMPER SUIT

AT THIS POINT JUNIOR'S ATTENTION BEGINS TO WANDER AND HE GETS ONE ARM AND BOTH LEGS INTO WRONG HOLES

FINDS THAT TO STRAIGHTEN MATTERS OUT HE'LL HAVE TO TAKE ROMPERS OFF, WHICH PROVES DIFFICULT, JUNIOR HAVING SUDDENLY GONE TICKLISH

SUCCEEDS AT LAST AND HOLDS ROMPERS UP FOR JUNIOR TO TRY AGAIN, JUNIOR BEING MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN BOUNCING ON THE BED

TRIES TO HOLD HIM, JUNIOR ELUDING HIM BY CRAWLING UNDER BED. CALLS WEARILY TO WIFE SHE'D BETTER COME TRY

(Copyright, 1936, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

# S MATTER POP—

YUP!

POP, MAY I POINT? I'VE GOT MUM-FINGER FIXED

LOOK AT WILLYUM!

SMATTER WITH WILLIAM?

HE'S USIN' BOTH HANDS ON HIS KNIFE!

AWK!

(Copyright, 1936, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

**TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Phantom Tunes In!**

10 AUL MANAGED TO GET THE TWO RADIO OPERATORS OUT OF THEIR OFFICE, AND THEN CONTACTED THE PHANTOM FOKKER MEANWHILE, THE OPERATORS ARE GROWING NERVOUS...

THE CHIEF MUST BE GOING BATTY.... CHASING US OUT... WHEN WE'VE GOT TO CHECK OUR FLIGHT SCHEDULES

(SINCE THIS PHANTOM FOKKER SCARE HIT THE FIELD...EVERY BODY ON IT IS JITTERY)

I'M SATISFIED YOU'RE COUNT VON HOCHT. I HAVE YOUR... INSIGNIA... I'M GLAD I DIDN'T KILL YOU DURING THE WORLD WAR... BUT...

HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS...

DURING THE WORLD WAR, CAPTAIN PAUL SMITH?... I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU... THE WORLD WAR IS STILL ON... AND I AM WAITING FOR YOU...

VERY WELL... THE WAR IS STILL ON... LISTEN... I'LL TELL YOU WHERE WE SHALL MEET... IN COMBAT...

AND PAUL....

# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Ben's News!

YOU'RE DISCHARGED? AND JUST FOR TALKING TO ME?

THAT'S WHAT THE TUMMY GAVE, AN' THERE WAS A SMIRKIN' OWL BESIDE HER ALL THE TIME—

WHY, THE MAN YOU DESCRIBE, PERCY, CAN'T BE ANYONE EXCEPT CUTHBERT TUTTLE—GAY, I'VE BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF HIM RIGHT ALONG—

BUT DON'T YOU WORRY, PERCY— YOU CAN GO TO WORK FOR ME— I'LL PAY YOU AS MUCH AS THE ORPHANAGE DID—MAYBE MORE, TOO!

YOU'RE WORKING FOR ME, RIGHT NOW! DO YOU REMEMBER A BOY AT THE ORPHANAGE THEY USED TO CALL BUGLE?

THE BUGLE? DO I REMEMBER HIM? HOW COULD ANYONE EVER FORGET THE BUGLE!

# THE NEBBS—Good Advice

AMEN, I WANT YOU TO GET ME \$1000 IN TRAVELER'S CHECKS AND \$500 IN CASH

WHEN YOU'RE ASKIN' FOR THAT KIND OF DOUGH, YOU MIGHT DIGNIFY THE OCCASION BY CALLING ME MR. POTTS

ALL RIGHT MR. POTTS— GET THE CHECKS AND THE CASH AND REMEMBER IT'S MINE AND I'M ASKING FOR NO FAVORS

ANY TIME YOU ASK A BANKER TO HANDLE MONEY THAT MOVES IN AND OUT AS FAST AS YOURS, YOU ARE ASKING FAVORS

ANOTHER VACATION, I SUPPOSE... LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHIN'— DID YOU EVER HEAR THAT SONG OVER THE HILLS TO THE POOR HOUSE? YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE IN FLAT COUNTRY— YOU WON'T HAVE TO CLIMB HILLS

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT, GOZART AMEN, IT SOUNDS GOZART AMEN, THERE'S NO USE OF US BOTH SAVING MONEY, AIN'T I THE CAPITAL LETTER NAME IN YOUR WILL? AND I EXPECT BY THE TIME I GET IT, I'LL HAVE SOWNED MY WILD CATS

# BOY SHOT IN CHEST WHILE BIRD HUNTING

MEMPHISVILLE, Ore., Oct. 20.—(AP)—Eugene Fox Snyder, 12, shot in the chest during a pheasant hunting trip yesterday, is in a serious condition but probably will recover, hospital attendants said today.

The boy was accompanying his father, Eugene Snyder, and Wilmon Smith. The latter two said the youth had dropped a little behind them when they heard him shout and looked around to see him running out of the brush with a wound in his chest.

It was believed the youth was poking in the brush with the butt of his gun when it discharged.

New York ran first of the 48 states in manufacturing.

# ETHIOPIANS HIT HARD IN REVENGE BATTLE

ADDIS ABABA, Oct. 20.—(AP)—Italy today completed a "mass reprisal" against Ethiopian irregulars who last July ambushed and killed 30 fascist aviators in western Wallega province.

Fifty Italian bombing and transport planes, carrying 300 men armed with rifles and machine guns, landed at Lekeuti, dispatching to Addis Ababa reported, and engaged irregular troops in a fierce battle during which the natives suffered heavy casualties.

Buddy Ebsen arises at 5:30 a. m. daily to spend a half hour on a golf driving range before he checks in at the studio.

# By SOL HESS

By SOL HESS