

# MURDER ON THE BLUFF

**SYNOPSIS:** In one wild and stormy night at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael, aunt, Jude Blinshop, sets off flames of mine, is shot to death on the bluff; the Skipper, Mike's tall and tuxedoed younger aunt, disappears, and Michael dislocates his shoulder by falling into the churning surf. The Skipper returns to say she's been in the stable with her stock-cote, Aunt Martha, stout and prudish, has hysterics a couple of times. Gay Palmer, Mike's red-headed sweetheart, keeps a fairly sane wits. Next morning at breakfast, everyone has jangled nerves.

## Chapter Nine Searching The Grounds

I GHTING a cigarette, the Skipper contributed, "Martha's breakfasting upstairs. She'll be down later." And silence descended upon the dining room.

For the space of about five minutes we crunched bacon and consumed coffee without incident. Higgins, looking rather seedy, appeared with fresh toast, opened his mouth to ask about Michael, discreetly closed it again, and took himself off. The Skipper smoked furiously, and the rest of us kept our eyes on our plates. Then, monotonously and with irritating force, Gay's fingers began a steady tattoo on the tablecloth. At least two sets of nerves promptly began to act up again. Michael's cup went down with a bang that bathed the surrounding territory in coffee.

"Damn it, Gay, quit that, can't you?" Gay flared, "Don't be so touchy!" Before I could get in my two cents' worth of sunshine, the Skipper interposed. "Easy, kids! Let's talk this over."

That being the one thing we all had in mind, we lapsed into silence. The Skipper smiled.

"We might as well look it in the face. These storms always last at least three days, which means that we must stick together or go mad. There's been a tragic accident which we must certainly explain to the satisfaction of everyone, if we're to keep from each other's throats—not to mention Jude's family or the local police."

Michael was breathing so fast and so heavily that I could distinctly hear him across the table. The Skipper waited for someone to speak. No one did. She sighed.

"Obviously there are two possibilities. Jude was killed either accidentally or intentionally, and in either case by some member of this household. If it was accidental, we should be able to establish that fact immediately, if it wasn't—"

Another pause, this time a breathless one.

Then—"we shall have to establish that fact too," concluded the Skipper.

Michael's voice was hoarse. "But what can we do?"

I answered him with more hope in my voice than conviction. "For one thing we can search the grounds. There must be a thug of some sort out there. It's the only logical answer."

Michael shot me a peculiar look. "Why not let it rest!" he demanded. "You know damn well that there's no one out there, Jim. We can't help Jude now. Old Foster would give us a fake certificate if the Skipper asked him, and we could say that she'd fallen off the bluff in the storm and—and forget about it."

I had known Michael since we were 17, but I had never heard him make such a proposal. Neither had Gay. She gasped in amazement. Once more the Skipper climbed into the breach.

"Michael, don't be ridiculous. Accidents don't need hushing up. And if it's not an accident, Jude's parents and we, her friends, have a right to know it. And he has a right to a deliberate murderer remain at large."

**Grasping At A Straw**

OUT of the numbness his speech had produced in my head came an idea. Mike thought the Skipper was glibly wild elephants could never have dragged that suggestion from him otherwise. And there sat, insisting that we investigate, I grasped at a feeble straw.

"Mike! The footprints! The footprints on the tennis courts. There must be someone out there. We've noticed the clay on anyone's feet in the house."

Michael's eyes were far away. "Drop it, I say. For God's sake, Jim, what good will it do? Tell you there's no one there. It just keeps things boiling to pretend there is."

"There must be!" Gay was on her feet. "Mike, don't be a sap. These grounds must be searched, and if you won't go with Jimmie, I will and so will William."

"And so will I!" said the Skipper, "and so will Michael!"

Michael looked at her, a long look that to save my neck I could not decipher. "All right, Skipper," he said at last.

We took all sorts of precautions. Heavy jackets, oilskins, boots, pieces of brandy, and Higgins' revolver. With the exception of Cook and Annie, we all assembled in the library and none of us looked cheerful.

My own state of mind was a bad jumble. My thoughts were whirling from Jude and the past to the ghastly reality of the present, spurred on by a certain insistent suspicion that Mike's blood run cold—action of any sort was a godsend. The probability of accomplishing anything was another matter. I should have preferred leaving both Gay and the Skipper in the house, but there was a glint in the former's eyes that invited no interference and I had never given the Skipper an order in my life. Furthermore, I wasn't counting on Michael for anything. M. Farrington voiced my feeling to the letter.

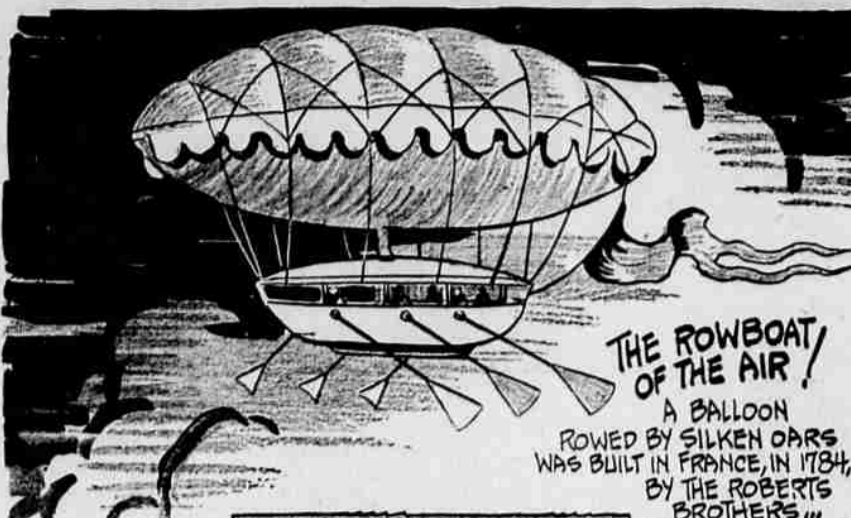
"It strikes me, Barbara, that you and Grace will be more in the way than anything else. Anu, Michael has no business out of bed. I should think that James and William would get along much better alone."

Gay's chin came up with a jerk and I braced myself for the deluge, but the Skipper spoke before it could get started.

"Two people can't search these grounds, Martha. Gay and I can take care of ourselves, and I think Michael's mind will be easier if he goes. He's well wrapped up. Don't fuss."

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



**THE ROWBOAT OF THE AIR!**  
A BALLOON ROWED BY SILKEN OARS WAS BUILT IN FRANCE, IN 1784, BY THE ROBERTS BROTHERS. IT MADE A 7-HOUR CRUISE SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING A HALF-MILE CURVE.



**PHILIPPA, WIFE OF EDWARD III, HAD TO WAIT 3 YEARS BEFORE HER HUSBAND WAS ABLE TO RAISE ENOUGH MONEY TO HAVE HER CROWNED QUEEN OF ENGLAND.**



**HAZEL WIGHTMAN WAS A NATIONAL TENNIS CHAMPION FOR A PERIOD STRETCHING OVER 24 YEARS. SHE WON 32 NATIONAL TITLES IN 1909-1933.**

**New Pine Business Tops Previous Week**  
PORTLAND, May 15.—(AP)—Reports from 114 mills showed last week's new business of 76,771,000 board feet of lumber was 6 per cent above the previous week's mark; the Western Pine association said today. Production totaled 81,324,000 feet and shipments reached 72,826,000.

**NOEL BENSON TO JOIN ADVERTISING HONORARY**  
EUGENE, May 15.—(AP)—Alpha-Delta Sigma, honorary advertising fraternity at the University of Oregon, initiated Noel Benson of Medford at the annual banquet this evening.

**TAILSPIN TOMMY—Circumstantial Evidence . . . Against Tommy!**



**BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Big Idea!**

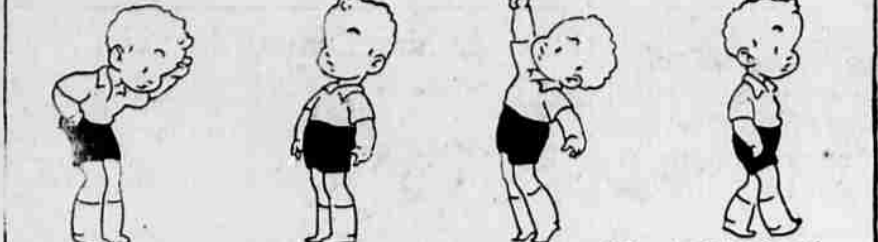


**THE NEBBS—Making Up**



# SELF-HELP

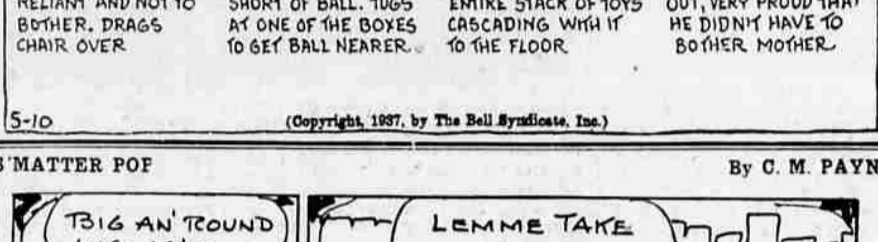
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



**ON ACCOUNT OF RECENT HOUSE CLEANING, CAN'T FIND HIS BALL**



**LOCATES IT AT LAST ON CLOSEST SHELF, WHERE MOTHER, IN A GRAND CLEAN UP, HAS NEATLY STACKED ALL HIS TOYS**



**MAKES FUTILE GESTURE OF TRYING TO REACH SHELF**



**TROYS OFF TO GET MOTHER'S HELP**



**DECIDES TO BE SELF-RELIANT AND NOT TO BOTHER. DRAGS CHAIR OVER**



**IS STILL A FEW INCHES SHORT OF BALL. TUGS AT ONE OF THE BOYES TO GET BALL NEARER.**



**TUGS BOX TOO FAR, ENTIRE STACK OF TOYS CASCADING WITH IT TO THE FLOOR**



**PICKS UP BALL AND GOES OUT, VERY PROUD THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE TO BOTHER MOTHER.**



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By C. M. PAYNE

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By HAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HERSH

# TEXAS LEGISLATOR CITED AS SLAYER

AUSTIN, Texas, May 15.—(AP)—Representative B. E. Quinn, of Beaumont, grey-haired veteran of the Texas legislature, was charged with the hotel slaying of Herman Hicks, Houston civil engineer, shortly after dawn today, in complaint filed with a justice of the peace.

Quinn was immediately released under \$1,000 bond.

He went to the state capitol, where the legislature is in session, and registered when the house convened.

Hicks, Quinn said, was one of two men who rapped on his hotel room door. He told the Associated Press he fired in self defense when the pair threatened to kill him.

The representative said he complained to the room clerk that noise "going on all night" in another room would not allow him to sleep and that about daybreak two men began beating on his door.

When he opened the door there was a scuffle, he said. He was struck several times and a small caliber pistol he had was discharged. Quinn said he never had seen either man and did not know who they were.

# Lumber Production Slumps During Week

SEATTLE, May 14.—(AP)—Production of 174,000 and operating mills in Washington and Oregon last week totaled 113,188,516 board feet, down 6,000,000 feet from the previous week and 71.8 per cent of the 1926-29 average weekly cut. The West Coast Lumbermen's association reported today.

The association attributed the decline to closure of 24 Columbia river logging operations by strikes or by employers.

Shipments dropped from 143,409,311 to 110,081,030 feet, while new business fell from 132,747,704 to 116,478,479 feet.

**Ready for Eclipse**  
WASHINGTON, May 15.—(AP)—The National Geographic society received word today that the seaplane tender Avocet had reached Enderbury Island, in the Pacific, with the geographic society-navy solar eclipse expedition. The party will observe the total eclipse of the sun June 8.