

MURDER ON THE BLUFF

SYNOPSIS: A mysterious shot kills attractive Jude Blinshop on a wild, stormy night at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael's aunt. Everyone marveled on this island is suspect: Mike, who talked with Jude alone that night; the Skipper, his tall and tuxedoed younger aunt; Aunt Martha, stout and prudish; Gay Palmer, Mike's red-headed sweet-heart; Higgins, the elderly butler; William, the chauffeur; Cook; Annie, the maid—even I who am Mike's closest friend. Then we discover traces of an outsider, perhaps a maniac, who must be loose in the house. Tired, nervous and fearful, we finally eat.

Chapter 21

We Dare Not Sleep!

"HIGGINS," said M. Farrington, "you may tell Cook that we shall all remain downstairs until she has finished cleaning up. Then I think we may as well retire. You may let us know as soon as you are ready."

"Very good, madam," said Higgins and departed.

"Oh, Lord!" said Gay sleepily. "What time is it?"

Michael glanced at his watch. "Twenty minutes of three." Abruptly a startling thought aroused me. None of us happened to be a murderer, but one of our number had been killed hardly more than 24 hours ago, and we had every reason to believe that a crafty and homicidal maniac lurked somewhere in the house even yet.

"Look here," I said sleepily, "we can't fall asleep! It's dangerous!"

They blinked at me. He had had very little sleep the night before and the past 24 hours had been cruelly exhausting. Nothing but action and considerable will power would keep us going for the few hours until daylight.

"Jimmie's right," said the Skipper; but her voice was very thick and her eyes were bleary. I poured more coffee.

"Tell you what," I said. "The back stairs are well blocked off. All the servants are probably in the kitchen. We are sure of this room and the library. He can't get anywhere upstairs except in the hall. Well, half of us can cover the lower hall while the other half goes through the living room, game room and conservatory. Then, if he isn't in any of those, we can all go up the front stairs. The servants can go up the back stairs, and we'll have him."

They were still blinking at me. I could see that I was talking to empty space. My own voice alternately receded from me and bounced in waves. I dashed my hand on the table.

"We can't sleep! Don't you realize that Jude is dead—that we'll all be dead if we sleep?"

Michael staggered to his feet. "You're right, I suppose," he mumbled, "but—can't seem to feel much."

I played my last trump. Dousing my napkin in ice water, I slapped him on the back of his neck. It worked. His eyes flew open in a flash. With the aid of more ice water and plenty of coffee, our party of seven, but it was not a pleasant awakening. An atmosphere of tortured nerves shrieking for rest pervaded the room. I don't think I ever felt less like moving. My brain was singing. "Jude—killer—can't sleep!" but it attached little or no significance to the words.

'On To The Kill!'

WE left Mike and Gay at the end of the hall, where they commanded a clear view of the main hall and of the small one leading to the library. The library windows and the hall door and windows were all securely locked. Except for the usual paraphernalia the hall closet was empty. The Skipper, M. Farrington and I explored the living room carefully. The windows were still fastened. Nothing but the scent of roses from the adjacent conservatory. "Can't sleep—can't sleep!" went the refrain in my head.

We stepped into the game room. The billiard cues still lay where Jude and Michael had left them. The fire had been dead for hours. Mechanically examining doors and windows, I was seeing Jude—good Heavens! only last night—here in this room. I could feel the pressure of her hand on my arm—see—I let the bolt on the door back into place with a thud.

"On to the kill!" said the Skipper, and winced. I saw the association of her own haphazard words.

Gay and Michael still waited in the hall, half asleep. I stepped quickly into the servants' dining room through the swinging door.

They were all sitting around the kitchen table and they turned rather guiltily at the sound of my voice. Unwashed dishes were scattered over the room, and both rooms were fully lighted, with the window shades drawn.

What the devil had they been talking about? I could not have been eyed more strangely if I had walked in that door for my own funeral.

"We've searched all the other rooms downstairs again," I said. "Our visitor must have gone up through

the front hall. All the doors up there are locked. You people go up the back stairs while we go up the front, and we'll have him. Are you a good shot, Higgins?"

The old man's face twitched. "I don't know, sir. I've never—fired the revolver, sir."

"William?"

"He hesitated for a second. "Yes." "Then you take the revolver. Shoot quickly and shoot low—and for God's sake don't miss!" William took the revolver reluctantly. "I'll call when we're ready," I said.

All of my party were waiting for me at the top of the stairs. Gay and Michael awoke at last, their eyes bright with excitement. The Skipper was talking to M. Farrington in a low voice.

"All right," I said. "Now we'll end this damned foolishness for good and all. William has the gun. Mike, you and I will go first. The rest of you stay well behind us, and don't leave the stairs until it's over. Everybody all right?"

The assents were a little hoarse.

"Here we go, William!" I bellowed, and pelted up those steps as fast as I could go. Ridiculous how intermittent that short climb seemed! M. Farrington was puffing behind me and Mike was at my side.

He panted. "Should have kept the gun yourself!"

"Can't shoot and neither can you!" I hissed just as the first view of the hall came into sight. At the head of the stairs we drew up with a jerk. Nothing! The hall was empty. Seven closed doors stared us in the face, and the key to each one of them lay in my own pocket. We stood straining our ears for sounds of a struggle in the other corridor. Then the door of the servants' quarters began to swing slowly toward us.

Locked Every Door

I HAVE never seen a door move so slowly. Through it tiptoed William, revolver in hand, and behind him came Higgins. Someone on the stairs gasped and then there was silence. I moved.

"The doors," I said. "Try them."

People were rushing up from the stairs, in from the corridor. Frankly we were tugging on locked doors, expecting them to open. None of them did. I tried them all myself, from one end of the hall to the other and even out into the smaller corridor. Locked, every one of them.

It was William who had one last gleam of hope. "Your keys, sir," he jerked. "Have you got 'em?"

I drew the keys out and counted them. Ten. I counted the bedrooms. Six and four more in the servants' hall. One by one I unlocked those rooms and bounced back. The light still burned beside Jude Blinshop's bed, but aside from the still figure under the sheet there was nothing there. I relocked that door last and went back into the hall.

"Impossible!" I said. "Someone certainly must have struck me. It must have been William, but I couldn't have struck William, and—someone did."

"The cellar," Gay said suddenly. "There must be a cellar."

There was, but it was inconceivable that Jude's murderer was down there—not unless he was a magician—and then some. Nevertheless, I rushed down the narrow stairs again. At the foot of them, a sudden idea pulled me up. The cellar door at the Bluff is outside the house in the little entryway of the kitchen where I picked up Michael's handkerchief. I myself had locked the door leading from that entry into the kitchen. In one bound I was at the door. It was locked and the key was where I had left it—on the inside of the door. Turning the key, I threw the door open on an empty entryway. The cellar door was bolted. I whirled back into the kitchen, relocking the door.

"Skipper!" I said. "Think carefully. Is there any other entrance from the cellar into the house?"

Her answer was prompt. "No. The only other entrance to the cellar is the one at the side of the house."

Michael spoke from behind Gay. "Then our man is still loose somewhere in the house."

I nodded. No one else had anything to offer. Over and over in the back of my head I was mulling the chances of William's having thrown himself down the stairs as a blind to start us hunting for a nonexistent murderer. Possible, of course. Probable? From the direction of the main hall, we could hear muffled sounds of the servants on the front stairs.

In the living room I sank uncomformably into a deep chair and studied a section of the rug pattern.

"The only trouble, Jim," said the Skipper quietly, "is that our friend is not in the cellar. The cat was all right when Martha and I came downstairs. He couldn't have been touched much before Cook screamed. And no one had time to mutilate that cat and make his exit down the back stairs before we got to the kitchen. No one went out the front door—unless he bolted it after him on the inside."

"But Skipper—" I began, when a warning look from her stopped me.

Desperate to keep awake, we try to play bridge, tomorrow.

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"But I think it would be well," he added, "to let the farmers know that congress feels that parity is a hopeless thing."

"I don't think you should place it on congress' doorstep alone if the money is not available," Jones retorted.

The object of the legislation is to assure producers of basic farm commodities prices that would give them the same purchasing power they had during the 1919-24 period.

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STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



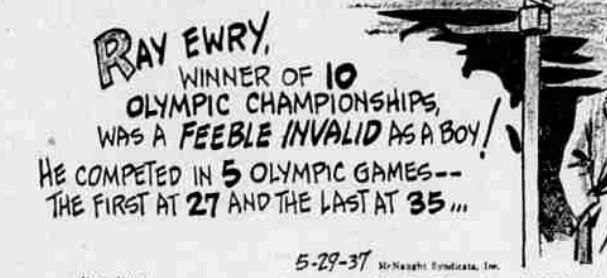
INSPIRED BY HOMESICKNESS!
"I WISH THAT IN ONE INSTANT I COULD TELL YOU OF MY SAFE ARRIVAL, BUT WE ARE 3,000 MILES APART AND MUST WAIT FOUR LONG WEEKS TO HEAR FROM EACH OTHER."
—WERE THE WORDS WRITTEN TO HIS MOTHER BY SAMUEL MORSE, TELEGRAPH INVENTOR, AS A 20-YEAR-OLD BOY IN LONDON—1811—



ICE OFTEN FORMS THICKER AND FASTER IN ZERO WEATHER THAN IN SUB-ZERO WEATHER



THERE ARE 507 TIMES AS MANY CHANCES OF BEING DEALT 12 CARDS OF ONE SUIT IN A BRIDGE GAME AS THERE ARE OF BEING DEALT 13!



RAY EWRY, WINNER OF 10 OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIPS, WAS A FEEBLE INVALID AS A BOY! HE COMPETED IN 5 OLYMPIC GAMES--THE FIRST AT 27 AND THE LAST AT 35...

Ray Ewry
In most cases a track man of 25 is already considered an old man in the game. At 27, Ray Ewry was just getting under way! As a small boy, Ewry was far from showing any promise as a future Olympic great. An invalid, his life was several times given up by attending physicians but the same heart that was destined to drive him to world championships later in life, fought off the onslaught of death.

With his health improving, Ewry took up various forms of exercise, becoming a jumper at Purdue university. At 27 he made the U. S. Olympic team, went to Paris in 1900 and won the standing high jump, the standing broad jump and the hop, step and

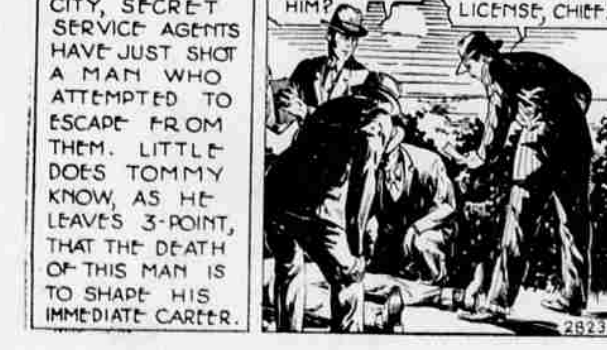
Official's Kin Hurt
BAKER, May 29.—(AP)—Graham Baird, son of County Judge and Mrs. Charles E. Baird, suffered a skull fracture Thursday afternoon when an elevator dropped from the third floor to the basement of the Rand building, which workmen are remodeling for the Paik company.

Cafes Boost Pay
PORTLAND, May 29.—(AP)—The Restaurant Owners' association adopted a proposal for a 10 percent wage increase today effective on June 1. The resolution called for arbitration on December 1 of an additional 5 percent boost.

Closing time for Zoo Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.

Use Mail Tribune want ads. Use Mail Tribune want ads.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Startling Resemblance



FAR OFF IN AN EASTERN CITY, SECRET SERVICE AGENTS HAVE JUST SHOT A MAN WHO ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE FROM THEM. LITTLE DOES TOMMY KNOW, AS HE LEAVES 3-POINT, THAT THE DEATH OF THIS MAN IS TO SHAPE HIS IMMEDIATE CARTER.

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Cup of Joy!



WHY, WHY, WHY, I CAN'T GET OVER IT—I'VE GOT A JOB! AND I THOUGHT THAT I WAS THROUGH—THAT NOBODY WANTED ME—

MRS. HIGGINS, I'M GOING TO LET YOU BREAK UNCLE NAT INTO THE WORK—I'VE GOT SOME ORDERS TO DELIVER—ALL RIGHT, BRIARGIE, LET'S GO!

NAT BARNES, I DECLARE YOU LOOK TEN YEARS YOUNGER! WHAT'S HAPPENED?

I FEEL TWENTY YOUNGER, HETTY, AND I'LL TELL YOU WHY—

I COULD DANCE A JIG, I'M SO HAPPY, HETTY! COME ON! JOIN ME! THERE'S ROOM IN THE WORLD FOR US OLD FOLKS!

DESPERATE TO KEEP AWAKE, WE TRY TO PLAY BRIDGE, TOMORROW.

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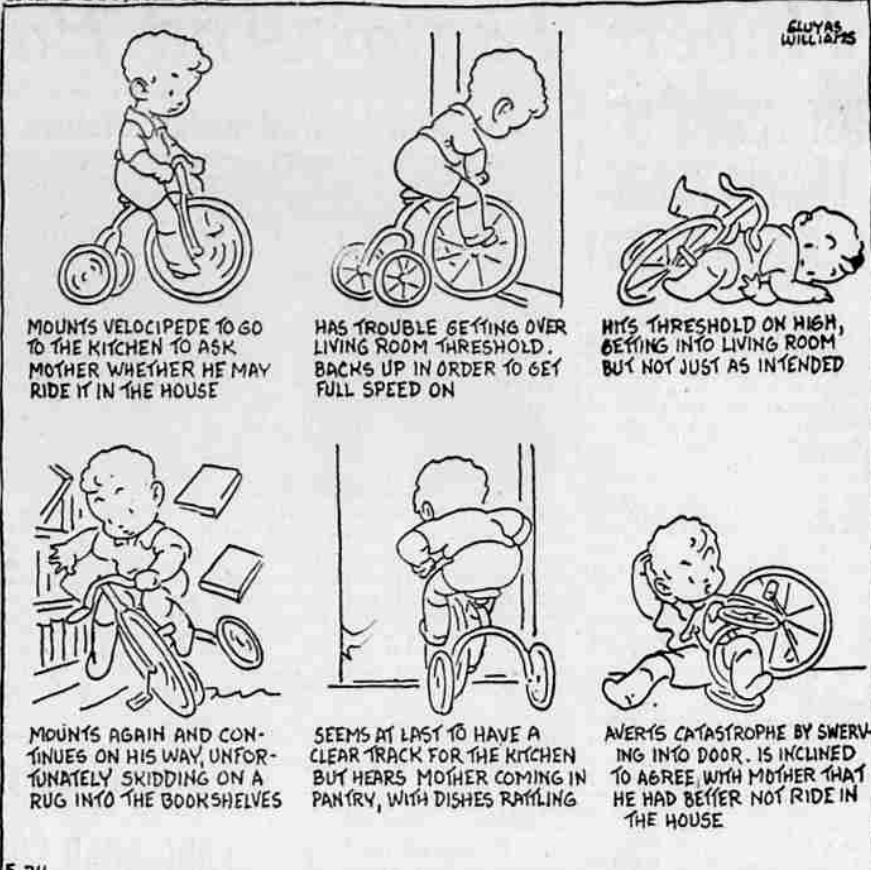
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INDOOR RIDING

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



MOUNTS VELOCIPED TO GO TO THE KITCHEN TO ASK MOTHER WHETHER HE MAY RIDE IT IN THE HOUSE

HAS TROUBLE GETTING OVER LIVING ROOM THRESHOLD. BACKS UP IN ORDER TO GET FULL SPEED ON

HIS THRESHOLD ON HIGH, GETTING INTO LIVING ROOM BUT NOT JUST AS INTENDED

MOUNTS AGAIN AND CONTINUES ON HIS WAY, UNFORTUNATELY SKIDDING ON A RUG INTO THE BOOKSHELVES

SEEMS AT LAST TO HAVE A CLEAR TRACK FOR THE KITCHEN BUT BEARS MOTHER COMING IN PANTRY, WITH DISHES RATTLING

AVER'S CATASTROPHE BY SWERVING INTO DOOR. IS INCLINED TO ABREE WITH MOTHER THAT HE HAD BETTER NOT RIDE IN THE HOUSE

5-24

S'MATTER POP

By C. M. PAYNE



?

SS-SS-SS-SH! MICE IN HERE!

AWK!

WOOF!

WHAT THA DING, DING?

YEH, HE BARKS TSABS

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WALLACE CLASHES WITH COMMITTEE ON FARM PRICES

WASHINGTON, May 29.—(AP)—Secretary Wallace and Chairman Jones (D. Tex.) clashed at a house agriculture committee hearing today on how much a farm price stabilization program would cost.

The Texas questioning the ability of the treasury to finance the program which Wallace estimated at \$1,280,000,000 would be needed annually for "parity" and soil conservation payments if all farmers complied.

"I think Mr. Chairman, that your mathematics must be in error," Wallace replied.

A short while later, President Roosevelt expressed hope at his press conference that Wallace's ever-normal granary plan, a part of the price

THE NEBBES—What Now?



I WANT TO PUT TWO BUCKS ON "COME-ALONG" BUT I WANT YOU TO TAKE EGGS. I AM TEMPORARILY EMBARRASSED FINANCIALLY

TEMPORARILY? YOU'VE BEEN THAT WAY ALWAYS—WHEN YOU MAKE A BET ITS IN DIMES, NICKELS AND PENNIES. SOME TIMES I THINK YOU MUST TAKE UP A COLLECTION IN A CHURCH AND GO SOUTH WITH TH' DOUGH

I ADMIT I AIN'T RICH LIKE YOU—I GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHIN FOR THEIR DOUGH BESIDES CONVERSATION

NOBODY ASKED YOU TO COME IN HERE—THE DOOR SWINGS BOTH WAYS—MY ADVICE TO YOU IS TO PUT YOUR PROFITS IN THE BANK AND AFTER 50 YEARS YOU MIGHT HAVE BUS FARE TO THE OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

HELLO HONEY FACE, I CAN'T TAKE YOU OUT TONIGHT—I GOT A CALL FROM MILLINGTON FROM THE BIG EGG HATCHERY TO COME AT ONCE—THEY WANT TO CONSULT WITH ME—DONT BE MAD AT ME, ANGEL DARLING!

5-27

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