

MURDER ON THE BLUFF

SYNOPSIS: Jude Blinshop, his old flame, is mysteriously shot to death. The story starts our stormy weekend at Farrington Bluff, home of Michael's aunts. A series of strange attacks occurs. Then we find the body of Michael's mad father below the bluff. Aunt Martha is shot in the shoulder, and nearly faints with sleeping powder. The Skipper, Mike's tall, tuesday younger aunt, disappears. Cook, William, the chauffeur, and Annie, the maid, suspect Higgins, the old butler. lock him in his room, believing him the killer, and write out the case against each person.

Chapter 44

The Mark In The Sand

THERE was only one person left, and for a moment I hesitated. There was something repulsive about sitting there sorting evidence against the Skipper when the chances were that her body was floating somewhere in the churning waters of the Sound. And yet, having gone so far, I wanted to finish it.

I wrote the Skipper's name at the head of a fresh piece of paper and rattled on.

SKIPPER

Upset from the very beginning, Motie observed. By nature, would stop at nothing to gain an end that she considered. Before the cyclone, asked me to keep Michael away from Jude. No real evidence as to her whereabouts when Jude was killed. Apparently the last person to see Jude alive. Knew of Higgins' gun. Had been seen to use it when she considered it necessary. Unusual for her to forget the dog. With M. Farrington when prowler was heard in upper hall. With whole party when both attacks were made. Would have been attracted by anyone.

Seemed to know just where to look for brother's body. Alibi about second shooting substantiated by Higgins. Last person with M. Farrington before his second accident. Both disappearances coincide with disaster (First—Jude's death, Second—M. Farrington's near death.) First person to notice forced lock on Jude's door. Capable of any sort of bluff at any time.

In all probability, Michael was searching the house for me by that time. Nevertheless, the odds were against my getting another chance to think things out alone. Time was pressing. The dial of my watch registered 2:45. I imagined that the boat from shore would be at the Bluff by eight o'clock at the very latest. That left us a little over five hours. I forgot old Higgins' locked in his room waiting for the police. I forgot everything. Feverishly I pored over those scribbled sheets.

I thought that the evidence pointed to one of two things—to an elaborate plan of revenge on the part of William Miller and his wife, aided by an old friend in Cook, or to a mixture and inexplicable misunderstanding between Michael and the Skipper. It was clear that, in the latter case, the two culprits were not in each other's confidence. Michael had searched the Bluff for his aunt like a madman.

Far-fetched as it might seem, I really believed that he had been ignorant of the existence of his father. All of his actions seemed to indicate that he had stumbled upon some evidence against the Skipper. He was neither a fool nor coward, and I could explain his anxiety to have the investigation dropped in no other way. It was an impenetrable mess. But the Skipper's guilt tallied with the evidence against Higgins.

There were few people in the world whom I could imagine Higgins trying to shield. Barbara Farrington was one of them. In her behalf, an old boy would go to trial without a murmur. He might have taken those letters in an attempt to shield the Skipper. He might have substantiated her alibi and tried to get someone else's fingerprints on the revolver. He might have been with the Skipper when William found him out of his room on the night of Jude's death.

It was possible that he had been about to confide the whole story to me that day in the living room when he saw someone outside the window. Could that person have been the Skipper? But what motive—what earthly motive—could the Skipper have for killing the daughter of an old family friend, for killing her only brother, for twice attempting to kill her only sister? It was preposterous! I turned hopefully to the other view of the case.

M. Farrington Approves

THE Millers had motive and opportunity for everything that had happened. One of them could have shot Jude in premeditated or sudden revenge. William might have cut me down as I was about to stumble over some evidence. Any of them could have enticed Michael's father from his hiding place. Either William or Cook could have killed the cat and upset M. Farrington's room after guessing old Norman's identity, in an attempt to throw the house in a panic. It was highly possible that M. Farrington unconsciously held some evi-

dence against them. Any of them could have both shot and drugged her and subsequently done away with the Skipper, who might have witnessed the latter crime. But if the Millers were guilty, how could I explain the behavior of Michael and his aunt?

I sat there for a long time, frowning at that paper. Even if the Skipper had been telling the truth, what of Michael? What had he and Jude talked about? Why had the Skipper been so anxious to keep that pair apart? I couldn't seem to get anywhere.

Michael, in the doorway, put an end to my speculations. He had read the case against Higgins to M. Farrington myself. Michael raged, stormed and threatened to tear me limb from limb. He would, he shouted, believe Higgins in opposition to Saint Peter. But M. Farrington took it silently, almost coldly, as if she had been expecting it and was in a measure relieved.

"You were quite right, James," she said, cutting short Michael's tirade. "It seems unfortunate, but we must take no more chances."

My sympathies, I am afraid, were entirely with Michael. The logical thing for me to do was to present my case against William, but I hesitated to tell that story to Farrington. An opinion once lodged in her head had a tendency to stay there, and if I were wrong two innocent people would be jobless when the whole business was over. Higgins was safe and quiet. Since Gay was taking M. Farrington's view of the case, I let it go at that.

At her own request, we left M. Farrington to sleep. She seemed really much better and announced her intention of joining us downstairs a little later. Gay wanted to stay with her, but she wouldn't hear of it. Pretty much involved in our own thoughts, we made a weary trek down the stairs. In the lower hall, I grabbed an old jacket of Michael's and slipped out onto the terrace.

The Imprint Of His Body

IT WAS a beautiful night, starry, crisp and clear. The salt air felt good. Leaning against a pillar, I closed my eyes and listened to the clear roar of the surf. I stayed there until the uproar in my head had cleared a bit.

Then, lighting a cigarette, I strolled aimlessly in the direction of the bluff with some vague idea of watching the effect of the spray on the rocks below. As I lurched along, I realized unconsciously over the exact ground that I had traversed so frantically that morning. I found myself pulling up with a jerk at the scene of Norman Farrington's death. The ground was marked and imprinted from the impress of many feet. The marks of our skidding as we tugged on the rope glistened icily in the starlight.

Wordsworthian reflections on Nature deserted me. I leaned over and looked down. Somewhat marred by the effect of the spray on the rocks below, the imprint of Higgins' feet, but still clearly defined in the sand below, was the shape of poor old Farrington's body. Apparently it had landed hard without sliding or rolling. At almost any other point on the whole bluff, if heavy weight going down the edge would have rolled and slid to the beach below. Slid!

If the Skipper had gone over the edge, the extent of the bluff's outward slope would make it necessary for her to have struck sand. And if heavy weight going down the edge would still be there, the rain had stopped long before she disappeared, and the sand was too wet to be much disturbed by the wind. It would be impossible for anyone to jump clear of the bluff into the water, even at high tide. There was no moon and I was without a light, but my eyes, already accustomed to the darkness, had seen the mark of Norman Farrington's body without any trouble. I raced along the top of that bluff, my eyes glued to the sand far below me.

When I finally halted on the rocks beside the stable, I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Skipper had not gone over that bluff into the water. She might, of course, have fallen from the rocks either where I stood or where Michael had fallen across by the boathouse. We had already examined that possibility, with no result.

I turned moodily back toward the house. That night couldn't end too soon for me. I tried to look at my watch, but my matches were gone. Striding rapidly alone, I wondered what Gay and Mike were doing. It would be pretty terrible if the Higgins issue precipitated another row.

The hall was still vacant, and the sound of voices rumbled in the living room. Peeling off the jacket, I made hastily in that direction, and just as my hand touched the knob, Gay's voice came through the closed door.

"Then would your mind telling me why you were searching your father's pockets a while ago, and what you were doing with the key you took out of them?"

I flung open the living room door in the silence.

"Well, Mike?" I said.

Higgins gives a hint of the Skipper's whereabouts. Monday.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



A TOWEL ENDED AMERICA'S CIVIL WAR!
IN LEE'S SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX, THE VIRTUAL END OF THE CIVIL WAR, A TOWEL WAS USED AS THE FLAG OF TRUCE...
THE TOWEL IS STILL PRESERVED...

"A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME,"
APPLES, PEARS, PLUMS, PEACHES,
BLACKBERRIES, RASPBERRIES,
STRAWBERRIES, APRICOTS, CHERRIES,
NECTARINES AND LOBANBERRIES
ARE ALL ROSES!
(Family Rosaceae)



BUTTERFINGERS!
DETROIT, A. L., MADE
425 ERRORS IN A
SINGLE SEASON IN
1901 - (136 Games)

Towel That Ended a War
The Confederacy was through. Its starving, battered troops were utterly worn out. It was useless to continue resistance. General Lee decided to surrender.

Recognizing the historic value of the towel that had been used as an aid in bringing about the end of the Confederacy, General Whitaker carefully preserved it among his effects. Later he cut off a piece of it for himself and turned the rest over to his chief, General Custer. Custer presented it to the Smithsonian Institution where it is now preserved.

The strip of towel which General Whitaker took for himself is now in the possession of his widow at her home in Washington, D. C.

Oddly enough, the price paid by Major Sims for his famous towel almost made it worthy of the singular honor to which it was raised. It cost him \$40.00, due to skyrocketing war prices.

The Cursed King
Protesting that they had not committed the murder of which they stood accused, two brothers named Caravajel appealed for a pardon from Ferdinand IV of Spain in 1312. Refused, they called on God to prove their innocence by calling Ferdinand to His tribunal in thirty days. Ferdinand became ill and on the thirtieth day after the brothers' execution he died.

Because of the conditions surrounding his death, he is known in Spanish history as "Ferdinand the Summoned."

Tomorrow: Merry-Go-Round Hospital.

Pueblo, Colo., reputedly was worth \$15,000,000 during the gold rush days at Cripple Creek, Colo.

His son, Merrill S. Bernard, attorney of Tulsa and Sand Springs, left today with his wife for Pueblo as soon as he was informed of his father's death.

Bernard said his father's rise to great wealth came from a "grub-stake" he gave a miner while operating a grocery store.

In 1913-14, however, he lost wealth in financing a San Luis valley irrigation project in Colorado, when, according to his son, friends who were associated with him in the venture, deserted him, leaving him with the financial burden.

In ancient China a political association was considered a social evil and an indication of a rebellious spirit against the state.

GUIDE SERVICE OFFERED AGAIN AT LAVA BEDS

LAVA BEDS, Cal.—(Sp.)—Guided field trips to points of scenic and historic interest will be offered again at this national monument during the current travel season.

Visitors will be shown as much of the monument's wealth of natural phenomena and of its historical region as possible with a minimum amount of driving. Captain Jack's Stronghold, recalling the fiercely fought Modoc Indian war of 1872-73, will be an important destination of the guided trips and will reveal how a group of 33 Indians battled a superior and better equipped force of soldiers for five months before the redmen were forced to capitulate.

The battleground area is today much as it was over 60 years ago. Bones of slaughtered animals, on

EX-MILLIONAIRE DIES PENILESS

TULSA, Okla., June 25.—(AP)—Sam S. Bernard, 79, who died today virtually penniless in a hospital at

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Disillusioned!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—A Success!



THE NEBBS—The Low Down



RESTING PLACES By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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'S'MATTER POP By C. M. PAYNE



By HAL FORREST



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HESS

