

OCTAGON HOUSE

BY PHOEBE ATWOOD TAYLOR

...the story so far: Asey Mayo, Cape Cod detective, is investigating the murder of Marina Lorne, whose husband's post office mural has aroused Quanamet. She was killed by a left handed blow from her sister's knife. Asey knows Pam Frye is innocent, as well as Tim Carr, boarder at the Frye's Octagon House. Marina was married to Tim, unknown to Jack Lorne, and also had played around with Roddy Strat, who is now being "menaced." Then the barn burns down, Tim and Asey are knocked out in the woods, and Pam's father is found unconscious in the Lorne's cottage. The problem uppermost in Asey's mind is a \$50,000 lump of ambergris Pam found the day of the murder. Pam hid it in the coat bin, and her father moved it to the barn.

Chapter 30

Asey's Opinion

"DID Aaron hear anyone in the house when he came to?" Dr. Cummings asked.

"He didn't hear anything or anyone," Asey said, "until Pam called him. He didn't have a watch, and the time element's all confused. He must have been out for a good while, though."

"How'd he get the ambergris in to the barn?"

"Believe it or not," Pam said, "he just casually wheeled it there yesterday morning."

"He didn't!" Cummings said.

"He did," Asey assured him. "Same order of things as my painting in the puttyin' yesterday. With troopers to the right of him and troopers to the left of him, he wheeled it out to the barn in an offhand manner—it was still covered up with the tarpaulin—and dumped it into an old zinc lined feed bin. The cops didn't say a word. Aaron was 'open' on an aboveboard, an' they was sort of losin' interest in doggin' his footsteps by then anyway, an' Hanson was away at the time. That's how that happened."

"And Asey doesn't think that the ambergris was in the barn when it burned," Pam said. "Of course, that particular bin was near the door, and I suppose it would be the first thing anyone would look into—but see here, Asey. If the person who fired the barn actually had looked around beforehand, he'd have found the ambergris right off the bat! And then there wouldn't have been any need of burning the barn at all, unless—"

"No," Asey said. "He looked around, an' couldn't find it so he burned the barn in order to get us to point it out."

"Listen, Asey," Pam said. "Take it slowly. Get the whole picture. I put the stuff in the coat bin. Father finds it, and has a fanciful notion that it'll be safer in the barn. So he takes it there. Someone wants to know where the ambergris is. You claim that they looked around the barn—well, if they did any hunting at all, they certainly found it in the bin. And if they didn't hunt for it, then it just got burned up."

"They looked for it," Asey repeated, "an' they didn't find it, so they set the barn on fire to see if—"

"If they didn't find the ambergris in the bin," Pam interrupted, "where in heaven's name was it, Asey? You just aren't makin' sense!"

"Sure I am," Asey said. "Your father put it in the bin. But someone moved it from the bin after your father put it there, an' before the person who fired the barn began his huntin'. That's clear, ain't it?"

"Asey Mayo, do you mean that there's more than one person after this ambergris?"

"I'm sort of beginnin' to think, Asey admitted in a characteristic understatement, "that maybe perhaps there possibly might be."

Barn Burner Or Biffer?

"TWO!" Cummings said. "Two? What do you mean, two?"

"Two people, or two sets," Asey said. "Maybe more. Probably more. I wouldn't know. That's what I been wrestlin' with in my mind. I think the fellow that fired the barn ain't the one that biffed Tim Carr and Aaron an' me. The barn burner uses his head. The biffer seems to be a violent sort of lad. The barn burner—"

"You certainly can't call him any quiet shrinking violet!" Pam interrupted. "And after all, arson isn't one of the gentler crimes!"

"I know. But I think the person that burned the barn hunted through it first, and then waited around to see if his burnin' theory worked out. N'en I think he called it a day, an' left. N'en I think that someone else carried on the violent part, biffin' your father before the fire, an' Tim an' me after it. An'—"

"And what about those two troopers, O'Malley and what's-his-name?" Cummings asked.

Asey shrugged. "No one knows. Hanson's tryin' to solve that one right now. P'raps they landed up with the violent gal before the fire, didn't. They're not within a mile of this place, anyway. It's been looked over again this morning."

"Listen," Pam said. "I've got another idea. Suppose someone found the ambergris in the bin, removed

it, and then fired the barn to make us think the ambergris was burned up in it. What about that side, Asey?"

"I thought of it, but I don't like it," Asey told her. "If he'd have swiped it, he'd have beaten it and not passed for the fire to call attention to things. Firin' the barn then might of lost him too much time, and of course, how an' when could anyone of got the ambergris away, with that mob in the woods, later."

"Perhaps that's why Shorty and O'Malley are missing. Perhaps they saw the man take it away, and perhaps they went after it."

"Wait an' let me get straightened out," Cummings said. "Aaron put it in the barn. Someone else—call him B, removes it. Someone else—call him C—hunts for it, an' can't find it, an' so he burns the barn. And now you think there's still another person, D, who's responsible for the violent biffings that went on. Well, that leaves you with three people, or one person three times, or—oh, it's beyond me! And suppose the ambergris was taken from the barn—where was it taken to?"

"Not very far," Asey said. "And who did it?" Pam demanded. "Who is this B, and who's C, and who's D? Who are they?"

"Who," Asey returned, "did your sister Marina tell about the ambergris before she was killed?"

"I don't think Marina told a soul," Pam insisted. "I truly don't. She was out to get that for herself. And suppose that she did tell someone. She and the person would have teamed up, and whisked it off long before I got over there to the garage at tenthirty. And—"

"Wait," Cummings said. "Wait another second. Suppose for the sake of the argument that Marina told someone about the ambergris, and suppose the person decided to get it for himself. And with the ambergris as a motive, suppose they killed Marina, and—"

"Good An' Thwarted"

"YOU can stop supposing right there," Pam said. "If someone killed her for the ambergris, why in the world would they take it after they killed her, Friday night? Why did they leave it for me?"

"How do you know they did leave it for you?" Asey asked.

"You left it in the garage because you didn't have any way of removing it. It's perfectly possible that the person who killed Marina was in the same position. You've hunted ambergris all your life, but you never thought about transportation problems. Marina could have been killed for the ambergris, and the person could of been stumped on the transportation angle just the same way. Now, let's suppose—"

"No," Cummings said, "don't let's suppose. Let's stop supposing. I can suppose up to a certain point beautifully, but from there on into higher mathematics, my mind doesn't function. And my mind's had enough. Except just this—suppose that the person who killed Marina didn't know anything about the ambergris at all, and suppose they killed her because she put it in the bin. Suppose the highest mathematics in my mind doesn't function. And my mind's had enough. Except just this—suppose that the person who killed Marina didn't know anything about the ambergris at all, and suppose they killed her because she put it in the bin. Suppose the highest mathematics in my mind doesn't function. And my mind's had enough. Except just this—"

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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.



Smallest Tea Set
A complete tea service for three people, consisting of 16 separate pieces, was hammered from a single dime by W. G. Coxeter, San Diego jeweler.

The set consists of an oval tray, just as wide and twice as long as the original dime; a teapot with cover, a sugar bowl with cover, a creamer, hot water pitcher, bread tray and spoon holder, and three cups, saucers and spoons.

"There is nothing in this Lilliputian 16-piece set but that one new dime and a little solder," Coxeter says. "So little solder, in fact, that the set weighs a trifle less than a new dime, because of the silver filings lost in manufacture."

Radio Antennae
A single, well-constructed aerial is capable of picking up all the radio programs in the world capable of reaching it, yet not more than 10 programs can be transmitted from one antenna.

According to the Federal Communication Commission, there is a practical limitation to the number of stations using a common antenna because the broadcast would interfere with each other. Forty kilocycles is approximately the closest they could be placed.

"Practically speaking, such operation is limited to perhaps five or ten programs since it is necessary to have the transmission frequencies fairly well separated in order to obtain effective filtering without undue loss of power," says C. A. Priest, General Electric Radio Transmitting engineer.

Naming of July
Originally named Quintilis because it was the fifth month of the old Roman year, July got its present name to appease Julius Caesar because he was not elected Emperor by the Romans.

There were but 30 days in Quintilis, so another was added to prevent any other month from exceeding that of Caesar. Strange as it seems, August (originally Sextilis) was similarly named to appease Emperor Augustus and an extra day was added for him also.

"X" Not Needed On Write-In Ballot
SALEM, July 1. —(AP)—When a name is written on the ballot by an elector at a school election in a first-class district, he is not required to

make a cross to the left of such name, Attorney General I. H. Van Winkle held here today.

Van Winkle said the writing of the name was one of the methods by which a voter is authorized to express his intention at the polls.

The other method is making a cross before the name which is printed on the ballot.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Betty Hops Off!



By EDWIN ALGER

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Sold!



By SOL HESS

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



By C. M. PAYNE



By HAL FOREST

The Grange

Jacksonville Grange enjoyed a corded dish dinner in their hall June 24 and held a regular meeting immediately following.

A short program presented by Alice Marsh consisted of a piano solo by Neal Stone of Central Point, a reading by Della Jennings, two piano numbers by Joyce Niedermeyer and a reading by Paul Hempster.

Mr. and Mrs. Beck were given the third and fourth degrees by Master Otto Niedermeyer after which a short recess was declared and members of Juvenile Grange obligated two new candidates and three honorary members.

A. E. Brockway reporting for the legislative committee gave an interesting comparison of the tariffs of various countries.

Henry Conger stated in his report

for the agriculture committee that Jackson county had the best organized and most active committee in the state.

Nellie Niedermeyer and Olive Floyd urged attendance at the annual Home Maker camp to be held at Lake O' Woods July 1 to August 7.

Chester Wendt gave an interesting report for the co-op. committee, reiterating many things stressed at the state grange session.

Mrs. Louise Brockway announced purchase of a new flagstaff. Mr. Sanden reported for the band uniform committee.

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Niedermeyer gave reports on their recent trip to the state grange at Klamath Falls.

Win Arnold was appointed by the lecturer to take charge of the program for next meeting.

TOWNSDITES TO HEAR REPORT OF DELEGATES
All Townsendites are invited to at-

By JOHN HIX