

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 mail has enraged Quannomet. She was killed by a left handed blow from the knife of her sister, Pam Frye. Milling around Octagon House and thereafter involved are: agreeable Tim Carr, who was married to Marina; Jack Lorne, who thought he was her husband; Roddy Strutt, whose plans crashed the night of the murder; Peggy Boone, an artist; Jennings, a plumber; and persons unknown who smoke Turkish tobacco, burned down the barn, bigged Asey, Tim, Pam's father and two troopers, and destroyed Jack's murder sketches. Missing is a \$50,000 lump of ambergris belonging to Pam. Meanwhile, Tim seems to be thinking of Pam in connection with his future.

Chapter 35

The Sweet With The Bitter

"PAM!" Peg Boone called from the kitchen. "Pam, where are you?"

"I've got to go," Pam said hastily. "She wants—"

"I do," Tim was replying to her housemaid's question. "I do, do I? What nice hands you have, I'm so sick of painted claws. Look, what's this about ambergris? Is it like verdigris, or a variation of amper-sand? I'm sure I ought to know, it's probably something I should be teaching the youth of America, but my mind's a blank. What are ambergris? And—oh—"

Peg Boone walked over to them and eyed them both rather curiously. Pam felt herself turning red again.

"Something's definitely wrong with the Spanish cream, Pam," she said. "I can't tell if it's too Spanish, or too creamy, but it's not as it should be."

"I'll be right in," Pam said. "Timothy watched Peg stride back to the house."

"What," he said, "does she do around here?"

"What do you mean, what does she do?"

Tim shrugged. "Every time I manage to haul you off for a nice long chat, up she pops. She reminds me of Aaron's clocks. Just as you forget them, they strike."

"She's nice," Pam said. "She's a friend of ours."

"I suppose she is," Tim said with a sigh. "Well, I'll just have to take the bitter with the sweet. I suppose you won't like lots of our friends, either. We know a tea master who wears a coral bracelet around one ankle, and sandals with a thong next his big toe. I'll tell you what—we'll introduce him to Peg. Maybe they'll marry. Isn't it wonderful how problems disappear, if you just put your mind to work? And," he added before Pam had time to speak, "where did Aaron get those clocks, anyway? With shaving soap?"

"Auctions," Pam said. "He got the first ones by accident, and then it got into his blood. He slinks around antique hunting then. Why don't you like—"

"Gran's that way about elephants," Tim said. "She buys—look, do you really have to see about that Spanish cream? I thought it was one of those things you couldn't alter afterwards. I mean, either you hit it on the head, or you don't."

"I know," Pam said. "You're what they call an extravert. You—"

"The things I draw on phone pads," Tim said. "Are as normal and healthy as can be. Well, let's cope with the Spanish cream, but don't let's ask the Boone to stay on indefinitely—"

Pam stopped short. "Why ever not, Tim? What's the matter? Why don't you like her?"

"If I were a woman," Tim dropped his bantering tone, "I'd say it was just my intuition. I don't know why I don't like her. Do you warm up to her much, yourself?" Pam hesitated.

"There," Tim said. "See?"

"Her Eyes Don't Smile"

"BUT I do like her," Pam said. "She's been awfully decent to me. I'm not violently enthusiastic about her. I've known her too long and too well, and besides, I don't often get violently enthusiastic about people. What is it you have against her?"

"Nothing," Tim took her arm. "Come on—"

"You have," Pam said. "I want to know before we go in."

"Well, you asked for it," Tim told her. "It's just that she's so damn hearty, but her eyes don't smile. I feel the same way about your brother-in-law. God knows no one would ever accuse him of being hearty, but his eyes are such fishy things. Like cod on ice in a fish market window. And then every time I get myself up to the pitch of telling you about Marina, she appears on the scene. That's worse than her eyes."

"What about Marina?" Pam said. "I was married to her," Tim said. "Before Lorne, I—no, please don't say anything now. Not till you've considered how much we have in common. It isn't Marina that matters. It's what she did—now, tell me about ambergris. Is it either portable or valuable?"

"Both," Pam said in a small voice.

"Really?" Tim said. "Tell me all about it—"

He remembered, as they went into the kitchen, all the questions Asey had put to the troopers about the barrow and the cartings that had gone on the day before. And he remembered that Peggy Boone had helped his grandmother repair the flower beds.

"All about it," he continued, still avoiding Pam's eye. "Ambergris is an introductory course."

While Timothy was being told about ambergris, Asey parked his car in front of the Pochet hospital, and went in to see Roddy's pilot.

"I was just going to call you," the nurse on duty said. "Susan asked me, Brigham's doing nicely. He really shouldn't have any callers, though, so you won't get him excited, or stay too long, will you? Dr. Carter sent you his regards, by the way, and says he's coming down for a sail before his vacation's over. I'll show you the room."

"How's Earl Jennings?" Asey asked as they walked down the corridor. "I hear he's been acting up."

"So you heard about that episode, did you?" the nurse sighed. "Thank goodness, he's going to-morrow. We're just about worn out with him. And he got into the mull at the beginning, too! It's the mull that's fretted him and got him so obstreperous. Here you are, Mr. Brigham, this is Asey Mayo."

"I hope," Asey said sincerely, "that all them bandages ain't any indication of how you feel. An' what's this contraption for, the busted leg?"

Brigham smiled behind his bandages. "Thanks to you and your doctor," he said, "I feel pretty good. And I'm glad to see you. I've got a lot I want to tell you, and a lot more I want to be told about—"

"Fifteen minutes," the nurse said warningly, and went out.

"What A Bunch!"

"HEN," Asey said, "we got to work fast. First off, who are you really? They didn't get any response from the wires they sent off about you, to the folks whose names they found in your wallet. That made me wonder if Brigham wasn't a kind of pen name."

"It is, I'm Charles Horn."

"The lad himself. And because we haven't a lot of time, I'll tell you the I was sacked from the L. and N. for drinking. So I'm Brigham for a while, till I can work up to being Horn again. And if I hadn't been a little bit tight the other night, Strutt wouldn't have got me into that plane. And if I wasn't one of the best pilots I know, I wouldn't be here now, nor would Strutt. All I ask is that I can get out of here and give that mug a good licking before somebody kills him for me."

"To save a lot of fiddlin' around, an' to save you from takin' Asey's name, I'm guess, an' you tell me where I'm off to mornin' in the story. Go back to Friday. You spent the day takin' Strutt an' his pals on joy rides—"

"And how! If I'd known more about that outfit, you couldn't have got me there in irons. What a bunch!"

"Uh-huh. Friday evenin', you an' Roddy trailed a pal of his to Providence, an' then come back here—when?"

"Around eight or so. And I sat down for the first time all day, and had a couple of drinks. I needed 'em, too," he said. "I needed 'em!"

"And Strutt went out, and then he came back," Asey said, "say around eleven, and told you that you had to go up again. That right?"

"Yes, I said he was crazy, and I was tired, and the plane needed some overhauling, and his lighting system was lousy. But nothing would do, after arguing and arguing, but we had to go up. Finally we got things organized and the way I felt about him and his crowd then, I didn't care if I did smash up his plane, and him, and myself, too. And he went up, and he dared me to land in the town square. For the hell of it, I did. I wouldn't have cracked up if he hadn't got panicky and froze onto me—say what was going on? What was his idea? It must mean something, or you wouldn't be interested."

Asey explained. "Alibi," he finished up. "No one's asked him just what he was doin' an' where he was, an' why, durin' the time Marina Lorne was killed—you know about that?"

"The nurses don't talk about anything else," Brigham said, "except her, and that plumber that wants to light anyone his weight for two cents. There's been another time with him. He roared for a solid hour this mornin'. Say, was Strutt mixed up in the murder?"

"That," Asey said, "is what I yearn to know. Can't you cast any light?"

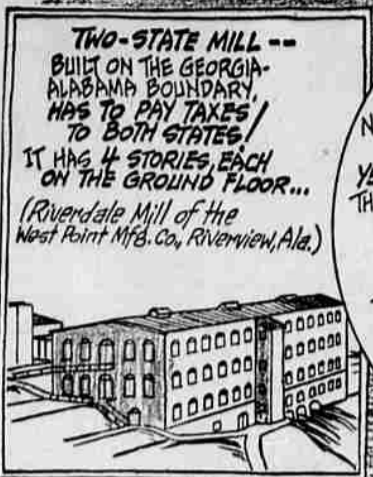
"All I know is, he went off after we got back from trailing that guy, all high and happy. When he came back around eleven, he was frightened about something."

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Brigham casts more light, tomorrow.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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Gottschalk's Walk.

Science has long held the viewpoint that ancestors of the American Indians came originally from Asia; but how they got here has been a difficult question to answer.

Close to the Arctic Circle, the northwest section of the Asiatic continent reaches out and almost touches Alaska. From East Cape, Siberia, it is merely a distance of 54 miles to Cape Prince of Wales on the American shore.

Across this water barrier ethnologists assert the early migrants traveled. The possibility of their crossing by boat in the summer months has been severely discounted because of the great dangers attached to such a trip.

Undoubtedly, some of them crossed the region known as Bering Strait, on foot, according to Dr. John P. Harrington, Smithsonian Institution ethnologist. Such migrations were in all probability made during the closing days of the last Ice Age, when the ice there was thicker than it is today.

Now the strait is never completely frozen over. In the summer strong south winds drive the ice into the Arctic sea; in the winter there remain open stretches—treacherous, shifting floes and thin spots.

Conclusive evidence that a foot crossing of the Bering Strait is possible was received recently by Dr. Harrington in a letter from Captain Max Gottschalk of Nome, Alaska, who recounted a trip he made in 1913 from East Cape to Shishmaref.

Alone with a dog sled, 16 dogs and a load of fur, he struck out for Big Diomed Island, which he reached in two and a half days. The next stop to Little Diomed was covered easily. There a white man, Bill Schroeder, joined him, following on snowshoes. Twenty-five miles out, Schroeder fell through the ice, eventually died of exposure after Gottschalk returned him to Little Diomed.

Carried northward on the drifting floes, Gottschalk eventually completed his precarious journey at Shishmaref, 75 miles north of Cape Prince of Wales, after traveling some 200 miles.

"I do not think I could do it again," Gottschalk wrote.

Sunday: The caterpillars that stopped a train!

COURT HEARS ARGUMENT ON FEHL COMMITMENT

SALEM, July 8.—(AP)—Arguments of attorneys were heard in the state supreme court here today in the case of Earl H. Fehl, ex-Jackson county judge, who is attempting to set aside a decree of Circuit Judge Norton of Jackson county, committing him to the Oregon state hospital.

Prior to his commitment to the hospital Fehl served a four-year term in the state penitentiary for ballot thefts in Jackson county.



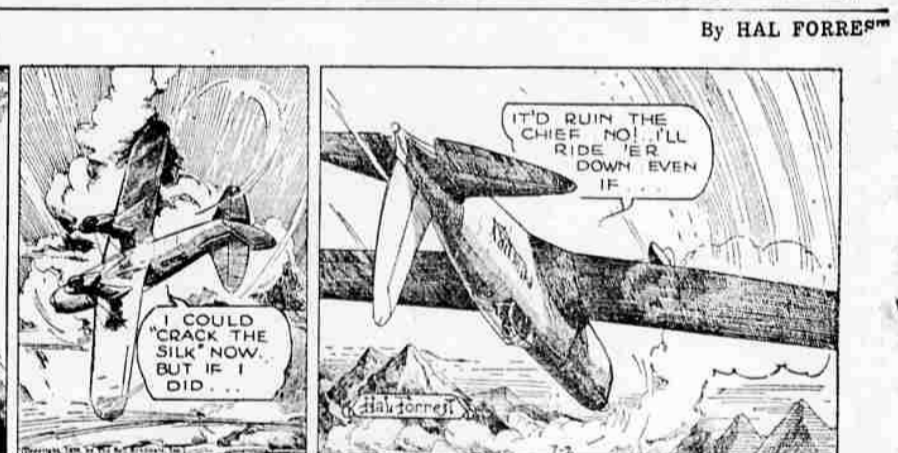
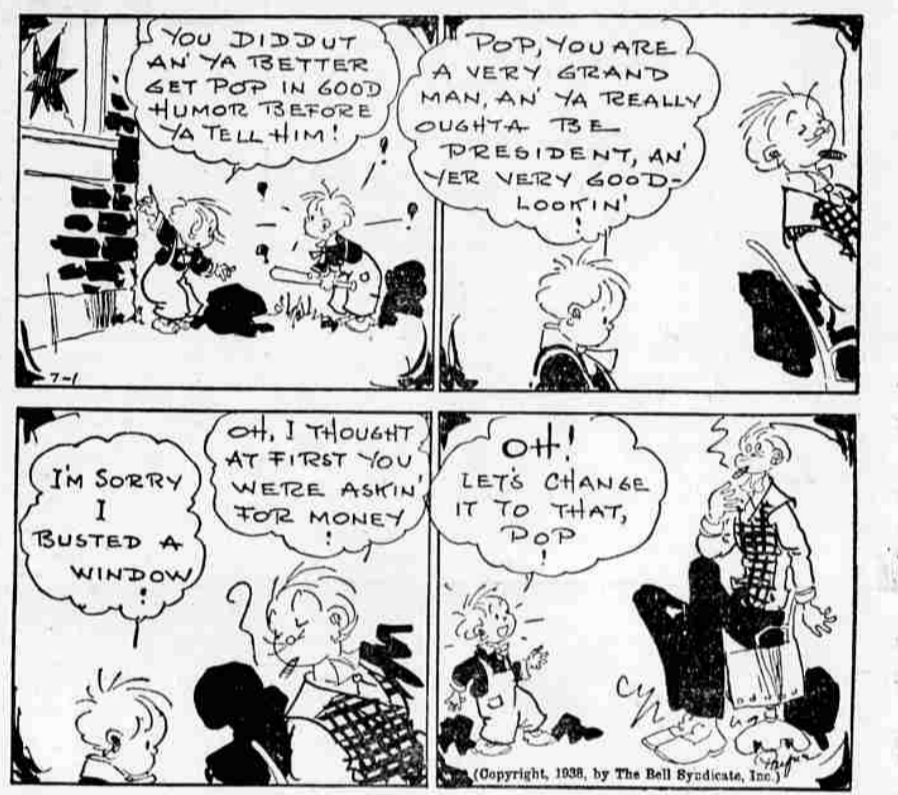
INTERRUPTION

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



S'MATTER POF

By C. M. PAYNE



MANY JOBS OPEN IN CIVIL SERVICE

United States civil service commission today announced open competitive examinations for the following positions:

Assistant home economist, \$2600 a year, junior home economist, \$2000 a year, junior in home economics information, \$2000 a year, bureau of home economics, department of agriculture.

Applications for the foregoing positions must be on file in Washington, D. C., not later than July 28.

Assistant messenger, \$1080 a year, for appointment in Washington, D. C. Closing date for receipt of applications at Washington is July 22.

Klamath Will Seek Control Of Sides

KLAMATH FALLS, July 8.—(AP)—The Klamath county court today agreed to contribute \$300 from its pest control budget toward starting a study of the midge nuisance on upper Klamath lake.

Plan is to employ an entomologist through Oregon State college who will make an investigation of the annoying bugs which perennially infest the lake area and possibly devise a program for their extermination.

THE NEBB'S—Pleased to Meet You

GOOD MORNING, MRS. SONJOHN—YOU'RE COMFORTABLE HERE I HOPE

PERFECTLY—I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO THESE VACATIONS IN NORTHVILLE WITH A GREAT DEAL OF PLEASURE

YOU WILL PARDON MY INTRUDING, MRS. SONJOHN, BUT I AM MR. NEBB'S BROTHER, STEVE—A WANDERER FROM EVERYWHERE... MY EYES HAVE ENJOYED YOU SINCE FIRST I SAW YOU

THIS PLACE IS NOT SO FILTHY WITH BEAUTIFUL AND INTERESTING PEOPLE THAT I CAN AFFORD NOT TO ENJOY SOME OF YOUR TIME AND I HOPE MY RELATIONSHIP WILL BE NO HANDICAP

