

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 enraptured Quenomet. She was killed by a left-handed blow from the knife of her sister, Pam Frye. Interested parties are: Tim Carr, once married to Marina; Roddy Strutt, whose alibi-planting plane crash was derobated; Peggy Boone, an artist; Jennings, a trade plumber; and persons unknown who burned down the Frye's barn, bigged Asey, Tim and Pam's father, and destroyed Jack Lorne's mural sketches. Missing is a \$50,000 lump of ambergris belonging to Pam which several people must have seen on the beach from Roddy's plane. Asey gets into the post office on Sunday for another look at the mural.

Chapter 39

Agreement All Around

"THE miscreants!" Elliott said. "The miscreants! This is an outrage. This is why there's not a single inch of that mural or of the side panels left! Not an inch that isn't covered by that red paint! It's—Jonah, don't you think that this is an outrage?"

Jonah, the dour post master, looked carefully at the Congressman and then at the red smeared walls before replying.

"Well," he said cautiously, "yes, an' no. Yes, an' no. If you ask me, it's a crime to hurt gov'ment property. They hadn't ought to of touched gov'ment property. But I tell you, it seems awful good to be able to look around the inside of this place without blinkin' an' wincin' Red lead, ain't it, Asey?"

Asey nodded. Red lead seemed to be playing quite a part in this case.

"Put on," Jonah continued, thrusting out an exploratory forefinger, "put on around the middle of last night, I'd say. Kind of a red job. They didn't spill much paint, an' they didn't do any trampin' around in what they did spill, either. No, sir, this wasn't no mad job. This was deliberate."

"I am profoundly shocked," Elliott said. "Profoundly. I'm at a loss."

His voice was entirely serious, and so was his face, and both were impressing Jonah enormously. But it seemed to Asey that underneath his seriousness, Elliott was considerably pleased, and considerably relieved. It had solved his problems, anyway.

"I s'pose the picture's ruined?" Jonah asked hopefully.

Elliott looked inquiringly at Asey.

"I guess so," Asey said. "I don't think you'll be able to do much reclaimin', an' it'll cost a pretty penny."

"Asey," Elliott said, "you have hit the nail squarely on the head. Any sort of reclamation would necessarily be a most expensive job, a burden on the taxpayers, already burdened—and so on. And after all, you can't expect the government to pour more money down the sewer—I mean, down the pipe."

"You don't figger there's any chance that they might do you?" Jonah asked.

"I would not like to go on record," Elliott cleared his throat. "But I think I may safely say that—I'm speaking for myself, you understand. This is not an official statement. It should not be construed as such."

Jonah nodded. "I see."

"But I think I may safely say," Elliott went on, "that the chances of this work of art being reclaimed or renovated are—well, they're remote. Jonah, they're remote."

He spoke with such relish that for a moment Asey wondered if Elliott might possibly have lost his key on purpose.

"That's fine," Jonah said. "I don't mind tellin' you, I sort of wanted to paint the thing out, myself."

"Off record," Elliott said heartily, "me too, Jonah."

"A Silly Story"

"SAY!" Jonah, who had walked over to the front door, beckoned to them. "Say, looky here, in the inside of the lock here. Looky! This gold key, this—"

"In the door?" Elliott asked unhappily.

"Right smack in the front door—it's unlocked, an' this key's sittin' here on the inside. Say—well, what do you know about that, this's your key, Elliott?"

"Impossible," Elliott said with prompt firmness. "Absolutely impossible. I don't believe it!"

"Well, it's got your name on the tag," Jonah said. "L. P. Elliott. That's your ain't it? Say, his dour face lighted up as you caught sight of forgotten this. El, you'd ought to of been more careful—"

"Jonah, you don't think that I—"

Jonah winked elaborately.

"But, man alive, I had nothing to do with this! If that in my key, it was stolen. As a matter of fact, I knew it had been stolen. A man came out of my hedge—" Elliott stopped in confusion.

"It is," Asey said sympathetically, "kind of a silly story, ain't it?"

"But it's true! Jonah, you've got to believe me—"

"I won't say a word," Jonah said. "Not a word. Here, take it. Now, you know what I think? We came in the back way an' no one seen us. But if they did, we can fix that up. I think we better get along—"

"What?" Elliott said. "Justice—"

"I know," Jonah returned. "But there still might be time for someone to salvage that damn painting, for all we know, but if we wait till tomorrow—when it's good an' dry—"

"We can't do any such thing!"

"Come on, El," Jonah said. "Let's let it get found tomorrow, just to be on the safe side. I'll find it myself, when I come over early tomorrow for the up mail. If anything's said about your bein' here this evenin', why, you just come out back with me to get a valuable document that got mailed by mistake. We didn't even come in this part of the buildin' at all. Come on, now. We don't want to be in here too long—hurry!"

He shepherded them out, despite Elliott's voluble protests.

"Now see here," Elliott said as they paused on the rear steps. "see here, Jonah, I did not have a thing to do with that! I give you my word of honor that I did not—"

"Go long," Jonah said. "I was your sergeant in France, remember. I know how straight a face you can lie with!"

"But I didn't!"

"Listen," Jonah inserted a finger in Elliott's vest buttonhole. "Listen, this'll get you quonomet and the towns around all so roused up in your favor—why, a hundred per cent! Just you consider the next election all over an' done with. El, we thought you was shilly-shallyin', not wantin' to get involved with Strutt's uncle in Washington that chose Lorne's picture. They been callin' you a fake, an' a straddler. But this'll save you, this will. An' don't think anyone'll ever let on or give you away. You won't get involved a mile. I'll see to that. If Asey don't, we'll—what's the word, Asey?"

"No Wild Geese"

"ALIBI, I think," Asey said in a strained voice.

"That's it! If it should happen that you get mixed up, why, we'll alibi you. We'll lay it all to the tourists in that mess last night," Jonah patted Elliott on the shoulder. "Now, you get along, El. I'm goin' to be late for evenin' services, as 'tis. An' don't you give this a thought. We all wanted to do it ourselves, an' we'll show you how we appreciate your doin' it for us. We know now that you got our wishes right to heart!"

Elliott gazed blankly after Jonah as he got into his car and went off. Asey having restrained himself as long as any human being could, laughed until the tears streamed down his cheeks in rivulets.

"Whee," Asey said at last. "I'm exhausted. I'm all wore out. Oh, golly, I think it is the funniest thing that's happened to you yet about this edifice, Elliott. I think—say, you didn't do it, did you?"

"What?" Elliott yelled at the top of his voice. "What? Listen to me!"

After ten minutes, Asey stopped him.

"I didn't really think so," he said. "Honest, I didn't. Look, I got to get over to see Roddy Strutt. I'm ashamed of myself for not havin' been there hours ago. Are you comin' with me?"

"Well," Elliott said with resignation. "I've apparently got the native vote, solid. Maybe I don't need the Strutts. Who knows? Sure, I'll come along, but if you find me being political, please don't take it seriously. If Roddy Strutt actually is involved in this, I'll do everything in my power to help you get the worm. Only, it's just possible that I may have to pretend otherwise."

"I understand," Asey said. "Let's get on."

He stopped by the telephone exchange to talk with Hanson, who hailed him wildly from the sidewalk.

"I ain't got time," Asey said, drawing Hanson aside, "to go into a lot of details, but this's what I want you to do. I want you to check up on Elliott—"

"Him? The Congressman?"

"Lower your voice, an' don't point," Asey said. "I mean him, the Congressman. Check up on him from when the post office closed last night till this afternoon. Got that? And for the love of heaven, don't let him or anyone else suspect that you're doin' any checkin'."

"Then you phone your boss in Boston, an' tell him that I want him to get from the newspaper the best pictures he can find of all of it, and I want 'em enlarged so's I can see all the details. Got that?"

"By you can go over to the post office, an' see it for yourself," Hanson said.

Asey drew a long breath. "Well, you do what I tell you, or—listen, do I usually ask you to chase wild geese? Well, then! You get after them two items, pronto, an' I'll see you later."

(Continued, 1938, Phoebe Atwood Taylor)

International Fortress

The citadel at Aleppo, Arabia, has long been fought over by nations which have sought to gain power in the desert peninsula.

Built on a high hill, which Mohammedan tradition says is supported by 5,000 massive columns, the citadel was taken in 1490 A. D. by Tamerlane, who entered through Bab-ul-Hadid (The Iron Gate.) With 50,000 men he marched up the hill to wrest the old fortress from the Syrians.

Legend states that Tamerlane was forced to sacrifice 10,000 men to form a human bridge over the water-filled moat surrounding Aleppo so that he could march to the citadel with the rest of his force.

Pair of Shoes

Strange as it seems, one pair of children's shoes, size 8, shod eight members of six different families, representing three generations in Yadkinville, North Carolina.

Purchased 72 years ago in 1866, the shoes were first worn by Bettie Russell. Next Bob Dixon inherited them, then Dixon's nephew, Charlie Williams, who wore them to church a few times.

Tomorrow: Man of a thousand intentions.

Alexep had been occupied in turn by Egyptians, Persians, Arabians, Turks, and recently by the French Foreign Legion. The center of the great caravan trade between Bagdad and Damascus, Aleppo still carries on important export and import trade.

Allen Couse and Clyde Eaton, of Lynwood, looked up an automobile behind an automobile and drove through the streets which were covered with foot-deep water—until the ignition wires dampened. Kayaks and paddle-boards were a common sight on the city streets.

Kennedy In Plea For Toleration

WINCHESTER, England, July 13. —(AP)—With a plea to democracies to resist "intolerance such as is abroad in so much of the world," Joseph P. Kennedy, United States ambassador, today unveiled a cathedral window as an American memorial to the late King George V.

Kennedy urged sympathy for the task of 32-nations refugee committee now in session at Evian-Les-Bains, France.

The memorial was suggested by an American citizen living in the United States, whose name was not disclosed and who paid half the cost.

BURNED AUTO IS FOUND BY POLICE

ROSEBURG, Ore., July 13. — (AP)—State police officers today are investigating discovery of the charred remnants of an automobile found near Leona and believed to be connected with thefts of a car at Eugene and license plates and accessories at Roseburg, Sergeant Paul Parsons of the state police said today.

The car, a Pontiac coupe, was apparently abandoned and purposely burned Thursday night, Sergeant Parsons said.

Sergeant Parsons reported that in his opinion the burned car is connected with the theft of a car stolen from Eugene and recovered Monday night at Medford, and with license plates stolen from similar makes of cars at Roseburg.

The machine recovered here Monday night was a 1937 Chevrolet coupe owned by E. E. Wyatt of Eugene. It was found abandoned on East Fourth street in the 100 block. According to local state police officers, the burned automobile discovered near Leona was a California car.

John Ezra McDowell

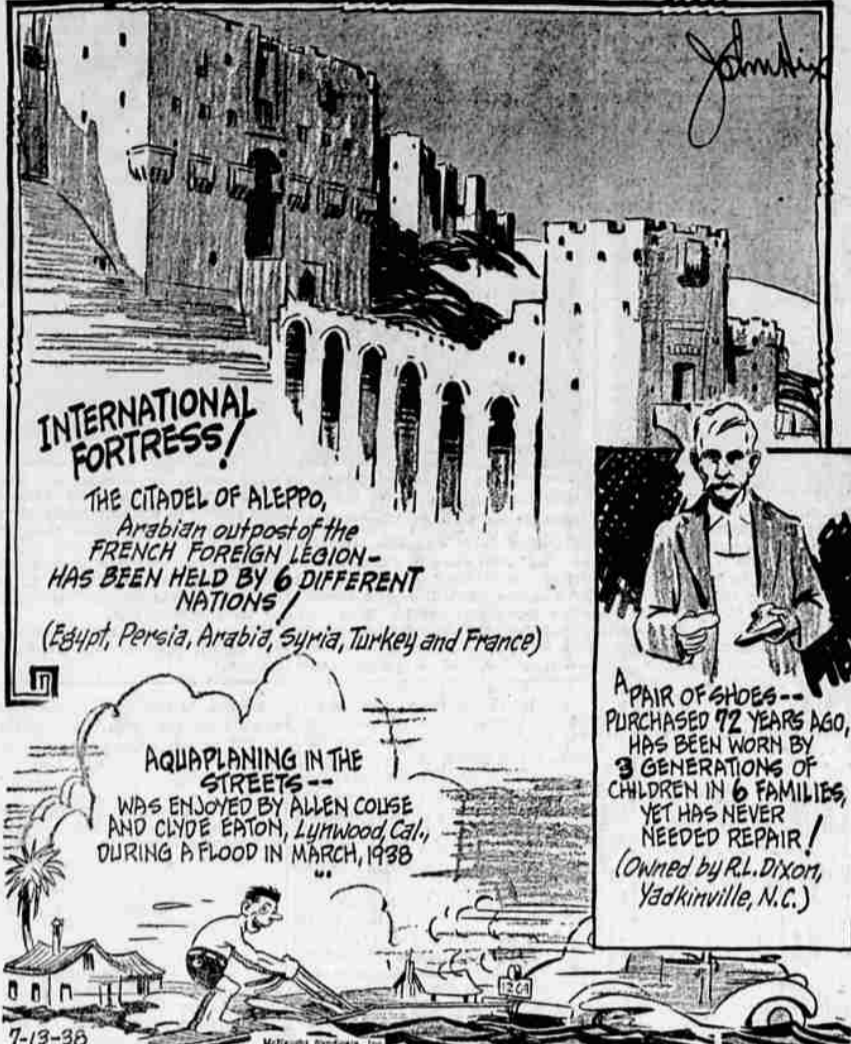
PALO ALTO, Cal., July 13. — (AP)—John Ezra McDowell, 68, former alumni secretary of Stanford university, died at his home at Los Altos today after a cerebral hemorrhage.

McDowell was graduated from Stanford in 1903, then became assistant registrar. Later he was alumni secretary and then academic secretary until his retirement a year ago.

More than 13,000,000 trees were planted in New York state's 1938 reforestation program.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



INTERNATIONAL FORTRESS!
THE CITADEL OF ALEPPO,
Arabian outpost of the
FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION—
HAS BEEN HELD BY 6 DIFFERENT
NATIONS!
(Egypt, Persia, Arabia, Syria, Turkey and France)

AQUAPLANING IN THE STREETS—
WAS ENJOYED BY ALLEN COUSE
AND CLYDE EATON, Lynwood, Cal.,
DURING A FLOOD IN MARCH, 1938

A PAIR OF SHOES—
PURCHASED 72 YEARS AGO,
HAS BEEN WORN BY
3 GENERATIONS OF
CHILDREN IN 6 FAMILIES,
YET HAS NEVER
NEEDED REPAIR!
(Owned by R. L. DIXON,
Yadkinville, N.C.)

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Tailspin Tommy—Checking Up!

TOMMY'S RACING PLANE, THE MERCURY, ONLY SLIGHTLY DAMAGED FROM A FORCED LANDING, OCCASIONED BY A BROKEN CONTROL WIRE, UPON WHICH ACID HAD BEEN POURED BY SOME MYSTERIOUS HAND, IS NOW IN THE THREE-POINT FACTORY, UNDERGOING REPAIRS.

BUT HOW COULD ACID HAVE GOT ON MY CONTROL WIRES, CHIEF?

THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO FIND OUT, TOMMY!

RUSTY, WHO, BESIDES YOURSELF, WAS NEAR THE MERCURY YESTERDAY?

WELL, CHIEF, THERE WAS WILKINS... AN'... OH, YES, LEM POTTER!

TELL WILKINS AND POTTER TO REPORT TO MY OFFICE AT ONCE!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—No! No!

LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS! WHAT'RE YOU MAKING HERE, ALGERNON?

OUCH! DON'T CALL ME THAT, MR. JIPPEM—MAKE IT MR. MCGURK, AT LEAST!

WELL, WHATEVER IT IS THE WEBSTER BOY'S PAYING YOU, WE'LL JUST DOUBLE IT! HOW'S THAT?

SEE, YOU'RE GENEROUS!

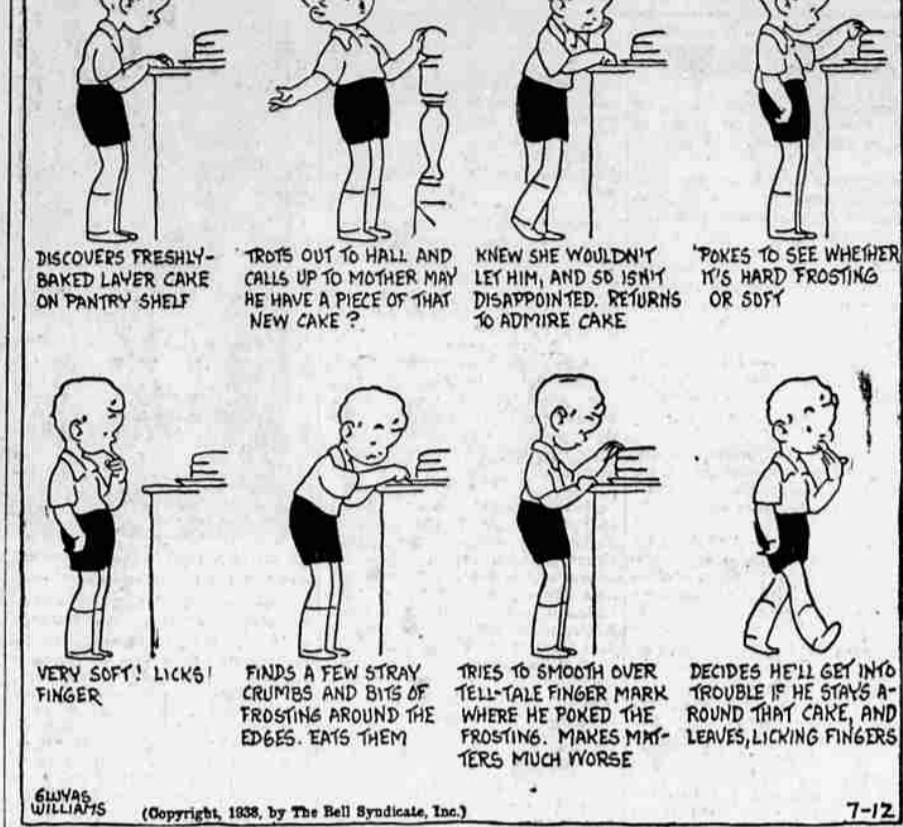
....BUT ON ACCOUNT O' MY EARLY TRAININ' AN' THE WAY MOM AN' DAD BROUGHT ME UP, I COULDN'T BE HAPPY TAKIN' YOUR MONEY, MISTER!

WELL, ER, ER, YOU'LL SELL US ONE O' THOSE BIG TURKEYS, WON'T YOU?

NO, MISTER, THEY AIN'T FOR SALE—TO YOU!

LAYER CAKE

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POP

By O. M. PAYNE



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THE NEBES—Reading the Riot Act

By SOL HESS



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