

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 enraged Quanonet. 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 alibiing plane crash was deliberate; Peppy Boone, an artist; Jennings, an artist plumber, and persons unknown who burned down the Frye's home, destroyed Jack Carveth's mural sketches and defaced the mural itself. Missing is a \$50,000 lump of ambergris belonging to Pam. Then Roddy is killed.

Chapter 44 A Neat Job

TWO hours later, in the enormous living room at the Strutt house, Asey puffed on his pipe and listened wearily to the argument between Dr. Cummings and Carveth on the subject of Roddy's death.

"Mr. Strutt," Cummings dropped his angry frown and spoke in a voice so subtly controlled that it startled even Asey. "I know that Roddy was your favorite nephew, and I know you've been upset during the last day or so, and I know you've suffered a tremendous blow tonight. But Roddy didn't kill himself. He was murdered."

"Roddy was driven to suicide!" Carveth said. "Look," Cummings' voice soared again. "I've tried to explain that I know how you feel, but I know the facts in the case. That's my job. I've spent the last couple of hours just finding out facts. Roddy was murdered."

"The boy was driven to suicide," Carveth said with stubborn persistence. "Everyone knows that suicides always go into a garage, shut the door and start a car."

"But they don't lock the garage doors on the outside!" Cummings said. "With a padlock!"

"Everyone knows that," Strutt went on, "and that's just what happened here. Roddy was so intimidated and so overwrought by these threats—why, he went out of his mind! He wasn't responsible for what he did."

"Carbon monoxide," Cummings said, "is a favorite with suicides. But Roddy was killed. He went into the garage, and someone—either someone with him or someone waiting for him—hit him on the base of the skull, hard enough to stun him. Then they moved him so that his head rested under the exhaust of his roadster, and then they went out, snapping the padlock after them. Certainly you don't think that Roddy locked that padlock, and then crawled back through a crack?"

"What do you think?" Carveth appealed to Asey. "I don't think," Asey said, "that I could ever prove it was suicide."

"Oh, I don't know what to do!" Carveth seemed to crumple back into his chair. "I don't know what to do, or what to think!"

"Dr. Cummings, too thoroughly annoyed with Strutt to stop and be sympathetic, hammered away at his point."

"Sheer reason," he said, "should convince you."

Asey motioned for him to be silent. This was no time to attempt to reach any possible better judgment Carveth might possess.

"wonder, Mr. Strutt," he said, "emphatically on his tentative belief 'about the newspaper angle. We kept this quiet up to now, but before long the reporters'll come. There's a lot in town, and you'll have to see 'em, an' talk with 'em—How about lettin' Elliott an' me write some sort of statement for you?"

"Oh, would you?" Carveth asked eagerly.

Stain On The Escutcheon
THE doctor raised his eyebrows and looked at Asey. That man could get more places with a little honey and molasses.

"But you got to consider," Asey went on, "the papers' angle, an' the position you an' your family hold. I wonder if, on the whole, it mightn't be wise to call it murder. I don't want to go against your wishes, but if we admit this is suicide, wouldn't it sort of be a—"

"Blemish," the doctor suggested. "Blemish. A stain on the family escutcheon."

"Just so. Now, you knew that your nephew was involved in the Marina Lorne business, didn't you, Mr. Strutt?"

Carveth grudging admitted that he had guessed it.

"An' if we say that he committed suicide, then—well, folks'll start talkin' an' sayin' that Roddy probably had reason to kill himself. People are always awful willin' to believe the unpleasantest things they can about anyone who kills himself. They want a reason, an' I'm afraid that Marina's murder might turn out to be it. But if we say Roddy was murdered, people will be sorry. P'raps sorry enough to forget some of the—uh—unpleasant incidents, an' all."

Carveth thought for a moment. "By George," he said, "I never thought of that! I think you're

right. You and Elliott fix up something—perhaps this will be the way to get Jennings. Yes, indeed."

"Now why," Cummings asked as he and Asey walked down the hall together a few minutes later, "why did you twist him over to our way of thinking, just to let him go off on a tangent about Jennings? He'll talk with Hanson, and you can't tell what will happen. You're sure Jennings didn't kill him, aren't you?"

Asey nodded. "But I don't want two conflicting stories on this," he said, "and I do want Hanson an' Carveth to provide a distracting element. Anyone would do, but Jennings is handier."

"In other words, you want the right hand in action, while the left brings forth rabbits. I see Asey, are you so sure about Jennings? He certainly menaced magnificently last night, if you can believe Carveth. And baffling Roddy over the head has a touch of Jennings about it."

"It's neat," Asey said. "The whole thing is neat, so much neater than I'd imagined at first that it makes my spine curl."

"Can you alibi Jennings?" the doctor asked, as he paused to pick up his black bag from the hall table.

"I can," Asey said. "I done some phonin' an' checkin' while you was busy cut in the garage. Jennings is alibied by time, an' the Methodist minister, you see, Roddy's disappeared just a little while before Elliott an' I come here, that was around seven-thirty this evening or maybe a bit after. At just about that same time, the minister was pickin' up Jennings, about 100 yards from the Pocket hospital. A quarter to eight, Lorne claims that Jennings was spankin' him. So you see, Jennings didn't have time to come here. The nurses can prove he was in his room at the hospital about fifteen minutes before the minister picked him up. They got him on a chart. There you are."

"A Red Herring
BUT where will Jennings be, when Carveth and Hanson get going?"

"He's safe. I'll get him out, if they get him in too deep. I want a red herring here, an' it won't harm him to be it. He can take it. An' I hope he'll keep everyone busy—"

"While you sneak off and ferret out the murderers?" Cummings asked.

"Just one," Cummings said.

"Forgotten Marina?"

"Nope," Asey said. "Oh, I know what you're goin' to say, Doc. The first murder was a stabbin' an' this is a carbon monoxide by force, an' they don't seem alike. But they're alike in one thing. The knife they used was Pam's, an' the idea here, I think, is for us to land on Jennings."

Cummings set his bag down. "Then you think that Roddy was being menaced, but not by Jennings?"

"I thought," Asey admitted, "all this menac'n was a yarn, at first. Now I wonder if perhaps Roddy wasn't been threatened all right. An' of course when Jennings turned up last night, naturally the Strutts thought that he was the menacer. Only he wasn't."

The doctor sighed. "It gives you an unknown menacer to start with, I suppose, but I don't feel that much of a foundation. How would anyone know that Jennings was the basher who went after you and the rest?"

"They wouldn't have to know," Asey said, "about that business in the woods, or any specific bashin'. Jennings has a reputation for violence. Everyone knows that way he thinks an' how he feels about Roddy. An' they know he's mad at Roddy. He's a nice, likely person to pick out, just as Pam was. Are you ready? Then we'd better get goin'."

Elliott met them as they walked down to the garage where the doctor's car was parked.

"Hanson's come and gone," he said, "and he left two messages for Asey. That he'd done all the checking, and it was okay. And what you wanted is on its way to you from Boston. Look, why did you check on me? Don't look so guileless, Hanson made a break!"

"The nicest people," Asey said, "do the strangest things. Elliott, you got to compose a statement for the press—an' then will you hang around here? Carveth's in a state, an' if you're helpful enough, you might get a new school. Besides, someone ought to be here who can make decisions."

The Congressman took copious notes on the backs of envelopes.

"There," he said, "Where'll you be?"

"Octagon House," Asey said. "Got anything, Lane?" he asked the officer who came over to them.

"No prints on the padlock, the car keys, the wheel, door, or anything. Everything's clean. Wipe off. He got hit with that piece of wood you thought, but that's clean too. And the padlock was not forced. Asey, I don't get this at all!"

(Copyright, 1938, Phoebe Atwood Taylor.) Monday: Asey reproaches himself.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



AUGUSTE MEUNIER—Belgium, WROTE 17,181 WORDS ON A POST CARD!



EDWARD PAYSON WESTON—long-distance walker, AT 68 BETTERED BY 29 HOURS A WALKING RECORD HE HAD SET 40 YEARS BEFORE—PORTLAND, ME., TO CHICAGO (1326 MILES) IN 26 DAYS!



A HOTEL KEY WAS MAILED BACK TO THE BABBETT HOUSE, Derby, Conn., 27 YEARS AFTER THE HOTEL BURNED DOWN! —May, 1938—



30 BARBARY APES—WERE IMPORTED FROM AFRICA TO KEEP ENGLAND FROM LOSING THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR IN 1930! THEY REPLENISHED THE DWINDLING MONKEY POPULATION, WHICH NATIVES BELIEVED WAS INSEPARABLE WITH BRITISH RULE!

Gibraltar's Monkeys
Strange as it seems, mighty Gibraltar, Mediterranean fortress noted for its impregnability, was saved for England in 1930 by 30 Barbary apes imported from Africa.

Involving in the superstitious beliefs of Spanish natives at Gibraltar, England's hold on the rock was never dependent on whether or not the Barbary apes could live there under British rule. When the last ape died, natives whispered, England's flag would no longer wave over the fortress.

In 1930, the monkey population of Gibraltar had dropped off until there were but two left—a pair of old females. Natives passed the word that the British hold was weakening.

Fearing possible revolution or other trouble with the Spanish natives, military strategists stationed at Gibraltar saw the necessity of taking steps to replenish the stock of Barbary apes.

Consequently Captain D. A. Smith was commissioned to bring new ones from Africa to quiet the superstitious natives. He captured 30, ferried them across the strait and turned them loose to clamber over the towering rock mountain. Today, strange as it seems, it is a crime to tease these peace-preserving monkeys of Gibraltar—and high treason to kill one!

For 234 years England has held this strategic fortress which stands guard over the entrance to the Mediterranean, yet oddly enough Gibraltar was not taken by England for England

in 1704, but for Archduke Charles of Austria, pretender to the Austrian throne!

During the War of the Spanish Succession, a British squadron was sent to the Mediterranean under Sir George Rooke who, after cruising about, decided to attack Gibraltar. Although the rock was fortified with 100 guns, Sir George took it in three days, in the interests of Archduke Charles.

However, Charles was defeated in his attempt to gain Austria's throne, so Sir George, on his own responsibility, caused the British flag to be raised over the fortress and took possession in the name of Queen Anne.

Tomorrow: Tiny sheep of the Cameroons!

LOS ANGELES—(UP)—District Attorney Byron Fitz reports that this city is free from payment of tribute to racketeers than any large community in the country.

History Papers Room
ROCK ISLAND, Ill.—(UP)—Front pages of newspapers showing big news breaks from 1861 to 1938 provide a unusual wall covering in a hotel here. Because it would be impossible to duplicate most of them, the owner is negotiating for their insurance.

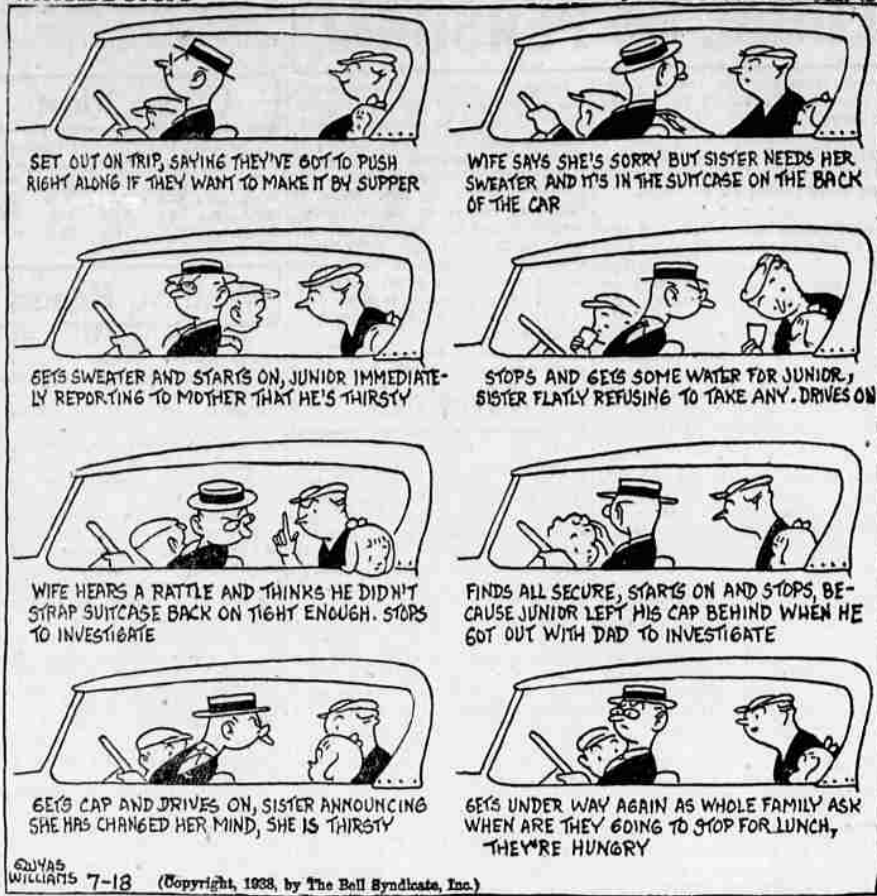
Horseshoe Strikes.
WORCESTER, Mass.—(UP)—Proctor R. Currier is convinced that horseshoes don't bring him luck. While walking past a horseshoe pitching court, Currier was hit on the head by a wildly-tossed shoe.

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WAYSIDE STOPS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



GLUYAS WILLIAMS 7-18 (Copyright, 1938, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

S MATTER POE

By C. M. PAYNE



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Paul Accuses Sneade!



By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Peace?



By EDWIN ALGPP

Foree Acquitted Of Burning Plant

DALLAS, Ore., July 19.—(AP)—Lisle Foree, former president of the Salem Teamster's union, was found not guilty of arson early this afternoon when he appeared before Circuit Judge Arlie G. Walker. Foree, who was tried without a jury last week, was charged with arson in connection with the burning of the West Salem box factory last November 20.

Sudden Auto Stop Cracks Lady's Hip

ALBANY, July 19.—(AP)—Mrs. Andrew Hansen, 85, of Eugene, suffered a broken hip last night when the automobile operated by her son-in-law, Leonard L. Good of Eugene, stopped suddenly to avoid a collision with a bicycle. The aged passenger fell forward to the floor of the car.

Eagerness For Job Costs Seeker \$23

PORTLAND, July 19.—(AP)—Walter Jarmer's eagerness for work made him gullible Sunday. A stranger asked him if he wanted a truck driving job and took \$23.50 from him to get him "bonded" and equipped with a chauffeur's license. The man gave him a note to a trucking firm authorizing the placing of Jarmer on the payroll, and signed "Al McGinnis." The drayage company had no never heard of "McGinnis" and had no job.

Trooper Succumbs To Bullet Wound

PORTLAND, July 19.—(AP)—Injuries he suffered in November when an infuriated Terrebonne, Ore., chicken rancher shot him at close range, yesterday took the life of State Patrolman Ray Pyle.

THE NEBS—Suspicion



By SOL HESS