

THE ARMY POST MURDERS

By Virginia Hanson

The Characters
Katherine Cornish, myself, visiting Elizabeth on a mid-western Army post.

Yesterday: Adam tells me that Barney was interested in Elizabeth before becoming engaged to Anne. Elizabeth leaves the dance around 11 o'clock.

Chapter Seven
The Music Stops

AS Elizabeth had predicted, the men were nearly all conventionally garbed—some in white, some in black and a few in olive drab.

Mrs. Orpington was a tolerable Pierrette until you saw her sharp-featured, malicious face. She had good legs and a marvelous figure, but she was not young.

She seemed disturbed that she was not dancing. I saw her measure the remaining possibilities and descend on the Wheelers, mother and son, who sat stolidly side by side, glassy eyed and painfully smiling.

Young Wheeler was tall and lean, with good features; but he burned with self-hatred. You could see it in his muddy gray eyes that veiled turbulent depths.

Something impinged on the corner of my vision—someone slipping past the wing of the building. For a moment I was sure it was Charlie—a turn of the head, the neat, fluid motion of the hips that distinguish a dancer and a fighter; Charlie was a little of each.

I rose impulsively, only to sink back in my chair. I did not want to see him, I told myself angrily, I would leave tomorrow; and I would send back his ring by the colonel's orderly.

A minute later Adam vaulted the veranda railing and sat there grinning at me. He had been gone quite a while. Had he run into Charlie?

"Adam, you're a gentleman," I said. "But I refuse to let you carry off all the honors. We're going in now, and you're going to batter Ma Wheeler into letting her little boy dance with me." I rose.

"What a perfectly revolting idea," he said with simple sincerity. "You can't believe I'd prefer Ma Wheeler!"

While I hesitated he reached out and caught my hand in a friendly, impersonal clasp. "Listen," he said softly.

The first liquid notes of Taps were flowing like slow cool water through the darkness. Tears stood in my eyes. I waited, my hand in Adam's, listening, under the spell of an enchantment I cannot describe.

The last silver note withdrew and I ceased to reach for it. Adam's hand was tangible in mine. "You wouldn't believe how soft we really are," he said gently. "A lot of this hard-riding, hard-drinking front is a pose. There's that word 'militaristic.' We're supposed to be tough and hard and brutal—don't we make war a career? Why don't we give up this archaic bugle-blowing? We could use a sort of fire whistle. We must everybody on the post stand and face the flag at retreat? It's an awful nuisance—everybody says so."

"Outsiders," I said. "Of course we do. When we say we're in the service we mean it literally. And we don't know quite how to act when a bunch of hard-boiled civilians hurl that insulting word 'militaristic' at us. Some day we'll invent a word to hurl back at them. Now we merely call them Outsiders."

"Am I an Outsider?" "In the sense that you are not one of us, yes. You were thinking a while ago that we lead a cat-and-dog existence, weren't you? Well, I heard you. You were thinking it, I heard you. And in a way we do. Take a lot of assorted humans and pen them up together too closely—I don't care who they are—and you'll see sparks fly. But don't forget that we have one bond in common: we're all in the service because we love it. In any trouble we show a united front. And then it's the Outsider who takes it on the chin."

There was no reason then for either of us to regard that as a warning; but I had cause to remember it later.

I was still hesitating over my decision to rejoin the party when Tubby Shaw bounced out of the club with his air of a man of affairs which sat oddly on his round, nondescript countenance. I suspected him of spending some time and thought before a mirror striving for a world-weary look, only to have it curdle into petulance when he was not watching.

"Everybody inside," he commanded with a deprecatory flourish of the bouquet of balloons which sprouted from his clenched fist.

He disentangled one fustily from the others and presented it to me. "To be tied to the lady's ankle," he instructed pedantically.

Adam said, "Do you feel up to a free-for-all, Kay?" I had always wanted someone to call me Kay, but from my sister's Kathy to Charlie's Red, no one ever had.

"It's awfully pleasant out here," I murmured, marking with gratitude the flattery praising of the brief question, the nice assumption of familiarity, of reluctance to break up the tête-à-tête.

"Sorry," said Tubby Shaw. "Everyone in for the balloon dance, Committee's orders. There'll be a prize."

And he stood there, implacable, until we rose and preceded him. The musicians were ready to begin. Tubby darted around the edge of the dance floor and mounted the stage where the orchestra was seated facing the door. He made a little speech, too glib not to have been rehearsed. The music was beginning.

Adam pinched my balloon neatly, grinned at the sharp report and guided me to an open door half-way around to the right.

Scream Of Horror
"THE reading room," he said. We stood in the doorway watching. The lights had been turned low and a rainbow spotlight circled its sensic colors across the faces of the scampering dancers, leaving their feet and the floor in shadow, so that balloons bounded like surf balls on a changeable colored sea.

They had livened up under the powerful tonic of rivalry. Men straightened their way through massed interference, whirled their partners like Apache dancers around the edge of the dance floor. From time to time there was the sharp report of a bursting balloon and a woman's squeal of chagrin.

Barney and Anne had returned. They passed near us, moving rapidly along the edge of the floor. Beside them floated a bright red balloon, like the scarlet heart of their costumes. Barney was holding her close, her cheek against his, his lips brushing her hair. They had touched her, for a moment her iris eyes met mine; but there was no recognition in them. They were blank and glassy, and I realized with a shock that she was more than a little tight.

I had seen enough. "Let's retreat," I suggested and turned back into the reading room. I was wondering, suddenly, what Adam liked to read, when a difference in the quality of the commotion on the dance floor drew my attention.

Adam was listening too. For a moment the voices had stopped, and the whisper and stamp of feet. The music faltered on for a few bars and the trap drummer finished an insane clamor of cymbals before he noticed that he was alone.

In the sudden silence a man's voice spoke urgently. A slight babble answered him. Then, like a siren cutting through traffic sounds, a woman screamed.

Adam was away like a startled deer. For a confused moment I waved at the doorway, starting across the vacant floor at the huddled people outside the door of the women's dressing room.

Impelled by the instinct to herd against danger, I fled to join them. Inside the powder room a limp little figure lay on a chaise longue. Over her was bent Doc Moore, the young medic who had been Elizabeth's dinner partner.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Jock Scott-- of Scotland, WALKED 30,000 MILES ACROSS 3 CONTINENTS IN 5 YEARS-- AFTER BEING GIVEN ONLY 6 MONTHS TO LIVE BY DOCTORS!

Scott Hiker
A good rival for the "Flying Dutchman" would be Sgt. James "Jock" Scott, the "Walking Scotman," who has perambulated some 30,000 miles in the past five years—to enjoy the "last six months" doctors had given him to live!

Chess Combinations
Strange as it seems, there are 165,518,829,100,544,000,000,000,000 different ways of playing the first ten moves on either side of a chess game. Playing each combination at the rate of one per minute, it would take you more than 320 sextillion years to work them all out.

McKesson Stock Under Trade Ban
NEW YORK, Dec. 7.—(AP)—The New York stock exchange today suspended from dealings the stock and bonds of McKesson & Robbins, Inc., chemical manufacturers and liquor firm.

Goebbels' Paper Raps King Carol
BERLIN, Dec. 7.—(AP)—Propaganda Minister Paul Joseph Goebbels' newspaper Der Angriff pursued its anti-Jewish campaign today by publishing a photograph of Magda Lupescu, close friend of King Carol of Rumania, only 13 days after the king was Adolf Hitler's honored guest.

McKesson Stock Under Trade Ban (continued)
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McKesson Stock Under Trade Ban (continued)
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THE WORLD AT ITS WORST By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



THE COAT CLOSET TAKES ON EXTRA HAZARDS. WHEN THE YOUNGER WINTER SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS BEGIN TO GET READY FOR THE SEASON BY MOVING THEIR EQUIPMENT DOWN FROM THE ATTIC

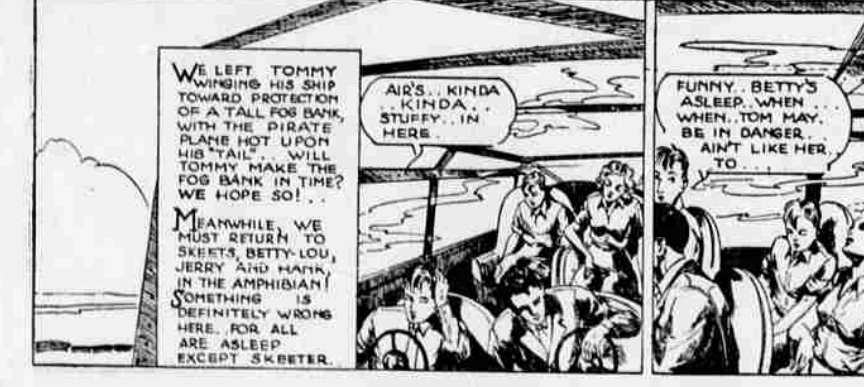
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MATTER OF BY C M PAYNE



By HAL FORREST

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Snap Out of It, Skeets, Before It's Too Late!



By EDWIN ALGER



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOI HESS

ROBBERS BEAT UP TWO IN PORTLAND

PORTLAND, Dec. 7.—(AP)—Two hold-up victims were beaten last night by a third—a woman—put a robber to flight by hitting him with "everything I had."

When a robber muttered "Stick 'em up," Miss Elizabeth Lupescu swung her fists handsly. The man turned and ran.

Cat Fools Convicts.
POLSOM, Calif.—(AP)—After convict workers had bricked up a hole in the foundation of the dentist's shop, they heard from within the mow of a cat.

Paul Revere Made Teeth.
BOSTON.—(AP)—Paul Revere, known for his ride and for his silver-smithing, also made false teeth.

Amnesia, loss of memory, may be caused by senility, various mental diseases, injury, shock, or severe illness.

Robbers Beat Up Two in Portland (continued)
I've seen you somewhere before," said Harry De Blasio when an unshaven stick-up man forced him to open the cash register at his service station.

Robbers Beat Up Two in Portland (continued)
"Who have?" the robber asked. "Well, this will make you forget," he struck De Blasio on the head with a revolver and fled with \$85 and a wallet.