

THE ARMY POST MURDERS

By Virginia Hanson

The Characters
Katherine Cornish, myself, visiting Elizabeth on a mid-western Army post.
Elizabeth, Colonel Wright's daughter.
Adam Drew, acting commanding officer.

Yesterday: The girl is an epileptic in her room is a strange note beginning "Come if you must--and ending "Keep under cover or you'll wish you had."

Chapter 16

The Typewriter

ALONE with the unconscious girl I read the note once more. There was something familiar about the typewritten letters I began to search the lines feverishly. Yes, the e was out of line, and the i crowded the letter that followed. I dropped the sheet of paper and stared at the bare white wall. It was unbearably hot here close to the roof. Hardly aware of what I was doing, I fumbled with the frogs and buttons at my throat, along the shoulder, under the arm. As I slipped out of the mandarin coat I was conscious of intense relief, as if it typified all the heavy blackness, all the evil of the night. I hung it carefully over the back of the chair, for, after all, it was a gorgeous garment and it was not mine. Then I picked up the letter and held it close to the light, staring hopelessly at the dense type, as familiar to me as the pattern of lines on my own hand, and remembering exactly, vividly, a scene in the two-room apartment I share with Eileen—a scene nearly a year old.

other voice as Barney's—quick, high, nervous, obviously strained to the breaking point.
"We must have been near the door," I heard him say. "The entrance, I mean. I heard—I thought it was one of those balloons. She went limp—in my arms." His voice broke, staidly. "Then I saw—there was blood on my hand..."
"Then the shot seemed to come from outside?"
"I don't know—I tell you, I thought it was a balloon."
"Do you remember a car passing?"
"I don't know—I think—no, I don't know. There may have been."
Adam was silent for a minute. When he resumed his voice was less official, more gentle.
"Was that kind of trouble was she in, Barney?"
"Trouble? What do you mean? What makes you think so?"
"I don't know. Even tonight—I thought she seemed—ragged."
"Does she drink—drank too much. I've been telling her. She was going on the wagon—after tonight."
"Was that why you split up last spring?"
"Not—not exactly," I ached at the patience in that tortured voice. "You heard that story about Wheeler? He was shooting off his mouth. Shaw told me the straight of it, but even then—I guess I was jealous. I thought—she might really like the fellow."
"Did you change your mind?"
"Was—later. That was Elizabeth. She talked some sense into me."
We had been hearing a lot of theories about Elizabeth and Barney. Here at last was something that sounded authentic. If only Charlie's part could be as reasonably explained.

The Prize

THEN you've nothing to add about that shot this afternoon?" I heard Adam ask.
"I told you I don't know anything about a shot. I dropped a light bulb and that ass Shaw thinks back and decides it was a shot."
"Did you find a bullet?" Adam reminded him mildly.
"You know what I think about that. Somebody—somebody missed her the first time."
The last words were half sobbed. Surely Adam would let him go now.

He did. I heard his voice asking Barney to stay around and advising him to take care of himself. But Barney's ordeal was not ended. I heard the door open and Mrs. Flower's uncontrolled words began to flow.
"Such a dreadful thing—you poor boy! Quite like Juliet and Romeo, only of course she didn't kill herself—or did she? Juliet, I mean. I was just asking Mr. Shaw where you were. So glad you're able to be about. I know about the prize; that's how he happened to mention you."
"The prize?" Barney repeated stupidly.
"Was for the balloon dance. My balloon was the last one on the floor—at least—well, yes, I was the last one dancing. So of course I asked Mr. Shaw about the prize and he said you'd know."

There was an awful silence. For once even Adam must have been at a loss. Then someone began to laugh—a thin, high giggle.
"The prize?" Barney gasped shrilly and broke into another peal of that terrible laughter.

Adam said something in a low voice and the sound ceased. A door opened and closed.
"Now don't say a word," said Mrs. Flower placidly. "I quite understand and I'm not hurt. The boy's overwrought. No doubt he's forgotten what he did with it. If you see him, just tell him he can send it around tomorrow."

Adam coughed and seemed at a loss for an opening. But he need not have worried. It was only necessary to listen. Mrs. Flower proceeded to volunteer all that she had told me earlier in the evening about hearing the shot and about Mrs. Ovington's incriminating position on the veranda.

"And everyone on the post knows she's that way about Barney. Of course they say it's dallas."

"Barney is very much interested in botany," Adam interposed gravely. "Biology, too—inherited traits—quite a scientific mind."

Now if Adam would only get rid of her, so I could tell him about the typewriter.
Mrs. Flower's sudden silence was more provocative than her speech. She couldn't just be still. It was impossible. Something must be going on.

Something was, I heard Adam say. "What's that?"
And then, in a piercing stage whisper that carried easily to the head of the stairs, Mrs. Flower hissed. "A scrap of cancer!"

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Tomorrow: I desert my post.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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Although Coach W. J. Wisdom of the John Tarleton Plowboys basketball team, Stephenville, Texas, never played a game of basketball in his life, his team set a record run of 89 straight victories.
The amazing winning streak is only part of the story—out of 110 games played in 1933-38, the team won all but two, which were lost only by one-point margins!
After winning 13 straight victories in 1933, the Plowboys lost to the San Angelo Ram 43-42. There followed four years of consistent winning, 89 games totaling 3705 points—broken in 1938 again by the Rams, 27-26. The Plowboys won the nine remaining 1938 games, for a total of 108 games won, two lost.
In amazing their record run of 86 wins, the Plowboys scored five one-point victories, two of which came after overtime periods.

Job for Big Thumbs
One of the strangest requirements for a job ever specified was that of Jim Murphy, operator of the "El Dorado" saloon in Columbia, an early California mining camp. His employees all had to have big thumbs!
The reason for this was that the current price of drinks in Columbia was "one pinch of gold dust." Obviously, the more dust a bartender could pinch, the more profit the house made. One man, John Olsen of Missouri, had such satisfactory thumbs that he was paid \$200 a week to tend bar at the "El Dorado."

PENDLETON, Ore., Dec. 17.—(AP) The Pendleton school board has announced revival of a proposed plan whereby two additional years would be added to the present high school course under a system which would be termed "advanced secondary and vocational training."
Before the proposed plan could be put into effect, however, it will be necessary to obtain approval of the legislature and the governor.

City and county groups have assailed the committee with pleas for more funds and for relief from their own heavy relief loads. Burden of relief now rests upon the counties. They have asked that a greater proportion of that load be shifted to the state.
Cities in particular have been eager for a diversion of gasoline tax revenues, now used mainly for construction and maintenance of state highways. The state highway commission has been adamant in its refusal to have gasoline money diverted for any purpose.

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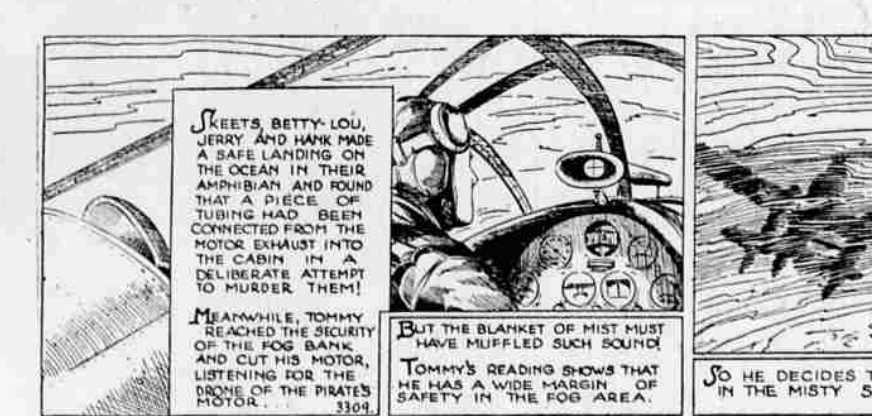


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INTERIM REPORTS ON REVENUE HELD FOR LEGISLATURE

SALEM—(UP)—A report to the legislature on possible new ways of getting money has been completed by the interim committee on state and local revenues, which had been in session off and on since the 1937 session of the legislature.
The committee, headed by Charles V. Gallorey of the state tax commission, has been beset with plans, some of them sound and some of them so far off center that one member of the committee dubbed them "lame brained."
The committee refused to release its findings until the legislature is in session. Those who have followed the workings have placed the following among the most important matters discussed:
1. A change in assessments against real property, to equalize the load. The coming year finds no state property tax levy, but there remain the county and city, as well as school district personal property levies. These are heavy or light depending upon the community, but most are fairly heavy.
2. A tightening of the income tax laws, particularly in the higher brackets, and an adjustment in deductions. It was pointed out that the amount deductible can reduce the income of a \$3,000-a-year individual into the \$2,000-3,000 income group, in which the lower tax is paid. By changing the exemption to a "tax refund," some believe it possible to bring all \$3,000-salaried persons into the \$4,000 tax bracket.
3. Gross sales tax, to be paid by all the merchants and added to all purchases without the use of tobacco.