

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 I discover that the note is written on a typewriter which I had given to Charlie.

Chapter 17

Oh, Fool, Fool!

ADAM read the scrap of paper. "Eleven o'clock," he said reflectively. "Where did you find it?"

"In one of those chairs in the lounge," Mrs. Flower explained portentously. "It was tucked under the seat cushion. Eleven o'clock. Too bad it wasn't dated. Or signed. Still—it is a clue."

"Yes, a clue. I'm very much indebted to you, Mrs. Flower."

Adam sounded harassed. It was not entirely Mrs. Flower, I surmised, though she had that effect on people. He was getting nowhere and the hours were passing. How he was exceeding his authority in detaining all these people, only he could know. They would be growing restive. But somewhere among them was a murderer, and time might play into that one person's hands.

Across the balcony there was motion. It brushed the fringe of my vision and vanished before I could turn. What had it been—a shadow? The reflection of a passing car? Or someone?

I strained eyes and ears to catch some identifying trace of a presence. Whatever had moved was still. Yet I had the feeling that someone was lurking there across the gallery—in the shadows or behind the closed door of one of the unoccupied guest rooms.

Almost without thinking I rose to my feet and stood listening, tense. I stole one quick glance at the door of the strange girl's room which had been within my range of vision all the time I was listening at the head of the stairs. Then I began edging around the well of the dance floor, keeping well back from the balcony railing. The central chandelier which hung high above me had not been relighted since the ballroom dance; the stage lights and the lamps which dotted the lounge provided ample illumination downstairs, and the light, rising diffusely, cast the shadow of the balcony itself partway up the walls that surrounded it. In this shadow I was hidden from below. But to anyone on the same level with me, eyes accustomed to the lesser illumination, I would provide an easy target.

I thought about that for a moment, but I couldn't feel particularly menaced. Perhaps foolhardy people are simply concealed the most vividly in their own minds.

Halfway around I did pause, however, remembering my promise to stay with the sick girl. I had not been very faithful to that promise. Perhaps I should go back. I might be on a fool's errand.

And then I heard a stifled moan so near me that my heart seemed to turn completely over. One step brought me to the closed door of the room from which that voice had come.

Some instinct prompted me to step clear of the door as I swung it open. But nothing came hurtling at me. No bullet whined over my head. There was no sound, no movement, no indication of life within; and presently, feeling rather foolish, I unfastened myself from the wall and peered cautiously in at the wide-open door.

So Trustingly THE room was like that other which I had left a few minutes before—the same furniture, the same absence of ornament, the same bleak efficiency. And at first glance it was in perfect order. No one was there, nothing seemed out of place—or not quite. A second glance, as my eyes accustomed themselves to the deeper gloom, discerned a dark shadow just beyond the foot of the bed—a long, motionless shadow that bulked as big as a slight woman's body.

I felt for the wall switch inside the door, remembered that there was only a light bracket that turned on at the fixture. I could see it across one corner of the room, well away from the bed and that motionless shadow. Two steps would take me to it.

Something keener than my mind was warning me. I left the door wide open, riveting my eyes on that shape on the floor. At the first faint movement I could be gone. Then I took those two careful steps.

The thing on the floor did not move. But the air in the room stirred faintly for a moment and the dim light grew dimmer. My hand was on the switch of the wall fixture. I turned it frantically back and forth, but nothing happened. I could still see, dimly, that the prone shape was motionless.

An instant too late I realized

that I had been tricked. But before I could whirl or cry out something black and voluminous engulfed me—something abominably soft and clinging that wound itself tightly around my throat, around my arms, trussing me as securely as a coil for the branding, muffling me as completely as a gag. I felt the knot jerked tight between my shoulders. Then along my ankles, where my fetters left off, I felt again the brief current of air and, faintly through the muffling folds, heard the key turn in the lock.

The realization of my criminal foolishness gave me a strength I had not known I possessed. I fought savagely at the coconlike wrappings. Oh, fool! Fool! I had asserted my own will, walked so trustingly into the trap. Behind the door—that was where the danger had been hiding; and I had turned my back on it. A woman's name would probably pay for this.

Half sobbing, I twisted and tore, bit and squirmed, and inch by inch the bonds worked upward from my forearms until I could use my hands.

Velvet—the stuff was velvet. Someone's evening wrap. The thought passed briefly through my mind. Then I tore the thing from my head and threw it across the room, staggering to my feet, gasping air into my starved lungs.

There was a thin streak of light above the door—the wooden transom, open a crack. Could I get out that way? Or should I scream for Adam? It was too late for secrecy. I needed help—once—at once.

In that brief instant of hesitation the crack of light vanished, and from the dance floor rose the shrieks of women and the confused babble of voices.

The lights were out!

Too Late! I POUNDED and kicked at the door and added my voice to the clamor outside. But what chance had I of being heard? The room I was in was roughly above the stage—too far from Adam for him to distinguish my voice in the general commotion.

I gave it up and leaned hopelessly against the door. What good could I do now, anyway? With the crazy monotony of a cracked phonograph record words were repeating themselves in my mind. "Too late. Too late."

Suddenly I froze into listening silence. Someone had come noiselessly along the gallery, had paused on the other side of the door and was drawing furtive, panting breaths like a runner forced to rest, yet wary of pursuit. Instantly I turned not to speak or move, not to seek rescue here. There was something clinked lightly on the floor at my feet; and there was silence on the other side of the door.

The key—it must have been the key. I did not take time to wonder why it had been returned to me. I screamed again with all the voice I could muster and dropped to my knees, groping in the dark.

I found it almost at once and my fingers closed on it convulsively. Nightmarish clumsy, I yet managed to find the keyhole. I had the door open and was in the hall when the finger of light searched me out from the encircling darkness.

"Kay! Thank God!" said Adam's voice, and the circle of light swooped to the floor between us. "You're all right? I heard you screaming."

His voice wavered a little and the light danced at my feet. "The murderer," I gasped hysterically. "He—it was here an instant ago. He locked me in that room, then the lights went out and he threw the key over the transom—he can't have got far!"

"A man?" Adam asked quickly. "I don't know. It—it was somebody."

And then I saw how hopeless it was. There were people on each side of us—they had come like moths to the light. I saw Mrs. Flower peering excitedly around Adam's arm. Behind her the Shaws, looking almost comically surprised. Mrs. Orpington had come out behind me and was just standing there, her eyes gleaming and a funny half smile on her lips.

"Nobody passed me," she said brightly. "I was right at the foot of the dressing-room stairs and I stood still and yelled until I saw a light up here. You're sure the door was locked?"

There was no mistaking the skepticism in her voice. I stepped closer to Adam.

Adam said, "Shaw, get out to the cars and find some flashlight, then get busy and find the fuse box—I think it's backstage."

"It is," said Shaw. "Barney's back there with Elizabeth, making coffee. It's in the box he'll have it fixed—I heard him stumbling around and swearing a minute before I came up."

"Adam," I whispered urgently, "that girl."

His eyes met mine, and there was apprehension in them too. (Copyright, 1938, Virginia Hanson)

Tomorrow: Murder number two.

SEVEN COMPLETE NORMAL STUDIES

SOUTHERN OREGON STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, Ashland, Dec. 19.—(Sp1)—Seven students completed requirements for graduation from the Southern Oregon State Normal school on December 16, being the last to secure diplomas with seven quarters of work.

Mrs. June Martin of Medford, Mrs. Helen Kaser of Grants Pass, Mrs. Lois Fretwell of Medford, Mrs. Julia Williams of O'Brien, Mrs. Ruby J. Wise of Klamath Falls, Mrs. Moe Harris of Ashland and Miss Margaret Peterson of Cottage Grove are the graduating seniors.

Advance registration for the winter quarter indicates a continuation of the increased enrollment of the fall quarter. Students entering with

APPLIGATE TEACHERS TO STUDY PROBLEMS

BIG APPLIGATE, Dec. 19.—(Sp1)—Mrs. Nettie Armstrong of Forest Creek school was elected chairman of the Appligate teachers' study group, which held the first of their winter meetings at Bush last week. Other teachers named on the committee with Mrs. Armstrong were Mrs. Ina Parrot, Bush-Battling primary room, and Mrs. Wanda Smith, Thompson creek Remedial reading problems and behavior problems will be studied at the next meeting, January 13. Pupils of Mrs. Marcelita Rawls of the upper room at Bush, attending school, presented a show program including French and Bo-

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



QUEEN OF THE NIGHT--rare South African cactus, blooms at night--AND ONLY ONCE A YEAR



4-IN-ONE BRIDGE--THE NEW THOUSAND ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE--JOINING THE U.S. AND CANADA, USES 4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPANS!



WOMAN OF THE NORTH! LOUISE BOYD--only American woman arctic explorer, discovered an uncharted glacier, had part of Greenland named after her, and has been decorated by foreign countries--YET SHE NEVER SAW SNOW UNTIL IN HER TEENS!



YOU CAN WRAP A COIN IN A HANDKERCHIEF AND PRESS A LIGHTED CIGARET AGAINST IT--WITHOUT BURNING THE HANDKERCHIEF!

12-19-38

Woman of the North

Until she was a girl in her teens, Miss Louise A. Boyd, a Californian, had never seen so much as a snowflake. But now she has seen plenty of snow—probably more than any other woman in the United States.

Miss Boyd today is America's only woman Arctic explorer and holds the distinction of having a part of Greenland named after her. Only, she says, she didn't know about it until she happened to see her name on a map one day!

Altogether she has made six ex-

peditions into the frozen north, her first trip in 1926. For surveying much of the eastern coast of Greenland that had never before been properly charted, the Danish government named the region "Miss Boyd Land" after her.

On her second expedition northward, Miss Boyd was engaged in a search for Amundsen, the great explorer who had vanished during an airplane search for the missing Italian aviator, Nobile.

For this service, Miss Boyd won the coveted Order of St. Olaf, first

class, from Norway. Also, the French government made her a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

Four-in-one Bridge

Strange as it seems, the new Thousand Islands International Bridge, connecting the United States and Canada, incorporates four different and distinct types of bridges—two suspension spans, one double ferris truss, one rigid formed arch, and one stone arch.

Tomorrow: Can ice burn your hands?

ORDER INQUIRY IN NAVY YARD BLAZE

hemian Christmas carols, and Mrs. Una B. Inch, county school supervisor, was present.

Mrs. Bertha Haskins of Applegate school will be one of the seven delegates from the county to attend the Oregon State Teachers' convention in Portland the last week in December.

Co. Treasurer Dies

GOLD BEACH, Dec. 19.—(AP)—Fred Moore, county treasurer, died here Saturday night. The 78-year-old public official is survived by three daughters and a sister.

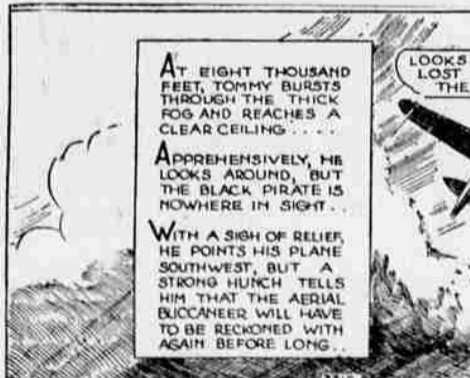
brick paint and oil storehouse in the yard.

The flames broke out at 8 last night and spread a black pall over the district. Hundreds of sailors joined city firemen in a two-hour battle to subdue the blaze.

All entrances and exits to the yard were barred. Marines with fixed bayonets kept spectators at a distance and refused to permit taking of photographs.

It was reported 270,000 gallons of alcohol were destroyed.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Mysterious Isle!



AT EIGHT THOUSAND FEET, TOMMY BURSTS THROUGH THE THICK FOG AND REACHES A CLEAR CEILING.

APPREHENSIVELY, HE LOOKS AROUND, BUT THE BLACK PIRATE IS NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

WITH A SIGH OF RELIEF, HE POINTS HIS PLANE SOUTHWEST, BUT A STRONG HUNCH TELLS HIM THAT THE AERIAL BUCCANER WILL HAVE TO BE RECKONED WITH AGAIN BEFORE LONG.



LOOKS LIKE I'VE LOST HIM... FOR THE TIME BEING.

WHILE I'M STALLING HIM OFF, I MIGHT AS WELL LOOK OVER SOME OF THESE ISLANDS.



ON THE OFF CHANCE THAT I MIGHT FIND THIS MYTHICAL SKELETON KEY.

THERE COULD BE NO LIFE ON THIS LONELY ISLE... BUT WAIT!

TOMMY SUDDENLY NOTES A FLOCK OF FLAMINGOS, STIRRED INTO SUDDEN FLIGHT!

SOMETHING... OR SOMEONE BELOW... HAS FRIGHTENED THOSE BIRDS!



WHISPER—THEN I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'M GONNA GIVE YA FOR CHRISTMAS!

LOOK! I RAISE MY HAND!

NOW, ARE YOU SURE?

YEP!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Two 'Doctors'!



WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR COWS, MR. CASEY?

DURNED IF I KNOW, BEN—THAT'S WHAT'S ITCHIN' ME!

QUIET, PLEASE! I GOTTA IDEA!



I KNOW, RUSTY! THE SUNSHINE PELLETS! HAVE YOU GOT SOME WITH YOU?

Y' THINK I BEEN TOTIN' THIS BUNDLE FOR PLEASURE, BEN?

SHOW US YOUR WORST COW, MR. CASEY—YOU'RE TALKIN' TO DR. WEBSTER AND McGURK... SPECIALISTS IN COW TROUBLES!

HUNH?

THE NEBBS—Pals?



HELLO, SYLLY, YOU LOOK NEARLY NICE THIS MORNIN'— THAT NEW GIRL AT THE BEAUTY SHOPPE CERTAINLY PAINTED YOU UP LIKE A 1900 MODEL.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND NO MORE MONEY PRIMPIN' 'CAUSE THE DIAMOND KING HAS GONE BACK TO 'AFRICA'.

MISS GRUNTLEY, YOUR WORDS ARE WASTED WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE LOWLY ORIGIN FROM WHICH THEY SPRING FORTH, NO ONE COULD GIVE THEM SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T THINK EVER GETS INTO THE MIND OF A SIMPLE PERSON, THAT IS TO MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

SEVEN COMPLETE NORMAL STUDIES

ADVANCE REGISTRATION FOR THE WINTER QUARTER INDICATES A CONTINUATION OF THE INCREASED ENROLLMENT OF THE FALL QUARTER. STUDENTS ENTERING WITH

THE NEBBS—Pals?



HELLO, SYLLY, YOU LOOK NEARLY NICE THIS MORNIN'— THAT NEW GIRL AT THE BEAUTY SHOPPE CERTAINLY PAINTED YOU UP LIKE A 1900 MODEL.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND NO MORE MONEY PRIMPIN' 'CAUSE THE DIAMOND KING HAS GONE BACK TO 'AFRICA'.

MISS GRUNTLEY, YOUR WORDS ARE WASTED WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE LOWLY ORIGIN FROM WHICH THEY SPRING FORTH, NO ONE COULD GIVE THEM SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T THINK EVER GETS INTO THE MIND OF A SIMPLE PERSON, THAT IS TO MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

THE NEBBS—Pals?



HELLO, SYLLY, YOU LOOK NEARLY NICE THIS MORNIN'— THAT NEW GIRL AT THE BEAUTY SHOPPE CERTAINLY PAINTED YOU UP LIKE A 1900 MODEL.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND NO MORE MONEY PRIMPIN' 'CAUSE THE DIAMOND KING HAS GONE BACK TO 'AFRICA'.

MISS GRUNTLEY, YOUR WORDS ARE WASTED WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE LOWLY ORIGIN FROM WHICH THEY SPRING FORTH, NO ONE COULD GIVE THEM SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T THINK EVER GETS INTO THE MIND OF A SIMPLE PERSON, THAT IS TO MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

THE NEBBS—Pals?



HELLO, SYLLY, YOU LOOK NEARLY NICE THIS MORNIN'— THAT NEW GIRL AT THE BEAUTY SHOPPE CERTAINLY PAINTED YOU UP LIKE A 1900 MODEL.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND NO MORE MONEY PRIMPIN' 'CAUSE THE DIAMOND KING HAS GONE BACK TO 'AFRICA'.

MISS GRUNTLEY, YOUR WORDS ARE WASTED WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE LOWLY ORIGIN FROM WHICH THEY SPRING FORTH, NO ONE COULD GIVE THEM SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T THINK EVER GETS INTO THE MIND OF A SIMPLE PERSON, THAT IS TO MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

THE NEBBS—Pals?



HELLO, SYLLY, YOU LOOK NEARLY NICE THIS MORNIN'— THAT NEW GIRL AT THE BEAUTY SHOPPE CERTAINLY PAINTED YOU UP LIKE A 1900 MODEL.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND NO MORE MONEY PRIMPIN' 'CAUSE THE DIAMOND KING HAS GONE BACK TO 'AFRICA'.

MISS GRUNTLEY, YOUR WORDS ARE WASTED WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE LOWLY ORIGIN FROM WHICH THEY SPRING FORTH, NO ONE COULD GIVE THEM SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T THINK EVER GETS INTO THE MIND OF A SIMPLE PERSON, THAT IS TO MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

12-17

12-17

12-17