

Casual Slaughters

By VIRGINIA HANSON

YESTERDAY: Jeff and Sandra, now married, arrive at the inn just as Julia and Kay are leaving. Julia accuses Sandra of playing a dirty trick on Jeff because people are saying she married him to protect him.

Chapter 22 Ivan's Play

I GOT up and straightened my hair and wandered around the room until I found cigarettes. Adam held a light for me in silence. He had said all he meant to say for the present.

"I'm not sure I know what behavior you're referring to," I told him at last.

"Let's put it this way, then. If I did or said anything last night that offended you I hope you'll forgive me."

"You're forgiven," I said.

He grinned. "I'll be discreet and not ask what for. May I sit down?"

"If you like."

He accepted the grudging invitation and changed the subject.

"What's your idea about this murder?"

"I haven't any. What is there to go on?"

"Nothing, that I can see."

"Have you questioned Sandra and Jeff?"

"Not yet. They came back to the colonel's quarters a while ago to get her things—they've taken a suite of guest rooms down the corridor here. The Pennants tried to get them to stay there, but they wouldn't. And—well, there was so much talk and fuss that I cleared out."

"How is it going to be if one of them did it?" I asked bluntly.

"You mean Sandra or Jeff?"

"Or the Pennants. The reigning family."

"It's going to be tough." He got up and prowled unhappily about the room.

"I've been appointed to head the board of inquiry on this and those stolen cars. I'd like to ask for a change of station."

"But you wouldn't get it. You've only been here a couple of months."

"He sighed. "It wouldn't be soon enough, anyway. And it couldn't be one of them. Ivan wouldn't have been worth it."

"Sandra thought he was."

"Worth murdering?"

"That isn't what I mean, of course. Worth—worth revenging, at least."

Adam blew a cloud of smoke and looked at me through it.

"Are you sure you know what you do mean?"

"I suppose I shouldn't have brought the subject up in the first place. Adam has a disconcerting habit, one I know well, of making you explicit. I assembled my thoughts hurriedly, trying to sort the things I could tell from the ones I had obligated myself to be silent about."

"It's an impression I got this morning," I said finally. "This hurried-up marriage, for one thing. I don't care what Colonel Pennant says, she was the one who promoted it. I heard her. She practically hypnotized Jeff into going for the license. And I had a strong feeling that she was doing it even with—well, with someone. Maybe all of them."

"Then you don't think it was meant to protect Jeff?"

"Maybe it was meant to look as if she were protecting Jeff."

"For what purpose?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. The Pennants are pretty fond of him, aren't they? She could hit at any or all of them through him."

Agent of Vengeance

HE was silent for a while, thinking that over. He stretched his long legs out and crossed them, but the rest of his body did not slouch. Adam gives me the impression that his mind and his body are always under perfect control, ready to act with speed and precision at an instant's notice.

"That strikes me as a woman's line of reasoning," he said finally in a rather pedantic manner. "Which doesn't necessarily mean it's faulty. Set a woman to catch a man. Perhaps. But I'd like something a little more substantial to go on. A little more logical. Why, for instance, is she a self-appointed agent of vengeance?"

"I think she was in love with him."

"Then why marry Jeff? In the first place, I mean. Before the matter of revenge comes into the picture? Money?"

"No, Jeff hasn't anything," I repeated until Julia had told me of Colonel Tack's will. "I don't know why. Spite, possibly. But that's even thinner reasoning. A woman might marry for spite if she were not in love with anyone else at the time. Hardly otherwise."

"Perhaps Ivan had other ideas and she was trying to bring him around, make him jealous. You haven't said he was in love with her."

I was silent. This was skirting too close to the scene on the large last night. I wanted to tell Adam about that; I was used to confiding in him. But I didn't dare. I had to remember his official position in the case, that nothing I told him in the way of actual evidence could be considered confidential.

"Why was Ivan, anyway?" I asked, hoping to lead him away from dangerous ground. "What do you know about him?"

"Not much, yet. I haven't had a chance to question Sandra. All she told the Pennants was that she met him in dramatic school. We've been through his luggage, of course. It didn't take long—one suitcase, and it was not full. Maybe he left a trunk in Chicago. I'd hate to think what we saw was all he had in the world. Two clean shirts and the one he arrived in. A pair of pajamas. Shaving kit. A change of socks and underwear. His only suit was hanging in the closet. Colonel Pennant loaned him the bathing trunks he was wearing when he was killed."

"Was there anything in the pockets of the suit?"

"Some small change and less than five dollars in bills. No watch. An address book full of names—some of them sounded familiar to me, but I brought it along for you to look at. Brought something else, too, that we found in the suitcase. It may interest you. Anyway, it's more in your line than mine."

He picked up the folder from the table where he had placed it, opened it and took out a small paper-bound address book which he handed to me without comment.

I opened it and began to read the scrawled names and addresses. I could feel Adam watching me.

"It's one that I know," I said presently. "It's a firm of literary agents in New York. Here's another—two more. And who's this man Fremont? The name's familiar. Isn't he a producer? The next one is, anyway. Everyone knows him. And Jane Trabel, the actress—how do you suppose he got her address?"

'Reunion in Moscow'

I TURNED the pages, noted that the list was long, that it changed abruptly from New York to Hollywood. Studios, names of famous and not so famous directors, firms that were probably theatrical agencies.

"Looks as if Ivan had been canvassing the field pretty thoroughly. Looking for work, I suppose."

"Possibly. But that isn't all. There's this thing here."

He took it out of the folder and looked at it rather helplessly, then gave it to me. A manuscript, dog-eared and grimy, bound between two cardboard covers which had been ornamented in heavy, scrolled lettering.

'Reunion in Moscow,' I read. "Cribbed title. By Ivan. That wasn't so dumb. Better than an unpronounceable last name. But a little precious. Like the lettering. Like Ivan himself, glanced at the worn, typed pages. "A play, by all that's wonderful! He certainly believed in starting at the top. Have you read it?"

"More or less," Adam admitted, looking down his nose. "It's well, I'm no judge of these things, and I don't want to influence you. I want your unbiased opinion."

"My opinion is worthless. I don't know anything about the theater, and from all I've heard few people do. Nobody knows what will make a successful play. But I do know that for an amateur to try to write and market one without help from the inside is as hopeless as building a snow man in hell. Making bricks without straw is a picnic in comparison."

"He seems to have found that out. Apparently he's even tried Hollywood."

"That's worse. The only hope of selling anything to Hollywood is by getting it published first—and well published. Even then it's only a chance. As for unsolicited manuscripts—I thought everyone knew by now that they don't read them."

I spoke from experience. My own and that of others. I knew the dream of every writer is a movie sale; so far that beneficent lightning had failed to strike in my vicinity.

"No, poor Ivan. He would have been better off to take the money he wanted on postage and play the horse. That way he would have stood some chance of winning."

I paused at the sound of footsteps approaching along the uncarpeted corridor. We looked toward the door which Adam had left standing open, in deference to the proprietress.

The footsteps stopped, and Sandra appeared in the doorway.

"Oh! I beg your pardon," she said. "I didn't mean to interrupt."

"No interruption," I said stiffly. I hate people who are always apologizing, making something out of nothing. "Won't you come in?"

She started to make excuses, but Adam sprang up and greeted her as if she were the one person in the world he wanted to see—as indeed she probably was. But there was no professional gleam in his eye to betray that his interest in her was other than social.

I can imagine Adam translated, like the Yankee at King Arthur's Court, before the court at Versailles; but unlike the Yankee, Adam would fit. He might have to take a few lessons in the prevailing fashion in bows, and the lace kerchief might embarrass him at first, but those would be details.

To be continued

Orch. KXK, KOIN, KSL.
9:00—Big Town, KPO, Dorsey's Orch. KGW; Paul Sullivan, KXK, KSL, KOIN.
9:30—King's Orch. KOIN; Music by Woodbury, KPO, KGW; Ravazza's Orch. KOMO.
10:00—Reporter, KPO, KGW; Goodman's Orch. KXK.
10:30—Sudy's Orch. KXK; Owen's Orch. KPO, KGW; Richard's Orch. KSL, KXK, KOIN.
11:00—Nottinscham's Orch. KPO; Busse's Orch. KSL, KOIN; This Moving World, KEX; News, KGW.
Saturday
8:00—Jenkins' Orch. KGO, KEX; Hollywood Derby, KXK, KOIN.
8:30—Busse's Orch. KXK, KOIN; Sudy's Orch. KPO, KGW; Choral Festival, KOMO; Dance Orch. KGO, KEX, KJL.
9:00—News, KEX; Uncle Ezra, KPO, KGW; Message of Israel, KGO.
9:30—Morgan's Orch. KPO, KGW; Heckscher's Orch. KGO; News of the War, KSL, KXK, KOIN; Melody in the Night, KEX, KJL.
7:00—Sky Blazers, KXK, KOIN; KSL; Barn Dance, KPO, KGW; James' Orch. KEX; Jewel from the Opera, KGO.
7:30—Jurgens' Orch. KSL; Musical Mirror, KOMO.
8:00—Dorsey's Orch. KGW; City of St. Francis, KPO, KGO; Hi Parade, KXK, KSL, KOIN; Luncheon's Orch. KJL.
8:30—Sports Forum, KGO, KJL; Sudy's Orch. KPO, KGW.

9:00—Marriage Club, KGO, KJL; Martin's Party, KGW; Bill Henry, KXK, KOIN; News, KSL.
9:30—Ravazza's Orch. KGO; King's Orch. KXK, KOIN, KSL; Owens' Orch. KPO, KGW.
10:00—Jones' Orch. KGW; Jurgens' Orch. KXK, Fml, KGO, KJL.
10:30—Garber's Orch. KXK, KSL, KOIN; Martin's Party, KPO; Harp's Orch. KGO, KJL.
11:00—Fitzpatrick's Orch. KSL, KOIN; Organist, KEX; News, KGO, KGW, KXK; Nottingham's Orch., KPO.

President Roosevelt has appointed three secretaries of war and three secretaries of the navy.

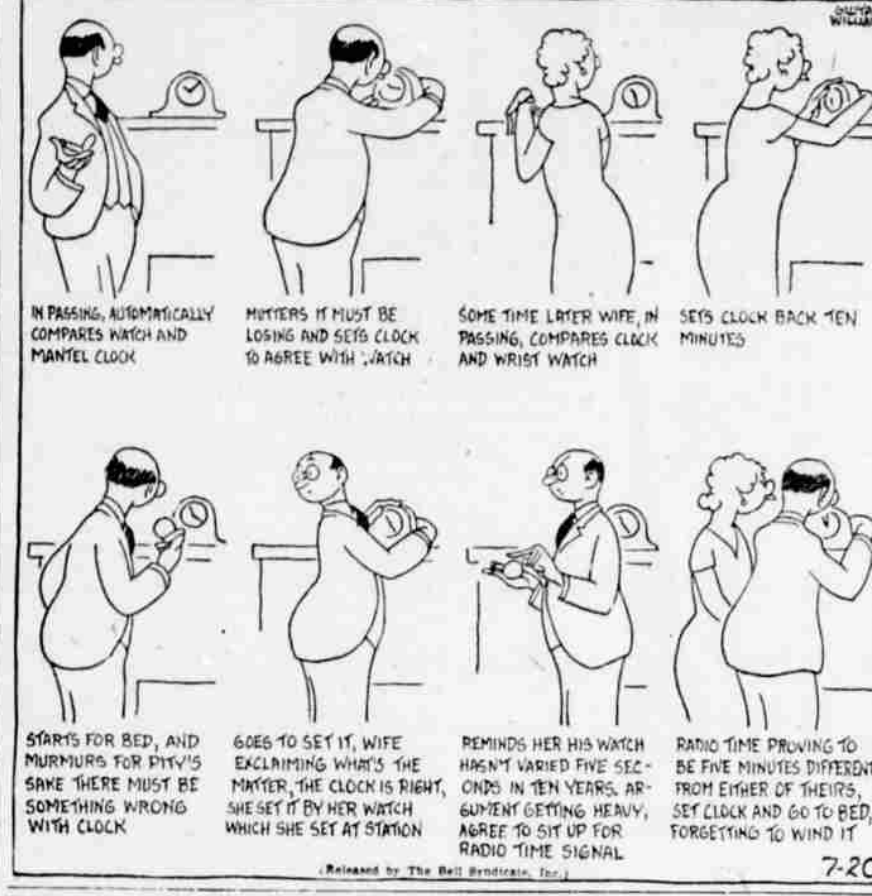
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HIX



THE MANTEL CLOCK

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY "A Bolt From the Blue!"

By HAL FORREST



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Ephraim's Doubts!

By EDWIN ALGER



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Not Very Much!

By SOL HESS



BILL, WAKE UP! SOMEBODY'S PROWLING DOWNSTAIRS!

By SOL HESS



On the Radio Chains
STATIONS
Where to Find Them on the Dial:
KEX, 1100, Portland; KFI, 510, Los Angeles; KXK, 1740, Spokane; KGO, 590, San Francisco; KJL, 920, Portland; KJL, 970, Seattle; KXK, 1050, Los Angeles; KGA, 530, Denver; KOIN, 840, Portland; KOMO, 880, Seattle; KPO, 630, San Francisco; KSL, 1130, Salt Lake City.
Friday:
5:00—Dart's Music, KGO, KJL; KEX; Waltz Time, KPO, KGW; Brallan's Orch. KXK.
8:30—Kogen's Orch. KGO, KJL; What's My Name?, KPO, KGW, Drama, KXK, KSL, KOIN.
8:00—Public Affairs, KXK, KSL, KOIN; Don Ambrise, KPO, KGW, News, KEX; Gilbert Philharmonic, KGO.
9:30—Al Pearce, KXK, KSL, KOIN; Quiz Kids, KPO, KGW; Concerts, KGO, KEX.
7:00—Prest Waring, KPO, KGW; Annie's Sing, KXK, KSL, KOIN; Johnny Messner's Orch. KGO, KJL, KEX.
7:30—Johnny's Presents, KXK, KOIN; KSL; Bird Expedition, KGO, KEX; KJL; Snow Boat, KPO, KGW.
8:00—Treasure Island Varieties, KPO; Sports, KGO; Chester's Orch., KXK, KOIN, KSL; News Here and Abroad, KGW.
8:30—Death Valley Daze, KPO, KGW; Baseball Game, KGO; Gray's