

THE PHONE BOOTH MURDER

by Phoebe Atwood Taylor

Chapter 16

About Miss Olive

BETWEEN mouthfuls and swallows, Asy told her, and when he concluded his story Jennie shook her head.

"Well, I never! Why, I've heard Custer Mayo talk about Washy Doane, an' it does seem as if Syl ought to be known him! But Syl never barely mentioned him. Only once he ever speaks of here is Mrs. Doane. Asy, you know what seems queerest of all to me?"

Asy chuckled. "Sure. The woman who walked past you. Your shot."

"Still don't believe me, do you?" Jennie retorted. "Well, just you wait! Sooner or later, I'm going to prove to you I seen someone. But what I think is the queerest is Mrs. Doane herself. Asy, she's worked hard to build this place up from a common boardin' house to what it is now, a nice inn with guests an' a fine reputation. It's taken her years an' years—why, this woman who's been shot, she's been comin' here more than twenty years, Asy!"

Asy choked on his raspberry tart.

"Jennie, you mean to say you know who she is?" he demanded.

"Why, of course, don't you? Land's sakes, Asy, ain't you even found out who she is yet?" Jennie scolded slightly shocked.

Asy pointed out that having practically only just discovered the body he had hardly had the time to accomplish much in the way of identification.

"You knew what she looked like, didn't you?" Jennie said.

"Why I met Angie Harris up in the drugstore, an' she knew the woman in a minute when I described her. Even the counter boy, he knew her."

"Who is she?"

"Why, she's a schoolteacher lives here at the Inn!" Jennie said. "Everybody knows her. Angie, she wasn't probably anyone in Quisset that didn't know Miss Olive. Miss Olive Beadle, that's who she is."

"Mess beetle!" Asy said. "Mess beetle. Well, well!"

Jennie wanted to know if he felt all right.

"I'm improv'n' rapidly," Asy told her. "Thanks to you. Remember that phone call we didn't understand, Jennie? Somebody was phoning her, don't you see? They was askin' for her, only we didn't get it. Huh! Go on, Jennie, tell me more."

"Well, she's been comin' here," Jennie said. "It's either twenty-four or twenty-six years. Angie said it was either the year the ole ice house burned down or the year the livery stable burned down, an' she couldn't remember just which. She's a quiet little body. Angie says, goes to church every Sunday, an' to all the suppers an' fairs, an' to the movies most every night. She pays more attention to the town an' the town folks than she does the folks at the Inn. Angie says the 'em are awful high-hat. She says one of 'em, a big fat woman that drives around in a big car with a chauffeur, she wouldn't even give a measly little dollar to the ambulance fund drive."

"Star Boarder"

"YOU'LL be glad to know," Asy said, "that the fat lady has made a thumpin' good contribution tonight, though she don't know about it. So Angie thinks this Miss Beadle's all right, huh?"

"Angie likes her. Says she's helped the Women's Club, an' she'd helped some of the town boys through college. She didn't give money, 'cause she couldn't afford anything like that—but she introduced 'em to people in Boston who got 'em started. She has a little car she drives around a lot, an'—"

"wonder, where is that car now?" Asy interrupted. "I ain't noticed it anywhere around here."

"Goodness, why worry about her car! Course, Angie said she was a woman kind of set in her ways. She used to have a special car like when it was Mrs. Mercer's Boarding House, an' she made Mrs. Doane keep it on the porch for her even now. 'I s'pose, Jennie added, "that's the very rocker she's under now. Makes your flesh creep, don't it?" You payin' any attention to me?"

"No, huh, I'm just thinkin'." Asy said. "An' watchin' that porch. A light went on just now in the room beyond."

"That don't mean anything," Jennie said. "It's been on an' off a dozen times. Now, of course, I did tell you about the 'em about what'd happened here tonight, but from what I found out it seemed to me you might say this Miss Olive Beadle was a kind of a star boarder, too. That's what I meant. Asy, when I said I thought it was queerest about Mrs. Doane, if she kills anyone, ain't she? An' somehow, you wouldn't hardly expect that anyone would kill off their star boarder, would you?"

Asy shook his head.

"No," he said. "You wouldn't."

"I got the idea from Angie, Jennie said, "that this Miss Olive,

as Angie called her, she'd sort of stuck to Mrs. Doane, an' she'd been down one year, but Miss Olive, she come just the same on June tenth an' lived in the room she always has, even though half of it was just boarded up an' covered with tar paper. An' one time there was a lot of talk that the water at the Inn was bad. Seems somebody come down with typhoid. Everybody packed up an' left but Miss Olive. She stayed right on. An' when some of them that'd left found she was stayin', why they come back. Angie said Miss Olive an' Mrs. Doane, they got along fine, an' more'n once, Miss Olive's smoothed people over when Mrs. Doane had riled 'em. I tell you, I do think it'd be awful queer for Mrs. Doane to be killing Miss Olive, don't you? But if she didn't, then why—"

"Hold it," Asy said softly. "Is she comin' out again? Is—"

"Shush."

Mrs. Doane eloped out the door on to the little porch and softly closed the door behind her.

Removing the tarpulin that covered the rocker, she bent over and looked down.

Asy moved from the shed to the porch so quietly that she wasn't aware of his presence until he cleared his throat and spoke to her.

"What you doin', Mrs. Doane?"

"Shocking Jennie."

HE STARTLED her so that she jumped, and for a moment Asy thought she was going to rush back into the house.

But her voice, when she answered him, was even and composed.

"What are you doing here?"

"Confrontin'," Asy told her. "What?"

"Wa-el," Asy said, "call it confrontin' an' confrontin', if you prefer it that way."

"What are you talking about?"

"That's the way they always put it in the newspapers," Asy said. "You don't ever just happen on someone you find who's apparently committed a crime. You confront 'em in the act. You don't ask for explanations when you confront. You confront 'em with the evidence. Like, Mrs. Doane, proprietress of Quisset's well-known and highly thought of Whale Inn, was confronted while bending over the body of her star perennial boarder, Miss Olive Beadle, and confronted—"

"Who are you?" Mrs. Doane demanded.

"Asy Mayo, Syl Mayo's cousin. I told you who I was."

Mrs. Doane stood very still.

"You just said you was his cousin," Jennie, who had just skirted the flower bed, informed Asy. "You didn't say you was Asy. Huh. I guess you confronted her, all right. She kind of looks like she was willin'. She looks like—"

Asy motioned for her to be still.

"What you goin' to do, Mrs. Doane?" he inquired. "Goin' to tell me the truth about all this, or do you want to do things the hard way? It's up to you."

In another second, Asy thought, Mrs. Doane was going to bite clear through her underlip.

"In your place, Mrs. Doane," he went on, "before I made a decision one way or another, I think I'd be inclined to consider one pretty important angle. I think I'd consider just what the odds of this sort would do to my inn."

"What do you think?" Mrs. Doane's voice was vibrant with feeling. "That I am considering? What do you think that I have been considering? Why do you think I moved this body out of the telephone booth in the first place?"

"So it was you who moved it?" Jennie said. "Well all I've got to say is, I should think you'd ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"I'm not!" Mrs. Doane said defiantly. "I'm not! I do it again! And if you want to know, if you two hadn't come, I should have put her body in the car later, and I should have driven it just as far away from the Inn as I could!"

Jennie was genuinely shocked. "I think that's a awful You mean, you'd pick up the body of a woman that's been your best boarder, an' stuck by you all these years through thick an' thin, an' you'd go movin' her body like—well, like she was some ole tramp?"

"Between the intensity of her job and the unexpectedness of her breakdown, Asy felt strangely helpless."

But Jennie, after watching Mrs. Doane for several minutes, made a decision and took the situation in hand.

"You got a handkerchief, Asy? Now, Mrs. Doane, here's a handkerchief. You'll feel a lot better if you'll blow your nose an' wipe your eyes. You know perfectly well you wasn't goin' to move poor Miss Olive's body to some ole ditch! You couldn't have gone through with it could you, really?"

"I didn't want to!" Mrs. Doane said brokenly. "Oh, I didn't want to! I didn't want to move it out here!"

To be continued

INDIAN HAZARD

Bombay, Dec. 5.—(AP)—The Bombay-Lucknow mail train was held up an hour today while the railway workers removed from the tracks an elephant which the train struck and injured.

Say "Merry Xmas" to him with a beautiful topcoat from Barker's \$23 and \$27

Barker's Store for Men

FRENCH AID NAZIS

New York, Dec. 5.—(AP)—The German radio reported today that the first French volunteer legion members had arrived on the eastern front to participate in the war on Russia.

Mexico City, Dec. 5.—(AP)—Pointing out that today's hero may be tomorrow's villain, President Manuel Avila Camacho has banned the naming of Mexican schools for living persons.

Redmond, Ore., Dec. 5.—(AP)—Named on the Redmond volunteer fire department's committee to gather money for a first aid car were "Sparks and Berning"—Firemen Virgil Sparks and John Berning.

A newly born kangaroo measures barely an inch in length.

On the Radio Chains

STATIONS: Chain affiliation and where they are on the dial:
KALE (MBS) 1330, Portland;
KEX (NBC-Blue) 1190, Portland;
KOA (NBC-Blue & MBS) 1310, Spokane;
KGO (NBC-Blue) 810, San Francisco;
KGW (NBC-Red) 630, Portland;
KJR (NBC-Blue) 1670, Seattle;
KNN (CBS) 1670, Los Angeles;
KOA (NBC-Red) 890, Denver;
KOIN (CBS) 970, Portland;
KOMO (NBC-Red) 890, Seattle;
KPO (NBC-Red) 880, San Francisco;
KSL (CBS) 1160, Salt Lake City.

Time shown is PST

Friday:
5:00 p. m.—Kate Smith Hour, KSL; Adventure Stories, KGO, KJR, KEX; Jane Arden, KOMO; Stars of Today, KGW; Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.

5:30 p. m.—News of the World, KGO, KJR, KEX; Bill Henry, KNN; Scattergood Baines, KOIN; November Overcoaters, KOMO.

6:00 p. m.—Secret City, KGO, KEX; What's On Your Mind, KNN, KOIN, KSL; Waltz Time, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Scandinavian Reporter, KJR.

6:30 p. m.—Michael and Kitty, KGO, KJR, KEX; Uncle Walter's Dog House, KPO, KGW, KOMO; First Nighter, KNN, KSL, KOIN.

7:00 p. m.—Shirley Temple Time, KSL, KNN, KOIN; Wings of Destiny, KGO, KJR, KEX.

7:30 p. m.—Al Pearce's Gang, KNN, KSL, KOIN; Grand Central Station, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Weekly Spectator, KJR; Modern Music Box, KEX; Amateur Hour, KGO.

8:00 p. m.—Fred Waring, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Romance and Rhythm, KGO, KEX; Amos 'n' Andy, KNN, KSL, KOIN; Buy Washington, KJR.

8:30 p. m.—Don't Be Personal, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Gang Busters, KGO, KEX, KJR; Playhouse, KNN, KSL.

8:45 p. m.—Lanny Ross, KNN, KSL, KOIN; Lum and Abner, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Along the Sidelines, KJR.

9:30 p. m.—Paul Whiteman's Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX; Dark Fantasy, KPO; Moonlight Sonata, KEX; Symphony of Melody, KGW; November Overcoaters, KOMO.

10:00 p. m.—Hollywood Legion Stadium Fights, KGO, KEX; Reporter News, KPO, KGW, KOMO; News, KNN; Masterworks of Music, KSL, Seattle Public School Prgm., KJR; Five Star Final, KOIN.

10:30 p. m.—Hollywood Legion Stadium Fights, KGO; Dance Orch., KGW; Broadway Bandwagon, KEX; Northwest Bible Institute, KJR; Masterworks of Music, KNN; The World Today, KOIN; Bob McGraw's Orch., KOMO; Eight Mysterious Hats, KPO.

11:00 p. m.—Pickard Family, KPO, KGW; This Moving World, KEX; Harry Owens Orch., KSL, KOIN.

11:30 p. m.—Your Hit Parade, KSL; Nat'l Barn Dance, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Message of Israel, KGO, KEX; Who, What, Where and Why, KNN, KOIN; Scandinavian Reporter, KJR.

6:30 p. m.—Tocantini Treasury Concert, KJR, KEX, Sports, KOIN, KNN.

7:00 p. m.—Tocantini Treasury Concert, KGO, KEX, KJR; Sports Newscast, KPO, KOMO, KGW.

7:30 p. m.—Grand Ole Opry, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Hi Neighbor, KNN, KOIN; University Explorer, KGO, KEX, KJR; American Challenge, KSL.

8:00 p. m.—Bishop and the Gardiole, KGO, KJR, KEX; Truth or Consequences, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Guy Lombardo's Orch., KNN, KOIN, KSL.

8:30 p. m.—Knickerbocker Playhouse, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Spin and Win, KGO, KJR, KEX; Hobby Lobby, KNN, KOIN, KSL.

9:00 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

9:30 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

10:00 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

10:30 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

11:00 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

11:30 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

12:00 a. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

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KPO, KOMO, KGW; Candlelight Concert, KEX; Phil Finner, KJR.

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6:00 p. m.—News, KPO, KGW.

News, KGO, KNN; Scandinavian Music, KJR; Reveries, KOMO.

5:00 p. m.—Ran Wilde's Orch., KGO, KEX; Music of the Americas, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Sports Story, KNN, KSL, KOIN.

5:30 p. m.—Ed Stoker's Music, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Boy Meets Band, KGO, KEX; Saturday Night News Review, KNN, KSL, KOIN.

6:00 p. m.—Your Hit Parade, KSL; Nat'l