

# THE PHONE BOOTH MURDER

by Phoebe Atwood Taylor

## Chapter 23 Room Five

"LAST summer I might have wondered about Rankin, but that's all over now," Washy went on.

"What's all over?" Assey asked.

"Why, he was kind of smitten with her last summer," Washy said, "but she turned him down in August. He told me all about it one afternoon over a glass of beer up in Tony's. I don't think he felt bad about it. Between you and me, I think he was relieved. He's the sort that'll take one of Tony's waitresses to a dance one night, and my wife and Miss Olive to a church fair the next, and play rummy with me the next—see that third window from the end, right by that corner? That's Miss Olive's window. She's had that same room for twenty-six years, and if you wanted to, Assey, I don't see why you couldn't shabby up an' get in there without anyone knowin'. Rankin's got the corner room, an' Lady Boop's got two rooms on the other side."

"I'll go up the shed lattice," Assey said, "an' walk over—huh. I wish I didn't have these city shoes. Them rooves look slippery."

"You can always sneak up the back stairs," Washy suggested. "I can go in an' keep people busy. Room Five, it is."

Assey looked at him curiously. "Room Five's Mrs. Hingham's, ain't it?"

"Nope. The Hingham's is on the other side of the house, Miss Olive's Five."

"But Room Five's what Mrs. Hingham come out of this evenin'?" Assey said. "She'd been in there havin' her migraine—real or imaginary, I don't know which! Anyway, that's the room she come out of when Jennie an' I yowled around in the hall outside!"

"I guess you maybe just made a mistake," Washy said. "Mrs. Hingham's door always has a big sign stuck on it. Says, 'Don't Disturb.' Nobody ever pays any attention to it, but if any maid ever takes it off, Mrs. Hingham marches out an' licks it back on again! I tell you, Room Five's Miss Olive's, an' she's had it for twenty-six years, an'—look up to her window, quick, Assey! I'd swear I just seen a little light flicker, like someone strikin' a match in there!"

**Through the Window**

"GIMME your sneakers, Washy!" Assey kicked off his leather-soled brogues. "Gimme—oh, I can't wait! Gimme that knife of yours, if you got it! Hustle up!"

Grabbing the ugly little knife Washy drew from his pocket, Assey raced over the wet grass in his stocking feet and was up the shed lattice with a corkscrew agility that left Washy staring.

His lower jaw was almost dangling on his chest as he watched Assey's progress across the shed roof, down to the lower level of the next ell roof, up again and over the railing of a sun deck, then up and along a precarious strip of gutter.

"Gorry!" Washy murmured in admiration. "Custer Mayo always claimed that feller was part rubber ball! Well, by gorry!"

He held his breath as Assey pulled himself, apparently by the skin of his fingernails, to a position beside Miss Olive's window.

Washy had been right about something flickering. Assey thought, as he dug his toes into the gutter.

There had been someone in Miss Olive's room. And there still was someone in there, moving about!

He thrust his hand into his coat pocket for Washy's knife, and wished that Mrs. Doane had been less extravagant with her guests' screening. Copper wire screens were all very nice, but a simple length of netting across the window would have made his job here something less than a cinch.

As he raised his hand to slash across the screening, the knife slipped from his grasp and fell. Mercifully, it didn't fall far. Only to the gutter. He could feel it with his foot. But it made enough of a clatter to put anyone inside the room on their guard.

Assey edged himself down, grabbed the knife, got it, and was once again ready to slash the screening when the lights flashed on in the room.

Muttering under his breath, Assey peered through the slats of the Venetian blind.

It was his Cousin Jennie standing there in boy drag, looking dubiously and a little guiltily around.

Assey tapped on the screen.

The location of the sound puzzled her for a moment, but at last she walked over to the window, raised a slat of the blind,

and peered somewhat ineffectually at the screen.

"Lift the blind an' open the window!" Assey said impatiently. "Hurry up!"

Jennie struggled with the blind, finally solved the problem by ducking around in front of it, opened the window, and asked him sharply what he thought he was doing anyway.

"Scaring me near to death! What you doin' out there, playin' Superman?"

"Unhook the screen, will you? Hurry up! Jennie, you been in this room before? Just a minute ago? Did you light a match in here?"

"Gracious, no! What'd I be lightin' matches in here for? How'd you get out there? Where," she added as Assey swung one leg over the window sill, "are your best shoes?"

"I don't know, Jennie, who'd you see as you come in here? Who was in this room?"

"Nobody."

"Nobody except who? Listen, this is important! Who'd you see out in the hall? Outside the room? Did you see anybody comin' up the stairs?"

"Not a soul. Assey! Everybody's down in the livin' room—a couple of men come in an' they're takin' pictures of the phone booth for Hanson, an' Doc Cummings phoned just now an' said he was on his way back here to see you—what's all this about, anyway? Where you think you're rushin' to?"

**Nobody Home**

"I WANT to find who was in here! Come on!" Assey strode past her into the hall. "Take the rooms on that side an' yell if you see anybody. I'll take this side."

Five minutes later they met at the other end of the hall.

"I didn't see anybody anywhere," Jennie said. "Did you? I looked under beds an' in closets, too. My, I'm all out of breath!"

"Wasn't Lady Boop in her room?"

"Mrs. Clutterfield? Oh, she's been downstairs a long time," Jennie said. "She ain't quite so scared as she was, but she still kind of jumps every time Hanson walks past her—Assey, what is all this about?"

"I don't know," Assey said. "That's what I'm tryin' to find out—bullo, Washy, he added, as the latter appeared at the head of the rear stairs, "you see anybody?"

"Gorry, no!" Washy said. "Was there someone? I figured there must be, when you didn't call out to me or make no noise, so I beat it inside quick to the hall outside the dinin' room. Nobody come down these back stairs, an' nobody used the elevators, either. You can always tell when anybody uses them, because it cuts the lights for a second when they start an' stop."

"Huh!" Assey said. "An' you're sure you didn't pass no one on the main stairs, Jennie?"

Jennie told him acidly she guessed she knew when she passed someone and when she didn't.

"How's about an attic?" Assey asked Washy.

"See that hatch?" Washy pointed up to the ceiling. "That's the only way you can get to the attic, through that hatch. We made so many changes here, we had to put out the attic steps altogether. It's hooked, see? Nobody's gone through that. An' this other wing," he pointed to a bolted door, "that ain't been opened up for the season yet. Nobody went through that door an' bolters it after 'em that's one sure thing!"

"Somebody," Assey said, "was in that room! I know they was! I heard someone movin'! Huh! Ain't got any secret panels around, have you, Washy?"

"We did used to have a slave hole once," Washy said, "over in the old wing. But we use that for a linen closet now, an' we don't ever speak of it as a slave hole no more. Scared the boarders—gorry, there I go again! Scared the guests still. I don't know why. Nope, Assey, we ain't got any passageways or secret panels—believe me, I'd know if there was!"

Assey leaned against the newel post at the head of the rear stairs, smoothed out the brim of his now thoroughly battered gray felt hat, and looked down thoughtfully at his wet feet.

"I wonder," he said at last, "if this is what the newspapers call bein' confronted by a seemin'ly blank wall, or if we just reached a sort of impulse. Huh! I wonder what he was doin', an' what he was after, an' how he got away, an' I wonder if our prowler an' prepper was Freddy's boy friend! Washy hang around outside an' keep your eyes peeled, will you? I know somebody was here, an' there's always the off chance that maybe he'll try comin' back. You stand watch."

To be continued

# On the Radio Chains

Chain affiliation and where they are on the dial:

KALE (MBS), 1230, Portland; KEX (NBC-Blue), 1190, Portland; KGA (NBC-Blue & MBS), 1310, Spokane; KGO (NBC-Blue), 810, San Francisco; KGW (NBC-Red), 630, Portland; KJH (NBC-Blue), 1000, Seattle; KNX (CBS), 1070, Los Angeles; KOA (NBC-Red), 850, Denver; KOIN (CBS), 970, Portland; KOMO (NBC-Red), 950, Seattle; KPM (NBC-Red), 680, San Francisco; KSL (CBS), 1160, Salt Lake City.

Time shown is PST

Friday.

5:00 p. m.—Kate Smith, 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 H. ry, KXN, Cocktail Hour, KGW, Leon F. Drews, KOIN, November Overcoats, KOMO.

6:00 p. m.—What's on Your Mind, KNX, KOIN, KSL, Wait's Time, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Cinnamon Bear, KEX, Judy Splinters, KGO, Scandinavian Reporter, KJR.

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

7:00 p. m.—Rochester Civic Orch.

KGO, Shirley Temple Time, KSL, KNX, KOIN, Wings of Destiny, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Candlelight Concerts, KEX, Fish Finder, KJR.

7:30 p. m.—Al Pearce's Gang, KNX, 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, Amos 'n' Andy, KNX, KSL, KOIN, Ray Washington, KJR, 8:15 p. m.—Lanny Ross, KNX, KSL, KOIN, Lum and Abner, KPO, KGW, KOMO.

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

8:50 p. m.—Radio Chatter, KPO, KGW, Wait's Time, KGO, KEX, KJR, Kate Smith Hour, KNX, KOIN, Punch and Judy, KOMO, Sports, KSL.

9:30 p. m.—Ran Wilde's Orch., KGO, Moonlight Sonata, KEX, Mary Bullock, KGW, News, KJR, November Overcoats, KOMO, Floyd Wright, KPO.

10:00 p. m.—Hollywood Legion Stadium Fights, KGO, KEX, Reporter News, KPO, KGW, KOMO, News, KEX, 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, KNX, The World, KSL.

Today, KOIN, Sparkling and Sunshine, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Spin and WIN, KGO, KJR, KEX, Hobby Lobby, KNX, KOIN, KSL.

8:00 p. m.—Music of the Americas, News, K O, KGW, KOMO, Henry Busse's Orch., KGO, KEX, Your Hit Parade, KNX, KOIN, Serenade, KJR, Sports, KSL.

9:30 p. m.—The Edwards, KGO, KEX, Beat of the Week, KPO, KGW, KOMO, News, KSL, KJR.

10:00 p. m.—Two Round Jamboree, KGO, KJR, KEX, Larry Carr, KOMO, News, KGW, KNX, KOIN, KPO, Dance Orch., KSL.

10:30 p. m.—Two Round Jamboree, KGO, KJR, Harry Owens' Orch., KNX, KSL, The Quiet Hour, KEX, World Today, KOIN, Bob McGraw's Orch., KOMO, Concert Hall, KPO.

11:00 p. m.—Frances Weiner, KPO, KGW, Martha Mears, KSL, KOIN, Carl Ravazza's Orch., KJR, News, KNX, KGO, The Quiet Hour, KEX, Evening Reveries, KOMO.

NOTHING TOO GOOD  
Ketchikan, Alaska — (P) — Where else could this happen? Fifteen-year-old Giarid Olson, a news boy, earned \$700 in a few months work at a cannery this summer. He didn't want to wait for a cannery tender to take him home. So he radioed and chartered an airplane and rode home as the only passenger.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HIX



# 19-YEAR CHAMP!

THE GREATEST OF ALL AMATEUR COURT TENNIS PLAYERS WAS JAY GOULD, WHO HELD THE U. S. NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP FROM 1906 TO 1925!

# EAR OF THE SEA!

THE SHELL OF TURBO TORQUATUS, OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, RESEMBLES A HUMAN EAR!

# SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



# TAILORED TOMMY—Uncertain Wings



# THE NEBBS—Paid in Full



# ROYAL GAME

Court tennis was a favorite sport with many ancient kings of England and France. It is played on elaborate indoor courts, many of which cost thousands of dollars. The scoring is similar to lawn tennis.

# MAD APPETITE

The blue-fish plows through schools of other fish, grabbing chunks here and there until it can eat no more—then proceeds to disgorge its load and start over! No other creature displays such an insatiable appetite, and the sea is the only place where there exists a food supply capable of withstanding such raids!

# SABOTAGE

MEANS "THE THROWING OF SHOES BY WORKMEN INTO THE MACHINERY OF THEIR EMPLOYERS!" (From French: "sabot" — "shoe")

# JAPS ADMIT FIVE SUBMARINES LOST

Tokyo, Dec. 19.—(P)—(Official Radio received by AP)—The Japanese naval command admitted today that five of its "special type" submarines failed to

on the United States Hawaiian naval base at Pearl harbor.

(Apparently the craft referred to were Japan's 41-foot, two-man submersibles, one of which was captured by United States forces in the attack on Hawaii while another was destroyed. The pocket submarines, electrically powered, have a range of 200 miles.)

The Japanese also admitted the loss of 29 planes in that attack and said that a United States aircraft carrier which on Dec. 8 had been reported sunk "now is believed to have escaped to a certain port."

**SKI AND SKATING SWEATERS!**

Jantzen's Norwegian sweaters for men and women

**Barkor's**

Store for Men

**"No Availables Available"**

Santa Fe, N. M.—(UP)—Director Joseph Bursey of the state tourist bureau says "no availables are available." That is his reply to a man in Lincoln, Neb., who wrote the tourist bureau asking: "Will you please place me on your mailing list for any availables?"

**GREAT SCOTT!**

WHAT REVELATIONS! SO? YOU INNOCENT-FACED PHILANDERER! YOU WERE ONCE SECRETLY MARRIED!

**(GULP!) YASSUH!**

AH NEVAH TOLD NOBODY IN DOGPATCH 'BOUT IT—BUT IT'S BIN ON MAH CONSCIENCE FO' YARS!—

**YOU MUST TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!**

WAL—IT ALL HAPPENED AT TH' COUNTY FAIR AT TILXEDO JUNCTION, 'BOUT A HUNDRED MILES FIM DOGPATCH. AH WENT THAR ALONE T' EXHIBIT SALOMEY IN TH' PET SHOW—

**IT WAS THAR AH MET UP WIF ARABELLA!**

OH CUSS TH' UNHAPPY DAY—SHE WRECKED MAH LIFE!—SHE MADE ME DO IT!—

**YOU MEAN YOU WERE INVEIGLED INTO THIS MARRIAGE?**

**NO, SUH!—AH WAS TRICKED INTO IT!—THIS IS TH' WAY IT HAPPENED—**

# THE NEBBS—Paid in Full



# THE NEBBS—Paid in Full

