

THE PHONE BOOTH MURDER

by Phoebe Atwood Taylor

Chapter 29

Jennie's Theory

"I'm comin' with you, Asey," Jennie announced.

"Now I think of it," Asey said, "what was you doin' in Miss Olive's room, anyway? What brought you upstairs here?"

"Well," she said, "for one thing, got to thinkin' about her. I got to thinkin', now if I could just take a look at her room I could tell an awful lot more about her. I thought maybe if you looked at her things, you'd find everything in order, but some one thing different, like, you see what I'm drivin' at?"

"Uh-huh," Asey said. "Sort of. You mean, for all she sounds so set in her ways, there might be some little quirk nobody noticed that'd account for her bein' away tonight." He opened the door of Room Five. "I hadn't thought of that, but it seems likely, Jennie, did you happen to notice the number on this door?"

"Jennie nodded vigorously. "I certainly did! That's the other thing I got to thinkin' about, Mrs. Doane was talkin' to Hanson 'cause he said he'd have to search all the rooms, an' she said somethin' about Room Five; she said Miss Olive's had Room Five for twenty-six years. Kind of a pretty room, ain't it, Asey?"

"Asey agreed as he looked around. "I love Venetian blinds," Jennie said wistfully. "I always wanted Venetian blinds, Asey, what'd you suppose Mrs. Hingham was doin' in here?"

"What do you think?" Asey returned. "Well, I think—course, you'll laugh at me! But I wonder if it wasn't Mrs. Hingham, that woman that rushed through the livin' room an' you did see only a piece of my imagination? Don't you suppose it was her, dressed up in Miss Olive's clothes?"

"Jennie, how much harder do you want to make this?" Asey demanded. "Think it'd be all right if I took a look around in the closet? Because," Jennie said with a gleam in her eye, "if I was to find a coat that was damp, an' things hung up different from the rest."

"If I thought there was three Miss Olives wanderin' around," Asey said, "I should curl up in that wastebasket an' ask you to toss me out into the incinerator! But golly, Jennie, you know, she could have, at that! Officially, she was in bed with a headache, but we don't know for sure! Nobody sat by her bed an' held her hand all the time, let's see."

"Oh dear, all the clothes in this closet's dry!" Jennie said in disappointment. "Dry as a bone! An' what a lot of coats she's got! All alike! Brownish tweed, bluish tweed, grayish tweed, greenish tweed, an' just sort of mottled tweed. Asey, what you lookin' at? Oh, pictures!" Jennie crossed over to where he was standing by the spinet desk. "S'pose that's her mother, in the old-fashioned gold frame? Who's in that folder?"

"The picture," SHE picked up a leather picture folder and examined it interestedly. "Asey, what a nice thing! I don't know's I ever seen any like this. You open it up, an' instead of there just bein' places for two pictures, there's these other leaves, like, an' you can twist it around so's any picture you fancy can be on top. She had this snap of those two men in white coats—oh, look!"

Asey leaned over her shoulder and looked at the photograph she was pointing to. It was a faded brown photograph of a bewickered, stern-looking man who stood in front of a tall, viciously spiked iron fence. His left hand was placed stiffly on a high chair in which a sad baby sat bolt upright. Beyond the baby stood a petulant-looking girl of about sixteen. Behind the trio was a flight of perilously steep marble steps, flanked by two enormous jardinières stuffed with plumed grasses.

"I seen that before!" Jennie announced triumphantly. "S'pose it's Asey returned. "Them painted marble steps, an' that spiked fence, an' them jars of grass was what you might call standard equipment in every photographer's studio in the country some sixty years ago."

"I'm not talkin' about the scenery! I mean the people! I seen 'em before. Now, let's see, where'd I ever see that picture before? Asey, while I'm thinkin', you got down an' look under the bed! That's where I'd stuff things if I took 'em off in a hurry. Member, we heard the bed squeak, too, just before Mrs. Hingham come out. Let's see. Now why do I keep thinkin' of Mr. Philpotts?"

"I wouldn't know," Asey said as he knelt down. "Who in time is Mr. Philpotts, anyway?" "That nice minister we used to have about five or six years ago. Asey, what you got? Did you find somethin'?"

Asey brought out from under the bed a tweed coat, a blue wool dress with white collar and cuffs,

a blue felt hat, and a pair of gloves. "They was all rolled up in a ball behind that cardboard box," he said. "The coat ain't much more'n damp, now, but the rug where it was lyin' is soakin' wet."

Jennie sat down in one of the armchairs and beamed with satisfaction. "There!" she said. "There! Now you take it all back about me an' my seein' things! I did see someone go past me in the livin' room, an' it was Mrs. Hingham dressed in these clothes of Miss Olive's!"

"Neither!" Jennie said. "I just felt awful kind of small. Then when she heard Mrs. Doane talkin' to a few minutes later, she come down an' said all that about bein' so bothered by us, she needed a doctor. Guess she figured Mrs. Doane'd get rid of us pretty quick, if she thought we was botherin' her guests! An' did you notice no doctor ever come?"

"Neither!" Jennie said. "I just felt awful kind of small. Then when she heard Mrs. Doane talkin' to a few minutes later, she come down an' said all that about bein' so bothered by us, she needed a doctor. Guess she figured Mrs. Doane'd get rid of us pretty quick, if she thought we was botherin' her guests! An' did you notice no doctor ever come?"

"Uh-huh. She departed some time ago, with a rug. An' Room Fifteen was empty still when I looked into it just now. Say, why was everybody seized with an impulse to dress up like Miss Olive this afternoon?"

"Search me. I wish I could remember about that picture!" She got up from her chair and walked back over to the desk. "What a lot of people in white coats Miss Olive knows. There's two more of 'em in this folder. S'pose they're all doctors? Here's a snap of the inn—oh, look, Asey! Here's one of Mrs. Doane, an' Freddy, an' Washy with his white cap, an' this must be Miss Olive herself—come see this snapshot, Asey!"

"Uh-huh," Asey continued to scan the titles in the bookcase. "What here an' look!" Jennie insisted. "I must say the woman don't go in much for light readin'," Asey said. "I don't even know how to pronounce the names of most of these books, let alone what they mean. Hefty readin', I'd say—what's the matter, Jennie?"

"Look at this picture! That's Ann Joyce on the steps, see, next to Miss Olive. Asey, they look alike!" Jennie said excitedly. "Asey, d'you s'pose—"

"Now listen, don't go insinuat-in' things!" "But they do look alike! Asey, s'pose it's her daughter?"

"From what I heard about Miss Olive," Asey said, "I think you're comin' close to malignin' her, Jennie. Don't let yourself get so carried away. They both got the same kind of pointed chins, but Ann Joyce don't look half so much like Miss Olive as she looks like Freddy, if you'll just stop an' think."

"Hm," Jennie said. "Yes, that's true. It's the way they got their hair. Hm. The Joyce girl's only twenty-one Mrs. Doane said, an' Miss Olive's been here for twenty-six years. Hm. I suppose it ain't very likely—Asey, this other picture of them three in front of that iron fence is drivin' me crazy, tryin' to remember where I seen it before! All I can think of is Mr. Philpotts! What's that note on the bureau?"

"What note?" Asey had turned back again to the bookcase and was thoughtfully scanning more titles. "Beside the brush!" Jennie went over and picked it up. "Asey! Asey Mayo!"

"What's the matter now?" "Asey, they ought to have come up here before! Listen to this note. Listen to it! It says, 'Dear Miss Olive. Well I've gone and done it, and I hope you won't be too annoyed with the results! Now I'm setting off to see how many people I can take in and fool—won't it be too wonderful if it works! It's signed 'Ann.' An' there's a lot of exclamation marks!"

"What was both the girl an' Mrs. Hingham dressed up like her?" Jennie demanded. "S'pose Miss Olive knew about Mrs. Hingham? An' whether she knew or not, where's Miss Olive now? Why—"

"To be continued"

On the Radio Chains

STATIONS: Chain affiliation and where they are on the dial: KALE (MBS) 1330, Portland; KEX (NBC-Blue) 1190, Portland; KGA (NBC-Blue & MBS) 1510, Spokane; KGO (NBC-Blue) 810, San Francisco; KGW (NBC-Red) 630, Portland; KJR (NBC-Blue) 1000, Seattle; KNY (CBS) 1070, Los Angeles; KOA (NBC-Red) 850, Denver; KOIN (CBS) 970, Portland; KOSD (NBC-Red) 850, Seattle; KPO (NBC-Red) 490, San Francisco; KSL (CBS) 1160, Salt Lake City.

Time shown is PST Sunday 5:00 p. m.—Eggar Bergen, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Blue Echoes, KGO, KEX; Columbia Workshop, KNX, KOIN; Gospel Choir, KJR; Ministerial Ass'n, KSL. 5:30 p. m.—Floyd Wright, KJR; One! Man's Family, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Cinnamon Bear, KEX; Musical Highlights, KGO; Concert Miniatures, KOIN. 6:00 p. m.—Sunday Evening Hour, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Granddaddy and His Pal, KGO, KEX, KJR; Manhattan Merry Go Round, KPO, KOMO, KGW. 6:30 p. m.—Bookman's Notebook, KGO; American Album of Familiar Music, KPO, KOMO, KGW; News, KEX; Conf. of Jews and Christians, KJR.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS 7:00 p. m.—Hour of Charm, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Goodwill Hour, KGO, KEX, KJR; Take It or Leave It, KOIN, KSL, KNX. 7:30 p. m.—Helen Hayes Theater, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KGW, KOMO, KOIN; Vera Vague, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Inner Sanctum Mystery, KGO, KEX, KJR; News, KSL. 8:30 p. m.—Jack Benny, KGO, KEX, KJR; I Was There, KNX, KOIN; Beau Soir Mustale, KGW; Highway Night Express, KOMO; Etchings in Brass, KPO. 9:00 p. m.—Walter Winchell, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Irene Rich, KGO, KEX, KJR; Hollywood Playhouse, KNX; Leona F. Drews, KOIN; String Ensemble, KSL. 9:30 p. m.—News, KJR; Story Behind the Headlines, KGO; What's It All About, KNX; Quiz of Two Cities, KGW, KOMO; Highway Night Express, KEX; Baker Theater, KOIN; Regal Amblings, KPO; On Temple Square, KSL. 10:00 p. m.—Reporter News, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Screen Guild Theater, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Stanley Kenton's Orch., KGO, KEX; News, KOIN; National Vespers, KJR; Masterworks, KSL. 10:30 p. m.—Henry Busse's Orch., KGO; Harry Owens' Orch., KNX, KOIN; Amen Corner, KEX; Hollywood Temple Hour, KJR; Sabbath Reveries, KSL. 11:00 p. m.—News, KNX, KGO; Bill

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HIX



CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

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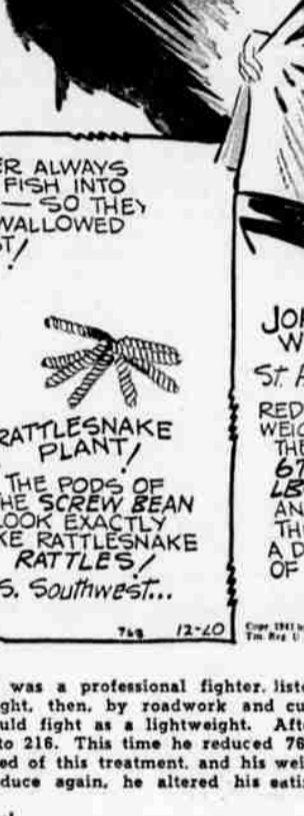
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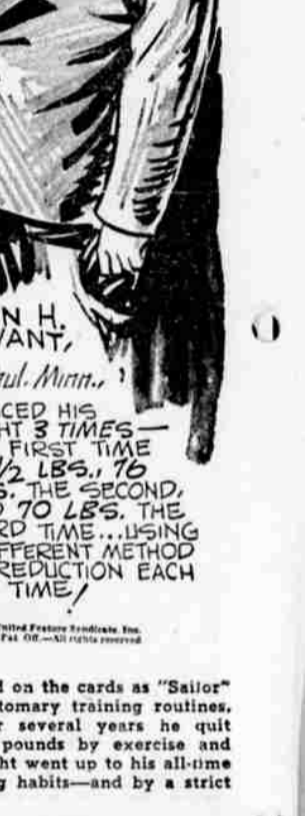
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Astoria, Dec. 20.—(A)—A 50 per cent decrease from last year in Christmas trade was reported today by Astoria merchants, who blamed the war with Japan.

Seattle, Dec. 20.—(A)—H. B. Fletcher, federal bureau of investigation agent in charge, said today that an Australian, accused of participating in activities of benefit to Germany, and nine other persons had been arrested in Washington state this week in the drive against subversives.

Victoria, B. C., Dec. 20.—(CP)—Eight men were aboard the Royal Canadian air force Stranraer flying boat which crashed in Nanose Bay, B. C., last Monday afternoon, Patricia Bay air base officers announced today. It was previously believed only seven men were aboard.

SKI AND SKATING SWEATERS! Jantzen's Norwegian sweaters for men and women. Barker's Store for Men

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LIL' ABNER—Them Cherry Blossoms Bloom Again!



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Fatal Signal



TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Fatal Signal

