

THE PHONE BOOTH MURDER

by Phoebe Atwood Taylor

Chapter 20
The Pincushion
FIVE minutes later, Jennie paused.
"Uh-huh," Asey said.
"You ain't listenin'! Asey, can't you stop starrin' off into space an' tell me the answers to some of them things?"

"Your guess's just as good as mine."
"Another thing I want to know about!" Jennie went on. "You listen to me? Well, nobody's tried to harm you, have they?"

"She broke off as something crackled sharply against the Venetian blind.
Jennie uttered a shrill squeal of terror and jumped from her chair, but Asey looked at the little pieces of gravel on the rug and grinned as she strode over to the window.

"Aho, Asey!" Washy called up hoarsely. "Aho! I can't find no body!"
"Keep on watchin', anyway," Asey told him.
When he turned around, Jennie was viewing with acute dismay the contents of the workbasket, strewn all over the floor.

"How'd that happen?" Asey inquired.
"O dear, ain't that an awful mess! I had the basket in my hand when I jumped, an' it popped right up into the air—my, that gravel startled me! Help me pick things up, will you? I looked under so many beds in such a rush, I'm stiff an' creakin' from bendin' over. I'm tired, anyways. You know it's most one o'clock?"

"Feel like callin' it a day an' goin' home?" Asey knelt down and started to gather up the spoils.
"I thought," Jennie sounded discouraged, "that I'd be a big help to you, Asey. It always seemed to me when you had cases like this before that I'd have guessed things an' figured things right off. Maybe not as fast as you, but anyway as fast as Hanson. But I guess it's easy enough after someone's shown you. He—oh, don't stuff things back that way, Asey! It was just about the neatest workbasket I ever seen, an' we mustn't leave it all messy!"

"There!" Asey gave her the basket and tossed the last spoon into her lap. "See anythin' I missed?"
"Seems like there'd ought to be a pincushion," Jennie said. "There's always a—Asey, that's another thing!"

"What? Where?" Asey looked around on the rug.
"Not on the floor, ninnny! I mean, the pincushion's somethin' else I don't understand. Look, when we first come here tonight, didn't I pick up a pincushion off the floor in the livin' room? It was a pincushion that looked like a tomato, wasn't it?"

Asey thought for a moment. "I don't know," she remembered. "What? I don't know," she remembered. "Why, tonight while we was waitin' there in the livin' room, while you was off huntin' Miss Olive, Mrs. Doane picked up her sewin' basket an' started darrin' a sock. I said, just to kind of make conversation, that I'd nicked up her pincushion off the floor, an' she said she was very fond of that pincushion because it was her mother's, an' so different from most—shaped like an orange! So I said—now, Asey, stop lookin' at them pictures an' listen to me! I said, what I picked up was a tomato, an' she said to take the basket an' look for myself, there wasn't any tomato there, only the orange, an' I must just have made a mistake with the candlelight an' all. Well, like I said, I was gettin' tired of havin' people tell me I just made a mistake, an' I got sort of mad, an' Freddy stepped in quick an' said that Miss Olive had a tomato that belonged to her mother, a real old-fashioned tomato pincushion—"

"What's that?" Asey said. "Say that again."
Jennie repeated it. "I wasn't so upset an' worried that I couldn't tell a red tomato from an orange orange! I said so, too, but Mrs. Doane just smiled that sort of superior smile of hers, an' said I could see, couldn't I, that there wasn't any tomato there!"

"Wasn't there?"
"Not!" Jennie said. "I looked through that basket twice!"
"Did you hunt around anywhere besides the sewin' basket?"

"I was just mad enough," Jennie said, "that I pawed around the floor for it, an' peered among the magazines on the table, an' I even poked in the flower bowl there. Freddy an' Rankin an' Washy all helped me hunt—they was polite enough, an' they pawed things around on that table every which way. But it was plain to see they thought I'd made a mistake, too. After a while, I got to wonderin' if maybe I wasn't wrong, because they all thought so—but just the same I was positive, sure I'd picked up a tomato pincushion an' put it in that basket. Now, what do you think—Asey, what's the matter with you? You looked glum as a fish two minutes ago,

an' now you're grinnin' from ear to ear!"
"Cousin, d'you realize what you done?"
"What I done?" Jennie sniffed. "Well, I must say, if I'd realized all the fuss an' bother an' to-do there'd be over a simple little thing like my pickin' up a pincushion, let me tell you I'd have let it lay right there on the floor! Mercy! sakes! A body'd think—"
"You got me wrong," Asey interrupted. "I don't think it's bad. I think it's good. I think it's more'n good. I think it's just about the best thing that's happened here tonight!"

"WHAT you done, Jennie," Asey continued, "is to put your finger on somethin', see?"
"I never!" Jennie said with spirit. "I didn't put my finger on it, Asey! I tell you, I picked up that pincushion. With my hand!"

Asey's grin widened.
"An' presented it to me on a platter," he said. "Just so. Look, there was somethin' belongin' to Miss Olive, Jennie. On the floor. You pick it up an' put it somewhere, but—if ain't there now!"

"I can't help that!"
"Wait. It must be Miss Olive's pincushion, all right. You say Freddy said she had a tomato pincushion. But there's none in her own basket here, is there? An' you said yourself it was the neatest basket you ever seen! That tomato pincushion ought to be right here. Only you found it downstairs on the floor. So that means that somebody—"
"Nobody!" Jennie said. "Asey, you feel all right?"

"Asey, you feel all right?" Jennie inquired anxiously. "Don't you think you better go lie down somewhere? You're talkin' kind of wild!"
"Look," Asey said, "you got somethin' that indicates that someone was here an' took the pincushion, an' somehow dropped it downstairs, an' then cared enough about it to come back an' remove it—"
"Jennie said, "it was that fellow that knocked over the clams, Asey! That's what he was snoopin' around for! Don't you s'pose that's the fellow the doc seen, too? He was tryin' to get in an' get the pincushion!"

"Asey," Asey said, "seems logical. But the big point is, at last we got somethin' belongin' to Miss Olive that somebody seems to be wanted! We don't need to waste time speculatin' if she left the pincushion down there on the livin' room floor herself. Folks as neat as her don't go strewin' their belongin's around. An' if this belonged to Miss Olive's mother, like Freddy told you, then probably she's just as choice of it as Mr. Doane is of her mother's orange model."
"But look here, Asey," Jennie's forehead was screwed up into a frown, "what'd anyone want a little ole pin cushion for, for mercy's sakes? I see what you mean, all right, but I think it's kind of a silly idea, Asey! If it was jewels or money or somethin' valuable, I can see why someone might want to steal it—but stealin' away a little ole tomato pincushion seems to me about as silly a thing as I ever heard!"

"That's just it!" Asey said. "It's so silly an' unimportant that I didn't even remember your pickin' the thing up at first!"
"You s'pose the girl might have taken the pincushion?" Jennie wanted to know. "You don't s'pose Miss Olive might of killed the girl herself? S'pose she was mad at the girl dressin' up like her? Wouldn't it be awful, after how sorry an' worried we been about Miss Olive, if she was—oh, no, I guess," Jennie said wearily, "that I'll just get along home an' make myself a nice cup of tea an' go to bed! You, too. Maybe the real answer'll come to you over night."

"I think I got enough now," Asey said reflectively, "to tackle them an' bluff somethin' useful out of 'em. But this pincushion—"
"O, that little ole pincushion! I tell you that a nice cup of tea—what's the matter now?" she added, as Asey walked over to the window and peered out through the Venetian blind.
"I thought I heard my car start up!" Asey said.
"You never did—see, you're jumpin'! You ought to rest an'—"
"Well for the love of Pete!"
"Asey, come back here! Where you goin'?"

"Go in to rescue my car!"
"You must go out that window! Come back here! Asey, are you stark ravin' mad! Come back!"
Jennie hustled over to the window, struggled again with the Venetian blind, and finally ducked around in front of it in time to see Asey land on the lawn below, scramble to his feet, and dash toward the driveway.
She could just make out the sleek lines of Asey's chromi-plated roadster sliding off through the fog.
Jumping into the coupe parked at the head of the driveway, Asey started it, backed out, and set out in pursuit of his roadster.

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) 670, Portland; KJR (NBC-Blue) 1000, Seattle; KNX (CBS) 1070, Los Angeles; KNA (NBC-Red) 850, Denver; KOIN (CBS) 970, Portland; KOMO (NBC-Red) 950, Seattle; KPO (NBC-Red) 680, San Francisco; KSL (CBS) 1160, Salt Lake City.

Time shown is PST
Monday
8:00 p. m.—Ecclesia and Betty, KGO, KJR, Vox Pop, KSL, KOIN, Adventures in Toyland, KEX, Stars of Today, KGW, Jane Arden, KOMO, Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.
8:30 p. m.—News of the World, KGO, KEX, KJR, Cocktail Hour, KGW, Bill Henry, KNX, Newspaper of the Air, KOIN, Christmas Bells, KOIN, Waltz Rhythm, KPO, Voices of Yesterday, KSL.
6:00 p. m.—Radio Theater, KNX, KOIN, KSL, Dr. I. Q., Jim McClain, KPO, KGW, KOMO, Cinnamon Bear, KEX, Rose Heanok, KGO, Scandinavian Reporter, KJR.
6:30 p. m.—For America We Sing, KGO, KEX, KJR, That Brewster Boy, KPO, KGW, KOMO, KOIN, Christmas Fund, KOMO, Concert Hall, KPO.
Tuesday
5:00 p. m.—Adventure Stories, KGO, KJR, Are You a Missing Heir, KSL, Jane Arden, KOMO, News, KOIN, Adventures in Toyland, KEX, Stars of Today, KGW, Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.
5:30 p. m.—News of the World, KGO, KJR, KEX, Bob Burns Show, KSL, Horace Heidt's Treasure Chest, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Today's Best Buys, KNX, Eyes of the World, KOIN.
6:00 p. m.—Burns and Allen, KPO, KOMO, KGW, We, the People, KSL, Ken Stevens and Erwin Yeo, KOIN, Cinnamon Bear, KEX, Scandinavian Reporter, KJR, Second Husband, KNX.
6:30 p. m.—Symphony Concert, KEX, KJR, Report to the Nation, KNX, KOIN, Fibber McGee and Molly, KPO, KOMO, KGW.
7:00 p. m.—Bob Hope Variety Show, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Glenn Miller's Orch., KSL, KNX, KOIN.
7:30 p. m.—Red Skelton, KPO, KGW, KOIN, Treasury Chest, KJR, KEX, KGO, Leon F. Drew, KOIN, Second Husband, KSL.
8:00 p. m.—Amos 'n' Andy, KNX, KSL, KOIN, Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KOMO.
8:15 p. m.—Lum and Abner, KPO, KGW, KOMO, Lanny Ross, KNX, KSL, KOIN.
8:30 p. m.—Johnny Presents, KPO, KOMO, KGW, Information Please, KGO, KEX, KJR, Are You a Missing

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

By JOHN HIX
AT THE RATE OF \$1 A MINUTE, IT WOULD TAKE 1900 YEARS TO SPEND A BILLION DOLLARS!

THE DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS
COMES IN FROM PLAYING AND CALLS TO FAMILY, GETTING NO REPLY
SITS DOWN ON STAIRS TO TAKE HIS THINGS OFF, WONDERING WHERE EVERYBODY IS
GIES UPSTAIRS AND FINDS BEDROOM DOORS ALL SHUT. TRIES MOTHER'S DOOR, WHICH IS LOCKED
MOTHER OPENS IT A CRACK, CAREFULLY CONCEALING WHAT IS ON THE BED, AND SAYS HE CAN'T COME IN
STARTS IN TO SISTERS' ROOM, AND AUNT SUES, CAUSING A FLURRY OF WHISKING SOMETHING OUT OF SIGHT AND SHRIEKS TO KEEP OUT
SITS DOWN ON STAIRS WONDERING WHAT TO DO, WHEN FRONT DOOR OPENS A CRACK AND FATHER PEERS IN
FATHER, OBVIOUSLY HIDING SOMETHING BEHIND HIS BACK, SENDS HIM UPSTAIRS BEFORE HE WILL COME IN
RETIRES TO HIS BEDROOM, REFLECTING HAPPILY THAT CHRISTMAS WEEK MAY BE LONELY BUT IT'S EXCITING

ORATORS' TRAINING

Demosthenes was derided by his audience on his first attempt to speak in public. Weak lungs and an impediment in his speech, he was advised by an actor to recite with pebbles in his mouth, to correct his vocal defect, and to shout above the roar of the sea to strengthen his voice. He became the greatest orator in history. Like Demosthenes, Winston Churchill was hissed and heckled at his attempt at oratory, while running for Member of Parliament from Oldham. To increase the power of his voice he stood on the deck of a ship alone and threw oratory into a gale.

Demosthenes!
AS THE GREAT GREEK ORATOR RECITED HIS SPEECHES ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE SEA TO STRENGTHEN HIS VOICE WINSTON CHURCHILL, AS A YOUNG MAN RETURNING FROM THE BOER WAR, CORRECTED FAULTY SPEECH BY SHOUTING ORATIONS FROM THE DESERTED DECK OF THE SHIP DURING A RAGING STORM!

OPERETTA GIVEN BY GOLD HILL STUDENTS

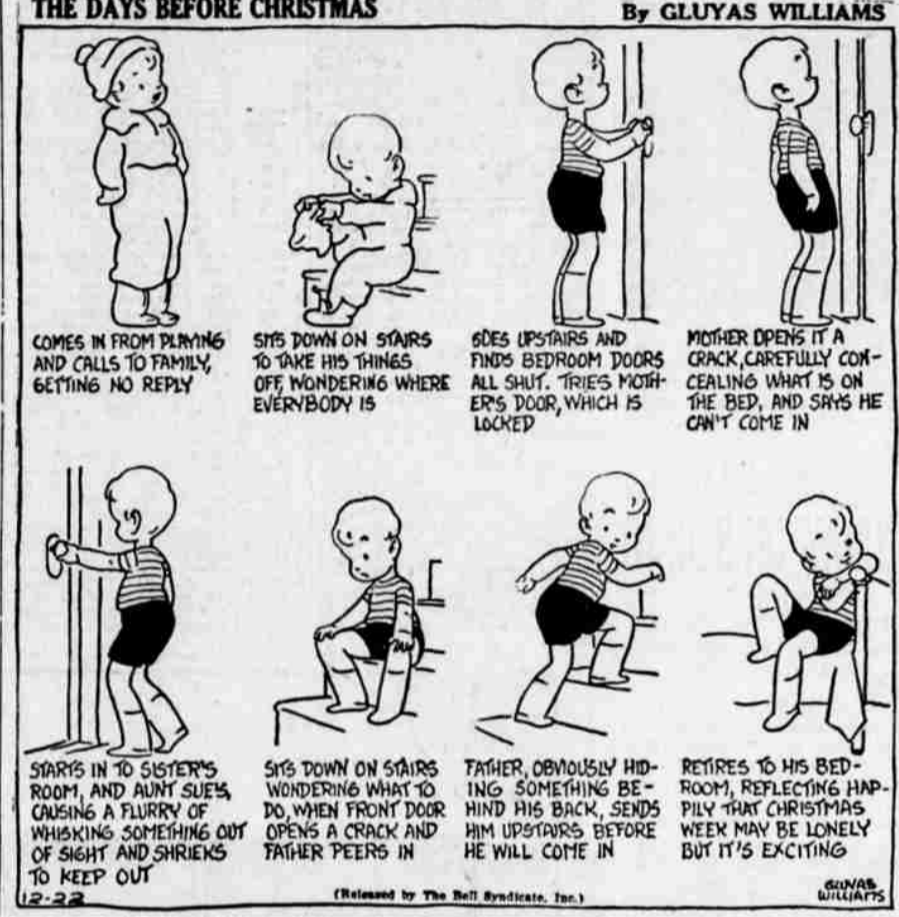
Gold Hill, Dec. 22.—(Spl.)—A Dutch Christmas operetta in two acts was presented by the grade school here on Dec. 18, in the school gymnasium. Instrumental music was furnished by the school band and singing

by the grade school chorus, high school glee club and sextette. The operetta was directed by Mrs. Opal Mooter assisted by other grade school teachers. The cast included Jessie Daily, Bruce Galbraith, Jocelyn Meunier, Fern McCoy, Raymond Dusenberry, Arlene Gascon, Jewell Cook, Donald Dusenberry, Robert Leazotte and Harold Colvin.

NEW SIREN TO WARN GOLD HILL CITIZENS

Gold Hill, Dec. 22.—(Spl.)—The city council has authorized the purchase of a new five-horsepower siren to be used in case of air raids or blackouts. It is expected that delivery will be made within the next 60 days.

Closing time for Classified Ads 9 a. m.—Too Late to Classify 12:30 p. m.



Give Him... A SWEATER \$3.95 to \$12.50 Barkers Store for Men