

The Avenging Parrot

By Anne Austin, author of "The Black Pigeon," "Rival Wives," etc.

CHAPTER XI

Again that blaze of anger in Cora Barker's eyes. "It's none of your business!" she choked. Then I suppose everything connected with Mrs. Hogarth is your business now," she conceded wearily. "Mrs. Hogarth made a new will just after Christmas, cutting Daisy Shepherd off, and naming me, for no better reason than that I had given her, as a Christmas gift, a rather nicely bound diary. I—had no ulterior motive. It was not trying to cut Daisy out. But Daisy didn't give Mrs. Hogarth a moment's thought about being tired of pampering the old lady. So I was Mrs. Hogarth's heiress until—some time in May, I believe it was, when she became very fond of Walter Styles, a new boarder. She was tired of me by that time, and wanted the fun of having a new heir. She didn't have much excitement in her life, and making wills was her chief indoor sport. I didn't mean that to sound ugly. I liked Mrs. Hogarth, even after—"

"After you quarreled with her?" Strawn suggested, as Cora's words stopped on a gasp. The yellow pallor deepened. "I—did not have a quarrel with Mrs. Hogarth." She brought out the words with difficulty.

Strawn smiled, and Dundee could have struck his chief. He was very young and very sympathetic.

"But you had come to regard Mrs. Hogarth's hidden hoard as rightfully yours, hadn't you, Miss Barker? Felt rather cheated, didn't you, when she changed her will?"

"No! No! I never expected to get it. We all knew how much she enjoyed changing her will. And I didn't need her money. I make a good salary as pianist at the Little Queen, and I also have a number of private pupils to whom I give lessons in the mornings, before the theater opens at 11. I make plenty to live on decently."

"I congratulate you, Miss Barker!" Strawn interrupted blandly. "Just one other thing, Miss Barker," before I send you to bed, for a good night's sleep, I hope. . . . Cap'n the parrot, is used to your presence in this room, of course. Do you think you could coax him into a talkative mood?"

At that apparently innocent request Cora Barker shrank from her inquisitor as sharply as if he had struck her. She trembled all over.

"No, no! I—I'm afraid of the parrot. Cap'n has always hated me—never would talk to me—"

When the completely demoralized woman had been dismissed, Strawn stretched his arms high above his head, yawned, then looked a quizzical eye toward Dundee behind the screen.

"Well, well!" he commented. "And what do you think of Miss Cora Barker, young slouch, me lad?"

"I think," Dundee said slowly, "that she has not told all she knows, that she believes Sevier killed Mrs. Hogarth, and is in terror of her life that she will be wrongfully involved."

"Wrongfully!" Strawn snorted. "I'll bet my badge she was in on it somehow!" He rose and strode to the door. "Payne!" he bawled, and the plainclothesman came on the run. "What about the Barker woman's room, Payne? Find anything?"

"Not a thing, chief," Payne answered regretfully. "But, listen, sir, the Sharpe are champing at the bit. It seems that the Sharpe dame was packing to catch a train when this rumpus was kicked up. She missed it, but wants to take the next one. Something about her darling baby boy, I gather."

"All right. Bring them both in," Strawn directed, and Payne

left the room to obey. "I think I told you that a Western Union boy brought a telegram for Sharp as I was leaving to go to headquarters," Dundee reminded his chief, from behind the screen.

"This was a nice, peaceful boarding-house tonight," Strawn commented sarcastically. "Then, at a knock on the door, 'Come in!' Mr. and Mrs. Sharp! All right, Payne. Get along with your work," he added significantly, and Payne departed to search the unsuspecting couple's room.

"I'm glad to meet you, Lieutenant Strawn, though I deplore the circumstances," Lawrence Sharp bemoaned. "The missus and I were great friends of the poor lady who is so tragically dead."

"So I understand," Strawn interrupted dryly, though he shook hands punctiliously.

"Oh, Lieutenant Strawn, you'll be as brief with me as you can, won't you sir?" Mrs. Sharp, fully dressed for traveling, even to hat, implored. "You see, I was going to catch the 1 o'clock train for the capital, where our son, Larry, is in the State University."

"Now, now, Dolly!" Mr. Sharp admonished her. "I thought we had agreed—"

"But I know he won't let me go to Larry, if we don't tell him about the telegram, and the terrible trouble my poor boy is in," Mrs. Sharp sobbed. "You won't put it in the papers or tell the other boarders will you, Lieutenant Strawn! You look like such a good, kind man, and, of course, it all has nothing to do with poor Mrs. Hogarth—"

"Suppose you let me see the telegram you received about 11 o'clock this evening," Strawn suggested.

"You already—know!" Mrs. Sharp gasped. "You see, Lawrence, I told you the police know everything! Here's the telegram, Mr. Strawn. Lawrence didn't want to show it to you, but as I told him—"

Strawn took the yellow sheet. It was a collect telegram, dated from the state capital. Strawn read it aloud for Dundee's benefit:

"IN PECK OF TROUBLE DAD STOP ARRESTED AND JAILED ON CHARGE OF DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED STOP NOT TRUE STOP WAS DRIVING CLASSMATE'S CAR AND WRECKED IT STOP VICKERS THREATENS CHARGE OF STEALING CAR UNLESS I PAY HIM THREE HUNDRED CASH FOR IT MONDAY STOP FOR GOD'S SAKE DAD RUSH THE CASH AND ALSO ARRANGE TO HAVE ME BAILED OUT STOP TERRIBLY SORRY BUT NOT MY FAULT, LARRY."

"Larry's a good boy, Mr. Strawn," Mrs. Sharp sobbed. "And I want you to let me go straight to him! There's another train at 3:10, a local, but I won't mind a day coach—"

"Just a minute, Mr. Sharp," Strawn interrupted, almost gently. "Suppose, Mr. Sharp, you begin with the receipt of this telegram and tell me all that has happened in this house this evening—to your knowledge."

Before her husband could reply, Mrs. Sharp began again, eagerly:

"I signed for the telegram, Mr. Strawn. And while I was signing for it Norma Paige and Walter Styles—the young man she's just got engaged to—came upstairs and knocked on Mrs. Hogarth's door. While I was counting the money out of my purse to pay for the telegram I heard Mrs. Hogarth call 'Who is it?' Norma said, 'It's Norma, Mrs. Hogarth,' and in a minute Mrs. Hogarth opened the door. When she saw that Walter was with Norma, she seemed to get aw-

ful mad. She raised one of the two canes she always used to walk with—because she was so terribly fat and heavy, you know—"

"Did you see her strike Walter Styles?" Strawn interrupted. "Oh, no!" Mrs. Sharp protested. "She just brandished the cane as if she was going to hit him, and she said something like 'I've told you to stay away from me, Walter Styles, and I mean it! Now get!'"

"And what did Styles say?" "Oh, he didn't say anything; he just backed away and tried to pull Norma with him, but she whispered something, and passed on into Mrs. Hogarth's room. I didn't pay any more attention then, because I wanted to see what was in the telegram."

"Did you see where Styles went?" "Oh, down the hall toward his room, but as I said, I didn't pay much attention. Mr. Sharp was anxious to see the telegram, too, so I closed our door, and we read it—and, then—"

She began to sob again. "Suppose you take up the story at this point, Sharp," Strawn directed.

"The wife and I talked things over for a while. We were pretty badly shocked, you know, and scarcely knew what to do, but Dolly insisted she was going to him this very night and made me go down to phone about trains and to see if she could get a berth on the 1 o'clock train, which would get her into the capital at about 7 in the morning. It took me about 10 minutes, I think, to get the information I wanted and to reserve the berth—I could only get her an upper; it's the Chicago train, you know, and pretty crowded. Coming back up the stairs I saw Norma—Miss Paige—closing Mrs. Hogarth's door. With one hand she was dabbing a handkerchief against her eyes, as if she had been crying—"

"What time was this?" Strawn interrupted sharply. Behind the screen Dundee's pencil faltered in a trembling hand.

"Why, it must have been about half-past 11 by that time, sir," Sharp answered, hesitatingly. "I hope I haven't—"

"Never mind that!" Strawn commanded brusquely. "This is murder, Mr. Sharp."

The pompous man's florid cheeks blanched; then he remembered something that brightened his eyes. "But it couldn't have been Norma who—"

He hesitated before the terrible word, "for I heard her call out, 'Good night, Mrs. Hogarth,' and then Mrs. Hogarth's voice answering, 'Good night!'"

Strawn's narrowed eyes glanced at the still ruffled parrot. "Are you sure, Mr. Sharp," he asked slowly, portentously, "that it was Mrs. Hogarth's voice that answered 'Good night!'"

(To Be Continued)

TURKEY POOL OPENS

MEDFORD, Ore., Nov. 5. (PA P)—The Rogue River valley turkey pool shipments opened today with moderate receipts and expectation that the first car lot would be despatched to New York tomorrow and every day thereafter until Sunday.

The heaviest receipts are scheduled for tomorrow and Thursday. The average price is 32 cents for A top birds and ranging downward to 25 cents.

DEA SHOW HERD RETURNS FROM P. I. EXPOSITION

Alexander Herd One Of Best In America

The Dea show herd of Aberdeen-Angus cattle returned today from Portland where they captured two grand championships, four first prizes, several second prizes, a second leg on the Congdon & Battles trophy for pair of calves, and lesser honors, in competition with two of America's leading herds.

The Grand Champions were Rock Creek Blinker, grand champion steer over all breeds; and Sir Blackcap Quality 2nd, Senior and Grand Champion Aberdeen-Angus Bull, in competition with showherds from Hartley Stock Farms and Congdon & Battles.

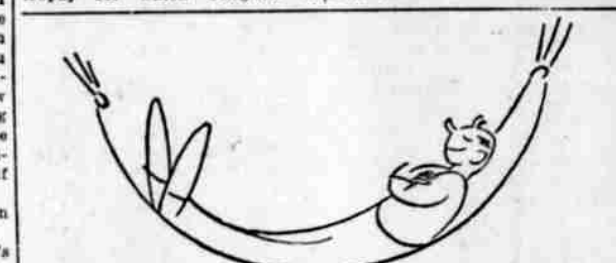
First prizes were won on bulls: exclusive of championships, bulls were shown in five classes and gained four firsts. Sir Blackcap Quality 2nd, Elmore Harrison 2nd, Blackcap Buxom H., and group of three bulls owned by exhibitor, each took blue ribbons. Elmore 10th and Blackcap Joan were each second prize winners in female classes, while a red ribbon was also had on the pair of calves, Blackcap Buxom H. and Blackcap Joan. They were defeated for first prize by Congdon & Battles' pair by their well known herd bull, Prizeemer 32nd, and in turn defeated three other pairs for the trophy for which Congdon &

Battles do not compete. Returning from Portland with the cattle is Ames Plantation Evette, purchased at the recent Hartley Stock Farm sale. She was Junior and Grand Champion cow at the Congress Show and Sale in Chicago last February, and was purchased safe in calf to the service of the imported bull, Evacus of Ballindalloch. She is a half sister through her sire to the well known bull, Ames Plantation Pal, twice Reserve Grand Champion at Chicago, and a contender for grand championship honors again this year.

The real feature of the show herd is, of course, Rock Creek Blinker, adjudged the best fatter of any breed to be shown at the Portland International Livestock Exposition. Alex McDonald, best cattle herdsman at the University of California at Davis, one of the best judges of beef on the coast, who has himself fitted several Chicago grand champions, placed the steers. He gave the steers a thorough going over and exhaustive attention, his placings being logical and in-



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structive. He complimented Rock Creek Blinker highly, as did Otto V. Battles and other veterans of the show ring in attendance. Blinker's competition lay chiefly within the ranks of his own breed, where he defeated well finished steers from Washington State college and from Congdon & Battles herd. For the grand championship he quite readily defeated the heavily finished Hereford from Oregon Agricultural College, and had a decided edge on the Rothrock Shorthorn titled and shown by Washington State College, upon the basis of finish, neatness, and refinement of head and foreleg.

"Ask Me Another" was popular for a time, but eventually failed to take the place of children. It ran out of questions too soon.

BANQUET HELD TUESDAY NIGHT

A banquet for members of the Masonic lodge and their wives where the theme of "Masonic Fellowship" predominated, was held last night in the lodge hall, when over 120 were present. Short talks were given by George Walton, Frank Ira White, Mrs. John Casper and Paul T. Jackson during the banquet hour all of which were based along the theme of better fellowship. Following the banquet an entertainment and musical program was enjoyed over which Mrs. F. Hill Hunter, worthy matron of the Eastern Star, presided. The evening was finished up with cards.

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7th Prize...20	14th to 25th Prizes, Each.....20

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W. J. Latimer, Puzzle Manager, The Portland Telegram, Portland, Ore.

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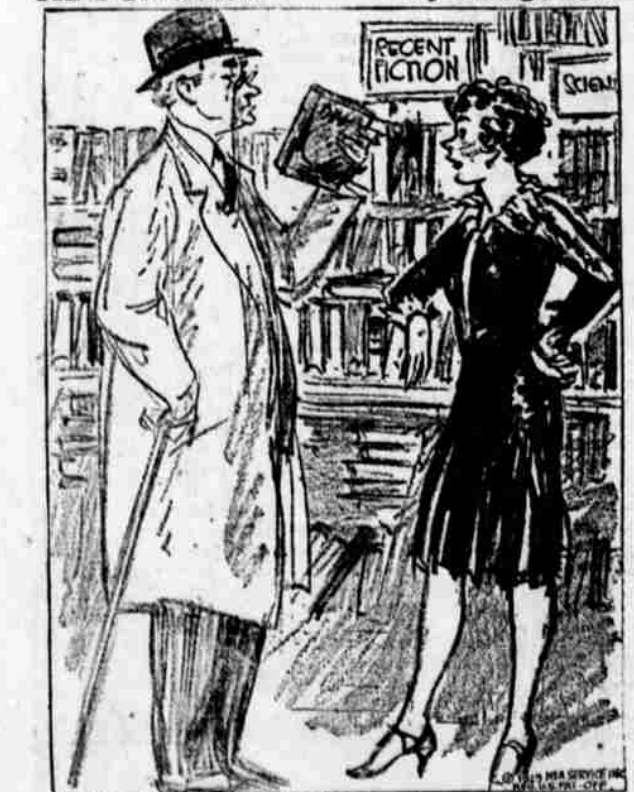
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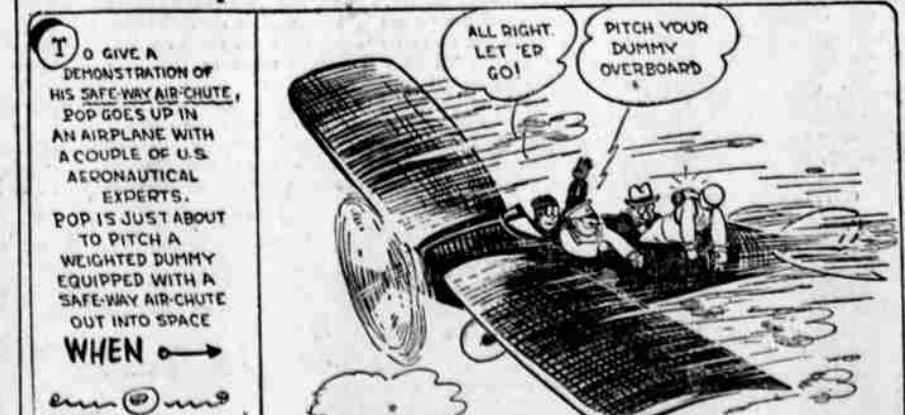
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