

# The UNKNOWN BLOND

By LAURA LOU BROOKMAN

BEGIN HERE TODAY  
DAVID BANNISTER under-  
takes to find out who killed Tracy  
King, orchestra leader found dead  
in his hotel apartment. Bannister,  
an author and former writer,  
saw King, who was the murder  
case with GAINES, start reports  
for the Post.

Among those suspected of the  
crime are JULIET FRANGE,  
blond and pretty, known to have  
visited King shortly before his  
death; HERMAN SCURLOCK,  
a writer; and MELVINA HOLLIS-  
TER, middle-aged spinster, who  
quarreled with King recently.  
King was engaged to wealthy  
DENISE LANG, MATTHEW HOL-  
LISTER, Melvina's brother, tells  
Bannister he believes his sister  
knows something she is keeping  
from the police. Bannister goes  
to dinner with PARKER COLE-  
MAN, friend of Denise Lang's.  
They are driving along a coun-  
try road when Coleman sees a  
dark object ahead and shouts:

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY  
CHAPTER XXVI

BANNISTER exclaimed sharply.  
"What is it?"  
The roadster came to a halt,  
brakes grinding. Coleman jumped  
from the car. "Back here," he  
called and ran in the direction  
from which they had come.

Bannister followed, slower and  
more cautiously. He could make  
out now that there was something  
ahead. Something black and  
oddly shaped, lying at the side  
of the road just beyond the turn.  
"Wait!" he called to Coleman  
but the other did not wait. Pant-  
ing, breathless, Bannister made  
the dozen yards. He knew now  
what it was ahead. An over-  
turned automobile, slanting on  
the hillside, its wheels reared  
grotesquely.

"Is there anyone there?" he  
called.  
"Can't tell. There's a flash-  
light in my car!"

Coleman was off again for the  
flashlight. Bannister searched  
his pockets for matches, found  
them and struck one. He had  
to move to the other side of the  
overturned sedan and cup his  
hands to protect the blast. The  
match sputtered an instant and  
then died. But in that instant  
Bannister had caught a glimpse  
of a man's face—white and cut  
and bleeding.

When Coleman returned with  
the flashlight he found Bannister  
struggling with the door of the  
sedan. The car had fallen in such  
a way that the door could not be  
opened.

"There's a man in there!" Ban-  
nister told him. "We've got to  
get him out!"

Together they struggled with  
the door but it would not open.  
In the bright rays of the flash-  
light they saw that the man was  
alone in the car. He had fallen  
forward, his body pressed against  
the steering wheel. There was a  
good deal of blood on the man's  
clothing and some on the cush-  
ions of the car.

"Do you think he's alive?" Cole-  
man asked.

"Don't know. We'll have to  
get him out and find out."

It was almost 20 minutes' work  
before they finally managed it.  
Coleman had stripped off his top-  
coat and laid it on the ground.  
They put the man on the coat.  
Then Bannister, down on his  
knees, bent over him touching his  
hands.

"They're warm," he exclaimed.  
And a moment later, "His heart's  
beating!"

BANNISTER looked down at the  
figure on the ground. The  
man's eyes were closed. His hair  
was matted and there was a dark  
stain across his forehead and  
down one cheek. His upper lip  
had been cut and bled copiously.  
Suddenly, with an exclamation  
that was both amazement and  
horror, Bannister drew back. "It's  
Drugan!" he cried.

"Al Drugan! He played in  
King's orchestra. He and King  
were friends. I was talking to  
him only the other night. Yes,  
it's Drugan, all right. We've got  
to do something! We've got to  
get him to a house some where,  
call a doctor!"

By the time they reached the  
nearest farm house Drugan's  
heart was still beating, slowly  
and weakly but nevertheless beat-  
ing. It was still beating, weaker  
and more slowly, when the doctor  
arrived, but it did not beat much  
longer.

Not for one moment did the  
injured man regain consciousness.  
There was nothing that the doctor  
could do for him, nothing at all.  
At 23 minutes past nine o'clock  
that night Al Drugan's earthly  
cares were at an end.

The women of the farm house  
—one middle-aged, plump and  
gray haired, the other slender  
and younger — hovered near the  
door of the room where Drugan's  
body lay.

"What will we do?" the older  
woman asked. "You're not going  
to leave him—?"  
"I've called the police," Ban-  
nister told her. "They'll be here  
in a little while. No, they won't  
leave him here."

It was in a police ambulance  
that they took Al Drugan back  
to Tremont. But when the am-  
bulance arrived at the farm  
house, besides the driver and his  
assistant, there were three other  
passengers. McNeal was among  
them and so was the police phy-  
sician. The other man was from  
the detective bureau.

Five minutes later another  
smaller car drew up in the farm  
yard and Sawyer, the Post pho-  
tographer, stepped out. He found  
Bannister and asked, "What hap-  
pened? They called me at  
home and said there'd been a bad  
accident out here? I don't see  
any accident. What's it all  
about?"

BANNISTER explained briefly.  
He had called the newspaper  
office at the same time he had  
notified the police of Drugan's  
death.

While the physician made a  
hurried examination McNeal asked  
questions. He wanted to know  
where the wrecked car had been  
found.

"It's still there," Bannister  
told him. "Just as it was."  
McNeal wanted to know how  
Drugan was lying when they  
found him. He wanted to know  
what time it was and asked a  
dozen other questions. Bannister  
left Coleman to answer them and  
walked away.

Presently the ambulance was on  
its way back to Tremont. McNeal  
and the other detective climbed  
into Parker Coleman's roadster.  
Bannister rode with the Post pho-  
tographer and they followed the  
roadster to the place where the  
over-turned sedan still lay.

Sawyer swore softly as he  
stepped out, surveying the wreck.  
The headlights of the two cars  
supplied light enough to show  
what had happened. The sedan  
had plunged from the road and  
fallen forward, turning com-  
pletely over. It was lying with  
its wheels in the air and the hill-  
side was gashed with deep, ragged  
furrows, showing the path it had  
taken.

"Some smash-up!" Sawyer ex-  
claimed and repeated it. "Some  
smash-up!"  
He became busy immediately,  
getting his camera from its case  
and rummaging for flashlight  
powder. Bannister moved on to  
join the others. He and Coleman  
tried to show the detectives how  
Drugan had been pressed in be-  
tween the steering wheel and the  
side of the car. McNeal seemed  
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his flashlight.

"What is it?" Bannister asked.  
"Smell it."  
Bannister sniffed the contents  
of the bottle. It was whisky—  
whisky that was so vile-smelling  
it must have been among the  
cheapest grades the bootleggers  
supply.

Bannister returned the bottle.  
"So that's it!" he said. "Well,  
if he drank all that I'm not sur-  
prised he couldn't keep in the  
road."  
Suddenly there was a roar like  
a gun shot and a flash of light.  
Sawyer, the photographer, called,  
"Crowd up close together, will  
you? I want to shoot another  
one."

Bannister managed to step  
aside before the second picture  
was taken. He did not fancy his  
likeness appearing in the public  
press. Besides there were too  
many in the group.

He turned and found Parker  
Coleman at his side.

"Say," Coleman asked, "what  
are these detectives doing? Why  
didn't they just send someone out  
to bring in the car? I don't un-  
derstand it. It was just an ac-  
cident, wasn't it? I mean they  
don't suspect—?"

"I don't know," Bannister told  
him. "I've been wondering the  
same thing but I'm going to find  
out."

It was not until they were back  
at central headquarters that Ban-  
nister got the answer. Then he  
said, "Look here, McNeal, just ex-  
actly what do you make of all  
this? Drugan's death was an ac-  
cident, wasn't it? How could it  
have been anything but an ac-  
cident?"

The captain's eyes were on the  
cigar he was lighting and he did  
not raise them as he spoke. "It  
could," he said, "have been mur-  
der. A murderer cleverly planned  
to look like an accident."  
(To Be Continued)

The robin is far from depend-  
able as a harbinger of spring;  
many of these birds do not go  
south for the winter, provided  
they can find plenty of food and  
a well-protected shelter.

General Westover, in a bal-  
loon race, went 16,000 feet  
straight up and then came down  
on the same bridge from which  
he ascended, at Birmingham,  
Ala., in 1921.

Flapper Fanny Says  
"I've called the police," Ban-  
nister told her. "They'll be here  
in a little while. No, they won't  
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## OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By Ahern



## SALESMAN SAM

By Small



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



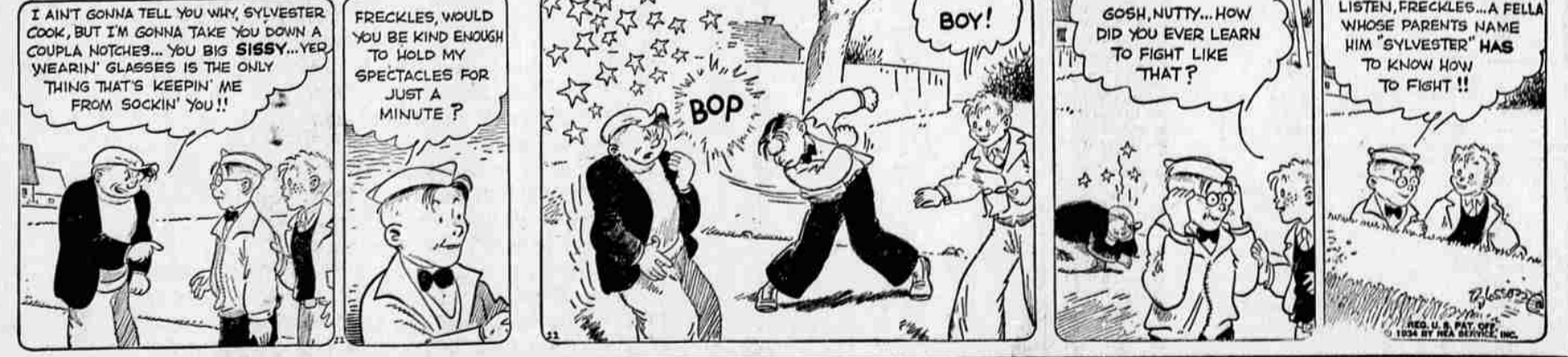
## WASH TUBBS

By Crane



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



## THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

By Cowan

