

The UNKNOWN BLOND

By Laura Lou BROOKMAN

BEGIN HERE TODAY
DAVID BANNISTER under-
takes to find out who killed
TRACY KING, orchestra leader.
In his best apartment, Ban-
nister is an author and former
newspaper man. He works on the
murder case with GAINES, star
reporter on that beat.
Among those suspected are
JULIET FRANCE, blond and
pretty and known to have visited
KING shortly before his death;
HERMAN SCHULACH, who wrote
KING a threatening letter; and
JOE PARROTT, down-and-out
vandalism artist. It is also known
that NEELYA HOLMSTER, said-
to-be spinster, and quarreled
with KING recently.
At 9:15 A.M. friend of KING's,
a found dead in a wrecked auto-
mobile.
Bannister persuades the police
chief to let Juliet come to his
apartment, ostensibly as a
guest, on the theory that if the
girl believes herself free they can
learn more about her.
Parrott is located in St. Louis
and a detective is sent to bring
him back. Bannister, working
home one evening, sees Juliet
France just ahead of him.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE girl did not see Bannister.
She was walking rapidly, her
hands in her pockets. In the dim
light from the street lamp she
caught a glimpse of the green suit,
knew at once that it was Juliet
France.

But where had she been and
what had she been doing? Ban-
nister cursed at Jordan, the "house
man" who was supposed to be
keeping a constant watch over the
girl. Then he saw the mail box.
It stood on the corner, not a dozen
feet from where she had been when
he first noticed her. So that was
the explanation!

Bannister quickened his step
and caught up with her. "Aren't
you afraid of getting lost?" he
asked.

She turned. Was it fright or
confusion that brought the girl's
hand to her throat? Then sud-
denly she smiled. "Oh, it's you!
I—I didn't recognize you."

"They walked along together. 'It's
dark,' Bannister objected, 'and
you're a long way from the house.
Aren't you afraid to be out
alone?'"

Juliet France shook her head.
"No," she said. "What is there to
be afraid of?"

"Nothing—I hope."
She looked up at him and her
eyes were not smiling now. They
studied his face searchingly. After
an instant she said, "I just wanted
a little walk. I didn't think there
could be any harm in that. I've
been in the house all day."

Her tone was so repentant that
Bannister smiled. "Perhaps there
isn't," he said. "Only after this I
think it would be better to take
your walks while the man is shif-
ting. Tell me, what have you been
doing all day?"

She gave him a resume of hours
spent at reading, at household
tasks and resting.

"Your aunt let me help make
the chocolate cake you're going to
have for dinner tonight," she told
him proudly.

"Aunt Kate knows how to cook
all right," Bannister admitted.
"Oh, indeed she does! And be-
side that, she's a darling!"

"They had reached the house now
and Bannister pushed open the
door. The warm air and subdued
lighting was delightful after the
cold and dark."

THERE was no time to talk to
Jordan until after dinner. Then
Bannister found the policeman in
the basement, putting a shovel of
coal on the fire.

Bannister lowered his voice
secretly. "Listen," he said, "did
you know Miss France left the
house this afternoon?"

Jordan's eyes were reproachful.
"I know it, Mr. Bannister, but
what could I do about it? Mrs.
Hewlett sent me to the grocery
store to buy some butter! I didn't
know the girl had gone until after
I got back. Listen, if I've got to
be running around doing errands
all the time I might as well not
be here. How do you think I can
keep track of what that girl's do-
ing if I've got to be an errand
boy? I can't—"

Bannister interrupted, promising
to do what he could about the sit-
uation. He'd have a talk with his
aunt, he said. Jordan was right;
he couldn't keep watch over affairs
in the household if he were sent
on errands.

"She did it this morning too,"
the policeman went on, aggrieved.
"Sent me to the dry cleaners. It
took over half an hour and I ran
nearly all the way back. No sir,
I can't be responsible if things
are going to go like that!"

Bannister assured him that they
wouldn't. Privately he wondered
how he was to manage Aunt Kate,
but managed she must be.

"I think the girl went out to
mail a letter," he confided. "I met
her over on Lawrence Avenue right
beside the mail box. Did she do
any telephoning?"

Jordan shook his head. "I kept
a close watch for that," he said.
"When I wasn't running errands!'
Evidently his pride had been
offended seriously. "She didn't go
near the phone while I was here."

"Well," Bannister said, "if she
leaves the house tomorrow, follow
her. Don't let her out of your
sight."

took a cab to headquarters and, as
he had hoped, found McNeal in his
office.
The captain was busy with some
papers but he put them promptly
aside. "Well," he said, "has the
girl been up to any tricks yet?"
Bannister sank into a chair. "I
don't know," he said. "She slipped
one over on Jordan and left the
house a little before 8 o'clock.
I think she mailed a letter."

"Yes, I know. Jordan phoned a
little while ago. That's fine!"
Bannister looked perplexed with
King's recent.
"What do you mean, 'fine'?" he
asked.

"Why, that's exactly what we
want! Let her write all the let-
ters she pleases. We'll get the an-
swers, find out who she sends them
to and what she says!"

"Oh, I see!"
McNeal took a cigar from his
pocket and offered it to Bannister.
He took another for himself, lit
it, and said, "This thing may work
out better than I expected," he
admitted. "You know I didn't go
for the idea much when the chief
first talked about it. But it may
work out!"

He asked several questions
which Bannister answered as well
as he could. Then Bannister
asked, "Has Parrott told you any-
thing yet?"

"Plenty—only I don't believe a
word of it! He claims he can
prove he didn't go near King that
evening. There's a lawyer who's
been buzzing around here this
afternoon. A fat chance he or
anyone else has of getting that
bird away from here! Not until
we've thrown with him!"

BANNISTER rested his arms on
the desk. "Honestly, Cap," he
said, "what do you make of all
this? It seems to me the solution
of the King murder gets farther
out of sight every day."

"I thought you were going to
solve it," McNeal put in. "Thought
you were going to show up how
dumb the police department is!"

"Nothing of the sort," Bannister
protested. "I've never pretended
to know anything about crime. I
only got into this to watch you
fellows do your stuff. But seri-
ously, Cap—just between you and
me—what do you think about it?"

"You've been holding this girl as a
suspect for almost a week. You've
got Parrott now. You've got Schu-
lach—"

The detective objected. "Schu-
lach isn't here," he said. "We re-
leased him this afternoon."

"Then you're convinced he's out
of it?"

McNeal seemed to hedge. "Schu-
lach isn't all right," he said. "He's
out of jail but he isn't going any
place. Any time we want him we
can pick him up again."

"That leaves Parrott and the
girl."

"It leaves a lot of things," Mc-
Neal told him. "One of them's the
fact that you seem to have for-
gotten finding Al Drugan smashed
up in an automobile out on the
McNeillville road."

"You don't think Drugan's death
was an accident, do you?"

"I've good reasons for not think-
ing so. Listen, Dave, I'm telling
you this because I know you can
keep your mouth shut. It's not to
get out yet. Understand? We're
holding Parrott for the King mur-
der but that's not all. While he
was in town he was seen around
with Meg Logan's crowd. You
know who Logan is, don't you?
He's what they'd call an 'under-
world king' in a bigger place.
Been up on half a dozen charges
but he's always too slick to get
caught. It was Logan's lawyer,
Lebrun, who came here to try to
get Parrott out of jail."

"Logan's got several rackets—
and I think one of them is dope.
There's a federal man who's been
in town for a week trying to find
out who's peddling the stuff here.
Remember, it was a dope charge
Parrott was indicted on last win-
ter. Well, I think he's in on a
deal here and that Drugan and
King were in the same racket.
That's the way I figure it. What's
more, I think the girl's in it too."
(To Be Continued)

There will be no bayonets in
future wars, says an army offi-
cial. Then they'd better provide
can openers with their corn wil-
lie and beans, hereafter.

A Detroit woman got a load of
vegetables from her estranged
husband, as alimony—which
must have put her in a terrible
stew.

The United States contains ap-
proximately 22,833,000 one-fam-
ily homes.

Flapper Fanny Says

Jordan shook his head. "I kept
a close watch for that," he said.
"When I wasn't running errands!"
Evidently his pride had been
offended seriously. "She didn't go
near the phone while I was here."

"Well," Bannister said, "if she
leaves the house tomorrow, follow
her. Don't let her out of your
sight."

"I'll try to, Mr. Bannister, only
if Mrs. Hewlett—"

"Never mind about Mrs. Hew-
lett. You see where the girl goes
and what she does."

JULIET FRANCE sang that eve-
ning. She did it at Kate Hew-
lett's urgent request. She sang a
number of English ballads and an
oriental love song and then she
sang, "Annie Laurie." Her voice
was not quite low enough for a
contralto and its range seemed
limited but the tones were sweet
and clear.

Mrs. Hewlett praised the singing
eloquently. Bannister said less.
He was wondering if Juliet France
had sung those songs for Tracy
King.
A little before 9 o'clock he made
excuses and left the house.

OUT OUR WAY



OUR BOARDING HOUSE



SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES-MOM'N POP

