

SERIAL STORY

Murder on the Boardwalk

BY ELINORE COWAN STONE

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Yesterday, unable to locate her cousin, Christine moved to the hotel named in her mysterious telephone conversation. Almost dawn to her last rest, Christine accepted Wilmet's offer, agreed to do sketches at his Boardwalk concession.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTINE hurried back to the hotel to assemble her sketching materials. She was to meet her new employer by the Twentieth Century Pier. . . . The new employer's name, she had learned, was Wilmet—George Wilmet.

When it had come to giving her own name, Christine had hesitated with an unprecedented reluctance. Then, almost as if someone else had spoken, she heard herself blurt out, "Nevin—Grace Nevin."

Hurrying along the crowded Boardwalk, avoiding the omnipresent wheel-chairs, the loitering pedestrians, and the pigeons that swarmed under foot, eager for the grain thrown them from the benches that lined the promenade, Christine tried to explain her squeamishness about giving her name. Eventually she excused it on the grounds that Cousin Emma would be embarrassed to find that a Thorsen was working on the Surf City Boardwalk.

She found her workshop to be a small booth next door to the Twentieth Century Pier—one of the noisiest amusement centers along the Boardwalk. It was several feet below the level of the walk, and you went down to it by a ramp at one side. The "studio" was frugally furnished with an easel, a camp stool, and the rear, on the beach side, with a bench some eight feet long, having a slab of concrete for a top.

The place had apparently taken a beating from dampness and frost, for the walls were cracked and crumbling; and someone had recently mended the top of the bench and the floor about it with fresh cement, into which Christine's heel sank and stuck.

Mr. Wilmet, coming to her rescue, was nervously apologetic: "I'm so sorry, Miss Thorsen. I had to do some repairing."

Christine got out her sketching materials and prayed for a chance to use them.

When, after 15 minutes, no customers appeared, Christine suggested, "Nothing draws a crowd like the sight of someone working at an easel. Why don't I begin with the Maharajah of Bahawalpur—or whatever his name is?"

She indicated a figure that stood by one of the pillars of the pier.

HE was, as Christine had intuited, a magnificent spectacle—his warm brown skin set off by a robe of some rich Oriental material and belted with a golden cord, through which was thrust an exquisitely chased dagger. About the head of the "maharajah" was draped a turban of bright silk, fastened with a single gem; and his slender brown feet were laced into jeweled sandals. He stood like a statue, his arms majestically folded, gazing with brooding brows out to sea.

Already Christine was at work; and almost immediately a curious crowd began to gather along the railing of the Boardwalk above. As she sketched, she heard someone say, "She's drawing Chandra—you know—that Indian swami over there."

As if he had heard, the gorgeous Oriental turned, fixed his eyes upon Christine, and detached himself from his pillar. Although he was not a tall man, there was in his bearing an air of authority before which the crowd fell back. He moved to the railing and stood, looking down. . . . His eyes, Christine was surprised to find, were not dark, but a fiery brown, with lurid yellow lights.

At length the "swami" extended a hand and said in a voice astonishingly deep and resonant, "It is good. I will take it."

When Christine passed the sketch to him over the railing, he slipped a bill into her hand and turned away.

"Wait!" Christine called. "Your change—"

"I have said that it is good," he returned, and strode away.

A woman said, "Of course that was staged. These Boardwalk people advertise each other."

It did prove to be good advertising. Soon Christine was busy. For a while Mr. Wilmet hovered on the outskirts of the booth; but eventually he melted away into the crowd, and Christine did not see him again that day.

He had been surprisingly generous about her commission. Although she had worked only a little over a half day, it would be almost \$4.

She must, however, look for cheaper quarters. She found a room on a side street, and having already committed herself as "Grace Nevin," she registered under that name, and hurried back to the Crestview to retrieve her belongings, and see if Cousin Emma had not sent some message.

But there was no message. Christine went upstairs, puzzled and uneasy. She told herself that it was this uneasiness which accounted for her strange feeling that something was amiss in her room.

SHE had unpacked very little the night before. Getting ready to move should not take long. . . . Nevertheless, she sat down, a frown between her brows.

The maid had finished her work here before she had returned from breakfast. There was no reason why anyone should have entered the room afterwards. . . . Nor why the bags should have been disturbed on their rack. . . . Yet they had been.

When Christine made an inventory of her few possessions, they were all in their places; yet her uneasiness persisted.

Descending in the crowded elevator, she was startled out of her preoccupation by murmured conversation behind her:

"It couldn't have happened if Emma Talbert had been there." . . . "She's been fighting this merger tooth and nail—and she owned enough shares to lick it single-handed. Why in God's name do you suppose she didn't come?"

Once established in her new lodgings, Christine's restlessness made the indoors unendurable. Going down to the street, she turned without conscious volition toward the brilliant lights of the Boardwalk, climbed the stairway that led from the street, and came out near the Twentieth Century Pier. The glare of a band and the shrieks of the crowd told her the shows must be in full swing. A little forlornly she stepped down into her own booth, next door, to listen to the band.

The booth was in almost total darkness; but a gleam of white caught Christine's attention. It proved to be a sheet of paper fastened to her easel. Carrying it to the lighted Boardwalk, she read:

"If you are worried—if you are unhappy—consult Chandra. Free public readings at the Temple of Truth every evening at 10."

CHRISTINE crossed the Boardwalk and sauntered along. A doorman, resplendent as a rear admiral, stood in front of the hotel just opposite her booth.

Then came a shooting gallery—so poorly patronized that the proprietor had leisure to follow Christine with an appraising stare.

Afterwards, the window of the Paris Smart Shop, featuring one jade green hat and a cluster of violets; a small, glass-enclosed stage on which tiny mechanized mannequins displayed the fabrics of a manufacturer of synthetic cloth; a cosmetics exhibit; a Chinese red and silver jars; an auction room; an oculist's window, with a grotesquely animated replica of a pair of human eyes. At last she came to an entrance that looked like the facade of an Oriental temple.

Over this concession Christine read the words, "Temple of Truth."

(To Be Continued)

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FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia

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"Weather bureau? Is the wind going to die down today, or shall I wear my best stockings?"

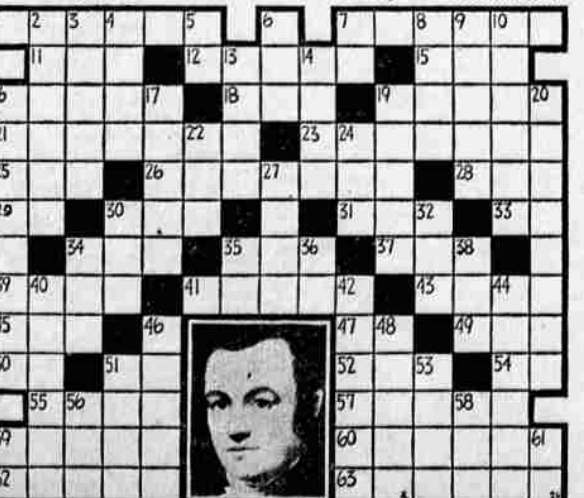
STEAMBOAT BUILDER

- HORIZONTAL**
- 7 Inventor of the steamboat.
 - 11 Uncooked.
 - 12 Appearances.
 - 15 To sin.
 - 16 Lazy person.
 - 18 To be indebted.
 - 19 Apart.
 - 21 Closest.
 - 23 To sparkle.
 - 25 Duct.
 - 26 Surmiser.
 - 28 Unit of work.
 - 29 Measure.
 - 30 Ventilating machine.
 - 31 Lair.
 - 33 Musical note.
 - 34 To be indisposed.
 - 35 Spider's home.
 - 37 Duet.
 - 39 Any wrongful act.
 - 41 Furnace tool.
 - 43 Elm.
 - 45 Wood sorrel.
 - 47 Unit in electricity.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

GREECE IT ATHENS
REAL POWER JEWEL
TASK ADORNE NER
ODE BUD BON NOB
L SOL CLIPPE
YODELED PAGEANT
MURAL GIPPER
CRYAL AND A TEA
U TRI RD YAY
SHARDS DRAMS
BNJ EOSEIN MET
BALKANS METAXAS

- VERTICAL**
- 49 Night before.
 - 50 Right.
 - 51 Yellow bird.
 - 52 Russian village.
 - 54 Connecting word.
 - 55 Polynesian chestnut.
 - 57 Coral island.
 - 59 Kind of meter.
 - 60 He was a — American.
 - 62 John — was the first steamboat inventor.
 - 14 Chair base.
 - 16 This — lived from 1785 to 1815.
 - 17 Royal.
 - 19 Ventilated.
 - 20 He was an — by profession.
 - 22 Solar orb.
 - 24 Commanded.
 - 27 To search for.
 - 30 To qualify.
 - 32 Almond.
 - 34 Constellation.
 - 35 Sorrow.
 - 36 To exist.
 - 38 Native metal.
 - 40 Commercial privilege.
 - 42 To send back.
 - 44 To deduce.
 - 46 To trespass.
 - 48 Oriental guitar.
 - 51 Auditory.
 - 53 Instrument.
 - 56 Social insect.
 - 58 Part of mouth.
 - 59 Provided.
 - 61 Verb termination.



OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

