

SERIAL STORY

5 WOULD KILL

BY TOM HORNER

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CHAPTER I
"I will be killed tonight!"
"My luck has run out. I have been warned. That anonymous telephone call. The black cat that ran across the driveway tonight. Third light on a match. I've had special police posted all around the house but they can't save me. But before I die—"

"There are five persons who would rather see me dead than alive. My wife, Helen Benthorne; William Alston, my father-in-law and former partner; Joey di Torio, the gangster; a woman named Ara and an old prospector, known as 'Big Red.' I hate all of them and I know they hate me. I leave this list that the police may know one of these five would kill me—"

ARNOLD BENTHORNE smiled—a bitter, twisted smile—as he read the words he had just written.

They would pay—all of them—for hating Arnold Benthorne. In life he had ruled them all. In death he would still retain his power over them. They would suffer. Only Benthorne could have conceived such a vengeance.

Deliberately he folded the paper, then rising quickly from his chair, he hurried across the study, pulled a bookcase away from the wall and knelt beside a small safe. He twisted the knob and in a moment the door swung open. Light from the desk lamp glistened on the metal.

Benthorne paused, undecided. "First place Helen and Joey would look," he said, half aloud.

He stepped to the window, pulled back the drawn shade. Rain drummed incessantly against the panes. A fresh, cool draft swept into the room as he raised the sash a few inches.

A flash of lightning revealed the dark-coated figure of a policeman, huddled against the gate. There was another in the garage, a third at the rear driveway, Benthorne knew. Thunder shook the house, rattled the window.

The ticking of the clock above the fireplace echoed throughout the ensuing silence.

Only a few minutes more, Benthorne thought.

There was yet one chance—only one—but he would take it. Quickly he returned to the desk, turned the lamp shade so that the light fell more upon the closed door. He crumpled the paper in his hand, tossed it into the wastebasket. He opened a desk drawer, took out a revolver. The safety clicked. He replaced it, carefully leaving the drawer open.

Pulling his chair back from the circle of light, yet still within reach of the gun in the drawer, Arnold Benthorne sat down, waited for his murderer.

He could see the headlines—"BLOODY BENTHORNE MURDERED." That would be old Parker's sheet. They hated him, too. Fought his methods, tried to trap him. But never quite succeeded.

"BENTHORNE, FINANCIER FOUND DEAD." Good old conservative Carter Smith. Wishy-washy. Afraid to call a spade a spade. Benthorne admitted he liked the Parker paper better than the Smith sheet. That gangster over at Parker's had courage. That's what it takes. That's what it took to make Arnold Benthorne. He saw a lad of 10, thin, clothed in castoffs, crying in a doorway. He saw an older boy, heavier, stronger, taunting the weeping lad. Funny that he should remember now. The older boy, Billy Watson, had challenged his right to sell papers on that corner. Arnold—his name was not Benthorne then—had refused to fight, had run away in terror.

Another picture came to mind. Billy's face, disappearing beneath the waters of the river. Arnold had run screaming to the nearest policeman; men had dived into the river for Billy's body. The crowd praised Arnold—he had done all he could. Even Billy's mother was nice to him, after her hysterical crying had stopped.

They never found Billy's body. It was just as well. Someone might have wondered about those bruised knuckles—bruised as Arnold pounded Billy's fingers as he clung to the dock.

The papers would not tell that story tomorrow.

NO—there would be columns about Arnold Benthorne's phenomenal rise in the business world. They would tell how dying stocks revived under his magical touch, how he pyramided his wealth into millions. There would be the story of his vast factories, his thousands of employees. His charities would be mentioned, and the scholarships his wealth had made possible.

There would be pictures, too, of Benthorne—dark-haired, fiftish, his cold, piercing eyes staring out from the lean hardness of his face. He hoped they would use that pic-

ture he had had made last month—the one the photographer said made him look like a dictator.

Helen's picture would be back in the papers again, too. The society editors would see that his marriage to Helen Alston, daughter of one of America's greatest motor truck manufacturers, would not be forgotten.

The gossip columnists had enjoyed a field day guessing the real facts behind the Alston-Benthorne wedding—wondering how one of society's favorite debutantes could marry a man almost as old as her father. Only one reporter—and Benthorne recalled grimly that he had soon lost his job—had hit the real reason. He had hinted that Benthorne had threatened to wreck Alston Motors and that old man Alston thought more of his trucks than of his daughter.

There was one mystery about Benthorne that no newspaperman would ever solve. For years they had been speculating as to where Arnold Benthorne got his stake. No one knew him when he first came to New York, armed with \$50,000 and the determination to turn it into a million. No one knew—nor would ever know—the story of "Big Red."

They had met in Alaska. "Big Red" had come in with the Klondike rush, hunted his strike for 20 years. And he had found it—far inland, among unmaped mountains. "Big Red" had found his gold. Benthorne—his name had been Benson then—learned of the mine when "Big Red" filed his claim. He had followed "Big Red" northward. He remembered "Big Red's" piteous cries as he left him, blind and dying in that forgotten valley.

He had taken "Big Red's" name—John Douglas—as well as his claim title and ore samples. Until

he had sold out to a mining company.

He had listed "Big Red" as one of the five—and "Big Red" was dead. He'd scratch off the name. No use blaming a murder on a dead man. Queer that he had imagined, even for an instant, that "Big Red" was alive.

He reached for the wastebasket.

"DON'T move, Benthorne!" The soft voice, almost a whisper, came from the half-opened door.

"YOU!" Benthorne gasped. The muzzle of a revolver shone in the light. The round, black hole held Benthorne's hypnotized gaze.

"Bring your hands up. Keep away from the desk. You've been expecting me?" Benthorne did not answer. His head was still above the level of the desk. If he could fall forward, suddenly, he might beat the shot, reach his own gun. One more second—

Flame spouted from that black circle as Arnold Benthorne took his last chance.

(To Be Continued)

VERSATILE CRAWFORDSVILLE, Ind., (AP) On its first test, Clyde Slavens' new 'coon dog' showed its versatility.

The dog, stopping beside a creek began to bark. Slavens looked.

There in shallow water floundered a 14-inch bass. "This dog," Slavens told friends, "is one of the most promising I ever had."

BIG GUNS DENVER, (AP) Sheriff Ted Steinhilber of Russell, Kas., here to return two prisoners, remarked: "By the way, somebody walked off with practically all our big caliber armament. Two Civil war cannons were swiped right out of the Russell cemetery."

Police started a check of junk yards. The Lincoln highway is more than 3300 miles long.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



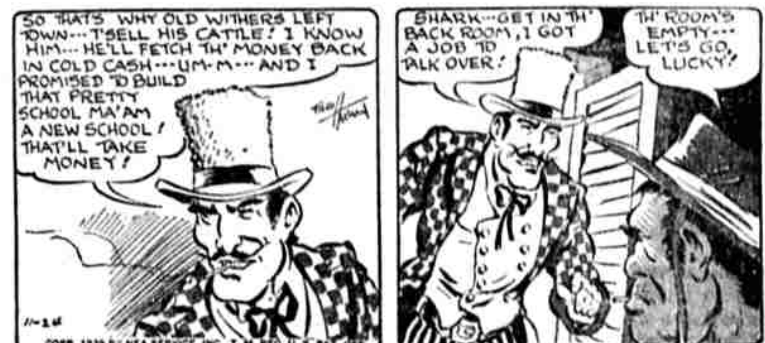
ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Watch your bidding, now. If we win the cup again, we have to keep it."

EMINENT WOMAN

HORIZONTAL

1,5,10 Famous woman religious leader.

13 Eggs of fishes.

14 Oat grass.

15 Form of "be."

16 To relate.

17 Bursts.

18 Genus of frogs.

20 Mass meetings.

22 Obtained by imposition.

24 North Carolina.

25 Memorandum books.

29 Growing out.

33 One that tines.

34 Jockey.

35 To turn into a star.

37 To make amends.

38 Iron (symbol).

Answer to Previous Puzzle

STIGMUND FREUD
TED TREATED PEA
HEED CAMEL BANG
OF MANTIA
RAN STET
INERT RT
BOOK RE
ST BRIMS
OD SLATERS AL
TRIM TROPE TRAY
OSSA EERIE HIRE
DOCTOR'S DREAMS

39 Chosen by ballot.

44 Shoelace.

49 Caterpillar hair.

50 Citrus fruits.

52 Sound of disapproval.

53 Model.

55 Age.

56 Coal boxes.

57 Wealthy.

58 She was the originator.

VERTICAL

2 Region.

3 Biscuit.

4 To scream.

5 Breaker.

6 Class of birds.

7 Cognizance.

8 Concludes.

9 Coarse file.

10 To merit.

11 To pull along.

12 Sand hill.

19 She trained some—as practitioners.

21 Draft of air.

23 To exaggerate acting.

26 Pistol.

27 Being.

28 Mesh of lace.

30 Insect's egg.

31 Stir.

32 Five plus five.

36 Role of film.

40 Cotton fabric.

41 Stiff collar.

42 Anxiety.

43 Perished.

44 Plant part.

45 While.

46 Point of jaw.

47 Posterior.

48 Existence.

51 Mister.

54 Form of "I."

56 Bushel.

