

SERIAL STORY

5 WOULD KILL

BY TOM HORNER

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YESTERDAY: Dawson studies the papers. Ara comes, tells him that she saw Benthorpe earlier in the evening. She came to him, but Mrs. Benthorpe interrupted their meeting. Dawson asks why she wanted to kill Benthorpe. Slowly Ara answers: "He was my father!"

CHAPTER XIII

FOR a moment there was silence as Ara's words seemed to echo throughout the room.

The girl did bear a resemblance to Benthorpe, Dawson realized now, wondering how it had escaped him. The expression of hate death had frozen on Benthorpe's face was reflected, however softened, in her features. There was the same downward slant to the corners of the mouth, the same determined set of the jaw. And Ara's almost unbreakable control, her ruthlessness of purpose—these were Benthorpe's heritage to his daughter.

"You have proof, of course?" Dawson asked, explaining, "You may share in the estate."

Ara shook her head. "I don't want his money—ever!" she said bitterly. "He offered me that . . . a hundred thousand to go away and never let Mrs. Benthorpe know. I laughed at him . . . I wanted to make him suffer as we had suffered—mother and I . . ."

"You must have some proof," the detective persisted, gently.

"I've plenty of proof, right here in this room," Ara answered. "Pictures, letters, a marriage certificate. They were on the desk when Mrs. Benthorpe came in. I stuffed them into a book, and put it on the shelf quickly, hoping she hadn't seen them. . . . But I told her."

"Suppose you start at the beginning and tell me all about it. We'll get to the proofs later, if necessary," Dawson guided her to a chair, then stood over her, waiting for this unbelievable, fantastic story.

THERE was nothing sordid in Ara's account of her mother's marriage to the man the world was to know as Arnold Benthorpe. It was merely the old, old story of an impetuous daughter, an attractive young man, and an elopement to escape parental objection. "Mother—her name was Ara Johnson, too—" the girl began, "was the daughter of a wealthy Montana cattleman. She was a beautiful girl, and she had a dozen proposals before she was 18. But John Douglas—Dawson glanced questioning at the young man, at the mention of the name—'really won her love."

"He was handsome, wealthy, apparently an adventurer when he came to Montana. No one could find out much about him, or where he had made his money—but that didn't bother folks out there much. . . . He did no work, received no mail, and apparently had no interest in life until he met Ara Johnson. . . ."

The old cowman, Boss Johnson, had little liking for the stranger, the girl related, and less when he discovered his daughter was seeing Douglas. At last the couple eloped to Salt Lake City.

The marriage lasted three months. Then Douglas disappeared, leaving his wife penniless and alone. She was too proud to go back to her father, too independent to ask for help. She found work, first as a waitress, then in a laundry, but the hours were long and the pay small.

Ara was born in a charity ward. But the months of work, the agony of loneliness, climaxed by the birth of the child, had taken too great a toll of her mother's strength.

"Before Mother died, she wrote all of this in detail. Then she put it with all of her pictures of herself and her husband, her marriage certificate and some letters John Douglas had written her before their elopement. On one of them—his finger must have been smudged with ink—was an almost perfect fingerprint. She also wrote a letter to her father, in Montana. "She left instructions that her father should be notified in case of her death and that the packet of letters should be kept for me. But something went wrong, no one ever told her father. And the packet was forgotten."

"I was raised in an orphanage. Apparently no one ever wanted to adopt me. When I was 15 I went to work as a housemaid. The family I worked for were kind and helped me all they could. It was through their efforts that I was able to trace my birth record and discover my mother."

"One of the nurses who had cared for Mother remembered her, and told me about her. She remembered the packet of letters, too, and when she learned I did not have them, she began a search that finally uncovered them in an old file cabinet in the vault."

BUT finding her father was no simple task, Ara learned after long years of vain searching. She might have gone home to her grandfather, but finding her father became an obsession. She had been alone all of her life, a few more years could not matter.

And as those years passed any affection she might have had for her father turned to hate. Her long hours of work were blamed on him. The pleasures she was forced to forego and the hardships

she endured were charged up to his neglect. Hers was a long fight, for an education, for a job, even for a living.

Defeating her father, she refused his name, adopted that of her grandfather. And all the time she waited for the clew that might lead her to her father.

It came unexpectedly. SHE was working as cashier in a coffee shop when she first noticed him—an open-faced, red-haired, smiling youth, who paused to talk about the weather and the baseball games as he paid his check.

"Build-up for an invitation to show and supper," she warned herself. There were many such requests and invariably all met with the same smiling refusal. But this time, Ara wondered if she really wanted to class this genial young man with all the others.

For a week she watched for him each day, waited for the inevitable "How about seeing a show tonight?" But it did not come. Then late one evening, just before she was ready to quit, she looked up from counting her change into those laughing blue eyes, and that disarming grin.

"Have you lived in Salt Lake long?" he asked pleasantly.

"I was born here."

"You must know a lot of people."

"Not many, and only a few of those who really count." "I'm looking for a man," he continued. "I don't know much about the city. I've searched for a week and I'm no farther now than when I started. You've been friendly—more so than any other person I've met—I wonder if you'd help me?"

There was no denying his

straightforward appeal. "Wait outside until I'm through here. We can stop at the library, check into the directories."

Fifteen minutes later they hurried toward the library. Suddenly Ara paused. "This isn't a habit of mine, you know," she said. "But you do look honest, and I may be able to help."

"I know you can," the young man insisted. "May I introduce myself? I am John Douglas."

(To Be Continued)



TESTED—Problem in maneuvering had Lieut. Clinton S. Rounds (above), who commanded the J-4, U. S. navy blimp used for tests in life-saving and refueling off New Jersey. Four blimps from Lakehurst engaged in the drill.

Alabama's pig crop this year going to get our ham and eggs after all.

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"If you could choose anything in the whole, wide world for a Christmas present, what would you want that costs a quarter?"

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BY BLOSSER

WASH TUBBS



BY CRANE

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



BY MARTIN

ALLEY OOP



BY V. T. HAMLIN



LEANING BUILDING

