

SERIAL STORY

MURDER INCOGNITO

BY NORMAN KAHL

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YESTERDAY, Martin Saylor's five dinner guests and his body in the study, Dale calls police. Lieutenant O'Leary arrives, makes routine inquiries, then asks Dale: "If you did not touch the body, how did you know Saylor was shot?"

CHAPTER III

DALE fingered the black bow tie that stood out in sharp relief against his white mess jacket. How DID he know they his stepfather had died from a bullet? "I don't know what made me think of shooting," Dale said in a monotone. "It's just the first thing that occurred to me. I don't know why. I just saw him there in that pool of blood, and the only thing I could think of was that he had been shot to death."

"Did your stepfather have any enemies?" Dale wondered how he should answer that, and then he said, "Yes, lots of them."

"Don't you think he might have had more than the usual because of his parole racket?" Dale shot a quick glance at the detective. "Then you know about that?"

"Sure. We've known about it all along, but we couldn't stop it. There wasn't anything we could put our fingers on. You know—getting convicts out of prison through crooked connections on the parole board and making them pay stiff fees if they didn't want to get sent back on trumped-up parole violations."

"Extortion, maybe. But what could we do? Nobody squawked, naturally. And if they had, it would have been the word of an ex-convict against a respectable attorney."

Dale nodded. "It might have been almost anyone who killed him. I suppose."

Lieutenant O'Leary clasped his ear-lobe and pulled at it. "Yeah, might have been." He arose and stretched himself. "Let's go back to the study. I may want to look around a bit."

THE body had been removed when they entered the room. O'Leary walked over to Saylor's desk and seated himself in the swivel chair. He opened the top drawer and fingered the sparse contents nonchalantly.

"Do you know very much about your stepfather's affairs?" the lieutenant asked.

"Practically nothing. He never confided in me."

O'Leary peered a moment at some papers he had removed from the desk drawer. "Tell me who was here tonight?" he asked.

Dale leaned against the mantle over the fireplace. "Miss Leighton and Mr. Barbour—I told you about them before, I believe."

"Who is Barbour?" "He was my stepfather's law partner."

"Okay. Who else?" "There was Mr. Mardell and Miss Waters, my fiancée, and myself. The servants, of course, but they were in another part of the house."

O'Leary pinned his gaze directly on Dale. For a second, the young man met the stare and then he peered uneasily at the floor. "You said a little while ago," the officer recalled, "that Miss Leighton was coming in here to see Saylor when she found him dead. What did she want to see him about?"

"I don't know," Dale snapped. "Better ask her."

"Thanks," said O'Leary. He brushed the incident aside. "I'm curious about this window next to the desk. You'll notice that the spot where the body lay was directly opposite."

Dale walked over to the window. "I don't think the shot could have been fired from the outside. My stepfather always kept the windows locked and there obviously isn't any glass broken. I don't see . . . Oh—oh, what's this?"

O'LEARY got up and came to the window. "What's the matter?" "Look, this window is unlatched. That's queer. Saylor never permitted that. He insisted the windows be kept locked."

O'Leary made a brief round of the room. "The others are locked," he said. "Tell me, when you were all standing in the room, did anyone go near the windows?"

Dale frowned. "Why, yes, now that you speak of it—George Barbour did. He was just looking out. There would certainly have been no point in his unlatching the window."

"Maybe not," O'Leary agreed. "Anyway, it's interesting."

Dale studied the latch on the French windows. "Of course, if it might have been possible for someone to jimmy it from the outside and then close it again."

O'Leary went back to the desk. "It's possible. Anyway, we'll find out soon. The boys are going over the outside now for footprints and they can take a look at the windows in a little while."

Dale rested on the arm of the divan before the fireplace. "If the shot wasn't fired through the window, it stands to reason it must have been fired from somewhere inside the house—and that's absurd."

O'Leary leaned back and tossed one knee over the other. "That's another thing I wanted to make sure about. During the 20 minutes, between the time Saylor left the drawing room and when Miss Leighton found his body, did any of you leave the other room?"

denly blurted out. The change of subject startled Dale. "I don't know exactly. I understood he had something to do with gambling."

"What was he doing here tonight?" "I wish I could answer that. Lieutenant. It's been whispered around that Saylor wanted to see him about some gambling debts. I don't know how true that is."

The police officer scratched his head and looked puzzled. "If you mean Mardell owed Saylor some money from gambling, it would hardly seem that he'd invite the man over for dinner to collect it."

Dale smiled. "You didn't know my stepfather very well. That would be precisely what he would do. His method of operating was mysterious—and usually cruel."

O'Leary looked up quizzically. "You know his cruelty, then?" The smile vanished from Dale's lips. "Yes," he said abruptly.

FOR a moment, it seemed as if O'Leary intended to press the point. Instead, he asked, "And how about Hazel Leighton?"

"My stepfather had his sentimental side, too. He had been going out with Miss Leighton for the past year or so. My mother died three years ago, you see, and Saylor had several other heart interests after that. His friendship for Miss Leighton lasted longer than any of the others."

O'Leary picked up a small sheaf of papers from among the few he had spread before him on the desk. "I think I'd like to talk to the young lady. Maybe she'll know something about this."

Dale was curious. "Do you mind telling me what it is?" "I found it in Saylor's top desk drawer," Lieutenant O'Leary explained. "Happy to 'get away from parachutes,' Genevieve Lawson, British girl who came to U. S. for 'duration of war,' shows her toy from England—a parachute doll."

plained. "He evidently wanted it handy for the young lady when she came in to see him. This is a cashier's check for \$5000 made out to Hazel Leighton. And this—he fingered a single sheet of legal-size paper—"This is a release made out to Martin Saylor guaranteeing against any breach of promise action. The two are clipped together—and the release hasn't been signed."

(To Be Continued)



ESCAPE—Happy to "get away from parachutes," Genevieve Lawson, British girl who came to U. S. for "duration of war," shows her toy from England—a parachute doll.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD By William Ferguson

Leaf surface puzzle: A square yard of leaf surface takes about two gallons of carbon dioxide from the air in a single day. Includes illustration of a leaf and a small creature.

CIRCUS ANIMAL

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for circus animals and other words.

Large crossword puzzle grid with various clues.

Red Ryder comic strip: A man receives a postcard from a friend who is leaving by plane. The man is surprised and excited.

Red Ryder comic strip: Red Ryder is blind for a spell but his eyes are good enough for a little while. He is talking to a woman.

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE BY HAROLD GRAY

Little Orphan Annie comic strip: Annie is talking to a man about her father's return. She is happy and excited.

WASH TUBS BY CRANE

Wash Tubbs comic strip: Wash Tubbs is in a restaurant in Washington, D.C. He is talking to a man about a high government official.

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS BY BLOSSER

Freckles and His Friends comic strip: Freckles is talking to his friends about a puzzle. They are all laughing and joking.

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES BY MARTIN

Boots and Her Buddies comic strip: Boots is talking to her friends about a puzzle. They are all laughing and joking.

SH-H! THE WIDOWS DOING HER STUFF!

SH-H! comic strip: A man is talking to a woman about a puzzle. They are both laughing and joking.

The Perfect Combination comic strip: A man is talking to a woman about a puzzle. They are both laughing and joking.

Little Orphan Annie comic strip: Annie is talking to a man about her father's return. She is happy and excited.

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Boots and Her Buddies comic strip: Boots is talking to her friends about a puzzle. They are all laughing and joking.

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