

SERIAL STORY

MURDER INCOGNITO

BY NORMAN KAHL

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YESTERDAY: Everyone in the house is under suspicion. Biggs, Saylor's chauffeur, is brought to join the five guests in the drawing room. Suddenly, there is a shot.

CHAPTER VI

IT seemed hours after the shot before anyone moved. Dale Appleby, his face pallid, was the first to leap to his feet. "My God! Another one," he said in a hoarse whisper. He started toward the study, and Mardell and Barbour rose to follow him. O'Leary barred the way. "Never mind, gentlemen," he said. "It's all right."

Barbour, the red tint missing from his fleshy cheeks, seemed genuinely frightened. "But that shot—" "I ordered that shot fired," O'Leary said calmly. "It was fired from the den out of the window and into the air—harmlessly. No one was hurt this time."

"But why?" Dale demanded. "Just to satisfy my curiosity," said the lieutenant. "Saylor was shot to death. We know that. But no one heard the shot. Yet everyone heard this one. So Saylor couldn't have been shot with an ordinary gun. Whose did the job used a silencer. With a silencer, a gun could be shot off in the den and you wouldn't be able to hear anything. It's too far away from this room, and Saylor had the door closed."

Slowly the men ambled back to their chairs. They were still a little angry. O'Leary turned to Mardell. "May I see you in the study for a few minutes?"

THE lieutenant motioned Mardell to a chair. "What were you doing here tonight, Mardell?" he asked bluntly.

Suave and self-composed, Winslow Mardell leaned back in his chair and propped his head gracefully against the cushioned support. "Just a social visit, Lieutenant. Saylor asked me for dinner along with the others."

From his pocket, O'Leary extracted a sheaf of papers, clipped together. "You wouldn't know anything about these?"

Mardell tilted his head slightly and glanced at the papers. Then he smiled. "So you found them." O'Leary went on. "A lot of dough is represented here—\$35,000. Not exactly chicken feed. These I. O. U.'s are yours, aren't they? You signed them."

Mardell looked bored. "Sure they're mine. So what?" "How come?"

"A little business—between Saylor and me." "Gambling debts, aren't they?" Mardell said evenly. "Maybe." "Were you going to pay them?" The man's eyes flashed. "Certainly. Do you think—?"

"Tonight!" For the first time, Mardell seemed ill at ease. "Well, no. I didn't have that much cash on me." He leaned forward angrily. "But Saylor knew that. He knew I was going to settle up. He didn't need the money right away."

O'Leary folded his arms and breathed deeply. "All right, Mardell. That's all for the time being. Tell Miss Waters and Mr. Appleby I want to see them."

"THERE'S something about that mug I don't like," Sergeant Carroll commented after Mardell had gone. O'Leary nodded. "He'll bear a little checking."

Carroll had slouched back in a chair along the inner wall. He didn't bother to get up when Dale and Rhoda entered the room.

"Sit down," O'Leary invited. "Mr. Appleby, I want to know where your stepfather's will might be found."

"I don't know," Dale replied. "He never confided in me." "You don't know who'll get his money? There must be quite a lot of it."

"No, I can't say." "Do you expect any?" Dale exchanged a swift glance with Rhoda. "I'll get my mother's money. That's written into her will. He couldn't have changed that."

"Will that be very much?" "Yes." "When your mother died, she left all her money to Saylor?" Dale looked at the girl. "Tell him, Dale," she urged.

"I may as well," the young man decided. "Most of my mother's money was left to me, you see—but in a trust fund over which Saylor had almost unlimited power. He didn't need to give the money to me, even when I reached 21, if he didn't feel like it—and he didn't feel like it."

"Did you ever ask your stepfather for the money, Mr. Appleby?" "Yes—but he refused."

"Why?" Dale flushed. "I don't think that." "I'll tell you why," Rhoda exploded. Her delicate features were tense. Her pretty fists were tightly clenched. "Martin Saylor hated me. He told Dale he wouldn't release the money until I was out of the picture."

FORTY-FIVE minutes later, the two officers were still sitting in the study. All the lights had been turned out.

"Chief, this case has me stumped," said Carroll. "Yeah," O'Leary responded, noncommittally. "I don't get it at all. A murder couldn't have been committed—and yet it was. All the suspects were in the other room, and the window wasn't opened, and—"

He stopped suddenly. From somewhere just outside the door that led into the library, they heard the sounds of shuffling feet. O'Leary stole quietly behind the divan in which the two men had been sitting and whispered curt orders for the sergeant to stand in the recess next to the fireplace.

The door opened, and a sharp beam of light from an electric torch cut across the room. O'Leary held his breath as the beam passed the sofa behind which he was huddled.

It was impossible, in the darkness, to tell who the man was. His light was turned toward the books in the built-in cases on the east wall, and he seemed to be studying the titles. Finally, he selected two large books and pulled them out of place. He reached his hand in the space where the books had been.

Suddenly O'Leary realized what the man was doing. Behind those books, secreted by a panel, was Saylor's safe. In a few minutes, the man pulled aside a small, steel door and reached his hand into the chamber.

O'Leary lifted himself to his feet. "All right, buddy," he said. "Drop it." He spoke quietly, but in the stillness of the night his voice boomed across the room.

The figure at the bookcase wheeled around. He swung his beam swiftly over the room and caught O'Leary square in the face. In the next instant, there was darkness as the torch was switched off, and then... a flash of flame and a crashing sound as he fired a shot at the detective's head.

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(To Be Continued)

Ace Queen



Folks down in St. Augustine, Fla., think comely Catherine Canova, above, is ace-high as a queen. She was the original queen of the Ponce De Leon pageant in 1924, and they have just chosen her to reign over the city's 375th birthday celebration, Sept. 7 to 9.

OUT OUR WAY By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN



THIS CURIOUS WORLD By William Ferguson



ANSWER: Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

POLITICAL CANDIDATE

HORIZONTAL Answer to Previous Puzzle
1, 7 Pictured American political candidate.
12 Contends.
13 Coin.
15 African colonist.
16 Fiber knots.
17 Animals in a region.
19 Halt.
21 Speeches.
23 Gypsy.
25 Small hotel.
26 To harden.
27 Persia.
30 Sketched.
33 Oleoresin.
37 Baseball team.
39 Wine cup.
40 Due reward.
41 To divert.
42 Speechless.
43 Pertaining to air.
44 Venomous snake.
46 Rhetorical digression.
51 Brother.
53 Portal.
54 Noise.
56 To be sick.
58 Noah's boat.
59 Street.
60 He is an — by profession.
61 Afternoon meal.
16 He was — or chosen U. S. A. presidential candidate.
17 Doting.
18 Era.
20 He has never held a — office.
22 Within.
24 Detail.
26 To kill a fly.
28 Edge.
29 God of sky.
31 Stopping way.
32 Rattle bird.
34 Pasture.
35 Before.
36 Russian village.
38 Marine mammal.
45 Auto body.
47 Outer garment.
48 Part of a lock.
49 Shaft part.
50 Black.
51 Swift.
52 Ceremony.
55 Anger.

