

'I AM A MURDERER'

BY MORRIS MARKEY

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THE STORY: This is the story of the "perfect crime" - the murder of Col. Wesley Hope Merriwether in the library of his Long Island estate - and of the events leading up to it. A frequent visitor at the Merriwethers' a few days before the crime has been Vaughan Dunbar, a foreign correspondent who appeared unheralded one night with a message to Cynthia, the Colonel's daughter, from one of her friends. His most recent appearance at the home was at a dinner when Cynthia told him the story of her life. When he left she joined Fred West and Henry Prentiss, two devoted admirers, at a club dance.

A FURIOUS GAME

CHAPTER XIV

WE approach now that critical Sunday afternoon in September. In the few days which preceded it, the activities of everybody concerned had been conventional, and therefore unexciting, and therefore casting no shadow of the harsh event that was to come.

Cynthia had dined at the Rainbow Room with Vaughan Dunbar, who had been reticent and a trifle uneasy. It had been a brief evening. When he returned her to Stone House, Captain Pugh was sitting with Colonel Merriwether.

The Colonel urged them to partake of something cool and refreshing, but it seemed to Cynthia that Vaughan Dunbar positively hurried through his Planter's punch. Likewise, it seemed to her, it was with actual relief that he rose quickly and bade them all good night.

Even Colonel Merriwether remarked upon the circumstance, after Vaughan Dunbar was gone. "Our guest seemed a trifle perturbed," he said. And Captain Pugh observed that Europeans were likely to have a rough time of it with our late summer weather.

During those days, also, Henry Prentiss had dropped around with his customary informality, to chat by the swimming pool or sip long drinks on the lawn, or loaf about the stables. Mrs. Porter West had entertained at cocktail time at the club, though, as Fred West ruefully confessed to Cynthia, "She had a hell of a time persuading the chairman of the House Committee to put it on the cuff."

At this affair, as a matter of unimportant incident, the wagering upon the polo game was reduced to decently modest sums, and good humors were thoroughly restored. Mitchell Grace had been absorbed in one of the Colonel's sporadic periods of such business - letters and telegrams and cables. On that Sunday, Vaughan Dunbar arrived at Stone House at half after noon. He had been invited for luncheon, and the polo game, and the party which Cynthia was giving to celebrate the victors and console the vanquished.

He came rather earlier than had been expected, for it was Colonel Merriwether's habit to make his first appearance of the day at luncheon time, and luncheon time was invariably 1 o'clock. Cynthia, too, was above stairs, and Vaughan Dunbar had, in fact, to cool his heels in the darkened study for the better part of a quarter hour.

Then Cynthia appeared, and began for cocktails, and began a story about Bill Stewart which she had neglected to tell before. But she did not have the opportunity to finish it. For Mitchell Grace entered, bearing a telegram addressed to Vaughan Dunbar in the care of Colonel Merriwether. The telegram seemed to annoy him.

"Why the devil such a hurry?" he murmured to himself. And then, to Cynthia, "I shall have to run back to the city. It's a plucky nuisance."

"Oh, dear me," she said. He idly handed her the yellow sheet. "Urgent that you confer with me immediately. Every moment of delay costly. Important new developments. Robert."

"But this is just simply horrible," Cynthia said. "Can't you get him on the phone?" Vaughan Dunbar shook his head. "Can't," he said. "I'll just have to go. But I shall return. Sometime in the afternoon. The game is not over, I'll find my way to the field. Otherwise, I'll come back to the house here - if I may."

His hat was still on the table. He picked it up, touched her hand for an instant, bowed - and simply was gone. He walked out of the door and down the steps and got into his car and left with a swiftness that was actually precipitate. Cynthia Merriwether and Mitchell Grace were altogether startled. They stared at each other with half-open mouths.

"Holy smoke," said Mitchell Grace. "The guy didn't even crouch for his leap, did he?" Cynthia was breathless. "It must have been - must have been terribly important," she said. "I'll bet his royal highness turns out to be a spy. He moved like the Gestapo was behind the piano."

"Take a cocktail," said Cynthia - herself picking one up from the tray on the table. And Colonel Merriwether came in to receive the news that his guest had been called back on matters of great moment, which the Colonel regretted in his mild fashion.

a pasture, and another pony had coughed twice, and Henry Prentiss was up to his elbows in veterinarians.

He had called to ask whether Cynthia would come by his cottage in the station wagon, to haul him and his gear to the field. Which she would do, certainly, and how was the hurt hand? Much improved. Practically well. No basis for an alibi, at any rate. And he was mortal glad she wasn't betting against him - or was she, on the sly?

"Oh, no. Too much afraid you'll win." "Afraid?" "In bookmakers' lingo, I mean." "Farewell, my Pretty." "I'll pick you up in plenty of time."

"Thanks. You're long suffering." Luncheon was not quite satisfactory. Cynthia continued, despite her best efforts, to remember the curiously swift flight of her missing guest. And Mitchell Grace knew that she was remembering, and glanced at her now and again with a slyness which she considered quite contemptible.

The game began promptly at 4 o'clock. The crowd was really quite considerable and the weather fine, and the pace launched in the first period was fast enough to have even the old stagers breathing a little faster and muttering things about suicide.

Henry Prentiss was setting most of that pace. He was playing a measurable notch above his game, and gaining the bitter profanity of his opponents by way of reproach therefor. Even Captain Pugh admonished him twice in that first period - yelling that he

HOLD EVERYTHING!



"You might as well give up - I've been trying to get space for two weeks!"

Dirty fighters. There's no other name for it when a pilot bailing out of a plane in a parachute is riddled full of holes. - Lynn Hurst, former Flying Tiger.

This launches the sniper as if he were a clay pigeon. And as he soars through the air with the greatest ease, the boys shoot him on the wing.

was close to very dangerous fouling.

By way of retort, Henry Prentiss let out yet another wrap for the second period. He was scoring rather frequently, leaving all the defense work to his mates, and yelling like a madman when he was on the ball. Which was often. His cries of "Leave it!" and "Get out of the way, damn you!" echoed to the far trees.

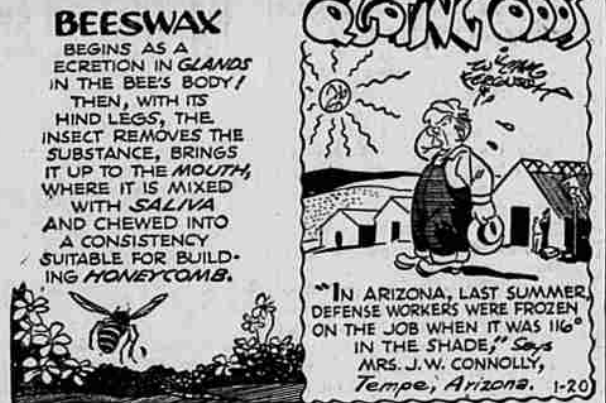
(To Be Continued)

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



IN THE SOUTH SEAS THERE ARE ABOUT 300 ISLANDS, COMPRISING MORE THAN 20,000 SQUARE MILES, BUILT ENTIRELY OF CORAL.



BEESWAX BEGINS AS AN ECRETION IN GLANDS IN THE BEE'S BODY! THEN, WITH ITS HIND LEGS, THE INSECT REMOVES THE SUBSTANCE, BRINGS IT UP TO THE MOUTH, WHERE IT IS MIXED WITH SALIVA AND CHEWED INTO A CONSISTENCY SUITABLE FOR BUILDING HONEYCOMBS.

IN ARIZONA, LAST SUMMER, DEFENSE WORKERS WERE FROZEN ON THE JOB WHEN IT WAS 116° IN THE SHADE, SAYS MRS. J. W. CONNOLLY, Tempe, Arizona. 1-20

SCREEN STAR

Word puzzle section with 'Answer to Previous Puzzle' and a grid of letters. Includes words like 'SODIUM', 'FINISH', 'ROYAL NAVY', etc.

Crossword puzzle grid with a portrait of a woman in the center.

They finished their cocktails and were moving in toward the luncheon table when Henry Prentiss called and promptly got himself invited to share the meal. But he could not come. Horse trouble. A pony he needed for the game had cast a shoe and cut



THE CONVERT

GOOD SLEEP. RED RYDER! FEEL-UM BETTER! HOW YOU? STILL BLIND FROM THE BEE STINGS! AND WE STILL LOST-UM, BUT MAYBE ME STRONG ENOUGH TO TRAVEL AGAIN! COME - ME LEAD-UM YOU TO HORSE!



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 Harmon



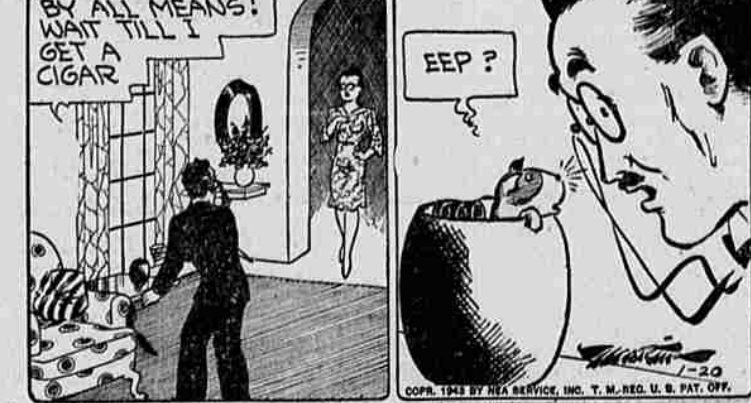
By Harold Gray



By Blosser



By Crono



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin