

'I AM A MURDERER'

BY MORRIS MARKEY

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MURDER AND FLIGHT

CHAPTER XVI

THE guests began to arrive at dusk settled. Cynthia, now, was in something light and airy and pale green, and she was in the housekeeper's office, nodding her approval of lists and menus.

Fred West and Mitchell Grace came in to join her there, and were, naturally, put to work. One had to be sure that the musicians of the orchestra were decently cared for, and the other to make certain that the lights at the pool were in working order and, incidentally, that there was water to plunge into.

Then, cars were rolling up the long, gravelled drive, and Cynthia was smiling at people who got out of them.

The early evening was quite beautiful, and its graces of fading blue sky, languorous trees, roses which held their heads high upon the bush, were embellished by the gay, bright frocks which moved across the lawn. There were very many small white tables upon the lawn, and small white chairs, and the usual little groups began to form.

The lights went on in the library. Its glazed doors were swung open, and Colonel Merriwether was behind his desk, smoking, and looking quietly out over the empty terrace, the populated green turf.

Walters in white coats moved among the tables with trays of drinks, and the orchestra played out an indolent air of summertime. Time wandered by, and time was of no moment.

A few of the older people went into the library, crossing the empty terrace from the lawn to go toward Colonel Merriwether. But none remained long. Those among the company who glanced in that direction could see two or three ladies and gentlemen moving away from the broad deck, and returning across the terrace— and there were glimpses of Colonel Merriwether's manservant, attending the needs of his master.

Then, just as a limousine wheeled into the drive and came to a stop, there was a curious sound from the library. The music had ended, and this sound struck sharply against the quiet.

It was of the order of a command, a short, undistinguishable word barked out. The well-bred heads upon the lawn turned, not without some irritation, at the uncouth noise. And Vaughan Dunbar stood beside the Colonel's desk.

HIS left hand was raised—an almost imperceptible signal to the people on the lawn. It brought a moment of complete silence, the servants stopping in their courses to look, and all faces puzzled, expectant.

Colonel Merriwether sat as if transfixed. His face was very white. His hands were spread before him on the desk. He was staring, not at Vaughan Dunbar, but straight ahead into the faces of his guests, half a hundred yards away.

Vaughan Dunbar held up a sheet of paper in his left hand. Then he laid it calmly on the desk before the Colonel, who did not move. Vaughan Dunbar gazed for an instant down at the face and head of Wesley Hoop Merriwether. He lifted his right hand, and with the small pistol that he held fired two shots.

Even as Colonel Merriwether slumped forward over his desk, Vaughan Dunbar was gone.

In the madness of screams and shouts, men cried, "Stop him! Grab him!" But within that same rush of frightened noise, the roar of Vaughan Dunbar's engine could be heard at the rear of the house. His car went off with a whine. The whine diminished rapidly, and its sound was lost.

The pursuit gathered instantly with rotors starting, and servants and chauffeurs yelling, "He went this way! And, quite contrariwise, "He went that way!" Once past the stables, however, the rear approach to Stone House broke into half a dozen lanes and byways. And all of them were empty. The pursuers cried out to each other, and then they turned back toward the house and the telephone.

Within half an hour, all but a very few of the guests were gone, and the police were in possession of Stone House. The ablest among them was Lieutenant Thatcher of the State Police, and he had given many orders, quickly.

Men of his own patrol, of the county forces, and of the sheriff's office were watching the roads of all Long Island. The bridges and the tunnels and the ferries were under close scrutiny. And descriptions of the fugitive had been broadcast over the radio and the teletype machines, throughout the metropolitan district.

WITH this much done, Lieutenant Thatcher spoke quietly with Mitchell Grace, saying, "Tell me everything you know."

Mitchell Grace told, then, of Vaughan Dunbar's first appearance at Stone House, and of his subsequent appearances there. Also he told of those last few shocking moments.

"I was walking into the library to see if the Colonel wanted anything, and Vaughan Dunbar was standing in the shadow. I got there just in time to hear him speak to Joseph, the Colonel's servant, and ask him to go and fetch a glass of fruit juice. He had not seen me, at that moment. "Joseph went out of the room,

and Vaughan Dunbar near my footstep. He turned toward me and said, "Good evening. Will you please ask Miss Cynthia to meet me at once in the drawing room? It is important." He seemed very quiet and serious, and I went without thinking much about it. I had just found her, when he called out, and I saw him standing over the Colonel.

"What did Colonel Merriwether seem to think of that?"

"I glanced at him. He seemed a little dazed. I got the impression that Vaughan Dunbar had brought some bad news."

"Where were you when you heard the shooting?"

"I heard it—and saw it, too—when I was about halfway down the lawn. I had caught a glimpse of Cynthia, and I was going toward her, when he called out. And I just stood there and watched him shoot."

Lieutenant Thatcher meditated, rubbing his chin gently. "He must have planned his getaway very carefully."

And Mitchell Grace was vehement. "I'll say he did. I was after him pretty quickly, as soon as I could unfreeze myself after the shock of seeing it. And all I caught up with was a blast of smoke and dust from his car when he went off. It took me, then, a few minutes—it seemed like a lifetime—to get a car started, and turned around to follow him."

Lieutenant Thatcher gestured toward half a dozen of his men who stood there, and said, "Let's go"—including Mitchell Grace in his command.

Slowly, almost cautiously, they trooped into the library. Lieutenant Thatcher stared around him for a space of time, and ordered that all of the lights be turned



"I never saw an outfit so enthusiastic about their own product!"

During the past year we have welcomed the ever-growing forces of America in our ports and camps and on our air fields. The bonds of respect, comprehension and comradeship have been forged which will, I pray, far outlive this war and be of lasting support in the labors of peace.—Winston Churchill.

It is within the realm of possibility that this 78th congress may have the historic privilege of helping greatly to save the world from future fear.—President Roosevelt.

up full. Men began to unpack cameras, and measuring tapes, and apparatus for recording fingerprints. And, thereafter, proceedings within the library moved with deliberation, and with method.

(To Be Continued)



THE BEAUTY PACKS Out Our Way By J. R. Williams



Red Ryder



Our Boarding House With Major Hoople

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



BABOONS SEEM TO BE THE ONLY ANIMALS WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WEAPONS! THEY THROW STONES AT THEIR ENEMIES, WITH TELLING EFFECT.

QUOTING ODDS HERE LIES EDGAR ELSON FASSY, WHO DIED IN A CRASH OUT SOME GAS. LIVES LADDER NOW HAS NO MORE RUNGS. HE SAID THE GAS DID HIS LUNGS.

A TROPICAL CYCLONE IS KNOWN AS A HURRICANE IN THE WEST INDIES, A TYPHOON IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC, A BAGUIO IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND A CYCLONE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

U. S. SENATOR NEXT: Where were the early California mission bells cast?

HORIZONTAL

1 Pictured U. S. Senator.

14 Whirlpool.

15 Clip.

16 Protection.

17 Rhode Island (abbr.).

18 Symbol for erbium.

20 Ever (poet.).

21 Exist.

22 Egypt (abbr.).

23 Greek letter.

25 Goal.

27 Speak.

28 Tip.

29 Sneaky.

31 Was seated.

32 Visitor (colloq.).

34 October (abbr.).

35 Limb.

36 French (abbr.).

37 Attempt.

38 Pell.

40 Call for help at sea.

42 Exclamation of contempt.

44 Frozen water.

VERTICAL

1 At this place.

2 Redacts.

3 North Dakota (abbr.).

4 Cereal grain.

5 Symbol for caesium.

6 Exclamation.

7 Honey maker.

8 Boat paddles.

9 Transpose (abbr.).

10 Be indebted.

11 Danish (abbr.).

12 Hail.

13 Border.

19 Sun god.

21 Beside.

24 High mountain.

26 Within.

28 Corpulent.

30 12 months (pl.).

31 Wash by rubbing.

32 Peep.

34 Removed.

37 Pedal digit.

39 Hurrah!

40 Muffler.

41 Music note.

43 Vital organ.

45 Toward.

46 Operative air.

47 Whip.

48 Proceed.

50 Bulk.

52 Health resort.

54 Incorporated (abbr.).

56 Born.

58 Part of "be."

60 Rupture (abbr.).

61 Symbol for europium.

63 Near.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64



Little Orphan Annie



Freckles and His Friends



Wash Tubbs



Boots and Her Buddies



Alley Oop



By Fred Harmon



By Harold Gray



By Blosser



By Crane



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin