

• SERIAL STORY

'I AM A MURDERER'

BY MORRIS MARKEY

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PRENTISS-DUNBAR

CHAPTER XXV

I HAD made Henry Prentiss, during that year, with all the methodical care which a sculptor would devote to a major work. I had begun by writing down, after the fashion of a novelist, the full and complete story of his life—an imaginary life which began in a home of pampered wealth, and led through many adventures, all amusing and a few even dangerous, to the quest of idle pleasures on the Pacific coast.

I carefully recounted his whims and his idiosyncrasies. And I drew, with all the skill I could command, the presence which he offered to the world: his physical appearance, his interests, his humors and his graces—or lack of them.

Then I set to work to bring that character into existence: to make him live and breathe, as vividly and as strongly marked as I possibly could without going to the length of caricature.

Polo was a savagely difficult part of it. But I must play polo if I was to enter fully and smoothly into the way of life at Gull Point. In the first place, I had no natural aptitude for games, because the struggles to keep alive in my early years had left no time for them. And certainly I had no aptitude for a game demanding a high degree of horse-ship. Added to this was the fact that I had always been left-handed, and already the polo associations were frowning upon left-handed players because they are a source of danger on the field.

It required not weeks, but months and months of hard, daily schooling under the coach whom I employed before I was good enough to seek an invitation to one of the club games at the Riviera Club. I never really enjoyed a single moment of any of the games that I played.

Almost fantastic luck played into my hands, the only real stroke of luck that ever appeared in my slow pursuit of the plan. That was when Fred West came to California to play two or three games at the clubs there.

My inquiries at Gull Point had already put him among the people I must know, and cultivate. And I could hardly believe the turn of fortune which made him an acquaintance, if not a friend, even before the time when I would make my appearance on Long Island.

It was an acquaintanceship of golden worth to me.

PERHAPS it would be well, here, to explain somewhat more clearly the way in which I proposed to carry out my purpose—and at the same time run no risk of detection, or the bleak humility of capture.

Henry Prentiss would become a fully active partner in all the life of Gull Point: an amusing, and indeed an interesting addition to the idle life of the community; well-to-do, not burdened with too much of brains, generous, warm of nature, as obvious as a thousand of his kind in like communities all over the world, and no more mysterious than a shower of rain.

Becoming a fixture within the scene, he would become, so to speak, his own accomplice. For, after gaining an intimate knowledge of the pattern of life in Gull Point and at Stone House, he would be able to choose the moment and call the cue for the entrance of that second character, the executioner.

You will observe, I am sure, the manifold advantages of the double impersonation. The existence of Henry Prentiss, his patent innocence and harmlessness, would become firmly established. When the execution occurred, nobody on earth would ever think twice about good old Hank.

But, being on the inside as it were, Henry Prentiss could choose the moment of the climax at will. He could bring on the executioner, in whatever shape the latter was, ultimately, to appear, at precisely the right moment.

The executioner would vanish when his work was done, but Henry Prentiss, good old Hank, would still occupy his own familiar niche in the society of the neighborhood. Furthermore, he would be able to follow the course of the chase for the executioner, to know precisely how that chase went, to learn instantly of any mistakes that might have been made.

For more than a year I lived at Gull Point without thinking seriously at all of the executioner's character, when, finally, the time would come for him to reach the scene.

Needless to say, I was quickly invited to Stone House. I had no immersed myself in the character of Henry Prentiss that I could sit with Norman Tinker or with my sister, called Cynthia Merriweather, and never suffer the least qualm, either of conscience or of fear.

I chatted many a time with Norman Tinker, knowing well that his life was in my hands, and that I should dispose of it when the fitting moment came. I did not gloat, I felt neither unholily joy nor foolish anxiety. I was at work upon a job.

IT was not until Cynthia had told her 20th tale of Bill Stewart that his name, his existence, swam into my mind as the beginning of my second character, the executioner.

Of course, the essential thing in the arrival and departure of this character was that he must appear with an immediate entree to Stone House: that his time upon the scene must be as brief as might possibly be managed, and that no suspicion whatever must fall upon him until he had finished his work, and disappeared forever.

I saw, at last, Bill Stewart, opening the door of Stone House

that retribution might enter in. The fundamentals of the second character had, of course, been integral with the creation of the first one, Henry Prentiss. For the impersonation must rely upon contrasts, and upon the immense power of suggestion called up by contrast.

The new character must not be a grossly disguised or arresting figure. Heavy beards, and scarred cheeks, and wigs and built-up heels—a limp or a stooping shoulder—these devices would not serve. They would only invite more attentive scrutiny.

When I knew that the Bill Stewart whom I had never seen was to be the key opening the way for the appearance of my new character, I did several things. First, I settled to a study of European affairs, because it seemed obvious that I must be a European, and a journalist if that worked out properly.

Second, I acquainted myself with the manners and mannerisms of international journalists, an easy task because they had written so much about themselves in recent years. I learned the names of the people whom I should claim as colleagues. I dropped anecdotes and epigrams into my memory.

And, third, I began to sketch in my mind the outlines of the character who would be my executioner.

The name of Vaughan Dunbar appealed to me when I read it on the cover of a book which he had published. The book was some years old, a collection of his most important dispatches. They were sound, but stiff and altogether conservative. That was what I wanted—and Vaughan

Dunbar, his name and such of his background as I might need, would serve my purposes. He would serve them doubly well, because, as far as I could learn, he was dead. He certainly was not in the United States. (To Be Continued)

The people of the soviet union so far have waged their magnificent battle against the nazis principally with their own arms. —Lend-Lease Administrator Edward R. Stettinius.



50 CENTS BUYS 12 YARDS OF BARBED WIRE Twelve yards of barbed wire might slow down a Jap just long enough for one of our boys to draw a bead on his noggin.

War Stamps buy barbed wire.

Your spare room—RENT-ED—will buy War Stamps. I'm a Herald and News Want-Ad, and I'm enlisted for the duration.

Phone me at 3124 and I'll turn YOUR spare room into barbed wire!

Herald & News Want-Ads Get Results

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



STARTING A FOREST FIRE TODAY IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE, BUT IN PURITAN TIMES IT WAS CONSIDERED THE EASIEST WAY OF CLEARING LAND, AND MILLIONS OF ACRES OF FORESTS WERE DESTROYED BY HAND-SET FIRES.

WHERE'S ELNER?

This famous place was known to the Romans as one of the pillars of Hercules. Its present name is a corruption of GEBEL-AL-TARIK! you have written this book fighting.

SEEDLESS TOMATOES CAN BE PRODUCED BY USING CERTAIN CHEMICAL COMPOUNDS TO REPLACE FERTILIZATION.

ANSWER: Gibraltar.

NEXT: Freezing gasoline.

LATE DIRECTOR

HORIZONTAL		Answer to Previous Puzzle	
16 Pictured late movie director.	16 Pictured late movie director.	ARTHUR TREATY	MC GOVERN
17 Aphorisms.	17 Aphorisms.	TREASURY	ERIN MADE
18 Plundered.	18 Plundered.	SWEET ENTER	BOW ALTO
19 Id est (abbr.).	19 Id est (abbr.).	RAIS B	AB SIR
20 Unclosed.	20 Unclosed.	AR PL	POD PD
21 Owl's call.	21 Owl's call.	I HVE	AXIS E
22 Exist.	22 Exist.	NOUNS	RENTER
23 Conducted.	23 Conducted.	ENDS	TR ROE
24 Lattice-work.	24 Lattice-work.	REDS VINA	KIND
25 Footed vase.	25 Footed vase.	LIFTS DRANK	
26 Encountered.	26 Encountered.	ORE LIES	ALIENS
27 Greek letter.	27 Greek letter.	RESCUERS	PATRON
28 Pen point.	28 Pen point.		
29 Of the thing (law).	29 Of the thing (law).	47 For fear that.	3 Mother.
30 Exclamation.	30 Exclamation.	48 Portico.	4 Self.
31 Too.	31 Too.	50 Decigram.	5 September (abbr.).
32 Mimicked.	32 Mimicked.	51 Renovates.	6 Doves' cries.
33 Bitter vetch.	33 Bitter vetch.	52 He was twice named one of the 10 best directors.	7 Decay.
34 Short-napped fabric.	34 Short-napped fabric.	53 Drug.	8 Note in Guido's scale.
35 Baseball club.	35 Baseball club.	54 Retains.	9 Striped animal.
36 Countries.	36 Countries.	VERTICAL	10 Paradise.
44 Grab.	44 Grab.	1 Prison.	12 Weight of India.
46 Symbol for silver.	46 Symbol for silver.	2 Revoke, as a legacy.	13 Largest river



Out Our Way By J. R. Williams WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY



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 Grand



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin