

'I AM A MURDERER'

BY MORRIS MARKEY

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DOUBLE LIFE

CHAPTER XXVI

AS I have said, the essence of my executioner's appearance and behavior was fixed by the appearance and behavior of Henry Prentiss.

My actual weight is 180 pounds. By the proper use of clothing: of loose-fitting, tweedy, shrewdly padded garments in checks and light colors—of large-sized, heavily-soled shoes and floppy woolen socks—I looked to weigh at least 180 pounds.

Clothe that same frame in fashioned suits of dark cloth and faultlessly tailored; put trim, black shoes over black silk socks—wear starched collars and carefully arranged cravats, elegant small jewelry in the way of watch chain and links in stiffened cuffs—and the man would seem to weigh hardly more than 170 pounds.

Next, the personality, the temperament of my new creation: I must contrast the happy-go-lucky way of Henry Prentiss to the stiffly formal; change carelessness and a suggestion of fatuity into grave concern over the affairs of the world; change merriment to dignity.

The voice would be quite easy. My own experience and my careful observation of professional players had taught me several valuable lessons about the voice. One was that actual intonation, the use of marked accents or the like, is not nearly so important as words themselves: the choice and use of words in the expression of ideas.

Henry Prentiss had a lazy, slangy manner of speech, and he was rather quick on the uptake in conversation. My executioner would speak in phrases so precise as to be pedantic, and he would give the impression of thinking carefully before uttering the simplest remark.

There remained the face. Now it is plainly true that there live thousands of men who could never possibly succeed with such an undertaking as I had assumed. The strongly marked face, distinguished by unusual bony structure, by teeth either remarkably handsome or unhandsome, by blemishes or scars or congenital departures from the normal cannot easily be disguised.

My own appearance could best be described as commonplace except for two things: my light-colored hair and my very blue eyes. The hair was a simple matter. The eyes were not.

FOR the eyes are the absolute key to the face. All else may be altered, and the result is no disguise whatever.

Conversely, we all know how even the most familiar faces of all, those belonging to the celebrities of motion picture actors and actresses, may be disguised for a brief while anyway by the simple use of darkened glasses. Of course, such a deception would not survive prolonged observation. But the lesson is there.

Here, then, was my chief problem. I tried many experiments—the use of various types of spectacles, of eye-shadow cosmetics, and even staining the eyes with such chemicals as argyrol. None of these things was in the least satisfying. But, again, I was in no haste.

And my patience was rewarded, as that virtue is almost invariably rewarded.

I came upon my answer in a most frivolous item in a most frivolous column of news of the motion picture colony.

Walter Huston, the actor, had been cast in the role of an American Indian for a new picture. His eyes were blue, and so not wholly appropriate for a black-haired savage. The incredible ingenuity of Hollywood had solved the problem, as it solves more technical problems every day than the world could hear about, or bearing care.

Mr. Huston would be provided with those devices called contact-lenses: magnificently contrived thin shells of crystal glass which fit immediately over the eyeball and which many people wear to hide their need of spectacles.

In normal use, they are quite invisible. For Mr. Huston, the pupils of these lenses would be tinted a deep brown.

Such lenses were easy to procure in New York. Along with them, I bought an ordinary pair of rimless spectacles. The wearing of them would account for the dullness of vision which the darkened pupils of the contact lenses would obviously entail.

made swarthy in as brief a time, and cleared again by a moment or two under the faucet.

On that first afternoon, when I walked to stand before my mirror in the make-up of the executioner, of Vaughan Dunbar, I tell you in all honesty that I had difficulty recognizing myself. I spent all the rest of that afternoon, and more than half of that night before that mirror, being Vaughan Dunbar.

When at last I went to bed, I knew. The cue might now be called, at the pleasure of Henry Prentiss.

So I settled to the preparation of details, the making of a program and time schedule which, in a less urgent enterprise, would have been tedious work.

After laying all the advantages and disadvantages side by side, I determined upon the afternoon of the finals at polo for the climax. And I prepared, down to the dots upon the 's, every single movement, every single minute of time, that would lead up to the one critical instant.

First, I made the opening appearance of Vaughan Dunbar in New York. I timed it, of course, as of the arrival of a Clipper Ship, and actually took a taxicab from LaGuardia Field half an hour after such a ship had landed.

Vaughan Dunbar registered at a hotel where Henry Prentiss was not known, but thereafter he visited numerous restaurants and cafes where Henry Prentiss was known, watching carefully for the one lifted eyebrow, the one short-nosed breath which would tell that the deception was a failure.

Vaughan Dunbar stood at divers bars with warm friends of Henry Prentiss—not Gull Point friends, but members of the cherished brotherhood who meet in the

public places and are oftentimes associated even more closely, one with another, than men who meet each other in their own homes. Nobody paid much attention to the man who was, so obviously, a visitor from Britain, shy and reserved and most properly worried. Vaughan Dunbar had met the first test.

(To Be Continued)

The jeep designers, looking into the future, see it being used as a prime farm tool, taking the place of the automobile, the truck, the tractor and the horse.



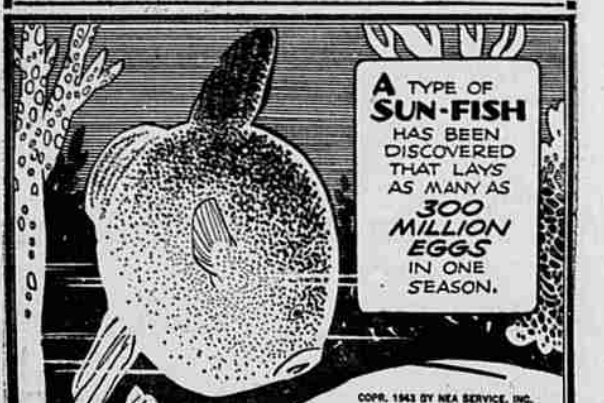
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THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

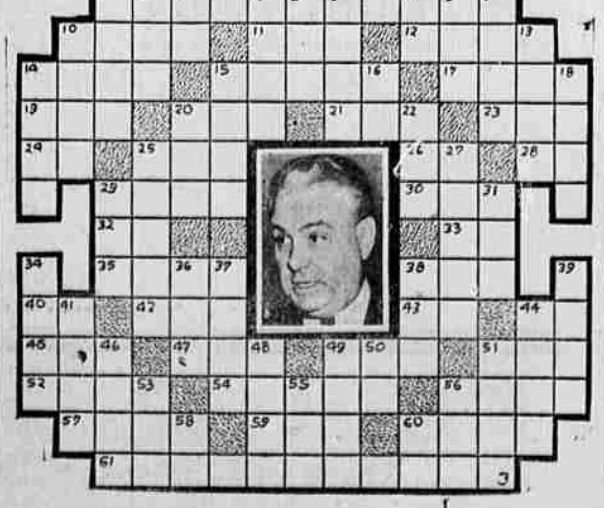


A TYPE OF SUN-FISH HAS BEEN DISCOVERED THAT LAYS AS MANY AS 300 MILLION EGGS IN ONE SEASON.

Advertisement for 'OLDING ODS' gasoline, featuring an illustration of a car and text describing its benefits.

OHIO GOVERNOR

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for the Ohio Governor and other words.



FOR the rest, I fashioned my own dyes and stains from chemicals bought in a dozen places, so that my hair could be turned to black very swiftly, and, since the chemicals were soluble in water, turned again to its natural color in a handful of minutes. Likewise, my clear skin could be



Our Way By J. R. Williams



Red Ryder



Little Orohan 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 Crano



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin