

DEATH WRITES THE LAST EDITION

By Adeline McElfresh

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THE STORY: Joe Parker, well-known editor of the Midvale Express, has been found stabbed to death. Clem Evans, sports writer, and Pat Cleveland, society reporter, search his papers for a clue.

DAVE

CHAPTER II

PAT was still staring at the letter she had found in Joe Parker's desk when the side door opened and a cold blast of air whirled someone into the room. "For Pete's sake, hello, there!" Clem's greeting jerked her thoughts up short. She looked up, startled.

"Dave Elson," she cried. "So you did come!" "Did you think I wouldn't, Pat?" His voice sounded tired and there were little lines around his eyes and mouth that hadn't been there three years ago. He thrust out his hand. "How are you, Pat?" Pat smiled up at him. His handshake sent the same old thrill through her. "Never better—until today." There was a little catch in her throat. "I know," he nodded. "I caught a plane... Lucky I finished that assignment... My vacation started Sunday. Is there a clue?"

"No, son," Clem Evans answered him. "Not a thing but the knife—no fingerprints on it." Pat held up the letter she had found just before Dave's arrival. "We have this," she told them. "Listen. You may get that information, Parker, but you'll never print it. I can't have my business ruined by a civic-minded paper like yours. My set-up is a gold mine. It's going to stay that way. There is no signature, of course." Both men snatched at the letter. Dave got it. He studied it closely, then handed it to Evans.

"There's a funny letter on that typewriter, Pat. The 'I.' It's out of line." Pat nodded. She had seen it, too, but— "What good will that do?" she asked hopelessly. "Where do we start?"

Dave Elson shook his head. "I don't know, Pat," he said. "But we'll do something. We've got to." Pat gave him a quick look. There was a hint of the old Dave in his tone that stirred memories in her heart, memories that she had long ago made up her mind to forget. Too, she felt a little sorry for him—and pity was the last thing in the world she wanted to feel for Dave Elson.

IT was after dark when Dave, Pat and Clem left the Express office. They had finished looking through Joe Parker's desk without success. That one letter seemed to be the only bit of evidence in the case and the possibility that it might prove anything was pitifully vague. What chance did they have to check every typewriter in the county?

Pat sighed as she settled herself in Clem's coupe. The faint sound registered all the misery and sorrow that had filled her heart since morning. "Me, too, Pat," Dave managed a crooked grin. He slammed the door shut, then opened it to toss out his cigar. "All set, Clem?" he asked when the sports editor alid under the wheel. Evans nodded glumly. "We must make a pretty grim trio," Dave began, trying to make his voice sound light and carefree. "Not a smile in the bunch."

Neither of the other two spoke. Clem kept his eyes straight ahead. Pat's hands were tightly clasped in her lap so they wouldn't tremble, but Dave didn't know that. He had an impulse to put his arm around her, comfort her in the sadness that he knew was heart-breaking. But he didn't. He, too, was remembering.

"This is my house, Dave," Clem Evans' voice broke in on his thoughts. "You take the car and drive Patricia home while I tell my wife you're staying here. She'll be ready for you by the time you get back."

"O. K. But I have to put you out like this. I could go down to the hotel, Clem."

Clem snorted. "You do that," he said, "and Mary would make life miserable for me. If there's anything she loves, it's company. And when that company happens to be Dave Elson—well, she read

your last book twice, maybe three times." Dave laughed as he got out of the car to hurry around to the driver's seat. Pat heard him tell Clem he'd be right back.

"You seem to be quite a hero to Clem's wife, Dave." Dave didn't say anything until he had been driving for a few seconds. The darkness hid the frown that wrinkled his forehead. "But not to you, Pat?"

His words were a statement rather than a question. Pat didn't look at him. She didn't have to. She could visualize the suddenly squared jaw and the stubborn look in his eyes.

"I didn't say that, Dave," she said softly. "Not in so many words, but that's what was in your heart. You can't deny that, Pat."

Pat was grateful for the darkness. She bit her lips to stop their trembling. "You could never be a hero to me, Davey," she lapsed naturally into the old habit of calling him that. "I know you too well."

There was bitterness in his laugh. "Spoken like a true artist, Pat. My congratulations." "Don't be like that, Dave," she pleaded. "Not now. Not when—"

She smothered a sob in her handkerchief, but it was enough to loosen the grief that had been dammed up inside her all day. "Oh, Dave, who could have done such a thing to him?"

Dave couldn't answer her for the sudden tightness in his throat. He just reached over and patted her hand. "Go on and have a good cry, Pat," he told her when he finally could trust himself to speak. "I'll do you good. We'll just drive around a while."

He didn't say any more. Just

drove and thought. But it did not good. Try as he would, he could think of no motive for the crime and, without a motive, there could be no suspect. Not when you knew as little about the case as he—or the police—did.

It was then that Pat clutched his arm. "Dave," she whispered, "there's a light in Mr. Parker's study. I just saw it."

"Probably the housekeeper." "She went to her sister's for the night."

"Or the police." "Blair said the house was closed for the night." There was no trace of tears in her voice now. "Anyhow, the light flashed for a second, then disappeared. The police wouldn't do that."

"No," he said crisply. "No, they wouldn't." Excitement always made him like that, Pat remembered. She marveled at the calmness that made him drive on down the street at the same slow pace they had been traveling and turn into a side street so that whoever was in the house would not be alarmed.

"Pat, you stay here," he told her when she started to get out, too. "I will not! I'm going right with you."

"Come on, then." He took her arm and they hurried across the yard toward the rear of the house. The wind seemed colder as it swirled the snow about them. Pat shivered.

"Want to go back?" Dave whispered. "No," she whispered back. "I'm just cold. There's probably a policeman somewhere around."

But Dave shook his head. "We can't wait," he said. "Whoever is in there might skedaddle." Without more ado, he tried the kitchen door. It opened easily. They tiptoed through the back rooms and the hall. Pat caught his hand nervously as they paused at the closed door of the study, but

he pushed her behind him. There wasn't a sound anywhere in the house. A faint odor of cigar smoke lingered in the air. Pat absently attributed it to the police who had been there during the day.

Dave squeezed her hand in warning as he eased the door open. There was no movement in the room. The dim light from the street lamp on the corner played against the window. Dave's tense nerves relaxed a bit as he stepped inside.

Then Midvale and the whole world seemed suddenly to have gone into a tailspin. Bright lights danced all around him. Pat's scream sounded faint and far away.

Out Our Way

By J. R. Williams



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

Our Boarding House

With Major Hoopie



HE HAD TO BLOW IT UP A LITTLE

Red Ryder

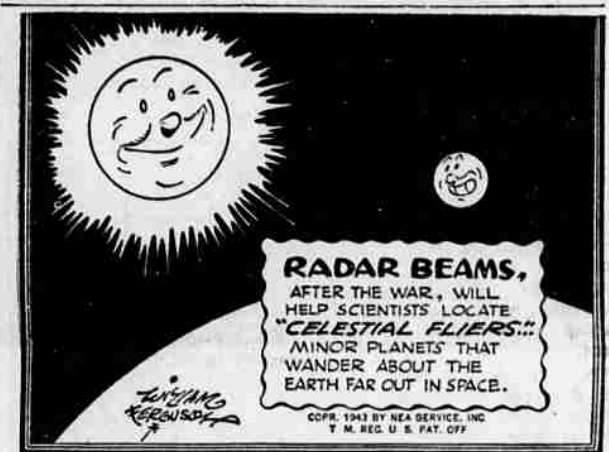
By Fred Harmon



(To Be Continued)

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

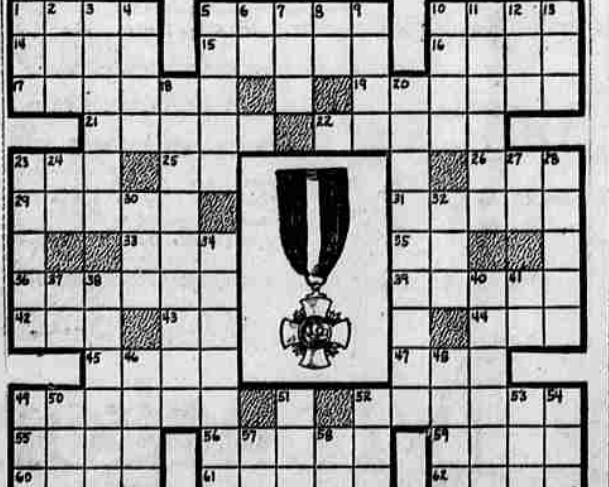
By William Ferguson



ANSWER: Right. Recent army tests show this to be true.

AWARD FOR SERVICE

HORIZONTAL	Answer to Previous Puzzle	23 Sour
1,5 Depicted medal, the U. S.	BOOTH TARKINGTON	24 Area measure
10 One who mimics	ARIAL ORIEL AILIS	27 Symbol for selenium
14 War god	LIBS TANALIS	28 Warble
15 Rugged mountain crest	TIL SLIPS TIRELLA	30 Hawaiian food
16 Urn	ARE LIPS A FAD	32 Fish
17 Assaults	PIENROD BOOTH NEEDS	34 Causes (abbr.)
19 Resounded	NOVELS TARKINGTON SLIDE	37 Ellis English (abbr.)
21 Woody plants	ERATE ILE TIFIN	38 Gathers after a reaper
22 Stable part	WE DOTS PINTIND	40 Sitting room
23 Swiss river	ION OPA GET	41 Sloth
25 Steamship	PACE ADEPT CODA	46 Being (comb. form)
26 Devotee	AMERICAN AUTHORS	48 Facility
29 Vault	47 Weight of India	49 Licentiate of Society of Apothecaries (abbr.)
31 Kind of duck	49 Type of shelter	5 Boxes
33 Boat paddle	52 Hymns	6 Railroad (abbr.)
35 Road (abbr.)	55 Dispatched	50 Snaky fish (abbr.)
36 System of rule	56 Water wheel	7 Over (poet.)
38 Asiatic kingdom	59 Kind mistake	8 Street (abbr.)
42 Bengal quince	61 Penitent	9 Clan
43 Babylonian deity	62 Gaelic	10 Grandparental
44 To be ill	1 Seize	11 Pale
45 Ages	2 Exist	12 Compass point
		13 Color
		18 Will
		57 Hawaiian bird
		58 Symbol for iridium



Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



Wash Tubbs



Boots and Her Buddies



Allep Oop



Little Orphan Annie



LA-A-DIES 'N' GENTS

By V. T. Hamlin



By Crane



By Martin



By Harold Gray



By Martin



By Martin



By Martin

FUNNY BUSINESS



By Martin