

OUT of the NIGHT

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
PRISCILLA PIERCE—heroine.
AMY KERRIGAN—Cilly's roommate and murderer's victim.
JIM KERRIGAN—Cilly's fiancé.
HARRY HUTCHINS—Amy's strange visitor.
SERGEANT DOLAN—officer assigned to solve the murder of Amy Kerr.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHAMBERT BELL RANG.
 "That's Martin," Sergeant Dolan said to Cilly. "One of my men. I've had him checking up on the tenants."

Cilly opened the door for him. "Come in, Martin," Dolan called. "What did you find out?"

Martin consulted some notes he had made. "Well, there are 10 apartments in the house. Two to a floor. Johnson, the superintendent, has a place down in the basement. Miss Pierce and the other young lady here in 1-A. Couple named Terry in 1-B. Johnson tells me they left the house about 11 o'clock on Sunday night. He met them going out the door with their bags. Said they were going away on a little motor trip."

"That's right," Cilly agreed. "Mrs. Terry stopped in shortly after 10 and asked me if I'd take her gold-fish for a few days. There they are, over on the window-sill. They were going up to Fall River to visit Mrs. Terry's mother."

"Funny hour to be leaving, wasn't it?"
 "Mr. Terry preferred to drive all night. There would be less traffic on the roads, he said."
 "Well, that takes care of the first floor," Dolan said. "Who's upstairs?"

"IN 2-A there's a Mrs. Elliot. Rather an elderly woman, Johnson says. But she's not in. Johnson and I looked the place over and it doesn't appear as if she's been home for a while. Rooms are all tidied up, windows shut down tight. Johnson says she's away a great deal. She's the last tenant that moved in."

"Now in 2-B, there's a family named Smith. Man and wife and 6-year-old youngster. Mrs. Smith tells me they were over in Jersey on Sunday visiting her in-laws. They left the youngster over there for a week. She says they didn't get home until somewhere about 3 in the morning. Didn't know a thing about the trouble here in the house. They took a 1:20 train from Rutherford."

"Check up on that," Dolan instructed. "I'll do that. Now we come to the third floor. Don't think we'll find anything there."

"On the fourth floor," Martin went on in his steady, phlegmatic voice, "in 4-A, there are the Downeys. A mother and daughter. Mother's a woman in her 60s, I should say. Daughter teaches school. The old lady, from the look of her, never could pick up a body and throw it off the roof."

"No," Dolan agreed, "it wasn't the work of a woman."
 "A Mrs. Wheeler lives in 4-B. Lives there alone, she tells me, and Johnson confirms it. Smart-looking woman, in her 30s, I'd say. A widow. Has a young niece that often spends week-ends with her, but she was all alone this Sunday."

SERGEANT DOLAN shook his head negatively as he listened without comment to Martin's report. Cilly could almost read his thoughts. One by one, he too was dismissing the tenants from consideration. In his hand he still held the crumpled note Jim had written to Amy.

"On the fourth floor, there's nobody we can pin the case on," Martin was saying, "and I'd say we could check off the fifth floor too. In 5-A there's a man and his wife named Hunter, a middle-aged couple. But he's a helpless cripple, paralyzed from the waist down. Sits around all day in a wheel chair. Johnson says he's never been out of the chair in the four years they've lived here."

"That let's him out," Dolan commented. "What about 5-B?"
 "Vacant."
 "Let's get going, Martin," he said. "We still have several other angles to check."
 Cilly rose too. "Just a minute, sergeant," she pleaded, "what about those vacant apartments? Anybody—a vagrant, for example—might have hidden away in them."

Dolan turned to his assistant. "What about it, Martin?"
 "We thought of that, Serg. Johnson showed me 5-B. In the first place, the door was locked, and he has the only two keys to it. In the second place, he's getting it ready for some new tenant moving in on the first, and Saturday the floors were scraped and shelled. Anyone coming down from the roof—which is covered with tar and soot and dust—would have left some tracks on that newly polished floor. There's not a sign of a foot-print."

"WHAT about the other vacant apartment?" Cilly asked him. "The one on the third floor?"
 "We found it locked," Martin said. "Johnson is the only one that has a passkey to it."

"Someone might have come down the fire escape," Cilly suggested. "He could have passed 5-B, which is vacant, and 4-B, without awakening Mrs. Wheeler, and climbed into 3-B."

Martin shook his head negatively. "The window from the fire escape was latched. He couldn't have opened it from the outside without breaking a pane of glass. Besides, from what I hear, before the young woman fell, there was a scream—loud enough to awaken the neighborhood. It awakened Mrs. Wheeler. If any man passed down the fire escape, she would have known it."

Cilly wondered where else a man might have hidden. Nobody came out of the house immediately after the accident, Cilly knew that.

SUDDENLY a new light dawned on the problem, and for the first time the strands of the terrible web of circumstances and coincidence which was encircling her loosened their hold.

Jim must have come down from the roof before Amy fell: if he had come down after the accident, Cilly would have seen him go out the front entrance. Or the police would have found him, still on the roof. Jim couldn't have been up there when it happened!

She almost wept for sheer relief. There was a new ring of confidence in her voice as she turned to Sergeant Dolan:

"Mr. Kerrigan couldn't have been up on the roof with Amy," she pointed out with conviction. "Because he couldn't have gotten out of the house after the accident without all of us seeing him. And he wasn't on the roof, or you would have seen him when you went up! That clears him, in spite of the note, doesn't it?"

Sergeant Dolan grinned. "I'd be a fine detective," he said, "if I were as trusting a soul as you'd like me to be, Miss Pierce. How can I be sure that he didn't come downstairs and slip into Apartment 1-A, where a young lady who believed him to be 100 per cent O. K. could easily hide him until the rumpus died down?"
 Cilly gasped. The strands of the web had only relaxed momentarily, to strengthen themselves for a more tenacious grip.
 (To Be Continued)

Democracy is a system which other systems might temporarily supplant, but evolution goes irresistibly forward and humanitarian democracy will come in all fullness.—President Eduard Beneš of Czechoslovakia.

I will not be quiet. I won't stand by and hear anything against the Duke of Windsor.—George Ladbroke, duke's former chauffeur, arrested for heckling soap-box orator of former king.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Is that the Jones' old baby or the new one?"
 "Can't tell. They didn't change the model much."

OUT OUR WAY



BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON.

BY J. R. WILLIAMS OUR BOARDING HOUSE

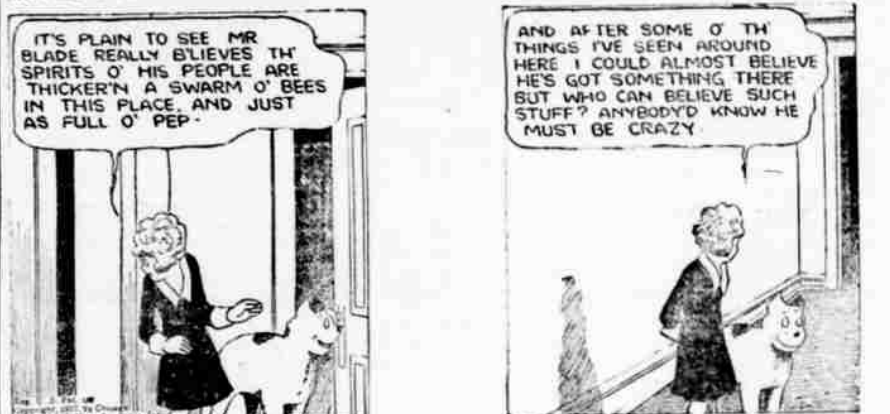


With MAJOR HOOPLE

MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE



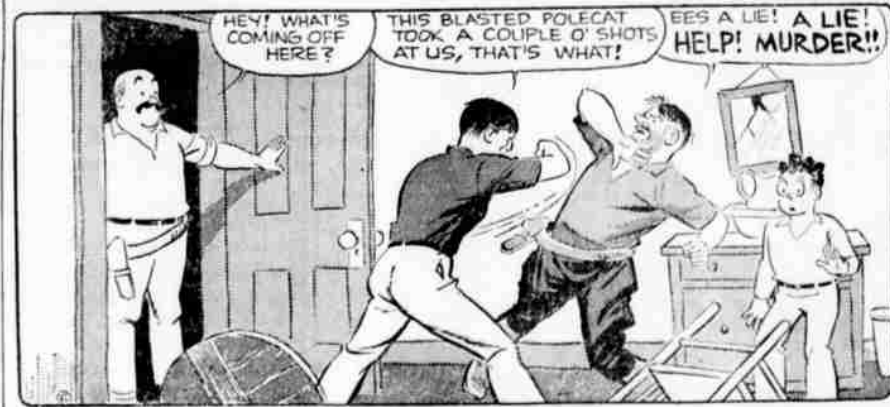
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



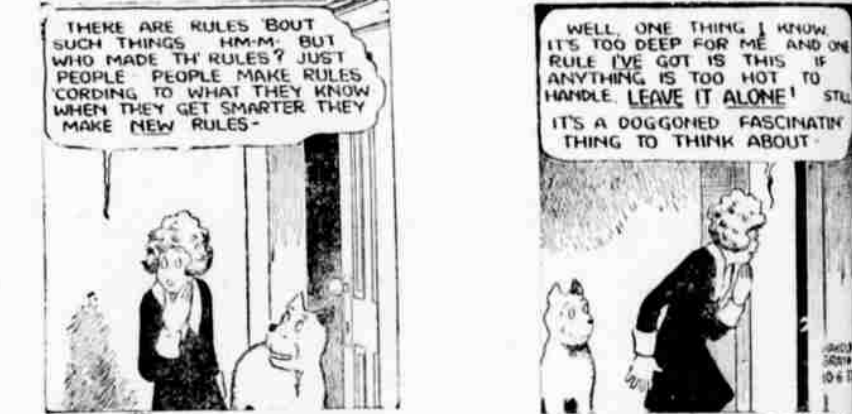
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