The MURDER at HAZELMOOR

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS.

While Mrs. Willett, her daughter Violet, Major Burnaby and three neighbors in the English village of Sittaford were playing at table tipping, a "spirit" message was received stating that Captain Joseph Trevelyan, a retired navy man, had been murdered. For two months the Willetts had been occupying Trevelyan's house. He had been unable to resist an offer of 12 guineas a month rent and had taken a small house at the nearest town, Exhampton, six miles distant. Through snow impassable for automobiles, Burnaby trudges, and finds his friend dead, the base of his skull fractured. Police Inspector Narracott questioned Evans, Captain Trevelyan's man, and then went with Burnaby to the offices of Walters & Kirkwood, Trevelyan's lawyers, where Trevelyan's will was read. The captain left all his trophies to Burnaby. His estate divided into four equal parts, went to his sister, Jennifer Gardner, and the three children of his deccased sister, Mary Pearson.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

INSTALMENT SIX.

Inspector Narracott ran his eye over the will thoughtfully.

"My deceased sister, aMry Pearson," he said. "Can you tell me anything about Mrs. Pearson, Mr. Kirkwood?"

"Very little. Shie died about ten years ago, I believe. Her husband, a stockbroker, had predeceased her. As far as I know, she never visited Captain Trevelyan here."

"Pearson," said the Inspector again. Then he added: "One thing more. The amount of Captain Trevelyan's estate is not mentioned. I should like just the roughest estimate as a guide. For instance would twenty thousand pounds be out of the way?"

"Eighty or even ninety thousand pounds will be much nearer the mark."

Inspector Narracott rose. "By the way, have you the names and addresses of this Jennifer Gardner and of the Pearson family?"

"I know nothing of the Pearson family. Mrs. Gardner's address is The Laurels, Waldon Road, Exeter."

The inspector noted it down in his book.

"That will do to get on with," he said. "You don't know how many children the late Mrs. Pearson left?"

"Three, I fancy. Two girls and a boy—or possibly two boys and a girl—I cannot remember which."

The inspector thanked the lawyer once more and took his departure.

When they had reached the street, he turned suddenly and faced his companion.

"And now, sir," he said, "we'll have the truth about that twenty-five past five business."

Major Burnaby's face reddened with annoyance. "I have told you already——"

"That won't go down with me. Withholding information, that is what you are doing, Major Burnaby. You must have had some idea in mentioning that specific time in connection with the murder to Dr. Warren—and I think I have a very good idea of what that something is."

"Well, if you know about it, why ask me?" growled the major.

"I take it you were aware that a certain person had an appointment with Captain Trevelyan somewhere about that time. Now, insn't that so?"

Major Burnaby stared at him in surprise.

"Nothing of the kind," he snarled, "nothing of the kind."

"Be careful, Major Burnaby. What about Mr. James Pearson?"

"James Pearson? James Pearson, who's he? Do you mean one of Trevelyan's nephews?"

"I presume it would be a nephew. He had one called James, hadn't he?"

"Not the least idea. Trevelyan had nephews—I know that. But what their names were, I haven't the vaguest idea."

"The young man in question was at the Three Crowns last night. You probably recognized him there."

"I didn't recognize anybodp," growled the major. "Shouldn't anyway—never saw any of Trevelyan's nephews in my life."

"But you knew that Captain Trevelyan was expecting a nephew to call upon him yesterday afternoon?"

"I did not," roared the major.

Several people in the street turned round to stare at him.

"Look here, won't you take plain truth! I knew nothing about any appointment. Trevelyan's nephews may have been in Timbuctoo for all I knew about them."

Inspector Narracott was a little taken aback. The major's vehement denial bore the mark of truth too plainly for him to be deceived.

"Then why this twenty-five past five business?"

"Oh! well—I suppose I had better tell you," the major coughed n an embarrassed fashion. "But mind you—the whole thing is plain foolishness! Tommy rot, sir. How any thinking man can believe such sonsense!"

Inspector Narracott looked more and more surprised. Major Burnaby was looking more uncomfortable and ashamed of himself every minute.

"You know what it is, Inspector. You have to join in these things to please a lady. Of course, I never thought there was anything in it."

"In what, Major Burnaby?"

"Table turning—table tipping and rapping."

"Table turning?"

Whatever Narracott had expected he had not expected this. The Major proceeded to explain himself. Haltingly, and with many disclaimers of his own belief in the thing, he described the events of the previous afternoon and the message at 5.25 that had purported to come through for himself.

"You mean, Major Burnaby, that the table spelled out the name of Trevelyan and informed you that he was dead—murdered?"

Major Burnaby wiped his forehead.

"Yes, that's what happened. I didn't believe in it—naturally, I didn't believe in it." He looked ashamed. "Well—it was Friday, my usual day to visit him, and I thought after all I would make sure and go along and see if everything was all right."

The Inspector reflected on the difficulties of that six-mile walk, with the piled snowdrifts and the prospect of a heavy snowfall, and he realized that deny it as he would Major Burnaby must have been deeply impressed by the spirit message. Narracott turned it over in his mind. A queer thing to happen—a very queer thing to happen. The sort of thing you couldn't explain satisfactorily. There might be something in this spirit business after all. It was the first, well, authenticated case he had come across.

A very queer business altogether, but, as far as he could see, though it explained Major Burnaby's attitude, it had no practical bearing on the case so far as he himself was concerned. He had to deal with the physical world and not the psychic.

It was his job to track down the murderer.

And to do that he required no gnidance from the spirit world.

Glancing at his watch, the inspector realized he could just catch the train for Exeter if he hurried off. He was anxious to interview Mrs. Gardner, Captain Trevelyan's sister, as soon as possible and obtain from her the addresses of the other members of the family. So, with a hurried word of farewell to Major Burnaby he raced off to the station. The major retraced his steps to the Three Crowns. He had hardly put a foot across the doorstep when he was accosted by a bright young man with a very shiny head and a round boyish face.

"Major Burnaby?" said the young man.

"Yes."

"Of No. 1 Sittaford Cottages?"

"Yes," said Major Burnaby.

"I represent the Daily Wire," said the young man, "and I——"

He got no further. In true military fashion of the old school, the major exploded.

"Not another word," he roared. "I know you and your kind. No decency. No reticence. Clustering round a murder like vultures 'round a carcass, but I can tell you, young man, you will get no information from me. Not a word. No story for your confounded paper. If you want to know anything, go and ask the police, and have the decency to leave the friends of the dead man alone."

The young man seemed not a whit taken aback. He smiled more encouragingly than ever.

"I say, sir, you know you have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. I know nothing about this murder business."

This was not, strictly speaking, the truth. No one in Exhampton could pretend ignorance of the event that had shaken the quiet moorland town to its core.

"I am empowered on behalf of the Daily Wire," went on the young man, "to hand you this cheque for £5,000 and congratulate you on sending in the only correct solution of our football competition."

Major Burnaby was completely taken aback.

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"I have no doubt," continued the young man, "that you have already received our letter yesterday morning informing you of the good news."

"Letter?" said Major Burnaby. "Do you realize, young man, that Sittaford is about ten feet deep in snow? What chance do you think we have had in the last few days of a regular delivery of letters?"

"But doubtless you saw your name announced as winner in the Daily Wire, this morning?"

"No," said Major Burnaby. "I haven't glanced at the paper this morning."

"Ah! of course not," said the young man. "This sad business. The murdered man was a friend of yours, I understand."

"My best friend," said the major.

"Hard lines," said the young man, tactfully averting his eyes. Then he drew from his pocket a small folded piece of mauve paper and handed it to Major Burnaby with a bow.

"With the compliments of the Daily Wire," he said.

Major Burnaby took it and said the only thing possible under the circumstances.

"Have a drink, Mr.—er—?"

"Enderby Charles Enderby my name is. I got here last night," he explained. "Made inquiries about getting to Sittaford. We make it a point to hand cheques to winners personally. Always publish a little interview. Interests our readers. Well, everyone told me it was out of the question—the snow falling and it simply couldn't be done, and then with the greatest good luck I find you are actually here, staying at the Three Crowns." He smiled. "No difficulty about identification. Everybody seems to know everybody else in this part of the world."

"What will you have?" said the major.

"Beer for me," said Enderby.

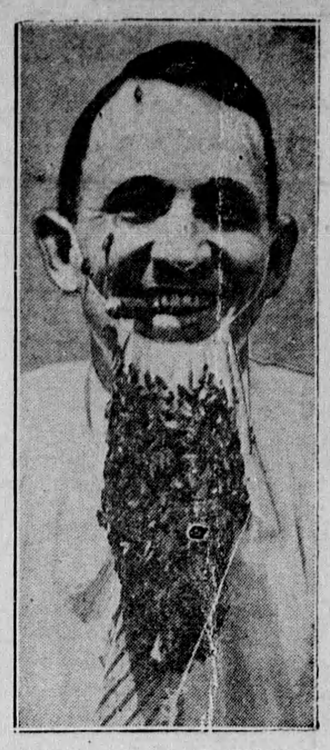
The major ordered two beers.

"The whole place seems off its head with this murder," remarked Enderby. "Rather a mysterious business by all accounts."

The major grunted. He was in something of a quandry. His sentiments towards journalists remained unchanged, but a man who has just handed you a cheque for £5,000 is in a privileged position. You cannot very well tell him to go to the devil.

(To Be Continued.)

Nonchalance?



William Gray of Hillsburgh, Ont., doesn't mind the odd bee and to show how completely he knows his bees he lets them flock over his "beard".

Huge Egg Laid

Huntington, Ind.—An egg measuring 9½ inches by 8 inches was laid by a hen here. It contained two yolks.

Happiness never lays its finger on its pulse. If we attempt to steal a glimpse of its features it disapppears. —Alexander Smith.

As the sensation of hunger presupposes food to satisfy it, so the sense of dependence on God presupposes His existence and character.—O. B. Frothingham.

SURPRISE OF THE SHOW

By Herbert Shaw

Warner Carey and his wife, in a stage box at the Cliffsea Hipprdrome, were enjoying the show. The touring company were giving a bright performance of a very successful London revue. There was a lot of dancing, and there were at least two hundred pretty legs. There were some quite good jokes.

The prettiest legs belonged to one of the chief dancers. She had red hair and an entrancing smile and a pleasant and effective voice. Warner applauded her in his hearty way. His wife said she was very good—and such a good dancer. She added:—

"I shouldn't applaud her so much, though. Whenever she's this way on the stage, she keeps on smiling at you, Warner."

"Nonsense!" laughed Warner. "You are imagining that, my dear."

But he was curiously puzzled. He continued to study the little dancer. He looked at her name on the program—Vera Wayne. His mind went groping. It was as if there were some sort of a dream relation between himself and her. He struggled hard to find the secret of it. Suddenly he knew, and was shocked. He looked round as though the door of the box had opened and let in a draught.

"Feel cold?" his wife asked.

"I've got cramped. I'll go for a walk round."

Warner stood at the back of the house, and the stage, now distant, seemed to be less menacing. But because he had recognized Vera Wayne at last—it was incredible, he thought, that he had forgotten her name—he was afraid.

Vera and he had been lovers fifteen years ago. She was very sweet and kind, and he had been very fond of her. He was studying in London for his examinations, and to the young man there is romance in having a chorus girl for a friend.

They made all manner of promises to each other. Of course, they would meet again, would go into the country together, would laugh together again. But life often laughs at young lovers. It had been good-bye. Since that parting he had not seen Vera till to-day.

Warner thought of his wife, of his two girls, of his big gloomy house in Western Square, of his success as an architect. He had made a small fortune with the growth of the East Coast town. Vera Wayne finished a song. Somebody standing by him clapped vigorously.

"Hullo, Warner." It was old Vincent, who owned a lot of property in Cliffsea. "Wonderful little woman, isn't she?"

'Very good indeed," Warner murmured.

Old Vincent continued clapping, trying to force an encore, but Vera Wayne bowed and ran off; it was the end of a scene.

Vincent said: "I've been seeing a good bit of that girl this week. She wants to come and live here whenever she can. She's got two boys to keep, and one of them is rather delicate."

Warner was astonished. Here in Cliffsea?" he exclaimed, in a way that made the ither look sharply at him. He added quickly, "She's married, then? I shouldn't have thought that."

"Nor should I," said Vincent. 'She doesn't look much more than a girl now—at any rate, on the stage. Yes, she was married. Her husband died and left her stranded—a bit of a waster, from what I hear. I think she is a wonder."

Warner tried to frame a question that would tell him more. It was not necessary. The hearty red-faced man at his side continued to talk enthusiastically at Vera Wayne.

"If you ask me, that woman's one in a thousand. She'd had the devil and all of a struggle to look after those boys of hers, and she never lets loose a grumble. It's a hard life, this stage business, and not much money. It's a pity that Cliffsea is a bit on the toney side and dear to live in. But if she can possibly see her way to afford it, she wants one of those little cottages I've got."

"You mean those behind Western Square?" asked Warner, with a sudden qualm.

"Those are the ones. She's making up her mind about it to-morrow. She's seen me every day this week about the cottage; that's how I know all about her. Between you and me, I've offered her the place at half the rent I'd want from anybody else. But I can't go any lower—business is business! I'll be popping off, Warner."

Warner did not go back to his box before the curtain had fallen. His wife was standing up. He was just in time, luckily, to help her into her fur coat. She said:—

"I couldn't think where you'd got to! And you missed the best thing at the end. Something happened that made the whole story different. It was the surprise of the show!"

Waiting in the dull sitting-room of Vera's lodgings, Warner was again afraid. He tried to reassure himself that he would be successful. He must be successful in his plan of preventing her from coming to live in Cliffsea.

When she came in he was relieved. She met him with that lovely smile of hers. She said that it had been splendid to see his enjoyment of the show the night before.

After that frank smile—the smile she had several times given him from the stage—she kept a guarded look. Warner knew, instinctively and thankfully, that she was going to say nothing about their old romance. That still look of hers warned him to make no reference to it, either.

"I'm going to be blunt," said Warner. "If it is not absolutely imperative for you to come to Cliffsea, I shall be very glad. I beg you not to take a house in Cliffsea—please forgive me. I——"

She interrupted him, and told him about the cottage. She had almost arranged to take it. It was Saturday. Early the next morning she was journeying to the next town where they were showing, and the papers were all ready, except for her signature. She had promised to let Vincent know by the next Monday.

"Listen," said Warner. "I know what a hard life you've had—Vincent told me. If you can find what you want on the South Coast, and promise me to give up the idea of living at Cliffsea, I will give you five hundred pounds towards the expenses, and another five hundred pounds next year if you want it."

Vera Wayne was astonished. Then she told him that she wouldn't think of taking the money from him. It was impossible.

He began to argue patiently with her. Of course she must take it. He could afford the money, and it was a pleasure to be able to help her.

Vera Wayne thought of unpaid school fees, of the time when the revue would finish, of a dressmaker's account overdue. Warner was again telling her that there was no earthly reason why she should not have the money. It seemed to her that he would go on repeating that forever. She must not miss the show.

She consented to take it at last—Warner would not allow her to refuse. He wrote her a cheque for five hundred pounds.

In the Cliffsea Constitutional Club, late that night, Warner Carey was thinking of Vera Wayne. It was marvellous how she kept her charm—and that lovely smile. Old Vincent was quite right—she was a wonderful woman. Any other woman would have been bitter or reproachful or angry about those dead, but exciting, days of fifteen years back. Vera had been perfect. She had not mentioned those days, or even allowed him to think she was giving the least thought to them herself.

George Cunningham, the manager of the Cliffsea Hipprodrome, came and stood in front of the big fire. He asked Warner to have a drink, and hoped that Warner had enjoyed the show the other evening.

"Very much, thanks," said Warner. "And my wife thought it first-class. I didn't see the end myself, though."

"That's a pity,' 'said Cunningham. "It had a really good surprise finish—bang at the end of the last act. Very neatly done. But that's nothing like the surprise I've had to-night, Warner. Did you notice that girl in the chief part especially— Vera Wayne?"

Warner sat up. "She was very good, we thought."

"She always is. That girl's a wonder—and a real good sort. She's found things very difficult, with a small family to keep; she's had a hard struggle. But she's just had a proper stroke of luck—that's the surprise of the show to me."

"What's happened to her?"

"You wouldn't believe it out of a book. Of course, she wouldn't tell me his name, but some rich man who had seen the show turned up at her digs this evening and insisted on giving her five hundred quid. She told me she wouldn't take it for a long time, and I quite believe her—she never tells lies—but she took it in the finish to get rid of him. He wouldn't let her refuse. I'm very glad for her sake."

Cunningham thoughtfully lighted a cigar.

"And the strange part of it is that Vera doesn't know who he was," he went on. "All the time she was thinking she ought to know him; but no matter how hard she tried she couldn't place him. He knew her all right, that was certain. But Vera couldn't remember where she had seen him before! And the name on the cheque meant nothing to her!"—London Tit-Bits."

Recently Wed

Princess Alexis Mdivani shown with her husband, the prince. The princess is the former Miss Barbara Hutton, heiress to the Woolworth millions. The photo shows the couple when they journeyed out to the polo field.

Buy Quality

'SALADA' TEA

French Military Pilots to Make Flight In Formation Over Colonies This Season

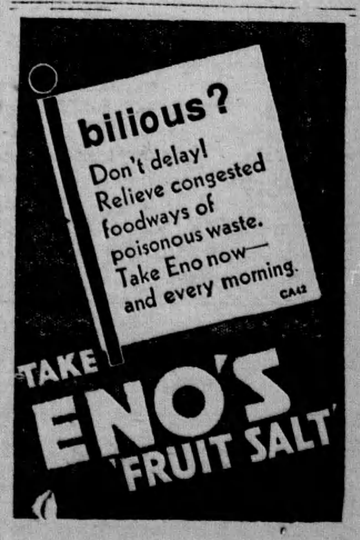
Paris.—French aviation this autumn will attempt a squadron flight across Africa, prepared and executed after the manner of the exploits of General Balbo and his Italian group flights.

The French attempt will be headed by the French Minister of Air, Pierre Cot, who, after daily study under military pilots since he came into office, has just obtained his pilot's license. One hundred airplanes and hydroairplanes will participate in the flight, and the pilots and navigators who will man them have assembled this month at Istres Airdrome, near Marseilles, where they will go into intensive training in preparation for the undertaking.

According to present plans, the group will take off in formation from the Istres station early in November for a Mediterranean-African circuit, comprising stops in Algeria, Morocco, Western and Equatorial Africa, returning by way of Egypt and Tunis to France. Only military and naval crews will take part.

Out of every hundred men sentenced in English courts, only fifteen are guilty of crimes serious enough to require over three months in prison.

"This depression could have been 90 per cent. avoided by the same methods which are now being so successfully used to cure it—controlling the price level."



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