Murder in Plain Sight

by GERALD BROWN

W.N.U. FEATURES

SYNOPSIS

Chapter XV: Donlevy says that Veronica is the obvious suspect. He mentions that the murder weapon has not been found, but that it should be in the park near an old cannon. As soon as Donlevy departs, McCale and Rocky rush out to search for the gun. In the barrel of the old cannon they find a red wig, a woman's. McCale believes this implicates Shari Lynn in some way.

"Well—then." He threw the red wig down on the coffee table between them.

She gasped. "Where'd you get that?"

"In the cannon where you hid it. Now get this straight. Any cop or judge or lawyer is going to know after I produce this wig that your story is phoney. You should have taken more pains with it if you wanted your story to stick. You're in a jam, lady. I think you're going to be in a worse one. You're making a little gamble on your own somewhere along the line and I think you'd better tell me what it is."

Her eyes narrowed for a brief instant.

"I'll give you five minutes. Think it over."

He went over to the desk, holding out his wrist as if timing her by his watch. It was five minutes of two.

* * *

At two o'clock, he turned to her again. She surprised him by beginning to talk almost immediately.

She had found the wig at Vallaincourt's apartment, days before. He had some woman who came there to see him, someone disguised as Veronica. She denied she was the woman. She didn't know, hadn't the slightest idea who could have been checking up on him. No, whoever was watching evidently had to think that only Veronica went there. It was hardly rational, because you'd think the only person to whom it would matter would be Veronica herself. Lately the woman hadn't come any more. Hence the wig which she had found.

"Didn't Vallaincourt confide in you at all?" McCale asked.

"No. Why should he?"

"I've played with the idea that you were once his wife."

A secret look behind the mascara told him he was right, but she said nothing.

He got up, reaching for his hat on a nearby chair. At the door, he turned, his dark-eyed face all sharp points and edges in the light.

"You're in a bad spot." He tried to control the hardness in his voice. "I'd lock the door if I were you."

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He saw fear burning bright in her eyes.

"Is that the advice you were going to give me?"

"Yes," he said.

He became deadly serious. Somehow he had to get through to her. He slipped a business card from his wallet and placed it on a nearby table.

"If you're frightened or just want to talk," he said, "call me at the number on that card. You really should talk, you know. I mean more than you've talked so far. I know you're holding back something important—something that is dangerous to someone. I think you're planning to sell that information. A little blackmail, maybe. But let me warn you, you are dealing with a cold-blooded murderer. You're in danger, Miss Lynn. You know that."

She laughed loudly, hysterically. "You fool," she screamed. "You think you know a lot. Well, what do you know? Just a lot of bunk I told you. You think you can scare me into admitting something. I can take care of myself. What're you trying to do? Get out! Get out!"

* * *

The buzzer sounded in the outer office. McCale looked at his watch It was three in the morning He opened the office door, looked out into the hall, and wondered who could be calling at that hour. Sharp heel clicks told him it was a woman coming up the stairs. The head and shoulders, then the figure of a girl swathed in furs, with a cowl concealing most of her face, rose out of the stairwell.

She saw him, hurried forward with a short laugh and stepped inside hurriedly. She pushed back the cowl of her Persian lamb coat and he saw the black hair and Beardsley face of Victoria Bigelow.

"I'm a mystery woman," she said, giving him an amused smile.

He didn't smile back. "Of course you know you've probably been followed her."

"About my being followed here," she said, "have no fear. The police didn't even put a man on the house. Old unimpeachable family stuff."

"You can't be sure."

"Sure enough." She shrugged the suggestion away.

He watched Victoria with a bored expression as she fingered a book on the desk.

"It's late," he said, breaking the silence. "You came to see me about something. It must be important for you to call at this hour. I hate to hurry you, perhaps you'll tell me what this is all about."

She turned abruptly and came over to him.

"I want you to do something for me."

"What can I do for you?" His voice was urgent and exasperated.

"Well"—she fumbled for a phrase—"you'll probably have an—an opportunity to go through Curt Vallaincourt's things, won't you?"

He looked up, pursing his lips. "We-e-ll." Better not tell her the cupboard was bare.

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"There is something of mine—that is, Curt had some letters that belong to me. I thought—"

"That I might take them out from under the eyes of the police? I'm afraid I wouldn't have the chance. By this time, the place has been gone over with a vacuum cleaner."

"But they wouldn't just be in any ordinary place. I'm sure he had a hiding place somewhere in that apartment. A wall safe or—or something."

"I doubt it. It seems perfectly obvious that you have already looked in every available place."

"Why I—"

". . . Tut, tut. Your intonation gave you away."

"My, you're clever, aren't you?"

"Let us say—well-trained. You visited Vallaincourt often?"

"No I—well, that is, I went there once in a while for cocktails, with a few friends." She was on her guard now. "Often enough to look about for something that was mine."

"Vallaincourt was hanging onto your correspondence."

* * *

"Oh, no."

"Then why didn't you just ask for it?"

"I did, but he'd only laugh and say he'd give them all back when—" She caught herself. She bit her lower lip sullenly.

"When he was safely married to Veronica Bigelow, I'll wager."

"You're quite the Sherlock, aren't you, mister? Listen, can I or can I not buy your services? I want those letters. Do I get them?"

She moved closer to him and stared him in the face boldly, a viperish intensity in her eyes. For a moment, McCale gazed deeply into her vicious little soul.

"Not from me." His voice was as cold as steel.

He turned away from her with a brusqueness intended to convey that he was through with their little interview.

* * *

He spoke quietly. "I'm sorry. I wish you'd take my word for it that there are none of your letters at the Vallaincourt apartment. No letters of any kind, in fact."

She eyed him narrowly. "You've been there already."

He nodded.

"Thanks, but I don't believe you."

"All right," he went on wearily, "don't believe me. But I assure you, there is nothing there. There's not a wall safe or a sliding panel in the whole shebang."

"The police—"

"I hardly think so. I was there before they arrived."

To Be Continued

Colour Blindness

Color blindness is mentioned by modern medical science as a serious handicap these days of speed and multiple machinery. Defective color vision is usually hereditary, and is more common among males than females.

While little can be done in some cases, authorities say that defective color vision is sometimes a sympton of a complaint which can be cured, and those who have difficulty in distinguishing between the primary colors are urged to consult their physicians, since their trouble may arise from correctible deficiency conditions.

BRITAIN'S BATTLE FOR FOOD BEGINS

Except for the modern tractor in the background, this photo might be a painting of "The Sower" by Jean Fancois Millet. It shows Alfred Cross, a Caterham, England, farmhand, sowing barley. He is one of thousands of British farmers who work from dawn to dusk to make up for over six weeks lost in Britain's battle for food, due to disastrous winter weather and floods.

ANNE HIRST
Your Family Counselor

Family: Don't Force Loveless Marriage

'MY FAMILY thinks a girl of 21 should be thinking of marriage—and I myself don't like to think of being an old maid!' So here's a nice girl tying herself in knots because she fears that plump little guy with wings and an arrow may save his shots for younger fry. What a pity!

These are her years for good times—for dancing, parties, movies and sports—dating first one lad and then another and taking her own good time to make a choice. Instead of which, egged on by an impatient family, she regards the whole male sex as potential husbands. No wonder she's "mixed up and worried and doesn't know where to turn!" Her family, of course, have the perfect husband all polished up and waiting on her doorstep. A nice young chap with a good job, who has all the qualifications — except that the girl doesn't love him.

● LOTS OF TIME

Why doesn't she love him? Ah, that's the secret. Another lad is enshrined in her heart, one who's been away, and whom she hasn't seen for a long, long time. She doesn't even know that he returns her love, but there is a small hope smouldering within her, and until that is extinguished she cannot persuade herself to view any other male as husband material.

Yet she confesses she is afraid to dismiss the man her family approves, "for fear I won't find anyone else!"

A generation or so ago, if a girl reached the age of 25 without being married her fate was sealed. The custom of marrying early still exists in many families, and they insist the tradtiion be upheld. If a daughter rebels, she is practically an outcast, discouraged in any career that may appeal, and treated as a disloyal member who refuses to accomplish her main purpose in life!

It takes stubborn courage and a deep faith in on's self to fight the whole family and still keep its good will. Something tells me this girl has both, and that she will keep on nourishing her hope that the man she remembers will soon return, and with love in his heart.

To "Diana": Some of the happiest wives I know did not marry until they were 30. Don't let your family get you down. Let this boy know he has no chance with you, but keep him as a friend if he and your people insist. Meanwhile, strike out on your own, study and make something of yourself, and let the question of marriage wait.

Price Up 233 P.C.

The cocoa bean, source of chocolate candy, has risen as much or more than any other commodity. Last October it sold for nine cents a pound. Today it costs 30 cents a pound, which makes a price rise of 233 per cent in six months.

C.N.E. BULLETIN

Bride's Budget Will Win $100

Are you to be a bride-to-be? Could you use an extra $100? If so, there's a Bride's Budget contest sponsored by the Canadian National Exhibition this year. The winner will net $100 cash prize money.

Prospective brides entering the budget competition may obtain entry forms by writing Exhibition headquarters at the C.N.E. Grounds, Toronto.

All entries must state the bride-elect's five rules for happy marriage. Costs of all trousseau items should be listed on the wedding budget, as well as the cost of linen and the amount the bride-to-be expects her parents to spend on the wedding.

Judges for the bride's competition will be a group of happily married women. Kate Aitken, Director of Women's Activities, points out that arrangements have now been made for similar garments indicated in the prize-winning budget to be displayed for all C.N.E. visitors to see.

Bright young ladies of today are careful to make up their wedding budget in black and white. Some clever bride-to-be will win $100 for her wedding plan this year.

Sunday School Lesson

The Struggle Against Baalism

1 Kings 18:20-21, 30-39.

Golden Text.—Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.—1 Kings 18:37.

All through the Old Testament runs the story of the conflict between true worship and the worship of idols — the moral and intelligent worship of the Supreme Being and the superstitious bowing to wood and stone.

It was a boldly noble conception in which man dared to say that he was made in the image and likeness of God.

Wherever men had this conception of God, no matter how dimly they perceived it, they were lifted toward something better.

* * *

Contrast this with the pagan and his grotesque and ugly objects of worship.

But the people often turned from the God of their fathers to worship graven images and to practice idolatrous rites. This is not true of a few. These were humble and lowly saints and the great prohpets. The Lord reminded Elijah in his mood of depression, following his great victory against the prophets of Baal, the sun god, that there were 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Why were the people drawn to idolatry when their religious heritage ought to have kept them true? For precisely the same reason that people turn to false gods and false ways today—the line of least resistance.

It was the way to indulgence and immoral allurement. The heathen rites had licentious and morally degrading aspects.

* * *

What does all this mean in terms of today? The idols and images are different, but the allurements and the moral degradations are the same. Every daily paper, as its news columns reflect the moral, social, and religious life of our time, reveals how paganism is in our midst.

And it is true, as it was of old, that sin seeks out individuals and peoples. False gods and false worship can destroy us as surely as they destroyed of old, unless the good that is in us prevails over evil.

Shield Baby Eyes

Even when a baby is old enough for sunbaths, the eyes should be given special protection, say the health authorities. An infant should be shielded from direct rays of the sun until able to move about easily. Doctors suggest that the baby be placed with feet pointing away from the sun, so that eyebrows and upper lids shield the eyes. It is also a good idea to line the hood of a baby carriage with some dull, preferably dark, material.

2,000,000 Lambs Lost

British hill farmers lost 2,000,000 lambs in last winter's severe weather instead of the original 250,000 estimated by the government, it was revealed in the House of Commons.

RICH, SPICY **CINNAMON BUNS**

Recipe

Dissolve 1 tsp. sugar in ½ c. lukewarm water, add 1 envelope Royal Fast Rising Dry Yeast. Let mixture stand 10 min. Then stir well. Scald ½ c. milk, add 3 tbs. shortening, ¼ c. sugar, ½ tsp. salt; cool to lukewarm. Add 1 c. sifted flour to make a batter. Add yeast mixture and 1 beaten egg; beat well. Add 2½ c. sifted flour, or enough to make a soft dough. Knead lightly, place in greased bowl. Cover; set in warm place, free from draft. Let rise until doubled in bulk, about 2 hours. When light punch dough down; roll out into oblong piece, about ¼" thick. Brush with 3 tbs. melted shortening or butter. Sprinkle with ¾ c. brown sugar, 1½ tsps. cinnamon, ½ c. raisins. Roll up lengthwise in a tight roll; cut in 1" slices. Place cut-side up, 1" apart in greased shallow baking pan. Cover; let rise in warm place until light, about 1 hour. Bake in 425°F. oven about 20 minutes.

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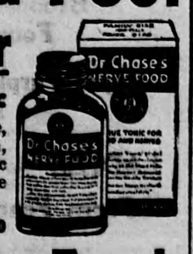

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food

ONLY LIPTON'S BRISK-TASTING TEA GIVES YOU THAT FLAVOR-LIFT

● Yes, it's really exhilarating—that delightful FLAVOR-LIFT you get with *Lipton's Tea*. It's a grand combination of rich, full-bodied tea flavor . . . plus a lift that just makes you feel good all over. And *only Lipton's Tea* gives you this FLAVOR-LIFT . . . because it's the *blend* that makes *Lipton's* and the *blend* is *Lipton's* own secret! Try *Lipton's!* See what a delicious, *brisk-tasting* tea it is . . . what a stimulating lift it gives you! Ask for *Lipton's*, the tea with the FLAVOR-LIFT, at your grocer's *today!*