



# The Crime Cat

By Leslie McFarlane

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Chapter XII

The Schemes of Dandy Carver

Kelvey's fantastic and triumphant arrival at Police Headquarters that night and his subsequent revelations concerning the prisoners he turned over, constituted a bitter pill for Inspector Malloy.

The newspapers grew black in the face next morning and the story monopolized the greater part of the front pages, but The Bulletin scored a distinct advantage over the others in that the story printed under the by-line of Jimmy Thomas contained many facts not to be found in the other papers.

It was common knowledge that the murderer of handsome Harry Heath and Seeley was in the cells that he had confessed and that his accomplices had forced the confession by turning upon him to save their own skins. But the series of events that culminated in the solution to the mystery, the course Kelvey had followed, Jimmy Thomas had that from the detective himself, and Kelvey declined to be interviewed by anyone else. How he sifted the truth from the tangle of lies and false evidence, how he discarded one possible suspect after another, how he discovered the meaning of the laughing cat and ran the killer to earth, made racy reading and elevated Jimmy Thomas to the seventh heaven of rectorial glee.

He had given Jimmy the interview three hours before press-time, in the privacy of his own apartment.

"We'll start at the beginning," said Kelvey, as he commenced his explanation. "As you know, the apartment manager called me to Heath's rooms when he found Heath lying dead. He told me about Heath's sudden decision to vacate the apartment, told me how one of the man's trunks had been returned. The conclusion was obvious, in view of what had happened. Heath had planned flight, for some reason. He had learned of the presence of an enemy but he had not been able to escape. He was not killed in the apartment. The trunk proved that. I examined the trunk and although it was not empty, the clothing in it was not closely packed and there was still room for a human body. Heath had been murdered outside the apartment and had been brought back in the trunk. I found a few blood-stains on the clothing in the trunk that bore out my deduction."

"How about Sam Bodansky?" asked Jimmy. "How did he get into the apartment? How did he get Heath's money? How about the revolver?"

"Sam Bodansky was never in the apartment. The window was locked from the inside. If Sam had been in the apartment and had been frightened out onto the fire-escape by our arrival he certainly could not have locked the window behind him. My reasoning, therefore, was that Sam was trying to get into the place. I found a cigarette case that he had in his pockets at the time. It had the initials 'A.V.'. Why the cigarette case? He meant to leave it in the apartment, along with the revolver, as evidence. Evidence against whom? Arthur Vale, of course."

"Vale had been in the apartment that evening."

"He was. I questioned him and he admitted it. He had found the body of Heath and realized that suspicion might be directed against him. Vale is rather a weak type, not at all courageous. When Vale told me that Heath himself had telephoned asking him to call, I saw that this was but another part of the scheme to brand Vale as the murderer."

"Why did Heath call him up?"

"Heath didn't call him, at that

time, was dead. The murderer called Vale by telephone and Vale never suspected the imposition. If someone calls you by telephone gives the name of a friend and you happen to notice a slight difference in the voice, do you become suspicious? It doesn't occur to you. Vale, then walked directly into the trap, but he did not do what was expected of him. He quietly walked away, without raising the alarm. What next? The plan had gone wrong. The decision to plant the revolver and the cigarette case near Heath's body followed."

"How did they get the cigarette case?"

"A pickpocket. The little forger in the gang is exceedingly light-fingered. He trailed Vale, got the cigarette case, and Sam Bodansky was sent to leave it in the apartment. The fact that Vale had found the body and stolen away would help the scheme immensely."

"The money in Bodansky's pocket?" suggested Jimmy.

"When Heath was murdered he was robbed. The money was given to Bodansky as his share, in payment for his services in planting the evidence. All this came out at headquarters when the gang started talking. At the time, however, I was certain of two things. Heath had not been murdered in the apartment, and someone was trying to throw suspicion on Vale."

"So you suspected Seeley?"

"Naturally. He had two rivals. By killing one and casting suspicion on the other, would rid himself of both and have a clear field for the affections of Miss Standish. I called at Seeley's apartment. I learned he had made an appointment with Heath for the previous afternoon and that he had not returned. This seemed to indicate positively that Seeley had murdered Heath. Then we found Seeley himself murdered."

"Near Vale's boat-house."

"Exactly. There was no doubt that Seeley had been thrown into the river from Vale's launch. I found an indelible pencil in the launch, and the mysterious note Seeley had received the previous day had been written in indelible pencil. I questioned Vale. I could tell that he lied when he said he had not been near the launch. He lied when he said he had gone home directly from the club. There was no doubt he had gone to the boat-house in the intervening time. But Seeley's car had been standing by the roadside long before midnight and at the Halcyon Club I learned that Vale had not left until close upon midnight as he claimed. He left on receipt of a telephone call. There we have it. Seeley's body was lying in the launch when he arrived. He was already terrified by Heath's death. Now, answering a strange summons--ostensibly from the police, this time, as he has since told me--he finds his other rival dead."

"So he lost his nerve and got rid of the body."

"As I said before, Vale is a weak type. He didn't know what he was up against but he knew that things would look bad against him. He took the body out in the boat, dumped it into the river and came back. In his haste and agitation he forgot to tie up the boat."

"You admit you didn't suspect Vale. How did you finally get on the right track?"

"That's where you helped, Jimmy. You found the girl for me. That girl had puzzled me. I wondered why she had gone up to Heath's apartment that night, why this man Bill had followed her. Your theory that she may have killed Heath was reasonable enough, but it blew up when confronted with Seeley's murder, and the efforts that were being made to involve Vale. I went to see this girl, Ruth Fletcher. My interview with her told me a number of things. First of all, she still loved Heath, in spite of the fact that he had deserted her. Really he had not deserted her. He had simply come into enough money to move into better sur-

roundings. The girl was more in love with him than he was with her. Secondly, the girl was trying to shield someone. Obviously, it was this man named Bill. Not Bill Corrigan. It was plain that she had no use for him. When I discovered that her brother's name was Bill also, I knew who had followed her to the apartment that night."

"Why did she go?"

"To warn Heath. Bill, who had been a waiter at the Cheshire Inn, was also a chum of Bill Corrigan. Evidently, Corrigan had been so pleased at the prospect of Heath's death that he had tried to reach Heath on the telephone, and Fletcher hadn't been able to refrain from remarking to his sister that "the sheik that ran out on you is going to get his." He thought she hated Heath by then. She didn't. She tried to reach Heath on the telephone. Then she went to the apartment, but he brother had followed her and forced her to go away. He was afraid the whole business might be traced back to Corrigan and then his own position would not be enviable."

"But when you learned that Bill Fletcher had been a waiter at the Cheshire Inn, what did that tell you? I can't see why you spotted the Inn as being the crux of the whole affair?"

"The laughing cat, Jimmy! Cheshire Inn--the laughing cat! I saw the connection."

"Darned if I see it yet. The Cheshire Inn--It's named after a cheese, isn't it?"

"Not at all. You've read Lewis Carroll? The Cheshire Cat! The Cheshire Cat was famous for its grin. Over the doorway of the Inn is a signboard which has no name upon it, merely a picture of a Cheshire Cat, in the English manner. Poor Heath, who was murdered in the room immediately above, not knowing the name of the place, but seeing the sign of the cat, had drawn that picture on a scrap of paper just before his death, hoping it would lead the police to the scene."

"How did Heath get there?"

"Now we come to the real story behind the two crimes. Heath was not his real name. His name was Dandy Carver, and in his own city he was known as a gambler and confidence man. Dandy Carver was present at the murder of a prominent politician in that city. The politician was murdered by a racketeer known as Eddie Zorn, and although the police did not know who committed the murder they learned that Dandy Carver had been an eyewitness. So Zorn and his crowd had to persuade Dandy to get out of town, and furthermore they had to pay him very substantially for his silence. Dandy was afraid they might consider it cheaper to kill him, so he left the city quietly and in a hurry. He comes here without much money, and lived in a cheap boarding house, with the Fletchers. When he got his bearings he sent Zorn a demand for more money but was smart enough to stipulate that it be sent to him through the lawyer, Pincus, with whom he got in touch. The money was sent to Harry Heath, in care of Pincus, and Zorn still remained ignorant of Dandy Carver's new alias. Thereupon Harry Heath moved away from the Fletchers, to the great resentment of Ruth, and took up quarters in the State Drive apartments. He moved about in the best circles and was making a strong play for the hand of the heiress."

"Where does Seeley come in?"

"Seeley and Pincus were good friends. Pincus admits that he hoped Seeley would win the heiress, and the two of them discussed means of getting Heath out of the picture. Pincus told Seeley about the mysterious payments that came for Heath and somehow Seeley learned Heath's secret. Knowing the name of the city from which the payments came, he went there for a few days and nosed around until he found what he wanted. He knew the police were anxious to get their hands on Dandy Carver, alias Heath. The murder of the politician had caused no end of a

row in city politics and the District Attorney's department had a good sum at its disposal to be turned over to anyone who could tip them off to Dandy Carver's whereabouts, with no questions asked. Seeley, who had been badly nipped in the stock market, needed this money."

"So he betrayed Heath?"

"He would get rid of a rival and get money at the same time. But he did not want to become personally involved. Through Pincus, he communicated with the District Attorney's department, offering to sell information. But the political pot was boiling and there was a Judas in the Attorney's own office. The letter was intercepted and turned over to Zorn. The District Attorney had not seen it, but Zorn knew trouble was brewing. So he took the first train out, and came here. First of all, on the letterhead of the Attorney's office, which had been provided by the spy along with certain stolen cards and documents belonging to the Deputy Attorney, Donlin, he wrote to Pincus and announced that he would come personally to investigate. He signed this letter with Donlin's name. This would protect him for the time being. Zorn then came here and got in touch with Luigi, a gangster who could be depended on, and set himself to find what was what."

"That was why Heath decided to clear out so suddenly?" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Undoubtedly. He either saw Zorn on the street or learned that he was in the city. But in the meantime Zorn had got directly in touch with Seeley. Obviously, it didn't take him long to guess which of Pincus' clients had been the traitor. One thing was certain. Heath was too dangerous, now that his secret was known to the others, and he must be killed. Furthermore, Seeley must be killed also. No doubt Zorn thought Seeley knew a great deal more than he actually did. Zorn got in touch with Seeley and, representing himself as the Deputy District Attorney Donlin, persuaded Seeley to help him in capturing Heath. Pincus, in the meantime, knew nothing of this and Seeley kept quiet in the hope of getting all the reward for himself, without paying Pincus a big commission. There you have it. Zorn arranged with Luigi for the use of the Cheshire Inn, a note was sent to Seeley telling him to lure Heath to this Inn under some pretext. Zorn himself has confessed that in the note he referred to the place as the Cheshire Cat Inn and that he suggested using Bill Fletcher's name if necessary to get Heath out there."

"That explains the writing on the little scraps of paper in the fireplace."

"Zorn had not been wasting time. He knew of the rivalry between Vale, Seeley and Heath and he saw a good chance to throw all suspicion upon Vale, thus covering up his own trail. Heath and Seeley came to the Inn. Heath immediately realized his danger and managed to draw that picture before he finally met his death. Seeley was also murdered. Zorn, alias Donlin was the actual murderer."

"How about Heath's trunk?"

"The trunk checks were in his pocket. Two of the gangsters went to the depot, claimed the trunk and brought it to the Inn. Heath's body was placed inside and taken to the apartment. Zorn telephoned to Vale in Heath's name, asking him to call. Later on, after dark, Seeley's body was placed in Vale's launch and Vale received a message which he believed to be from the police, asking him to come down to the boat-house. And there, Jimmy, you have the whole solution. Zorn, calling himself Donlin, calmly showed up at Pincus' office next morning with the stolen credentials, went with him to Seeley's apartment and fooled Pincus completely. Then he quietly went away, and Pincus would never have known that the man was not really Deputy District Attorney Donlin had it not been for what eventually happened."

"Didn't Zorn fool you too, when you were in the Inn?"

"For a moment, yes. But when he pretended that he had positive evidence against Vale, he overplayed his hand. I knew Heath had not been killed in the apartment and that Seeley had not been killed in the launch. I suspected a trick when he tried to get me into that narrow passage, so I asked him to turn out the light and then, in the darkness, I took good care to stay away from that secret door."

"Why didn't Zorn kill you then and there? You were unarmed."

"He was afraid of Luigi. Luigi had too much on him as it was. He wanted Luigi to kill me, so that they would be in the same boat and they'd have to stick together. Fortunately, when I disguised myself and went to the Inn I took the precaution to have Parkes come along and hang around outside. When Parkes heard the shots he came in by the cellar window and reached the corridor just in time to get me out of an awkward situation."

"Glad to be of service, sir," said the admirable Parkes, appearing from the kitchen. "I have prepared a little lunch--"

"Not for me," declared Jimmy, thrusting his notes into his pocket and reaching for his hat. "I've got to make deadline. When the paper is out I want to bring Inspector Malloy his copy and watch his face while he reads it."

The End.

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