

# The Black Deuce

By W. L. Roper

It was nearing midnight, New Year's eve and the Macambo in Hollywood was aliye with gay, stylishly dressed celebrants.

Suddenly the smile faded from Myra Walton's face. She held out a card toward Bob Bancroft, her publicity man, who was seated at the table with her. 'Is this another of your fool publicity stunts?' she demanded.

Bob smiled. 'Why, it looks like the deuce of spades. Where'd you get it?'

'A little dark man in a black suit laid it beside my plate when your back was turned. I thought for a minute he was a waiter. But if this is one of your—'

'Cut it, Myra,' Bob's voice was a bit edgy. 'I didn't have a thing to do with it. Here let me see it.'

### Inscription

She handed him the card and he studied it closely. 'Hey, look,' he exclaimed, "There's something scribbled on the face of the card."

Slowly he read: 'Chopper Joe, a jungle buzzard, is after your junk. Be careful, Benny.'

Bob continued to study the card thoughtfully. 'It sounds like some underworld lingo,' he said. 'I've

a notion to step into the office and show it to Detective O'Riley.

Myra's eyes flashed fire. 'No, you don't. I've had enough embarrassment from publicity. I don't want anything to do with the police.'

### Mistaken Idea

Bob sighed. 'Yeah, I guess you're right. Since I was sitting here at the table with you when a mysterious little dark man handed you this cryptic message, both the cops and the press boys would jump at the conclusion that it was some kind of a screwy stunt to get your name in the papers.'

Myra smiled, but her hand trembled slightly as she lifted her



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glass. 'Here's to a happy, prosperous New Year,' she said.

Bob's roadster was purring along Sunset toward downtown Hollywood, when the big black sedan swung alongside and crowded him to the curb. From the rear window of the sedan protruded the nose of a submachine gun.

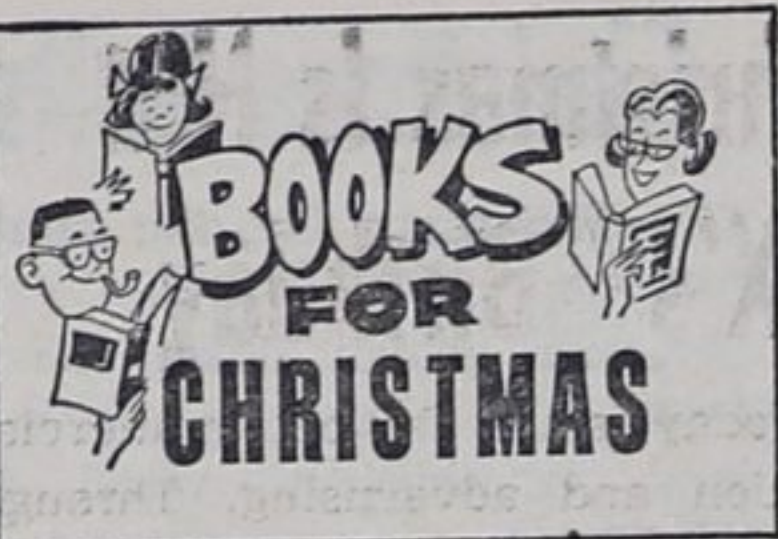
'Where's the junk, Sadie?' a deep voice growled. 'Talk up. We're in a hurry.'

'My name's not Sadie and I don't know what you're talking about,' Myra said.

### Rescue

On the road behind them sounded a siren. A police car with red lights flashing was approaching. Quickly letting go of her wrist, the man sprang back in the black sedan. It roared away as the police car stopped behind Bob's roadster.

Bob pointed excitedly at the fleeing sedan. 'Get that car,' he



Toys, of course, are the first thing we think of when we start running down the list of young folks on our gift list. For the very young, that is. When we start deciding what to give to the pre-teen and early teen set, we have to use a bit of imagination as well as a bit of realistic thinking. Too often, we overlook the wonderful world of books.

To the impressionable youngster, good books open the door to adventure, travel, mystery, to recreation and education.

Books are easy to select and give. All one must know is the age, reading ability and capacity, and interests of the youngster for whom the gift is intended. While books are ageless, youngsters are not; they have their own individual likes and dislikes and a book on a subject in which they are not interested would be as useless to them as a shirt four sizes too big. The same is true if the subject matter of the book is 'too old' or 'too young'. There is no such thing as a book for youngsters "6 to 16". The age span is too wide and the diversity of interests will be even wider.

### Buy Wisely

Some well-intending persons buy books or book sets for the school-age as gifts for infants, thinking they are purchasing a 'lasting' gift. Actually, they are wasting their money. If the books are not torn or misplaced by the time the child is old enough to read and appreciate them, most likely the information contained in the books is outdated.

Books for youngsters are written for a select age group—not for a select age. At 13, two boys may have entirely different reading tastes—as well as reading abilities.

Books make excellent gifts for persons of all ages. But, like a glove or a shoe, they must 'fit' the recipient if they are to be fully appreciated.

### Give Toy Box

The do-it-yourselfer, who is handy with hammer and saw can come up with a good, personalized gift for his favorite youngster—a box to hold all the toys he will receive from others. Both the child and the parents will appreciate a toy chest large enough to hold the Christmas collection. For those not so handy with hammer and saw, an unpainted chest can be purchased inexpensively; a couple of coats of enamel will make it bright and the name stenciled on the front adds that 'personal' touch.

shouted. 'They're gangsters. Got a Tommy gun and—'

'Sure, we know,' Captain O'Riley replied. 'We've just radioed ahead. Did they hurt you? That deuce of spades we found on your table with a warning message scribbled on it sent us out looking for you.'

Later at Central police headquarters downtown, O'Riley and the officers on the narcotic detail explained the rest of the mystery.

'Those gorillas in the sedan were after Sadie McCabe Gomez, the dope queen who's been running the stuff between Tia Juana and Hollywood,' O'Riley explained. 'She tried to make-up to look like you, Miss Walton, and that caused the confusion. Government agents captured Sadie early this evening. She won't be masquerading as you any more for awhile. Why, even that dark guy, Benny, one of her pigeons, who left the warning card at your table, was fooled by the resemblance.'

As Myra's dark eyes flashed angrily, O'Riley added: 'Neither he nor the gorillas who were after Sadie's stuff had noticed that her eyes are a pale green, not a beautiful brown like yours.' He smiled at Myra. She smiled back at him.



Warmest greetings at the Holiday time! May this be the most joyous of Yuletide seasons for you and yours.

MATABANICK HOTEL  
HAILEYBURY

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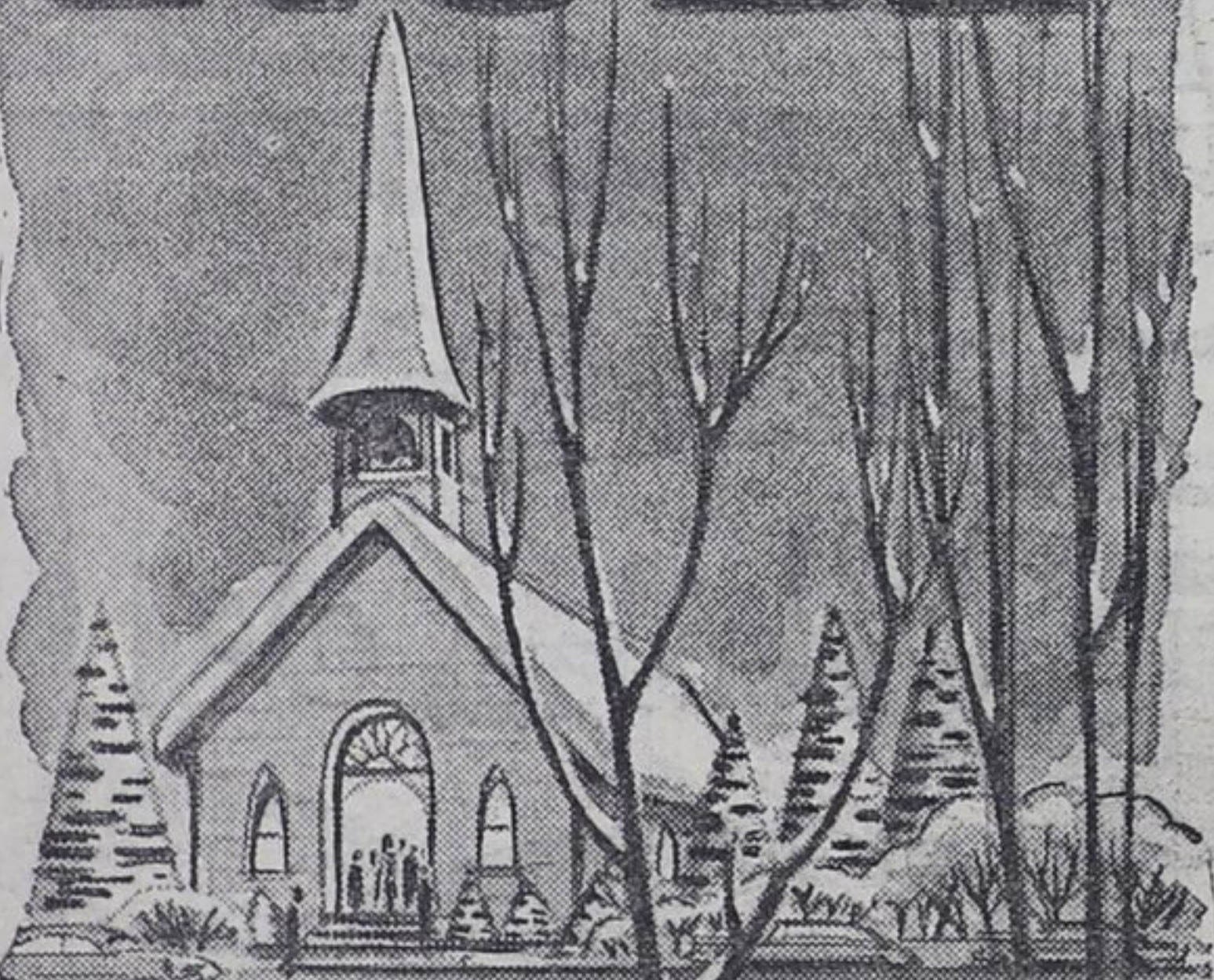


Greetings

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