

Tribute cont'd from pg. 14

the rector's study, to stand gazing up silently at him, as he made the phone call. "What's broke, Daddy?" the little boy asked when his father had hung up the phone. "Mommy said something broke and failed down and the big chine had to come fix it."

"That's about it, sport," he said, picking the little boy up in his arms and giving him a hug. "Why don't you play with your cars for a few minutes while I talk to Mommy."

"Okay, Daddy," the boy said, returning his father's hug, then wriggling from his arms to run to his room to get his toy cars.

Joan looked up expectantly as her husband returned to the kitchen. "Well?" she prompted.

"The porch on the Steele's mausoleum collapsed as William Thorn was entering the building. Thorn is dead. They pulled the stone out of the way so they could see who it was." He shook his head in disbelief. "It is Thorn."

"Poor Amy," Joan cried.

"Yes. Poor Amy," Frank repeated.

Neither thought it strange that they were more concerned for the daughter, than for the father whose life had been ended. Amy poured them a cup of coffee, put in the cream a sugar, and handed Frank his. They sipped in silence.

Almost as if he had forgotten, Frank added, "Fairchild has taken Samuel Monday into custody."

"What on earth for?" Joan gasped.

"It seems he rigged the stone over the porch to topple if someone tampered with it. He keeps his liquor in the mausoleum and someone... or so he says... has been borrowing from his supply."

"One can't but wonder what the other spirits think of Sam's spirits," Joan pondered with dry humor.

For a moment images of ghostly beings drinking toasts with Sam's illicit stock, came to their mind, the macabre humor of it, started them laughing. "Oh, Joan," Frank gasped between great guffaws of laughter, "and to think the latter day Steeles had all signed the pledge." Hilarity overtook them again.

It was thus that the corporal and John Mullet found them, doubled over with mirth.

"I saw nothing funny with this mornings events," the rector observed rather stiffly.

"Sorry, John," Joan said catching her breath. "It was all my fault. I asked Frank how he thought the spirits in the mausoleum mixed."

"I could see them holding up glasses at midnight and toasting each other," Frank explained, getting control of himself. "Maybe we just needed something to laugh at," he suggested. "Here I'll pour you a coffee. You could probably drink one about now."

"Don't mind me. Its just that people of my parish are being disposed of in such a ruthless fashion. And then seeing old Monday being led off by two constables.... well, its a bit unsettling," the reverend said defensively.

"Has Dr. Fegan phoned?" Fairchild asked, accepting his cup of coffee. "If he doesn't contact us soon, we'll have to move the body."

Joan asked quietly, "Has anyone thought of notifying Amy?"

John paled with remorse, "I had forgotten all about Amy. We'll have to tell her quickly. Before she starts wondering at his not being home." He set his cup down. "I'll phone the Grayson's and have them meet me there.... they meant so much to each other, William and Amy."

"I'll go with you," Joan offered. "Frank, you and Teddy can make yourselves some lunch. Better still, why don't you two go down street for a hamburger. That will keep him from asking questions about the backhoe and things going on in the cemetery."

"Leave him to me. You just worry about Amy." Frank gave his wife a quick kiss and held her close for a moment.

Fairchild put his cup down, "Thanks for the coffee. I'll go out to the car and see if I can raise Jeremy again. If not, we'll just send the body to the morgue." he stated.

Lunch was ready. Amy set a little bouquet of pansies from the garden in the center of the table, stepped back and looked at the table. She had taken special pains with lunch to please her father, even though she had to admit to herself, he was getting harder and harder to please. She knew how he hated to have his plans disturbed, and could guess at his reaction when she told him that Hilda was going to Kingston with Dr. Fegan. Maybe the lunch would offset his disappointment. It would be a relief to get away from his dependency, his moods and petty tantrums, when she went west, but she would miss Edward.

Where was her father? Probably working on something in his workshop and had forgotten the time. She would give him a few minutes more, then go down and get him. The doorbell... now who would come by just at lunch time. She wiped her hands on a towel and went through the house to get the door.

"Edward... Joan... Rev. Mullet. What?... Has something happened?... Come in," she said, the greeting pouring out in startled confusion. "Not Hilda?" she gasped in dread.

"No, my dear, not Hilda," Edward replied taking her hands in his. "Your father."

"But he's working in the garden or in his shop," she protested.

"My dear, he went to the Steeles' mausoleum and was crushed by the stones of the porch. They fell on him as he was entering," Edward explained gently. "It was very quick."

"But he can't be dead. I was just going to call him to lunch," Amy dismissed his explanation with the irrelevance of one in shock.

"I'm sorry my dear, but he is dead." John Mullet spoke for the first time. "I identified him at the scene."

Edward, his arm around Amy's shoulder, led her into the sitting room to the chesterfield and sat down beside her. She turned to look up at him, "But he can't be. I saw him outside not that long ago," she protested.

"I'm sorry," was all he could think to say.

Tribute cont'd pg. 16