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PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

WHAT HAPPENED AT nurse, specializing in the care of child- than you think. Provided Ralph wasn't grown with moss.

the Montalban family nearly ninety event years of age.

who has been master of the family seat it," said Molly. "There might even be for twenty years. He has three sons: smash (unmarried).

RALPH: (married) CHARLES, 21 (unmarried). and two unmarried daughters ELSTE and CLEONE.

Montalban in mysterious circumstances LAWRENCE SEVERN: Secretary- works itself out in the end." companion to the veteran Sir John.

CHAPTER VII MOLLY LEARNS MORE

tops of the trees of the Montalban park insolent swirl of the cotion cloak, and er. Robert just interests me, that's all. immobile against a pale, cloudless sky, the door slammed behind her. Two of the Montalban family were disporting themselves in the clear, deep a rum household. Do they really care end of the lake, nearest the inlet of the so little for each other, or is it a pose?" stream. Sand broke the dark soil under this stretch, and even made a narrow strip of beach for bathing along old, so they said, and in terms of news- major operations and-the results you the distant edge of the water; but Charles and Robert Montalban preferred to dive from the balustrade. To Molly, watching from the window of the day nursery, it was startling at first to see the distorted body of Robert plunge clean into the water beside him, silently, without a ripple, and turn, and bans. flash away under water at an otter's easy speed.

al in finding this queer dexterity in body leaned slightly forward for the No one here knows it, except probably another element revealing itself in one crippled for life upon land. Some sort accident of automatic remedying of a fate thrown out of balance; one of nature's compensations.

Cleone, dressed for swimming and carrying a scarlet wrap, came in while she was still standing at the window and instantly came to look over her shoulder.

"I was watching your brother," said Molly. "Isn't it fortunate there's still something he can do so we'l?"

"Oh, Rob! He's like a fish. Nothing in the sight of Robert poised for his pleases him more than to show off for an audience. He probably knows you're watching and admiring him.

"Probably," said Molly, resisting the temptation to spring away from the window at once. She turned and looked at the interrupter. She noted that Cleone was not afraid to wear gay colours, even if her qualities were no longer the qualities of youth. She turned her thin shoulder, and showed a half-detached shoulder-strap. "Be an angel, will you, and put

stitch in it for me. Molly sewed the strap into pace, and was entertained in the process. Cleone was by no means a random talker; she talked constantly and with purpose, but the purpose was her own satisfaction. Molly had learned to venture no protest and no opinion during there enlightening conversations. If she kept slience the flow was stimulated.

"Don't try and work up any sympathy for Robert," said Cleone. "He doesn't need it. I don't think he wants it. He was never a Charles, wanting to rush away and climb mountains when things went wrong. No. Rob shuts himself into his little study and gets drunk on books.

She witched her shoulder. "I can' see your face. Are you looking disapproving? What's the use of my talking this way unless you are?"

Molly regarded the thin, taut figure before her. Severn was right; a woman could do it. The sill of the window was low, and one quick lift would hurl Cleone over the edge. "You're a long time," said Cleone

"Was I positively coming to pieces?" "No, it's nearly done now. Was Robert very handsome before his accident? He has fine shoulders and head now, you know."

"Yes, I suppose he was worth glance. No Montalban could ever be beautiful to look at, of course. That was one of the things I had against Mailia. Good-looking was the best one could ever say of me, even by the wildest stretch of imagination. She was quite indecently beautiful. Did you ever see a photograph of her?"

"Yes, I have. She was rather lovely "I often wonder who my benefactor was," said Cleone thoughtfully. "Your benefactor?"

"Whoever threw her out of the window. I might have done it myse'fthat way or some other way-if she'd stayed in the same house with me much longer. So I certainly owe a vote of thanks to the person who relieved me of the jcb." She wriggled her shoulders. "Do come round where I can see you, Nurse Balcon. You have such a delightfully disapproving face; I love to see it getting primmer and prim-

Molly laughed. There was an itch in her fingers to jab the needle well in under the sharp shoulder-blade.

"I said I often wonder," remarked Cleone, going off at a tangent. "But as a matter of fact, there are frequent times when I feel morally certain. Opportunity-well, we all had that. On the whole I'm inclined to think my apple 'rees in the orchard, "I like it eyes averted. Neither of them had anyesteemed parent was the chosen vessel." "Do you really know what you're | with it is that it didn't happen." saying?" asked Molly.

"But naturally! Why not? I've no proof; no one has any proof; no one ever will have any proof. That's the happened to be sitting up with a very whole glorious point of it. He not only did it, he did it well; and all to have his hope from a disastrous marriage.

"I think you're talking through your hat," said Molly brusquely. "Is it likely your father would sit back and let Ralph stand his trial for something he'd done himself?"

'What's a murder trial more or less all. to a Montalban? In the Middle Ages afraid that's that." actually condemned, father could hold |

"You should call on Detective-Ser- you here when it happened?" ROBERT MONTALBAN: His son, geant Walden and tell him all about a reward for useful information. There ROBERT, Junior, crippled in a road you are, the strap's quite safe now." "Thank you. For the advice, too. Some day I may take it. But I'm

afraid they'd need evidence. "I'm afraid so, too."

BARBARA MONTALBAN: Wife of of murder. Especially since Robert got crippled; after all, he has nothing | til-that happened." MAILIA DAUNT: Met her death at but Charles to live for now. Ralph's nothing. Ah, well - no doubt it all be so. There isn't much that woman laughed, slinging her scarlet wrap about her shoulders. "Don't bother to look wouldn't do for them. That was what through the window any more, nurse. gave me the idea she might have killed

> "This," thought Molly, "is certainly paper files seven years was not so great | see. It was a ghastly blow for his trouble to look up the reports of that any considerable brains, you know." motor smash; not for any possible light it could shed upon recent events, but car, too, weren't there? Mrs. Forester because she began to be greedy for in- said so." formation about these baffling Montal-

There was, in reality, nothing unusu- feet curved into a firm grip, his twisted me her name, because I don't know it

It was not likely, however, that she would have thought about it again if and she hadn't a shady business. it had not been for Mrs. Forester. The don't see that her stepfather's sins need housekeeper was standing at the window of her sitting-room when Molly went down the stairs. The room was of the house, and from this window the edge of the terrace and the rim of the lake could just be seen. Mrs. Forester also, it seemed, felt fascinated interes:

Robert raised his arms and plunged. "He has a wonderful dive, hasn't he?" said Molly. "I've just been watching

him from the nursery window." "It's a blessing there's something he can still do," said Mrs. Forester with sudden warmth. "When I think how fine he used to be! He was never so tall as Mr. Charle,s of course, but he was as likely a young man as you could wish to see. And I have heard that he was looking forward to a promising career in the diplomatic service, but when-it happened-he seemed to give suppose it was no use going on. They at the time." talk about another operation on his back, but nobody seems in any hurry to fix it up, and it's my belief they know

it's too dangerous. "It must have been a ghastly smash to break him up like that," said Molly. How did it happen? Was he driving

"No, his father was driving," said Mrs. Forester. "It was no fault of kept up a heavy drain of fees for a his, though. The other man was drunk whole year?" -or so they said at the inquest." "Ch, he was killed, then, was he? As a rule, the boot's on the other foot; and the one to get killed is the inno-

cent party. Did it happen round here?" "No, somewhere in Sussex, I believe. Mr. Montalban and Mr. Robert were mc oring back together from a business visit to some bigwig at his country house, and this man drove out on them at a crossroads. They hadn't a chance. Both the cars were smarned to pieces, and it's a miracle of all things the two

"The two women?" "The man's wife and daughter-or step-daughter, or something. I forget the exact relationship. It was as a bad

women weren' killed as well."

business all round. I did read something about the women being put in a scmething badly wrong about them, at any rate-no; normal people.' "Too bad," said Molly. "I wonder

what happened to them. "I'm no concerned for them. What

always aggravated me was that they should get off so light from a smash hat made poor Mr. Robert-what he is ncw." Her face was vindictive. She had, it seemed, if no tenderness, ferocious loyalies; and the was a big astic thought took possession of Melly's mind. Who would more willingly wipe out any human embarrassment which set i self in the way of a Monta ban? Much less a greedy, preda cry Mailia who had set herself

Yet it was too fantastic. She would be aspecting the parlour-maid next Later, much later in the day, when he baby was safely asleep in his cot, and dinner was over, Molly told Severn | the seat, and added abrup'ly: "I must ebout the amazing theory that Mrs. Forester had killed Mailia Daunt. He treated it more gravely than she had

quarely in the way of them all!

expected, but was not excited. immensely. The only thing wrong thing more to may.

"How do you know?" "It was simple routine police business. At the hour of the tragedy she ick between-maid. The head househeard the scream. So-exit Mrs. Forester. I'm sorry. I really am sorry. She would have made a marvellous

rather like the affair settled once for lived on a plantation!

Story we did what we like in these parts. They walked to the far end of the MOLLY BALSON: A young London No, my dear, our nerves are better orchard to a rustic seat parily over-

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"There's another thing I've been SIR JOHN MONTALBAN: Head of his tongue, and sit tight, and wait the wondering about," said Molly, spating "Robert's accident. Were "No, it was before my time by two

or three years. But what can it conceivably have to do with Mailia and

"Nothing I suppose. This was qui'e a different wondering. I was watching him in the water to-day, and it brings it home rather how helpless he is on "I could tell them he's quite capable land. Mrs. Forester tells me he was destined for the diplomatic service un-

"She'll know. If she says it, it must She doesn't know about the Montalbans.' My dive is not worth your notice. I for them. No, I wasn't trying to con-It was a hot day, and still, with the flop badly." She departed with an nect up the car smash with the murd-Do you know anything about the case?"

"A little. It was caused by a drunken driver, who turned ou -when they'd identified him-to be a fellow called She began to wonder, in an idle way. Sacchetti. He was killed, and Robert about Robert's accident. Seven years got a year of lying on his back, two a time. She might, some day, go to the father. Robert was the only one with

"There were two women in the other "Fellow's wife, and a young girl -

her daughter, but not his, as far as I She went back to the window. Robert remember. She'd been married twice; was standing upon the balus rade, its the girl was English. And don't ask dive. She found herself resenting his the two Roberts. Owing to the subject's youth her name was suppressed." "Why? She wasn't driving the car

> ever have affected her. "She had other qualities not usually advertised. Like her mother before

in a small wing built out from the end her. They were both of them rotten with cocaine." "Ch!" said Molly slowly, and not without horror. "So that was the sort

of home they were put into!" Severn lit a cigaretite. "Someone seems to have been telling this tale

"Not so well. Go on. What was it, a court order that they should be comcelled to undergo treatment? I don't know how these things are done." "I know how this one was done. Montalban had it done, and he paid

for their treatment.' "And were they grateful?"

"Would you be?" Molly laughed. "A long time afterwards, I might be. From an outsider's point of view it was more than generour of him. Poor creatures, though, I up all hope of ever doing anything. I shouldn't be surprised they loathed him

"Quite likely. But not for long at least for one of them. The woman died inside three months. She was too

"And the girl?" "They cured her. She was only sixteen. She came cut of the home after a year, and that was that." "Do you mean to tell me that they

Severn nodded. "And three weeks over, to be exact. Yes, Montalban paid out steadily for a year from an estate by no means rich, to rehabilitate a girl who was nothing to him but a bad memory, and whom he'd seen personally only once. You never know what

a Montalban will do.' "Where was the home?" asked Molly "I hardly know. I remember the name of it, though. It was the Margaret Seward Institute."

Molly gave a sharp exclamation which drew his eyes to her face at once. "You know it?"

"The same fund endowed a clinic at the London hospital where I used to work. It would be the easiest thing in the world for me to get into touch with the Matron there; I correspond-rather home, or some such thing. There was irregularly, but I do correspond—with one of her nursing sisters

He regarded her dazily over the glowing end of his cigarette 'My dear girl, what do you hope to find there? What does all this past

history matter? It hasn't any bearing on the Daunt business. And by the way, what do you care about the Daunt business?" She shrugged her shoulders. "I doesn't affect me, of course. Still, I'd

wcman, large-boned, strong. A fan- be glad if it were cleared up. My patient would have a better chance and I should be happier. One ge's to know people and the issue begins to matter guite considerably.'

"You don't believe Charles did it," he reminded her, with an odd gleam in his

"I'm sure he didn't. I haven't menticned Charles. There are other people in 'his house besides Charles." Having said so much, she got up suddenly from go back and see if Mrs. Montalban wants anything.

Severn arose in his turn, and fell into step beside her as she set off at a ra-"I like it," he said, they ducked ther hurried pace in the direction of their heads under the low boughs of the house. She walked fast, with her

(To be Continued)

North Bay Nugget:-Modern speech . . In a Main stem coffee shop this a.m. we overheard a fellow telling another chap about his new home. 'It's maid was there, too. They all three ideally located," he said. "Out in the snuburbs, you know!"

nounced rubber could be made from ily, is of no use to Dora. She finds no "I'm sorry, too. Because I should the lowly dandelion, we had no idea we place to insert the pencil to be sharpened.

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Ladies Auxiliary at Hall

are being shipped by the fund. Among the ladies present were: Mrs. B. Richards, Mrs. C. Wheeler, Mrs. A. Borland, Senior, Mrs. W. Wilkinson, Mrs. W. Rowe, Mrs. D. Ellis, Mrs. C. Stevens, Mrs. K. O. Grady, Mrs. Roy, Mrs. Robt. Hardy, Mrs. W. A. Devine, Mrs. R. Harrison, Mrs G. Ruest, and son Bobbie, Mrs. A. Cameron, Mrs. W. Shornys, Mrs. H. Pope, Mrs. A. Borland Jr., and daughter, Elizabeth, Miss M. Borland, Mrs. Hinds, Mrs. Charlton, Mrs. E. Tilley, Mrs. E. George, Mrs.

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