

MURDER OF HAZEL MOR

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS
A party of neighbors gathered at the home of Mrs. Willett and her daughter Violet, turned to table tipping for amusement. Seated around the table were Mrs. and Miss Willett, Mr. Duke, Mr. Ryeroff, who dabbles in the psychic, Ronald Garfield and Major Burnaby. For two months the Willetts had been occupying the house of Captain Joseph Trevelyan, who had been unable to resist an offer of 12 guineas a month rent and had taken a small house for himself six miles distant. Major Burnaby, his friend, occupied one of the five cottages Trevelyan built on land near his house. All those seated at the table were startled when a "spirit" message stated that Captain Trevelyan had been murdered. Burnaby walks the six miles through heavy snow and finds his friend dead. He had been struck on the head by a green batz tube. Police Inspector Narracott questioned Robert Evans, a retired naval man, who worked for Trevelyan.

Inspector Narracott nodded thoughtfully. "This Mrs. Willett," he said casually. "Was she an old friend or acquaintance of the captain's?" "Oh! no, sir, she was quite a stranger to him." "You are sure of that?" said the inspector, sharply. "I ask because it is a very curious time of year for a let. On the other hand, if this Mrs. Willett was acquainted with Captain Trevelyan and knew the house, she might have written to him and suggested taking it."

Evans shook his head. "Was the agent—Williamson—that wrote, said they had an offer from a lady?"

Inspector Narracott frowned. He found this business of the letting of Sittaford House distinctly odd.

"Captain Trevelyan and Mrs. Willett met, I suppose?" he asked.

"Oh! yes. She came to see the house and he took her over it."

"And you're positive they hadn't met before?"

"Oh! quite, sir."

"Did they—er—?" the inspector asked, as he tried to frame the question naturally. "Did they get on well together? Were they friendly?"

"The lady was. A faint smile crossed Evans' lips. "All over him, as you might say. Admiring the house, and asking him if he'd planned the building of it. Altogether laying it on thick, as you might say."

"And the captain?"

"The smile broadened.

"That sort of gushing lady wasn't likely to cut any ice with him. Polite, he was, but nothing more. And declined her invitations."

"Invitations?"

"Yes, to consider the house as his own any time, and drop in, that's how she put it—drop in. You don't drop in to a place when you're living six miles away."

"She seemed anxious to well—to see something of the captain?"

Narracott was wondering. Was that the reason for the taking of the house? Was it only a prelude to the making of Captain Trevelyan's acquaintance? Was that the real game?

Evans' answer was not very helpful.

"She's a very hospitable lady, by all accounts. Someone in to lunch or dinner every day."

Narracott nodded. He could learn so much more here. But he determined to seek an interview with this Mrs. Willett at an early date. Her abrupt arrival revealed looking into.

"Come on, Pollock, we'll go upstairs now," he said. They left Evans in the dining-room.

"All right, do you think?" asked the sergeant in a low voice, jerking his head over his shoulder in the direction of the closed dining-room door.

"He seems so," said the inspector. "But one never knows. He's no fool, that fellow, whatever else he is. His story seems straight forward enough. Perfectly clear and above board."

And with this pronouncement, very typical of his careful and suspicious mind, the inspector proceeded to search the rooms on the first floor.

There were three bedrooms and a bathroom. Two of the bedrooms were empty and had clearly not been entered for some weeks. The third, Captain Trevelyan's own room, was in exquisite and apple-pie order. Inspector Narracott moored about in it, opening drawers and cupboards. Everything was in its right place. It was the room of a man almost fanatically tidy and neat in his habits. Narracott found

ished his inspection and glanced into the adjoining bathroom. Here, too, everything was in order. Then he shook his head.

"Nothing here," he said.

"There are the papers in the desk in the study. You had better go through those, Pollock. I'll tell Evans he can go. I may call round and see him at his own place later."

Inspector Narracott left to have a talk with Major Burnaby, but he was destined to see the major until he had had a protracted interview with Mrs. Belling—licensed proprietress of the Three Crowns. Mrs. Belling was fat and excitable, and so voluble that there was nothing to be done but to listen patiently until such time as the stream of conversation should dry up.

"Yes, Mr. Narracott," she proceeded in answer to his question. "The Major is having his breakfast now. You will find him in the coffee-room. And what kind of a night he has passed with no pajamas or anything, and me a widow woman with nothing to lend him, I can't say, I am sure. Said it made no matter, he did—all upset and queer he was—and no wonder with his best friend murdered."

Very nice gentlemen, the two of them, though the captain had the reputation of being close with his money. Ah, well, well, I have always thought it dangerous to live up to Sittaford, miles away from anywhere, and here's the captain struck down in Exhampton itself. It's always what you don't expect in this life that happens, isn't it, Mr. Narracott?"

The inspector said that undoubtedly it was. Then he added:

"Who did you have staying here yesterday, Mrs. Belling? Any strangers?"

"Now, let me see. There was Mr. Moresby and Mr. Jones—commercial gentlemen they are, and there was a young gentleman from London. Nobody else. It stands to reason there wouldn't be this time of year. Very quiet here in the winter. Oh, and there was another young gentleman—arriving by the last train. Nobby young fellow. I call him. He isn't up yet."

"The last train?" said the inspector.

"That gets in at ten o'clock, eh? I don't think we need trouble ourselves about him. What about the others—only the one from London? Did you know him?"

"Never seen him before in my life. Not a commercial gentleman, Oh, no—a cut above that. I can't remember him name for the moment—but you'll find it in the register. Left on the first train to Exeter this morning, he did. Six ten. Rather curious. What did he want down here anyway, that's what I'd like to know."

"He didn't mention his business?"

"Not a word."

"Did he go out at all?"

"Arrived at lunch time, went out about half past four and came in about twenty past six."

"Where did he go when he went out?"

"I haven't the remotest idea, sir. May have been just for a stroll like. That was before the snow came, but it wasn't what you might call a pleasant day for walking."

"Went out at half past four and returned about twenty past six," said the inspector thoughtfully. "That's rather odd. He didn't mention Captain Trevelyan?"

Mrs. Belling shook her head decisively.

"No, Mr. Narracott, he didn't mention anybody at all. Kept himself to himself, he did. A nice looking young fellow—but worried, I should say."

The inspector nodded and stepped across to inspect the register.

"James Pearson, London," said the inspector. "Well—that doesn't tell us much. We'll have to make a few inquiries about Mr. James Pearson."

Then he strode off to the coffee-room in search of Major Burnaby.

The Major was the only occupant of the room. He was drinking some rather muddy looking coffee and the Times was propped up in front of him.

"Major Burnaby?"

"That's my name."

"I am Inspector Narracott from Exeter."

"Good morning, inspector. Any forrarder?"

"Yes, sir, I think we are a little forrarder, I think I can safely say that."

"Glad to hear it," said the major drily. His attitude was one of resigned disbelief.

"Now there are just one or two points I would like some information on, Major Burnaby," said the inspector. "and I think you can probably tell me what I want to know."

"Do what I can," said Burnaby.

"Had Captain Trevelyan any enemies to your knowledge?"

"Not a figger in the world," Burnaby was decisive.

"This man, Evans—do you yourself consider him trustworthy?"

"Should think so. Trevelyan trusted him, I know."

"There was no ill feeling about this marriage of his?"

"Not ill feeling, no. Trevelyan was annoyed—didn't like his habits upset. Old bachelor, you know."

"Talking of bachelors, that's another point. Captain Trevelyan was unmarried—do you know if he made a will? And in the event of there

Brother of Champ



This will introduce "Buddy" Baer, brother of Max, who defeated Max Schmeling, Bud's quite a hand with his fists, too.

being no will, have you any idea who would inherit his estate?"

"Trevelyan made a will," said Burnaby promptly.

"Ah—you know that."

"Yes. Made me executor. Told me so."

"Do you know how he left his money?"

"That I can't say."

"I understand he was very comfortably off?"

"Trevelyan was a rich man," replied Burnaby. "I should say he was much better off than anyone round here suspected."

"What relations had he—do you know?"

"He'd a sister and some nephews and nieces I believe. Never saw much of any of them, but there was no quarrel."

"About this will, do you know where he kept it?"

"It's at Walters & Kirkwood—the solicitors here in Exhampton. They drew it up for him."

"Then, perhaps, Major Burnaby, as you are executor, I wonder if you would come round to Walters & Kirkwood with me now. I should like to have an idea of the contents of that will as soon as possible."

Burnaby looked up alertly.

"What's in the wind?" he said.

"What's the will got to do with it?" Inspector Narracott was not disposed to show his hand too soon.

"The case isn't such plain sailing as we thought," he said. "By the way, there's another question I want to ask you. I understand, Major Burnaby, that you asked Dr. Warren whether death had occurred at five and twenty minutes past five?"

"Well," said the Major gruffly. "What made you select that exact time, Mayor?"

"Why shouldn't I?" said Burnaby.

"Well—something must have put it into your head."

There was quite a pause before Major Burnaby replied. Inspector Narracott's interest was aroused. The Major had something which he quite patently wished to conceal.

"Are you ready?" she asked.

Jack nodded briefly and climbed into the cockpit. He was beginning to wonder if he had been too quixotic in his offer to help. The whole equipment seemed a little below par. No mechanic; an out-of-date type of machine; an engine which sounded as though it was well worn. Only the girl herself still retained his confidence. She had started up with the sangfroid of an old-timer.

"She 'took off' in a climbing turn. Jack realized at once that, whatever the shortcomings of her machine, that she was a first-class pilot. Her touch on the controls was as delicate as a caress. She humored her engine instead of racing it. He had no further qualms and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the "flip."

He glanced over the side of his cockpit. The school where the accident had occurred was plainly visible. Jack pictured the feelings of the pilot who had crashed there. It was ghastly to know one was going to write off a number of human lives and be able to do nothing about it.

In the front cockpit, Sonia was concerned solely with earning her money.

This aeroplane venture had been a failure from the start. She had bought the machine with borrowed money. It was second-hand, and, although it had seemed all right when she tested it in a trial flight, the en-

TWO FOR LUCK

By CAPT. A. O. DOLLARD, V.C.

Her outfit was established in a roped-off enclosure at the corner of a flat field on the outskirts of the fair. Her aeroplane, jolly painted in red and blue, had a ladder leaning invitingly against the fuselage. A board suggested "an aerial view of the fair and surrounding country" for the modest sum of five shillings per head.

Sonia Carrington, smartly attired in workmanlike polo jumper and breeches, waited patiently for customer. She had waited since the fair opened, but no one had had the temerity to engage her services.

Jack Dunthorne stood at the back of the crowd and watched her admiringly. Underneath the smiling curve of her lips he could see her little chin jutting out. Plucky kid!

Plucky but misguided. Didn't she read the papers? Didn't she know that, less than a month before, another joy-riding pilot had crashed in the school playground of this very town? He had killed and seriously injured a dozen children, but had escaped himself.

The incident was too fresh in the minds of the local inhabitants for them to show any degree of airmindedness. Go up in an aeroplane? No fear! And with a girl, too! Not likely!

He was half inclined to speak to her; to tell her what she was up against. Perhaps he had better not. These modern girls were very independent.

He shrugged his shoulders and began to walk away. He had covered about a hundred yards when a sudden clamour made him swing round. Two hulking youths had slipped through the ropes and were advancing, bent on mischief.

Jack broke into a run; elbowed his way sternly through the crowd; vaulted into the enclosure; ranged himself alongside the white-faced girl.

"Come out of that!" he cried, fiercely.

The louts retired sheepishly. Jack, red-hot with anger, addressed the crowd.

"If you don't intend to patronize this lady, why the devil don't you go away and leave her alone?"

"Why don't you?" retorted some wag at the back.

"Ay! Go up yourself!" they called. Jack turned to Sonia without hesitation.

"Will you take me?" he smiled. She flushed self-consciously.

"Yes, but—I don't want you to feel you're forced into it."

Jack felt rather mean. He was no better than the others. "I'll hire you or twenty minutes for a tinner. Take me up and stunt me. When they see you can handle your bus, they'll roll up in hundreds."

Sonia stared up into the bronzed face before her. Was he joking? If only he knew what it meant to her! The blue eyes returned her gaze unflinchingly.

"Very well," she agreed. "And—thank you very much."

She set about making her preparations. "Why are you single-handed?" Jack asked. "Surely you've a mechanic?"

Sonia paused with one hand on the propeller.

"He left me in the lurch this morning."

She did not explain that he had taken her last penny with him, and that, but for Jack's intervention, she would have been destitute.

She swung the propeller. The engine broke into a roar. She disappeared into the tent and re-emerged in flying hat and goggles.

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gine had broken down almost immediately afterwards.

Then she had discovered that people would not trust themselves with her. She thought it was because she was a girl. Actually it was because she was far too good looking. It did not seem possible that a girl as pretty as Sonia could pilot an aeroplane in safety.

Now was her chance to show them and she glared in at them. She intended to give her passenger full value for his money.

She climbed steadily to three thousand feet. Glancing over her shoulder she looked inquiringly at the man behind to see if he were ready. He smiled and waved his hand. He had evidently been up before, she deduced.

She pushed down the nose of her machine to increase her speed. The wind began to hum through the bracing wires. Its note increased crescendo. Sonia braced her feet against the rudder bar; gently pulled the control column towards her. The cooling roos steeply before her.

Buy Quality



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She waited, her hand on the throttle. The horizon flashed into view. She shut off the engine. The air roared like a breaking wave with the speed of the dive. Sonia eased the machine back on an even keel.

"Jolly good!" Jack applauded, just before the re-awakened engine drowned speech.

Sonia set her teeth. Did his voice contain the faintest hint of patronage? Her long run of ill-luck affected her judgment. If he was patting her on the back because she was only a girl, she would jolly well give him something to think about.

She promptly looped again. The moment the machine came out of the dive, she looped again. Followed two half-rolls; a full roll; another loop.

As she came up this time her passenger shouted: "Half a minute!"

Sonia smiled grimly but took no notice. She pulled her stick back for another loop. Flashed with excitement, she made her circle rather too sharp. The machine was on its back when an ominous creak sounded sharply above the wile of the propeller.

She automatically shut off her engine. The machine went into a dive. She pulled the stick towards her. The plane refused to rise.

Sonia tugged and tugged. Nothing happened.

They were rushing vertically towards the earth. Directly below them, all unheeding, the fair was in full swing. Sonia felt sick with apprehension.

"Put your engine on again!" Jack shouted. "It'll help her come up."

Again Sonia took no notice. Impatient at her stupidity he shook her roughly. She fell forward on her safety belt. The lack of food had had its effect. She had fainted.

Jack thought quickly. Unless he did something the tragedy of last month would be re-enacted.

With the rush of wind holding him back, it was an impossibility for him to climb into the front cockpit. Yet he must get control. He leaned forward over Sonia's inert body. With his left hand he opened the throttle. With his right, he seized the control. The machine refused to come up.

He knew in a flash where the trouble lay. The weight of his body, thrown into the front cockpit, had

shifted the centre of gravity forward. He must shift it back or nothing could save them—of the people beneath.

He forced himself round. Climbing on to his seat, he flung himself face downwards along the fuselage. Stretching down with his hands, he felt for the elevator control wires. He grasped them and pulled. With a sigh of relief he saw that the dive was lessening.

Sonia recovered from her faint to find the plane on an even keel. She automatically took control. Looking behind she saw the perilous position of her passenger. She shut down her engine and called to him that all was well.

Five minutes later they landed safely. Sonia tumbled back to the enclosure. Together they examined the machine. The rigging was slack and untrue.

"It looks as though your mechanic was a dud," remarked Jack, drily. "No wonder he pushed off."

Sonia turned impulsively towards him.

"But for you we should both have been killed. However can I thank you?"

Jack shook his head. "You don't have to," he declared. "I wasn't thinking of you and myself, but of the people on the ground."

He went on to tell her of the recent accident.

Sonia's face screwed up in horror.

"How terrible! Do you know who the pilot was?"

"It was I," he confessed, simply.—London Tit-Bits.

The Great Adventure

Grieve not for me who am about to start.

A new adventure—rather fill a cup And wish me God-speed for the hidden days—

Come, with the red stuff fill the goblet up. And drink to one who ever loved new ways:

Ahead, unfurrowed, lie broad fields for me. Lands unexplored stretch out, a far-flung sea.

Is beckoning, and even now, a ship To bear me, builds in the eternal slip—

Eager, I stand, and ready to depart, I, and my restless pioneering heart. Lydia Kingsway.

"The greatest thing that life does is to give you experience and knowledge of other people."—Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"I believe that events in nature are controlled by much stricter and more closely binding law than we suspect to-day."—Sir James Jeans.

"You must put a big emphasis on the work 'luck,' if you are going to succeed in advancing knowledge in science."—Simon Flexner.

"There is no political peace without economic peace."—Edouard Herriot.

"It's an old principle of philosophy that when you assert something, you may, without intending it, be denying something else."—John Erskine.

"Let us not forget that the most advanced nations were primitive once upon a time."—Albion Husley.

"Man's progress has always been when he was forgetting himself and had a spiritual ideal."—Viscountess Astor.

"It is true today, as perhaps never before, that no nation lives to itself or dies to itself."—Haveleek Ellis.

"Quietly, imperceptibly, our epoch is returning to the Middle Ages, to the Tenth Century before Christ, even to the Cave Age."—Giuglielmo Ferrero.

"So you think women should be able to run the country?"

"Well, for logic and style, I'm willing to put my daughter's graduation essay up for comparison with a lot of the regular campaign speeches."

Keep your face to the sunshine, and the shadows will fall behind you.

So They Say:

"Presidential authority rests far less upon specific grounds than upon ability to lead the electorate."—Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"Human history's not a logical, inevitable development in which the cause is always equal to the result."—Bruce Barton.

"National governments must be rationalized, renovated and made directly responsible."—Benito Mussolini.

"No great human experiment ever rides into its own with a 100 per cent success."—Raymond B. Fordick.

"What world trade needs is not abolition of tariffs but first a reduction to a more moderate level and then even more, reasonable stability."—Sir Arthur Salter.

"I see no sign on the horizon that gives promise of any composition of a paper of greatness."—Frank Damrosch.