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Easy Reading
George F. Baker, Jr., the New York capitalist, was talking on the Olympic about foreign exchanges. "The fluctuations of the franc and the lira," he said, "always have a meaning—a meaning as easy to read as the Hobson episode."
"Where did you get that black eye?" Hobson's chum was asked.
"Hobson," said the chum, "is just back from his honeymoon. It was me, you know, who introduced him to his bride."

Irons in the Fire
"Where are you going to spend your vacation?"
"It all depends."
"On what?"
"I'm answering questions in six travel contests."

Keeping Its Reputation
Nebraska, the home of Arbor day, has 1928 distributed 682,000 trees to 2,000 farmers at a cent apiece, to be planted as windbreaks.—Country Home.

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How One Woman Lost 20 Pounds of Fat

Lost Her Double Chin
Lost Her Prominent Hips
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Gained Physical Vigor
Gained in Vivaciousness
Gained a Slender Figure

If you're fat—first remove the cause! KRUSCHEN SALTS contains the 6 mineral salts your body organs, glands and nerves must have to function properly. When your vital organs fail to perform their work correctly—your bowels and kidneys can't throw off that waste material—before you realize it—you're growing hideously fat. Try one half teaspoonful of KRUSCHEN SALTS in a glass of hot water every morning—in 3 weeks get on the scales and note how many pounds of fat have vanished. Notice also that you have gained in energy—your skin is clearer—your eyes sparkle with glorious health—you feel younger in body—renewer in mind. KRUSCHEN will give any fat person a joyous surprise. Get an 85¢ bottle of KRUSCHEN SALTS from any leading drugist anywhere in America. (Lasts 4 weeks). If this first bottle doesn't convince you this is the easiest, safest and surest way to lose fat—if you don't feel a superb improvement in health—so vigorously energetic—vigorously alive—your money gladly returned.

THE DESERT MOON MYSTERY

BY KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

"Sam Stanley!" I gasped. "You can't refuse. That's all. Own twin sisters! And Danny as innocent as a new-born babe—"

"Don't talk like a book, Mary. Danny may be as innocent as she seems to be, and—she may not. She, nor anyone else, can leave this place until we have gotten to the very bottom of this thing. That goes."

"To think you paid attention to that fool reporter!" "Don't be a fool yourself," Sam urged. "This note, in Gaby's handwriting, clears Danny of the crime, if all the other evidence didn't, which it does. We know that she did not kill her sister. But, of all the people in this house, she is in the best position to know who did it. Of course, if she is involved in this she is involved innocently. If she put the key in your pocket, while we were out in the car, she did it with no idea of what she was doing. Just the same, I want her right here on the Desert Moon, for a while. Mary, you take the note to her, and explain, in your nice way—"

"I'll give her the note, Sam," I said. "But you'll have to do the explaining yourself. I'll tell you why. It isn't right for you to try to protect anyone, not even Martha, to the extent of refusing to allow one sister to carry out the dying request of another sister."

Sam dropped his pipe. As I saw the tobacco and the ashes scatter, I was more certain than ever that I was acting as a decent woman should.

The door opened, and Danny came in. She was so pale that her cheeks had sort of a greenish tinge to them. Great dark circles spread far down under her eyes that were red and swollen from crying.

I hurried to her, and put my arms around her. She clung to me, and hid her head on my shoulder, and said my name over and over. Sam turned away, as if he could not bear to look at us.

I took her into the living-room, and sat down in a big chair and held her in my lap. "If only," she kept saying, "if only she could have left us in her beauty. She was beautiful, Mary. And now—"

Remembering what I had seen the night before, I knew that I must get her mind into other channels if her reason was to be saved. I thanked my stars, when I remembered the note.

After she had read it, she cried harder than ever; but I knew that it was crying of a saner sort.

"Will you go with me, Mary?" she questioned, when she had quieted some. "To San Francisco?"

"We'll have to talk to Sam about that, dear," I said. It was the habit of helping him, not any kindly impulse, that made me continue. "I am afraid that Sam wants us all to stay here, for a while. There, there, dear. You see how it is, don't you? Sam thinks that the duty of each one of us, right now, is to stay here and help try to find the guilty person."

"Does Uncle Sam think we will find him here?" she questioned.

I tried to tell myself that I had been mistaken; that she had not emphasized Sam's name in a hard, pointed way, as she had seemed to do.

"There isn't anywhere else to try to find him," I said. "Did you know about the key in my pocket?"

She nodded. "I knew about that," she said.

"What else did you know about?" I asked, a mite sharply, for there was no mistaking her emphasis this time.

"Nothing. But, Mary, doesn't it seem possible to you that someone, clear from the outside, did it? And gave the key to Chad, and asked him to put it in your pocket? And that, for some reason we probably never shall discover, Chad could not, dared not, tell on the person who gave it to him? And that is why he shot himself?"

"And we hadn't thought of that!" I gasped. "I do believe it. It is as clear as day."

Her sudden, definite silence talked as plainly as any words she could have spoken.

"Danny," I questioned, "you thought of that, but in your heart you don't believe it. Do you?"

"I—I want to believe it," she evaded.

"But you don't?" I persisted. She was silent.

"Danny," I pleaded, "tell me about it. Just tell me, dear. I'll never breathe it to a soul, if you say for me not to. What is it that you know, or think that you know?"

She waited so long before answering me that I thought surely she was finding the words with which to take me into her confidence. I was so disappointed I could have cried with her, when she hid her face on my shoulder, again, and moaned, "Mary—I can't. I dare not tell. I tell you—I dare not."

She jumped up out of my lap, and ran upstairs as if wicked, dangerous thing were running after her.

CHAPTER XX
A confession
John came into the room. "The outfit is back, or most of it," he said. "Darn their souls! Curiosity, nothing else. But for this, they wouldn't have shown up for two days yet. I think the women went into the kitchen just now, Mary."

There they were, Belle, Sadie and Goldie, all huddled up together like a bunch of something, near the back door. As I came into the room, they jumped and screamed. The only thing that makes me madder than being scared myself is to scare somebody else. I spoke to them right sharply.

I told them that I expected them to go about their work, and to act like sensible girls while so doing. I told them that we had enough to put up with, just now, without adding a parcel of jumping, squealing girls to our load.

Sadie, the sauciest of the lot, on account of imagining that being married made her more independent than the other girls, spoke up.

"We haven't decided yet that we want'a go workin' in a house where a murderer, and maybe more'n one, is livin'."

"If that's the way you feel about it," I said, "the sooner you leave the better. It is an honor to work in the Desert Moon ranch-house, and you know it."

"Maybe 'tis. Maybe 'tain't." Sadie sauced back. "You'll not get girls as easy to-day as you would of yesterday. Murders and suicides—if it was a suicide—don't do much in makin' a ranch pop'lar for help."

"Very well," I said. "If you are going, go now. If not put on your aprons and get to work."

fit's quarters, I tried to keep the truth from him; saying, only that the girls and I had had a spat, and asking him to find some new girls for me.

He came up, in about half an hour, with an Indian girl, not more than fifteen years old, trailing along behind him. Answering his nod, I went with him into the living-room.

"She is the only one I could get," he said. "We'll have to send to Reno or Salt Lake. None of the outfit want their women folks working here. I don't blame them. The Desert Moon Ranch is disgraced—"

He stopped short.

I thought that it was because he could not bear to go on with what he had begun to say; until, following his eyes, I saw that he was looking at a piece of paper on the writing desk just in front of him. It had been propped up against a vase; but it had slithered down into a curve. He reached for it; read it, and handed it to me.

"I killed her. Chadwick Cauffield, P. S. Sorry to put you to the trouble of disposing of me. Make it cheap and snappy. I haven't a relative in the world. P. G."

"A lie," Sam said. "I think so."

"I know damn well it is. I tell you, she had been dead two or three hours, anyway—probably longer—when we found her. Listen, Mary. Between four and five o'clock—we all saw her alive at four—Chad sat right there at that piano, and he never left it once. Did he?"

"No, he didn't. I kept thinking he would, to join Gaby. But he didn't."

"Between five and six o'clock," Sam went on, "he was with me, every minute of the time, down in the barn, and coming up to the house. Never out of my sight. Between six and seven he was with us all at supper. If he'd been gone all afternoon, I'd know that note was a lie; know it just as well as I know it now—"

"But why did he shoot himself, then, Sam?"

"God knows. He thought he loved her."

"But this note! A confession! Why would he die in disgrace, when we know he was innocent?"

"God knows. To shield someone else, I reckon."

"Who?"

Sam dropped his pipe. I heard him stamping the sparks out. I did not look down. I did not want to look down.

CHAPTER XXI
A Summons
It might be," Sam said, as he refilled his pipe, "that Chad did not write this. I'll send it, with some of his other writing, to one of these handwriting experts I've read about."

"He wrote it, I said. The writing is his. So is the wording. You know it."

ranch who is as guilty as hell; who knows who committed the murder; who aided and abetted it. We are going to find that person. Then we will find the murderer. They'll be hung together. After that, we can leave well enough alone."

"Suppose," I suggested, "that Chad was the accomplice."

"I reckon," he said, growing suddenly kind, "that you've been through too much, Mary. That's it. You aren't quite responsible to-day. I don't wonder. But reason with me, Mary."

"Somebody suggested, already today, that it was Chad who put the key in your pocket. When did he get the key to put it there? Well, say that he got it between seven and eight o'clock, when he was out scouting by himself. Did he meet some entire stranger then, who asked him to dispose of the key? Did he agree to do it, as a favor to said stranger? Did he, later, shoot himself and leave a lying confession to shield the stranger? The stranger, that is, who had killed the girl Chad loved? Chad did carry some secret to the grave with him, Mary. I am sure of that. But not a secret that we can't discover. We are going to discover it."

To doubt Sam, standing there before me talking so earnestly to me, to doubt his honesty of purpose and his goodness, was more than a question of doubting my eyes, my ears, my senses, for the moment. It would have been to doubt the things that had made up my life for the past twenty-five years, it would have swept away all of my accumulated certainties, all of my standards, as a wind sweeps trash from the desert. It would have left me as aimless and as wind-tossed as tumble-weeds.

"Sam," I began, resolved to tell him, then and there, about those pipe ashes of his on the beaded bag. I had waited too long. Mrs. Ricker was coming down the stairs.

"I think," she said, "that Martha should not sleep so late. I fear that she is sleeping too heavily."

"It is a blessing that she can sleep," Sam said. "She is all right. Those sleeping powders are as powerful as all get-out. I got them from a doctor in Frisco, when I was down there last year, and they made me sleep when I had neuralgia. I'm going up, though, I'll have a look at her."

"By the way," he added, from the stairway, "I want you two ladies to be here in this room, at promptly three o'clock this afternoon."

"Upon my soul!" I said, when Sam was out of sight. "What do you suppose that means?"

I might have spared my breath. She did not answer. But she did something downright unusual for Mrs. Ricker. She looked at me; and, as I met her look it seemed to me that there was a pleading expression in her face, as if, were she able to talk, she'd like to ask me to do something for her. I have seen dogs look like that, at times.

"What is it, Mrs. Ricker?" I questioned.

She shook her head, and walked to the windows and turned her back on me.

I looked at the straight, gaunt back, and at her long arms hanging at her sides. She seemed frail. And yet, she could hold Martha still, when Martha was in one of her tantrums, and that was more than I, a much stouter woman, could do. She, with no one but Martha who did not count, had been alone in the house for an hour the evening before, while the others of us had been out hunting for Gaby.

Sam insisted that Gaby had been dead two or three hours when we found her. But was he certain of that? How did he know? Might he be mistaken? Mrs. Ricker had hated Gaby, as only a jealous woman can hate.

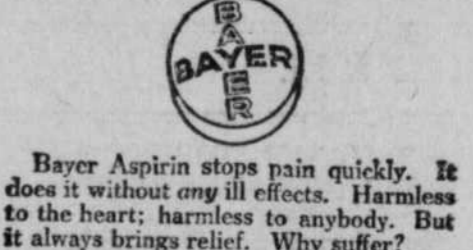
(TO BE CONTINUED)

them, so their three abreast arrangement would be quite all right. Now just suppose! What would the first Irish traffic officer do to them for obeying the law and for blocking traffic on a street where nullification and law breaking are so firmly established that 25 or 30 miles an hour is the pace, and persistence in 15 miles an hour would make a man a candidate for the lock-up or the observation ward in Bellevue.

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Mrs. Guyer—Yes, but who wants to handle a man as rough as that, my dear?

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Sioux City Ptg. Co., No. 29-1930.