

Hidden Ways

By FREDERIC F. VAN DE WATER

SYNOPSIS

David Mallory, in search of newspaper work in New York, is forced to accept a job as switch-board operator in a swank apartment house, managed by officious Timothy Higgins. There David meets Miss Agatha Paget, a crippled old lady, and her charming niece, Allegra. One day, talking with Higgins in the lobby, David is alarmed by a piercing scream. David finds the scream came from the Ferriter apartment, not far from the Pagets. The Ferriters include Lyon and Everett, and their sister, Ione. Everett, a genealogist, is helping Agatha Paget write a book about her blue-blooded ancestors. Inside the apartment they find a black-bearded man—dead. No weapon can be found. The police arrive. Higgins, who actively dislikes David, informs him that he is fired. David is called to the Paget apartment. Agatha Paget offers him a job helping write her family history—which will unearth a few family skeletons. He accepts the offer. Meanwhile, police suspect Lyon Ferriter of the murder. Jerry Cochrane of the Press offers David a job helping solve the murder. David accepts. He is to keep on working for Miss Paget. Later David meets Grosvenor Paget, Allegra's brother. Then, that night, David sees Grosvenor prowling through the Ferriter apartment. David confronts Grosvenor with the story. He is told to mind his own business.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

Grosvenor watched me as I took my tankard. I thought he expected me to reach a foot for a brass rail or blow froth on the floor. Perhaps it was another doubt that bothered him. I forgot to wonder about it in admiration of Miss Agatha.

She plunged her patrician nose into the foam and, after a brief instant, set down the vessel empty with a contented sigh. She caught my eye.

"Beer," she said with authority, "is a mass beverage, David. Its virtue lies in volume. People who sip their beer also like afternoon tea or Wagner on a fiddle. No beer, Allegra?"

The girl sat close beside her brother. He peered into his tankard. One of her hands lay on his bowed shoulder.

"No," she said and smiled, "I'm too sleepy."

"Always," Miss Agatha told me, nodding toward her niece, "the soul of courtesy. How much of that material did you get through?"

"All of it," I said.

It pleased her. "Excellent," she exclaimed, with a tiny click of her teeth. "Then tomorrow we can get to work, burning the scandal at both ends."

"Isn't it nice," the girl asked, and I thought her jauntiness was forced, "that after all the family skeletons, Mr. Mallory will drink with you, Agatha?"

"Bah!" said Miss Agatha and reached for the untouched tankard, "David is—"

"Just," I said as she paused, "an elevator man coming up in the world."

The wrinkles came about her eyelids. She chuckled.

"That isn't what I was going to say. Since you are in New York and your people are in Nebraska, you may have more use for distance makes relations more endurable to one another. Of course the republic is founded on the American home—"

"There she goes," Allegra said in a loud aside to her brother.

"The family is the foundation of the nation," the old lady went on, "and I wonder if that isn't the trouble with things. I believe—"

The peal of the doorbell cut her short. Grosvenor rose to answer it.

"Damn," said Miss Agatha. "If it's that mat Shannon again—"

It was Lyon Ferriter. I admired Miss Paget's balance.

"Well!" she said warmly, as though a wish had been answered. "Come in and revel. Grove, another tankard."

Lyon checked the lad and smiled. His eyes, moving easily from face to face, rested on mine an instant and once more seemed puzzled.

"Thanks," he said and bowed to Miss Agatha. "I shouldn't have intruded but they said downstairs that you had just returned. I came, with Captain Shannon's permission, to get some things from my flat and I wanted to thank you—all of you—for your neighborliness. There's an odd word to use in New York, but I can think of no better. You were very good to my sister, Miss Paget."

"He added more softly, 'I shan't forget it. You've kept your head better than any of us, during this—unpleasantness.'"

"My dear man," Miss Agatha said crisply, "When you've lived as long as I have, a mere murder can't terrify you. And Ione?"

"Better," Lyon replied in the tender tone that always accompanied his mention of her. "We're coming back tomorrow. The Babylon is hardly a refuge. Newspaper men have found out where we were hiding. A police man's life is not a happy one."

He stood in the doorway, a brown, worn and pleasant figure, and spread his hands.

I said to Miss Agatha: "It's time I went—or several hours after time."

"If," she answered and her eyes were merry, "you can stir that—that decoration there—she nodded toward Grosvenor—to an interest in fencing or any exercise, stay longer."

As I turned toward the door, Lyon's exclamation halted me. "Fencing," he repeated. "Oh, by George,

I know you now. Your face has bothered me for days. I saw you in Chicago.

"If you did," I told him, "you saw me get trimmed."

"By D'Armaillac," he said as if that excused anything. "You know," he told the others, "this lad really is good."

"Was good," I corrected. "That was two years ago." I was glad he fortified the hasty lie I had told to cover Grosvenor. Lyon ran on like a boy:

"I use the sword a little myself. Sometime, I'd like to show you my collection of blades. Some of them are rather good."

I almost told him I had seen them. Then I remembered the dead man who had lain before them, and didn't. I gave Miss Agatha my new address and left them talking as easily as though the last thirty-odd hours never had happened.

The events of the final sixty minutes had scrambled my mind. They had kicked over what theories I had built and now memory of Allegra, loyal and valiant and fearful, fought against the erection of new. I was half-way to the corner before I remembered my suitcase still in Higgins' basement flat. Here was something definite to do, an anodyne to

bewilderment. I faced about and went back to the Morello.

The light was out before the basement door and the hallway beyond was dark. I thought that Higgins might be asleep. That stopped me for a moment. Asleep or awake, I decided, there would be a squabble and I might as well face it now.

I closed the door, felt for a match and, finding none, went along the black hall.

My fingers touched the white-washed stone, once, twice. They reached out a third time and recoiled. They had brushed rough cloth and underneath that was a body, pressed tight and still against the wall.

For a second, neither of us moved, or breathed. Then I lurched forward, arms spread wide. My hands grazed the harsh fabric but found no hold.

Something tripped me. I went down. A foot stamped on my knuckles. I grabbed for it and missed, but its owner fell too, with a thud and a gasp and a flat chime of metal on stone. I leaped up to stumble once more over the thing that first had tripped me. I fell again, this time upon it. An angle smote me in the midriff, driving out my breath. I heard the quick sound of retreating feet. I saw, as I got to my knees, the outer door open and a dim figure that fled. Then I squatted, blinking in a blaze of light.

I could see nothing but that glare. It hurt my eyes. I knew dimly that my knees and my trampled hand ached. I squatted, half up, half down, for a long instant. The dazzling haze thinned and Higgins' red face came through.

"What," he asked and I thought he gloated, "is all this, hey?"

"I fell. I was tripped," I said sturdily.

Higgins chuckled. "So ye was tripped," he jeered. "Now ain't that too bad? The someone that tripped ye lays beside ye, me lad."

I looked down. The obstacle over which I had twice fallen was my own suitcase. Higgins, in a last flare of spite, had left it in the hall. I got up slowly and brushed dust from my sore knees.

"Who else," I asked, "was in here?" The superintendent chuckled and anger helped me get hold of myself.

"Who else?" he echoed. "Nobody, ye fool, but yourself and your clumsy feet."

Higgins locked the door behind me. I stumbled up the steps.

The wind stung my face. Its blast seemed to scatter my mind. Someone had been in that basement hallway when I had entered—someone who feared to be found there, who had fought off my clumsy effort at capture. I had touched, I had heard the intruder. He had left his heel-

mark on a bleeding knuckle. Suspicion that had pointed first to Lyon Ferriter, that had centered on Grosvenor Paget, swung wildly about now like a weathervane in a whirlwind. I had left both men upstairs. The dim figure I had seen dart through the doorway had seemed slighter than either. It could not have been the buxom Everett. Why had it been lurking in a basement hallway of all places? What had dropped to the floor with a clink of metal and then had vanished?

Suddenly, I wanted to confide in someone. It was the lonely wretchedness of the overburdened. I thought, as I slapped at my dusty overcoat and trousers, of Shannon, of Miss Agatha, of Allegra, and each time found at once good reason why I could not go to them. As I picked up my suitcase, an amused voice asked behind me:

"Ever try a whiskbroom, accomplice? You can buy them at all the better stores."

Jerry Cochrane's coat collar was turned up about his ears. His round face had been spanked red by cold and wind had watered his canny eyes. He was sane flesh and blood. I was glad to see him.

"What's this?" he asked, nodding at my suitcase. "The body?"

He was medicine for the jitters. At my question he gave a gesture, half shrug, half shiver.

"I trailed Lyon Ferriter from the Babylon," he said. "Your hall force wouldn't let me wait in the vestibule. I was across the street when I saw you go down the cellar. So when you came out, I—"

I grabbed his arm so hard that he stopped and stared. I had trouble getting hold of words.

"Who came out ahead of you?" he repeated, wide-eyed. "Out of the cellar? Nobody."

"I groaned. 'If you'd only watched,' I began, but he cut me short.

"Listen," he bade. "I didn't have anything else to do, except freeze. No one came out of the basement except you. What's all the heat—"

"Save it," I told him and ran toward the Morello. My suitcase battered my legs. I swore at it and myself. If Cochrane were not mistaken, if the intruder who fled had not gone up to the street, he had lurked in the area by the stairs until after I had left. He might still be hiding in that black pit.

Beyond the Morello, a taxi swung into the curb. Someone entered it. The door slammed and it slid away. We were too far off to see the license number or even the passenger clearly.

"Sometime," Cochrane asked politely, "when you're not quite so active, you'll let me in on this?"

I told him, as well as I could, for I was winded, what had happened.

"Who was it?" Cochrane queried.

"I think," I answered, "it was Mr. Addison Sims of Seattle."

The wind boomed in the area while we talked in hushed voices. It struck my sweating face like the gush of a cold shower bath. Cochrane was panting, yet he shivered.

"Lyon?" he asked. I wondered why it should have been his first thought, as well as mine.

"Lyon Ferriter," I answered, "is upstairs—in Miss Paget's apartment. He couldn't have got down here ahead of me."

"Unless he took the hidden way the murderer traveled," Cochrane pointed out stubbornly, and his teeth chattered. "I'd like to know where he is, this minute."

I turned toward the steps and said:

"I can go back and find out if he's still upstairs."

"I'd like to know," Cochrane repeated in a cold-shaken voice, as he followed me upward. "If I'm going to live to understand all this, I've got to get a taxi and a drink fast. Find out if Ferriter is still upstairs and then—"

But we had no need for search. As I came out of the area, a lean figure left the Morello vestibule. Shoulders hunched against the wind, Lyon Ferriter strode past us. I thought he recognized me, for he looked hard and seemed about to check his pace and then pressed on. We watched him to the corner.

"Anyone," Cochrane gasped through his rattling teeth, "who can go without an overcoat on a night like this is a murderer or a suicide. Hi, taxi!"

As we bounced along toward the address he gave, his questions prodded me once again through the story of my struggle in the basement.

"It doesn't make sense," he complained. "Maybe it was someone colder than me, even—some Forgotten Man ducking in out of the wind."

"He wasn't too numb to move fast," I reminded him. "And why should he hang out in the area after I'd flushed him, unless there still was something in the basement that he needed?"

"True," Cochrane said. "Perhaps he wanted to get his watch, or whatever you heard drop."

"I heard it drop," I told him, "but it wasn't there. I looked."

"It was, but it wasn't," he said bitterly. "And there you have the case in a few words, accomplice. I'm sorry we hired you. You keep messing up the puzzle. I owe you one, though, for your tip on the Babylon. I don't know who was sorer—Shannon or the Ferriters—when I ran 'em down."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Who's a Copycat? Everybody!

Man is, under the skin, and sometimes on top of it, remarkably akin to the lower animals. His sense of self-preservation is just as acute. So are his appetites and a great many of his emotions. The following series of photos is not intended to poke fun at anyone, but is designed merely to draw a few parallels. In some of the cases portrayed the subjects have deliberately copied denizens of the lower animal kingdom. In others the similarity is purely accidental. We could have drawn more deadly parallels, but our aim is a pleasing series and nothing would be gained by introducing unpleasantness. There is too much of that in the headlines.



VAMPIRE . . . In the upper picture we have a giant fruit bat, popularly called the vampire but through a belief that it sucks human blood. It is not pretty. The maid in the lower picture suggests a bat in flight—making a pretty picture. Her cloak is designed to act as a sail on a ski run. Her name, Madeline O'Reilly, of New York. She was photographed at North Conway, New Hampshire.



NOSY . . . This monkey gets his name from his extraordinary proboscis. Nature gave it to him for a reason—and the reason was not to make people laugh.



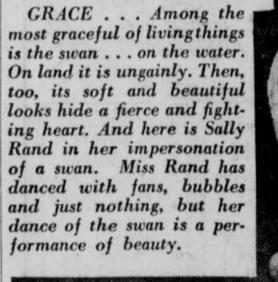
SCHNOZZOLA . . . Jimmy Durante, famed stage and screen comedian, found that his nose is his fortune. The garland is Hawaiian leis.



If we don't pay too much attention to the grizzly bear's terrible claws we manage to feel sorry for him, with his nose pressed pathetically against the bars pining for freedom.



COUNTERPART . . . But we cannot pity this human counterpart of the bear, glaring through the bars of his cell, on charge of killing a four-year-old girl through criminal attack.



GRACE . . . Among the most graceful of living things is the swan . . . on the water. On land it is ungainly. Then, too, its soft and beautiful looks hide a fierce and fighting heart. And here is Sally Rand in her impersonation of a swan. Miss Rand has danced with fans, bubbles and just nothing, but her dance of the swan is a performance of beauty.



This baby lion is pleasant . . . but just wait! And so with the boy. Will that grand smile hold out through life, or become a snarl?



Picture Parade

Star Dust

STAGE-SCREEN-RADIO

By VIRGINIA VALE

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

ROSALIND RUSSELL, who considers Columbia her lucky lot, has been signed to play the feminine starring role in that studio's new comedy, "This Thing Called Love," a tale of a six months' trial marriage which goes on the rocks before it is well launched. Miss Russell will be seen as a brisk and competent insurance executive (and let's hope she won't over-act, as she sometimes does) and Melvyn Douglas, playing opposite her, will be a mining engineer.

A few years ago the beautiful Rosalind was borrowed by Columbia for the title role in "Craig's Wife," an unsympathetic part, as you'll probably recall, but in it she proved



ROSALIND RUSSELL

so conclusively that she could act that the picture gave her a place at the top. She scored another Columbia triumph as "Hildy Johnson" in "His Girl Friday."

Two daughters of famous football coaches are up for roles in "Tillie the Toiler"; they are Marcia Shaughnessy and Annie Lee Staggs, and were suggested by no less a personage than Maude Adams, the famous actress, who coached them at Stevens college.

The 52.6 second kiss record set by Ann Sheridan and George Brent in "Honeymoon for Three" brought reactions of all kinds from here, there and elsewhere.

A Los Angeles laundry asked for the handkerchief used by Brent to wipe off Miss Sheridan's lipstick, offering to launder it for nothing. An inventor in Indianapolis asked Brent to be the first to try his new lipstick remover. A clock manufacturer inquired what kind of watch was used to time the kiss. A New York promoter telegraphed a \$500 offer to the pair if they would officially open a "kissathon" by repeating the performance.

And then a woman's club in Topeka, Kan., passed a resolution recommending that endurance kissing be banned on the ground that it is unhygienic. And countless males between the ages of 17 and 60 wrote in, volunteering to take over Brent's next assignment of that kind for nothing.

When young Betty Brewer was working with him in "Rangers of Fortune" Fred MacMurray taught her to croon. Since then she has been rehearsing her sister and brother and a little neighbor girl in a quartet which she calls "Betty Brewer and Her Playmates," and it's so good that an advertising agency may put them on the air this fall.

As old as radio is the annoying production problem of performers kicking the microphone stand or striking it with their hands if they make gestures while on the air. If a grating sound comes from your receiving set, that's probably the reason.

Cecil B. DeMille thought he'd solved the problem for his radio theater last year, by using a hanging microphone—but without a base stand to guide them, actors bumped their heads into the mike. (Gluttons for punishment, these actors!)

Undaunted, C. B. went to work again. And this year when the cast assembled for the theater's first production, "Manhattan Melodrama," with Myrna Loy, William Powell, and, of course, Don Ameche, they found that a circular guard rail had been built under the mike. That suited them perfectly—they could rest their scripts on it.

ODDS AND ENDS

☞ "Most Inspirational Extra of the Year" is the title bestowed on Doris Davenport by the Hollywood Studio Club, because she rose from the extra ranks to the feminine lead in "The Westerner."

☞ Douglas Fairbanks Jr., is vacationing at his farm in Virginia

☞ Susanna Foster, starlet of Paramount's "There's Magic in Music," was all ready to leave for a vacation in Kearney, Neb., when her dog, Rex, was struck by an automobile. She unpacked her trunks and abandoned her plans, to stay at home until Rex recovered.

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