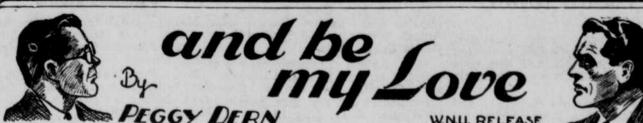
THE FRONTIER, O'NEILL, NEBRASKA



ate eyes.

unsteadily.

Miss Meggie-'

said the gentle old voice.

-it was an accident-"

THE STORY THUS FAR: She could | not believe that her father had killed Alicia, and he assured Meg that he knew she was incapable of such a deed. And yet what might be brought out at the inquest? Distressed, Meg thought of Tom, and remembered that he had called her "darling." She felt she was falling in love with him. Laurence had come over from the county seat in connection with the inquiry concerning Alicia's death, and he called to talk to Annie and Meg. No trace of a weapon had been found, Larry reported. "Her husband is coming to claim the body." Yes, Alicia was married and it had been her husband who sent money each month for her to live.

CHAPTER XII

She had lost all interest in whatever it might be that Annie was telling Laurence. She was so shaken by the news that Alicia had a living husband, that she couldn't get her mind on anything else. Her father had wanted to marry Alicia; and Alicia had let him think that she was free! How Pleasant Grove was going to laugh at the fool Jim MacTavish had made of himself! Because people were talking about the way he had been pursuing Alicia -and now they would know that Alicia's husband cared enough about her to come east for the funeral.

Megan was still sitting in the living room when Laurence came back from his talk with Annie. His brow was furrowed a little and he looked perplexed.

"That's the darndest story I ever heard," he admitted as he sat down opposite Megan and folded his arms across his chest. "I don't know what to make of it-but Annie's not the imaginative sort. She has always seemed so sensible and levelheaded, such good sound common sense-you wouldn't expect her to believe in ghosts, would you?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" she asked.

"Annie's just been telling me a yarn-I told her that I'd have to go to Squire Ethridge and pass it on to him, because he's nominally in charge of the case here, though of course the bright boys from the county seat will want a share in it. But anyway, this is what Annie told me."

He leaned forward and looked at her straightly.

"I suppose you know about that little old family burying ground at the foot of the Ridge, just at the top of your pasture, west of the rock that you always occupy on your walks?" he began.



And without waiting for her to recover from the shock of his quiet answered Laurence, "just as I had words and their implication, he went asked him to do." quietly out and the door closed be-Bob Reynolds eyed Megan

hind him. straightly and asked. "How long has She sat there for a long time Amos been working for you, Miss after he had gone. So Amos had MacTavish?" seen her with Tom! And Amos had "All my life," answered Megan told Laurence.

quickly. "Annie came to work for my mother when she was fifteen. She bent forward and put her face She and Amos were married a year in her hands and was still-until a or so later, and moved into that little

soft movement behind her startled cabin, and were there when I was her, and she straightened with a little jerk to find Annie in the dooralmost, as mine." Bob nodded. "Then what would way watching her with compassion-"Us didn' want to tell Mist' Laurence, Miss Meggie-but us had to,"

telling tall tales?" he asked. "Of course, Annie," she managed Megan managed a little laugh she hoped did not sound too artificial or

"Ain' nobody else gwine know, forced. "Well, I'd say that all depended, rant proprietor who wanted things "There was nothing wrong, Annie "'Course, Miss Meggie-us all knows dat." Annie's voice was comfortable, assured. "Now yo' run up-

> I'd say Amos is quite truthful." a ghost eight feet high hovering

least remotely like that?" suggested Bob pleasantly. "I feel quite sure that he did-or thought he did," answered Megan

promptly and honestly. Bob nodded. "That's the impression I got from the old fellow," he admitted. He stood in thought for a moment before he looked straight at her and asked quietly, "What would be your explanation for his story, Miss MacTavish? How could you account for it?"

Megan set her teeth hard for a moment and there was pure panic in her eyes, but before she could say anything, Bob went on quickly, "I

you know of anything that could it when they get it." have alarmed Amos so that he would have mistaken it for an eightfoot ghost?"

"I've been trying to think," Megan said thoughtfully. "There are Dear Ed:

some old fruit trees around that washed lately. They are not on my up.



ELMER TWITCHELL ON RESTAURANTS

Either the wrong men are operating too many lunchrooms and restaurants in this country or else they're just too scared to speak to the help about things. _.

"I do my share of eating in midborn. This is as much their home, dle class eating places," said Elmer Twitchell today, "and it is my conviction that most of the operators you say about Amos' truthfulness? are glorified dog-wagon men. I I mean is he reasonably truthful in am no chef myself but I could get his statements-or is he given to up better dinners with an old broom and a bucket of switch-grease."

> Elmer was quite sore. "What's become of the old-fashioned restau-

Mr. Reynolds," she confessed gaily. right? Whatever happened to the "If you mean when he is explaining chef who had pride in his work? to Annie how it happened he's lost Where is the old-fashioned bartendall his money in a crap game, I er who knew how to mix a drink Tigers for several weeks in Florida _._

"It's years since I have run across a proprietor who has a conscience, thinks it important to hold his trade and won't water the soup, cut down the portions more than necessary or feel upset if he discovers the potatoes have not been

served cold. _...

"And I am not referring merely to the Grade B restaurant. Some of our best clubs are now employing cement mixers as chefs. _._.

"I had a business man's lunch at a private club last week and I still can't figure if the manager and chef were former pig feeders or just a couple of boys who confuse human beings with seagulls."

Elmer wanted to be fair. "I admean, of course, that you are quite mit it's hard to get foodstuffs," he familiar with the surrounding ter- concluded, "but it seems to me the ritory-it is all strange to me. Do boys should know what to do with

> Ex-Pfc. Purkey in A Quonset Hut

Well now I know how it feels to place. Pear trees in full bloom look live inside of a egg, or even inside ghostly in the dark-only it's too half a egg. The wife and me has early for them to be blooming. I just got one of them Quonset huts. can't remember whether the trunks We already got roundshoulders and of any of the trees have been white- we stoop over even when standing



HERE are many details or important items in sport that are beyond all human understanding. And this doesn't only mean horses

that run last in one race and then win the next time out. It doesn't mean a Billy Conn, who w a s completely fearless in his first Louis meeting, who had been completely fearless through his entire ring career, who was known as dead game and yet ap-C. Keller

peared to be in terror in the recent heavyweight title flasco.

Suppose we take up the case of the New York Yankees. I happened to be in the immediate vicinity of the Yankees, the Red Sox and the this spring.

Everyone figured, and this included Joe McCarthy, Bill Dickey and Larry MacPhail, that the one possible weak spot in the Yankee lineup should be their pitching. Spud Chandler-and then who did they have? Their defensive fielding was an established fact. This part couldn't miss.

What about the Yankee offense? Now you must admit that Joe Mc-Carthy, Larry MacPhail and Bill Dickey are three rather smart operators as far as baseball is concerned. Offense? With Joe DiMaggio, Charlie Keller, Tommy Henrich, Snuffy Stirnweiss, Joe Gordon, Nick Etten, Phil Rizzuto, Johnny Lindell, Bill Johnson, Aaron Robinson, Bill Dickey-here was the last and least worry. The Yankees had the slightly heavier figure. Easy their full share of fielding defense. to care for because it opens out But above all they had something flat to iron. You'll look as crisp as a lettuce leaf these hot sticky more important-their attack-their

offense-their power at the plate. days in this go-everywhere dress. McCarthy, MacPhail and Dickey all admitted this. Nothing to worry about in the way of a run-making attack. Stirnweiss had led the American league at bat a year ago-.309. DiMaggio was a normal ,340 hitter. Etten, Gordon and Henrich were at least .285 hitters. Keller was a .300 hitter. Rizzuto had been a .310 hitter. The team average should have been around .280 or .285.

Mystery of the Yankees

So what happens? Nearing the end of July the team batting aver-





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at night!

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think he shows amazing imagination | right?" he demanded. and inventiveness. But ordinarily, "In other words, if he says he saw

around in an old burying ground, then he saw something looking at

"Yes, I know the place, of course," Megan answered, waiting tensely, little prickles of chill running up and down her spine like icy fingers.

"Well, it seems that Amos was coming home night before last a bit late from a lodge meeting," said Laurence, smiling, "It seems that he'd had some luck with the 'galloping dominos' and he knew that Annie wouldn't shoot him on sight for getting home so late. Anyway, it was somewhere around midnight, or a little later; Amos was passing the little burying ground when suddenly he saw something that froze him in his tracks-and may make him avoid 'galloping dominos' in the future, though that's a lot to hope for."

"You can't possibly mean that he brush. thought he saw the usual wavering white figure-" Megan almost laughed.

Laurence nodded. "Nothing less," he told her solemnly. "It was, he claimed, at least eight feet tall and it didn't have any shape to it, just sort of like it was being poured, he expressed it. There was something shiny about it-the moon was not quite full, but the light was good in the meadow. He says the ghosthe's quite sure, of course, that it was a ghost-floated along the meadow fence and then went towards the rusty iron fence. It had something in its hand, although he couldn't see what it was. But he stood still in the shadow of a tree, and watched-because he was too paralyzed with fear to try to run. And he thought that if he didn't interfere with its affairs, it might not know he was around. He says it moved inside the fence, and bent down above one of the old graves and hid something. And then it stood up, and looked around and moved back out of the fence and turned away from Amos-and Amos, recovering a little from his paralysis, made it home in practically nothing flat!"

Megan said uneasily. "He had probably been drinking up some of that terrible 'white mule' his friend Pete whips up-and he was seeing things!"

Laurence nodded. "That's the line I would follow, if it were not for the fact that that night, possibly a few minutes before Amos saw the eightfoot-high ghost, a woman had been killed and the weapon has never been found," he pointed out.

Megan said swiftly, "You can't possibly think that Amos' hallucination had anything to do with-with that?"

"I don't know, of course," Laurence answered. "But, of course, any unusual happening that night, at around that time, will have to be carefully investigated."

He hesitated a moment and then he said quietly, "There is no reason whatever, Megan, for anybody to know that you were on the Ridge with Fallon at the time Mrs. Stevenson was murdered." tion.

land, you see, and I haven't noticed "So you are investigating ourtragedy, Mr. Reynolds?"

staihs an' fix yo'self up all purty-'fo' Mist' Larry gets back an' us has suppeh," urged Annie, and vaguely comforted by Annie's matter-of-factness, Megan heaved herself to her feet and went upstairs.

She grimaced a little as she looked at herself in the mirror. She was white to the lips, there were shadows beneath her dark eyes, and her hair was untidy.

She showered and donned fresh things, a soft green jersey dress the shade of the first new green in spring that has almost a tinge of yellow in it. She brushed her hair until it gleamed and crackled beneath the vigorous onslaught of the

Laurence came back a litle later, but he was not alone. With him was a stocky young man whose face looked like that of a man in his early thirties, but whose hair was thickly streaked with gray. He had a pleasant, friendly manner, yet one felt instinctively that he could be tough should occasion require it.

Laurence performed the introductions, saying casually, "Meggie, this is Bob Reynolds. He's a detective from the county police who's looking into this business."

"Hello," said Bob Reynolds, with a friendly smile and a firm, pleasant handclasp. "This is quite a yarn your handyman's been spilling, Miss MacTavish. I'd like to talk to him if I may."

"Of course," said Megan, looking uncertainly at Laurence. "Shall I call him in here-"

"I think Amos would be more at ease if we talked to him in his own cabin, Bob. I know where it is, Meggie-suppose I show Bob the way?" suggested Laurence, and Mr. Reynolds agreed that that would be best.

They went out and a little later Annie came to the door and asked uneasily, "Yo' 'speck dat policeman gwine stay fo' supper, Miss Meggie? Hit's mos' ready."

"He's a friend of Mister Laurence's, Annie-I imagine he would stay if we asked him. Suppose you set a place for him?" answered Me-

gan mechanically. Annie hesitated, something else obviously on her mind. But after a minute she said her expressionless "yessum" and her felt-soled, broad feet padded silently away.

Megan felt that Laurence and Reynolds had been gone a long, long time and looked at the clock to see that barely ten minutes had elapsed since they had left the room. But it was closer to thirty minutes before they returned, and as they came

low-pitched, cautious voices and her nerves crisped a little ... "Did you find Amos?" she asked with what she hoped was exactly

them recently." Bob nodded, his eyes intent. 'A you have no more doubts about the and the White Sox. Outside of Chartree trunk whitewashed half way up

be Spanish moss on the trees? In thinking aloud, and his brows drew together in a puzzled frown. "Still, Amos is so sure that the 'spook' went | their noggins. inside the gate and bent above one of the old mounds-" He broke off, grinned and said briskly, "Oh, well,

we'll have to wait for daylight to make an intensive search of the place, I suppose. From the description Amos and Larry both have given me. I don't imagine we could accomplish much by searching tonight. I'll be over first thing in the morning, and we'll give the place a going over."

He was obviously on the verge of leaving, and Megan said quickly, "Won't you stay for supper, Mr. Reynolds? We'd like having you!" "Better take her up on that, Bob.

Annie's the best cook in seven states-at a conservative estimate!" said Laurence lightly. Bob beamed happily. "Well, now, if you're sure it won't be an imposition, there's nothing I'd like bet-

ter!" he assured Megan gratefully. "And I'll give you a lift back to Meadersville later, Larry." "Swell!" Laurence agreed hap-

pily. Just as Annie came to the door to announce that supper was ready, the front door opened and Jim came in. Megan caught a glimpse of him before Laurence or Bob saw him; he looked desperately tired and forlorn, his shoulders drooping. But the next moment he became aware of

the stranger in the living room. His shoulders went back and his head 15 to 100 per cent all over America. himself, friendly, polite, hospitable, as Laurence performed the introductions.

Annie made her delayed announcement of supper, and they went in and were seated, before Jim spoke to Bob. "So you are investigating our - tragedy, Mr. Rey-

nolds?" "Yes," answered Bob, eyeing hungrily the crisply browned stuffed

chicken that Annie had placed before Jim, who was about to wield an expert carving knife. "And I don't mind telling you that I con-

sider it an open-and-shut case." For the barest moment Megan thought the carving knife shook in her father's hand; but the next instant he went on carving delicately thin slices of chicken and laying them carefully on the plate before him. along the hall, Megan heard their

"An open-and-shut case? You mean you have-er-an idea as to the guilty person," Jim asked, with a beautifully balanced interest and curiosity in his voice. the proper amount of polite inflec-

(TO BE CONTINUED)

world being round. Already I am lie Keller they stand with a flock is a rather spooky looking thing in working on a book which I will call of .233 hitters, taken as an average. the dark. And I suppose there would "The Half Egg and I" or maybe Yet most of these players were once "Life With Low Ceilings." The first dangerous each time they moved to the moonlight, with a slight wind thing you got to learn is not to get the plate. They were batters to be stirring that-" He was obviously off a chair too sudden. You can feared. Today almost any one with tell how long a couple has lived in a right or a left arm still hanging one of them huts by the bumps on on can stop them cold.

> ----A real love life is necessary on cally every member of the squad is account of if a couple do any scrap- a friend of mine. It isn't a matter ping there is no neutral corners to of dissipation or lack of determinago to after the knockdowns.

-Oscar. His doctor declares President

Truman is at the peak of health after 14 months in the White House. He has gained 10 pounds, has a deep tan and can throw the veto 300

yards without puffing. . . .

The Italians roamed the streets crying, "Down with America, England, France and Russia."-News item. ---

Fourth down, no gain!

"In the evening the President saw a movie 'Janie Gets Married.' "--News Item.

Ideal picture for him would have been "The Grin Years." . . .

A Russian newspaper man visiting this country says he saw \$200 boxes of cigars being sold here. through the fire before-you wade Nonsense! It's just the impression right up to your neck in what is anybody gets from looking into a cigar case and trying to locate something for 10 cents.

"Summer hotel rates are up from Look at the Red Sox! ing rates in some cases from \$20 for two people in a double room to \$65."-News item.

the banditti. He reports that the hotel in which Washington once

"Too Few College Teachers Are Inspired, Speaker Says." - News Item.

Brother, it's hard to be inspired When you're underpaid and tirea, -Larry Singer.

The United Nations is still hunting a site for a permanent home. How about Dodge City, Iowa?

We know a fellow who would write his congressman but doesn't know how to spell OPA.

age of the Yankees is under .238. After you have been in one a day They are far below the Athletics

What has happened to the old-

fashioned Yankee attack? Practition. They are giving the game all they have.

On a general average they are smart, intelligent, hustling ball players. They feel lower than MacPhail or Bill Dickey feel. Their reputations, which means their living, is at stake. But they can't hit.

You can understand one or two men moving into a batting slump. How can anyone explain practically an entire team taking the soapy chute at bat? There is no longer any question but that the tropical trip to Panama took a heavy toll. Those who went to Panama reported to St. Petersburg early in March in July condition. They were too far ahead of any training schedule. I don't believe this mistake will ever be repeated. Anyway it is only a part of the answer. It can't explain the entire story.

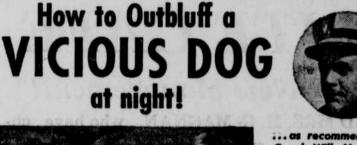
When 11 ball players, who should range somewhere between .280 and .340, drop below .240-experienced, veteran stars who have been technically known as a quandary -whatever a quandary is-trying to find the answer.

You can't blame this on war years went up, and he came in, bracing Hotels that were on the verge of because in the same spring and closing as a result of the war years summer interim, the Red Sox have have heralded better times by jump- placed five hitters among the first ten. The Yankees have had only one hitter-Charlie Keller-among

> The Yankees have been down Elmer Twitchell went into one the slightly lower than the White Sox were in 1906, when they were known with cross inflation and a view of as the "Hitless Wonders." But the "Hitless Wonders" had Ed Walsh, Nick Altrock and Doc White who slept has become the inn where even were pitching four and five-hit

> > If any three of the 11 Yankee hitters expected to bat from .280 to .340 had only moved up in the .280 class, many a ball game, now lost, could have been saved. This amazing reversal of form has the usually sane and able Bill Dickey baffled.

Bill, being a veteran who has always used his head, can understand two or three members of a team in a three-months slump. But as he shakes his Arkansas head, he can't quite understand 10 or 11 from one squad forgetting what the old ash furniture means, and how it should be used.



Comdr. Willy Necker, Wi ing, III. — noted dog traine and judge at dog shows...and wartime head of U. S. Coast Guard War Dog Training

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club, Shout! If bitten, see

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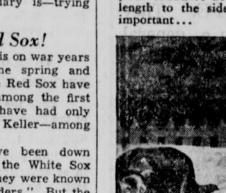
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other day and asked for a room games.

a Rockefeller burns up. . . . AIN'T IT SO?

