

Outside, the sidewalks were damp and slippery. It was late February. The sky was blurred with an approaching storm. McCale walked buy an early morning paper at the ed energy of a coiled spring.

He'd just had some mid-morning in great detail of how Miss Adelaide Bigelow, of the Bigelows, had for the "right" detective. Just what she needed a detective for, they didn't know, but it looked promising.

To McCale it looked like hokum; besides, he wasn't interested. He did not, at the moment, realize that the first pebble had started to roll, that even then he was being gently prodded into the relentless avalanche of a big case. He stopped for cigarettes at a drug store and stood at the counter idly turning the pages of the newspaper.

B-29s were at home over the Jap mainland, and the American fleet was tickling Jap shipping where it hurt. There was a complete blackout planned for the coming weekend. On page ten, Mrs. Atkinson Keye, socialite, was off to Reno again. Business as usual. A Mrs. Mulligan of Roxbury had given birth to her twelfth child. And, wait a minute, under a misty photograph of a very debby deb, the caption: "Lydia Prentice of Marlborough street and Magnolia, one of the bride's attendants at the wedding next Saturday of Veronica Perkins Bigelow to Curtin Vallaincourt."

So that's all it was. A society wedding. He laughed soundlessly as he thought of Leach and Garrity making a big story over some old blue-blood who was, no doubt, looking for a couple of dicks presentable enough to mingle with a crowd of gilt-edged guests, while they kept a sharp eye on the wedding presents. He did not have to be much of a sleuth to figure that one out. He chuckled at the mental picture of either of his so-called pals straining to look "to the manner born" in such a situation.

How McCale Became a Private Detective

As he folded the paper, his eye caught a word or two in the gossip column, "After Dark." It read: "At the Latin Quarter last night, Curt Vallaincourt, the handsome lad who is to middle-aisle it with Veronica Bigelow next week, waited in vain for her to appear. He ended his vigil by lapping up Zombies with Shari Lynn, the 'torchy' singer from the floor show. We didn't know they knew each other."

McCale frowned at the last allusion. Too bad these keyhole lads

had to spice everything up so. McCale's office and living quarters combined were on St. James street, a bit far uptown for that sort of thing. They were in a block of old brownstone houses, the last that remained in that vicinity. Here, while they lasted anyway, McCale was able to cling to the illusion that he was a cut above the average detective. He admitted that it was probably psychological-a complex with him. His background, surely, was worse than most. Born in the scummier part of Chicago, he had been brought up among thieves and mobsters. At fourteen, he knew all the answers. To himself, he often admitted that he had a criminal turn of mind, but some peculiar twist had saved him from putting it into practice. It may have been the merest glimmer or craving for something finer than the obviously brief splash made by the racketeer, on top today, shot full of holes tomorrow. But at sixteen he went was any good in it. Somehow he discovered that he had a love for books and a real aptitude for learning. He worked his way through a Midwestern college. He took summer courses here, there, and wherever he heard of something that might interest him. And he was interested in many things.

He woke one morning knowing that detection would be his career. Then he took a course in criminology at a famous university, sat in at lectures at police college, talked himself into a job with a run-down detective agency. After that, he had set himself up as a private investigator. Cynical over police methods as he found them in practice, sick to death of the strike-breaking jobs, the divorce work, the undercover many of the men masquerading as honest investigators, it was the only thing for him to do. Only a few clients had come his way. But it was worth it.

McCale was small and dark and smoothly articulated. His hair was shiny and black; his eyes, inclined to be withdrawn one minute, would quicken with a peculiar glint the next. His mouth was too large for the countenance it graced, and, in looking person, I assure you." repose, a trifle sardonic. But when he smiled or laughed, it lit up his about the way he said it. Then he

whole face in a most disarming | smiled and everything was quite way. The dominant feature of the all right. complete picture of Duke McCale seemed to be a nerveless quiet, but often there would come a fine Italian-like gesture, fleet as an arup Stuart street slowly, stopping to row, that bespoke the closely guard-

He was nearly at his own doorstep when he noticed it. An antique coffee with a couple of erstwhile limousine, broad in the beam and private "eyes" and they'd told him high in the tonneau, was drawn to the curb before his door.

McCale opened the waiting-room been traipsing from office to office door and stepped inside. The room was empty. The faded carpet and real leather chairs stared at him blankly. The wine velour draperies were pulled back to let in what daylight there was. There were fresh yellow flowers in a squat white bowl on his secretary's desk, but she wasn't there.

He was thinking that it looked very quiet, very nice, not like a detective's waiting room at all, when Ann Marriot came in. She closed the door of the inner office, giving him a warning look.

Ann Marriot was the type of girl you might pass by at a first meeting, but when you knew her better,



"Miss Bigelow?" His sharp eyes took her in at a glance.

you became aware of her attractiveness. Her features were nicegray eyes set far apart; a straight but not too small nose, and a goodsized mouth. She ran to intelligence and tweeds and her ash-blonde hair always imparted the fragrance of carnations. McCale caught a whiff of it now, as she handed him an engraved calling card.

It read: Adelaide Perkins Bige-

Wealthy Old Lady Appears Troubled

"Miss Bigelow is waiting in your office," said Ann. "Why in there?" McCale asked,

lowering his voice.

"Well," she answered, flushing slightly, "it's nice in there. There's a fire in the grate and the big chair and-books and things." "Ah, I see. You are duly im-

pressed by the royal presence." "Not at all," she rather snapped.

"She's quite nice. Did it occur to you I might want to impress her?" McCale smiled. "Bless you, my child," he said as he went in. There was a fire burning briskly

in the fireplace, throwing light and shadow on the simple decorations -the big chair with its accompanying side table, well-filled bookcases into the world to find out if there | lining the walls. The lamp on the desk was lit, for it was darker in

A little old lady, quietly dressed, turned in the act of reaching for a book, to face him.

"Oh," she said, nearly dropping

"Miss Bigelow?" His sharp eyes took her in at a glance.

She was small, almost birdlike, and nervous in a fluttery way. She had a fine, delicately modeled face, too delicate, perhaps, to be imposing. Yet there was evidence in her carriage and in her manner of dignity and stubborn strength. Mc-Cale was aware, too, of a certain uneasiness, a lurking apprehension behind the too bright eyes that he could not attribute to surprise at his sudden entrance nor to her bebribery, the questionable ethics of | ing out of her milieu in a detective's

> office. "I was interested in your library," she floundered. "I expected you-"

"To look quite different?" McCale frowned. "More like a doctor or college professor, perhaps?"

"Why. "That's all right. None of us can choose his personal appearance. If I could, I'd be quite a different-There was something ingenuous

"It isn't that at all." She was just as candid. "You're quite nicelooking, really. It's just that all the detectives I've ever seen-that is-er-heard about-are rather big and brutal-looking-and tough."

McCale wanted to answer that, all things considered, he was probably just as tough—that he just wasn't big. But he didn't.

She seemed, for a moment, at a loss to begin. The old eyes searched his anxiously, and were withdrawn, as if the brain behind them was confused and helpless. He knew that there was desperation there, that it was difficult for her to play a part, but that she had determined to play it. He waited, and the silence in the room lengthened. He saw that she was still searching for an integrity behind the flash of his exterior. He saw the light go out of her eyes and realized with chagrin that she would not tell him what was gnawing at her mind, that she had decided to risk acquiring his aid only in part.

"My niece is to be married next week, Mr. McCale. Perhaps you have heard of her?"

"Yes, indeed. Veronica Bigelow. Her pictures are very lovely." He'd

never seen one! brightened considerably. 'She is lovely. My favorite niece, Mr. McCale. She'll be very wealthy, too. My brother's child. The wedding, of course, will be at Trinity, but the reception is to take place at the family's town house. There are a great many beautiful and priceless gifts on display. They will have to be guarded night and day."

Guarding Gifts Pays Well

"The police," ventured McCale. "Pshaw! The police." She became more assertive. "We don't want plainclothes men all over the house. They'd stick out like sore thumbs. I want someone quiet and unobtrusive—just—just someone—" The old voice faltered and trailed

McCale looked at her attentively. 'Of course. I'm quiet and unobtrusive and inclined to be helpful." She dropped her eyes. "I-I think you're the man I want."

"It doesn't exactly take brains to watch over a table of wedding pres-

"I know that. But if something were stolen, if something did happen, you'd have to investigate, wouldn't you?"

McCale glimpsed then, for an instant, the whirlpool of events to come. There was something in that remark alone that piqued his curi-

He made up his mind. "That will be twenty-five dollars a day," he said, and added meaningly, "for guarding the wedding gifts."

But she would not rise to his bait. She searched a moment in a large black bag that hung from one arm. A hundred-dollar bill crackled as she put it on his desk.

"A retainer," she said. "One moment. Miss Marriot will give you a receipt."

"Never mind. It isn't at all necessary. Will you come to tea this afternoon, at five?" "To tea?"

"Yes. Please do." The tired old eyes pleaded with him. "The family-you should know them by sight -and there might be something to talk over-some arrangements you might want to make."

"Why, yes," he agreed, sudden intuition quickening in his mind. She seemed relieved; turned to

"One moment, Miss Bigelow. You'll want me to assume responsibility-when?"

"Oh, right away." That look had come back into her face again. "Im- 1 cup chopped carrots mediately."

"But the wedding is-" "I know. I'd feel safer"-she caught herself - "that the gifts I tablespoon celery seed would be safe if you were to take 1 cup chopped celery charge today. They keep arriving 2 cups vinegar -more and more-most valuable, 2 cups sugar some of them."

He cut in on her embarrassed floundering. "Very well. "I'll see you at tea. That's all you want to tell me?"

She looked wretched. "That's

all," she said. The door closed quietly after her. McCale stood staring thoughtfully into the fire. He heard Ann Marriot say good-morning and the outer door shut.

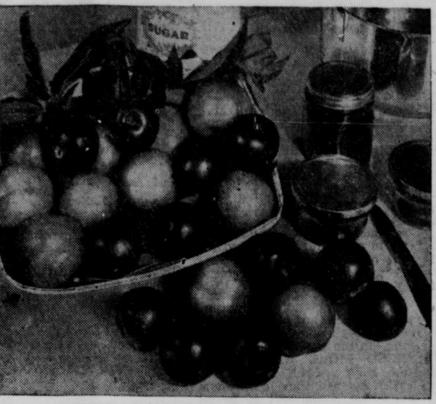
"She's a nice old thing," said Ann Marriot. "I hope you weren't curt and distant with her. She seemed to be in trouble." "She wants me to guard her

niece's wedding gifts." "But. . . ." He shrugged. "I took the job." He flipped the hundred-dollar bill

under her nose "Nice big retainer. Funny. She seemed sort of lost to me." "Ann," McCale said, "that old lady is frightened!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

MEMOS... by Lynn Chambers



Add Finishing Touches to Canning Now! (See Recipes Below)

Late Canning

Well, the summer's about over, with late fruits peeping through the leaves in the

orchard, and the last of the season's vegetables pushing up through the earth.

I am assuming you have most of your canning

done, but there are some things that cannot be

canned until late. That time will soon arrive, so be prepared! Sometimes it is the things canned

last that are the sweetest and best turned out. That may be because we're in practice, but perhaps, too, it's because things like pears and grapes are in season, and the family likes end-of-the garden pickles best of all.

Look over what you've canned during the summer before winding up with a final session of canning and try to balance the canning cupboard and fill in spaces with the foods you need. Our recipes today are of a variety to help you do just that.

Pear Butter.

Wash pears, but do not peel. Slice and add a small amount of water to start cooking. Cook until soft, then press through a colander. To each cup of pulp, add 1/2 cup sugar, and a few spices, if desired. Cook to a paste, stirring frequently to prevent burning. Pour into sterile jars and seal at once.

You know fruit butters will spread a lot of slices of bread this winter and put a damper on that rifling of the cookie jar. Here's how it's done

with apples: Spiced Apple Butter. 4 gallons prepared apples

1 gallon sweet cider 4 pints sugar 1 teaspoon allspice 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Pare, core and slice apples. Boil cider until reduced by one-half. Add apples to cider while boiling and cook slowly until the fruit is soft. Press through a

sieve and then return to fire and continue cooking, stirring frequently to prevent burning. When the fruit begins

to thicken, add sugar and spices. Cook until smooth and thick. Pour into sterile jars and seal while hot. End-of-the-Garden Pickles. 1 cup sliced cucumbers 1 cup chopped sweet peppers

1 cup chopped cabbage 1 cup sliced onions 1 cup chopped green tomatoes 1 cup green beans, cut into 1-inch

pieces 2 tablespoons mustard seed

2 tablespoons turmeric

LYNN SAYS:

Making Good Jelly: To extract the juice from fruits and berries so that it is clear, use several thicknesses of cheesecloth or some flannel. A wire mesh strainer may be used to hold the cloth. The bag should never be squeezed or the jelly will be cloudy.

The best jellies are made in small batches so that cooking time can remain short. For fruits rich in pectin (jelling quality), use 34 to 1 cup of

sugar for each cup of juice. The pectin content of fruits is highest when they are just barely ripe. A combination of underripe and over-ripe fruit will make a satisfactory combination for flavor and pectin requirements.

LYNN CHAMBER'S MENUS

Stuffed Pork Shoulder Slivered Carrots and Onions Green Beans Mashed Potatoes Gravy Garden Salad Biscuits with Honey Plum Cobbler Beverage

Soak cucumbers, peppers, cabbage, onions and tomatoes in salt water (1/2 cup salt to 2 quarts water) overnight. Drain. Cook the carrots and string beans in boiling water until tender. Drain well. Mix soaked and cooked vegetables with remaining ingredients and boil for 10 minutes. Pack into sterile jars and seal.

Two preserved fruits that are both piquant and satisfying are Grape Gumbo and Peach and Apple Conserve. Here are preserves that will add that magic touch to the meat course during winter:

Grape Gumbo. ounds seeded grapes 1 orange, thinly sliced 34 pound seeded raisins 4 cups sugar

Cook all of the ingredients until the mixture is of the consistency of marmalade. Pour into sterilized

jars and seal at once. Conserve needs stirring and watching so that it does not stick. Do not cook too long or these delicate fruits will lose their color.

Peach and Cantaloupe Conserve. 1 pint diced peaches 1 pint diced cantaloupe

2 lemons, juice and grated rind 3 cups sugar 1/2 cup walnuts, blanched and

chopped Combine ingredients with the exception of nutmeats. Cook until mixture is thick and clear. Add nutmeats and pour into sterile jars.

Seal while hot. Both plums and apples are latein-the-season fruits, yet they make delicious jelly if you still have enough of your sugar ration left.

Crab Apple Jelly. Select sound crab apples. Wash and remove blossoms. Cut into quarters without

peeling. Barely cover with water and boil until fruit is tender. Strain the juice through a jelly bag. Measure and bring juice to a boil. Add ¾ cup

of sugar to each cup of juice and boil rapidly to jelly stage. Pour into sterilized jelly glasses and seal immediately.

Plum Jelly.

Wash plums and cover with cold water. Boil until plums are quite soft. Press juice through jelly bag, strain and measure. Bring juice to a boil and add one cup of sugar for each cup of juice. Boil rapidly to jelly stage, then pour into sterile glasses and seal at once.

Plum and Orange Jelly. 5 pounds plums, cut up 6 oranges 1 lemon sugar

Wash plums, cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Add oranges and lemon and cook until plums are soft. Drain in jelly bag. Boil extracted juice 15 minutes and to every 4 cups of juice, add 3 cups sugar. Boil rapidly to jelly stage. Pour into sterile glasses and seal.

When you rout out all the jars and caps that seem likely prospects for your home canning, or jars and caps to share with neighbors, you can set aside at once some kinds that won't do. Into the discard group go jars and caps that have any crack, nick, dent, or any other defect that would keep a jar from sealing airtight. And set aside, too, odd shaped and very small jars. They can be used for preserves or other purposes where a paraffin seal is adequate. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

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