

MURDER By An ARISTOCRAT

Mignon G. Eberhart

CHAPTER IV

It was Bayard. We found him in the library. We stopped our headlong rush at the door. He was lying on the floor near the table. He was on his face, his neck twisted so queerly that you knew at once he was dead. I knew the dressing gown and his hair.

Adela, a granite woman with a gray-white face, walked across the rug, knelt, and turned him over. His face was untouched, his mouth open a little, a lock of hair across his forehead, his yellow eyes closed, his arrogant nose sharper. I knew that there was nothing I could do.

Things wavered and seemed to rock about me. But I was aware that Janice was standing beside me, her fingers digging into my arm, her whole body quivering. And that Hilary was in the doorway staring with bulging eyes. And that Adela was trying to speak to me.

"Call Dr. Bouigny," she gasped through blue lips. "Call him. There's a telephone there. In Dave's study." Her eyes were two blank blue stones set in a granite face. I saw them change, lose their blankness, and become aware.

"No, no," she said with a sort of gasp. "I'll telephone. Help me, Emmeline."

Emmeline bent stiffly and laid Bayard back on the rug, and Adela got clumsily to her feet, as if her muscles were drugged. I followed her, for she looked very near collapse. I reached the door in the end of the long library in time to hear her gasp into the telephone:

"Dr. Bouigny. Yes. Dr. Bouigny. Call him—hurry."

There was a pause. Adela clutched the telephone and looked with unseeing blue eyes out of the window. The room was small, furnished simply with a desk, some chairs, a leather-covered lounge, and a good rug. On the rug at Adela's feet lay a small white something, I suppose I bent, and picked it up, and looked at it merely to give myself something to do. It had looked rather like a tightly folded note, but as I got it into my fingers I found it was only a piece of newspaper wadded up tightly as if to make a sort of wedge.

"Daniel—Daniel, is it you? Yes, yes. Come at once. It's Bayard. He's—been shot. Killed. Hurry, Daniel." I could hear the click of the other telephone. It was quite distinct, and I knew Dr. Bouigny had rung off, but Adela continued: "Burglars. There were burglars," before she put down the telephone.

"Now Hilary," she said in a dazed way. "Now I must call Hilary. No, no—Daniel will stop for him—Hilary must know—"

"Adela," Janice was standing in the doorway, her face strained and tight, without beauty or life. "Where is Dave?"

Adela didn't drop into a chair, but she leaned slowly against the desk.

"I don't know. I don't know. Janice, Janice, what will people say?"

"But they were fishing. Dave and Allen. Where are they now? Where's Dave?"

Adela made a visible and pathetic effort to pull herself together. That was one of the two occasions when I saw her falter. Her face was still like gray chalk, but somehow she managed to assume that impenetrable cloak of dignity.

"They are probably still fishing. They'll be back together soon. I must call Hilary. I'm convinced—" and how bravely she said it through her blue lips—"I'm convinced it was burglary."

"Burglary! Why, Adela—do you suppose—I never thought—" Janice's tight face be-

came momentarily animated. "Could it be that?"

"I'm convinced it was burglary. Bayard came upon the burglar and was shot. You read of that happening every day in the papers. That's what happened. The safe's just back of you, Janice. Isn't it open?"

"Why, no—no, it's closed."

"But it must have been burglary. I'll open it. First I'll call Hilary."

There were voices in the library. Janice turned.

"Here is Hilary now. With Dr. Bouigny."

Dr. Bouigny was kneeling. Hilary was at his side looking down, his plump face the color of ashes. In the doorway stood Evelyn, dreadfully pale under her tan. Higby had vanished, but Emmeline remained, twisting her purple hands and watching Dr. Bouigny's mouth.

"Hilary—" said Adela.

"Good God, Adela, this is a terrible thing! How did it happen? Who did it? Who found him? Where is Dave?"

"Dave is fishing with Allen Carick. They aren't back yet. Is there nothing you can do, Daniel?"

Dr. Bouigny got heavily to his feet. He was a fattish, dark man with a good-natured red face and clothes that always bagged. His face now looked mottled.

"There's nothing to be done. He's dead. Who did it?"

"How long has he been dead?" asked Hilary sharply.

"I don't know. I can't tell exactly." The doctor paused thoughtfully and added: "You see, it's so hot this afternoon."

"Oh," gasped Evelyn. She sank into a chair as if her knees refused to hold her and said in a small muffled voice: "What will people say?"

Dr. Bouigny glanced quickly at Hilary and then at Adela.

"It's pretty bad. But I was afraid of this—"

"It's a plain case of suicide," interrupted Hilary quickly. His authoritative, slightly pompous manner was returning. "It's a plain case of suicide, and no one can prove it isn't."

"Suicide?" said Dr. Bouigny doubtfully, his large head tipped a little to one side as he studied the tragic huddle at his feet. "Well—"

Evelyn rose suddenly, snatched a scarf from a divan, and laid it swiftly and carefully over Bayard.

"You ought to move him. It isn't decent to just leave him there. Like that. On the floor. After all—it's Bayard."

"Wait. No. We'll have to let the sheriff see him, too, just as we found him," said Dr. Bouigny.

"The sheriff will say suicide," said Hilary confidently. "And you are coroner, Dan."

Dr. Bouigny looked worried.

"I don't like this scandal any more than you, Hilary. It won't hurt me as much, of course—but it's pretty bad for you, everyone knowing there's been bad blood between you and Bayard. Oh, I know—I know—" as Hilary started to protest—"I know you didn't shoot him, but what will people say, do you think? I'll do everything I can to smooth it over—hush it up. But if it's suicide, where's the gun?"

"It's here," said Hilary. "It's here. It's—why, it must be here!"

We were all looking vaguely about on the floor, the tables, all around the body. I cast my mind back to my first view of the body. There had been no gun close to it, then; I was sure of that.

"But it isn't suicide," said Adela. "It's burglary. It must have been burglary. There's—wait, let me look in the safe. The diamonds were there, you know, Hilary."

"I followed her into the small study. The safe, an old-fashioned affair, massive and clumsy, was set in the wall with no attempt at concealing its dial. We watched her hands fumbling, turning, twisting. And when the heavy door swung outward we watched her search.

And the diamonds were gone. Only a stack of empty boxes remained, their yellowed satin linings exposed and gaping as Adela's swift hands opened them one after the other.

"I knew it," she said. "I knew it. See, they're gone. It was burglary. The thief was here, robbing the safe, Bayard heard him and interfered, and the thief shot Bayard and escaped." She was dignified, deliberate. She reached out a hand and touched a red morocco case. "That," she said, "held my mother's sunburst."

It was strange to watch the faces slowly lose their look of terrified apprehension, become slowly more composed; only Janice's face remained cold and rigid. Dr. Bouigny's eyes met Hilary's, and he nodded slowly.

"There you are," he said in a relieved way. "It's happened exactly as Adela says. Everybody's heard of the Thatcher diamonds. And nobody in the county would believe that Bayard Thatcher shot himself."

"But, my God," said Hilary, suddenly bewildered and alarmed again, "the diamonds! It's the family collection. They're worth a small fortune. We've got to get hold of them."

"That's the sheriff's job," said Dr. Bouigny, almost blithely, and at the same moment Adela, her eyes cold and blank, looked strangely at Hilary.

"Don't you think it's worth the price?" she said, coldly.

Hilary looked at her, at Dr. Bouigny, at his wife. He got out a handkerchief, wiped his pale face and said:

"You'll fix things up then, Dan?"

"I'll do what I can with honesty," said Dr. Bouigny. "No more. And there's the sheriff, you know."

"I can fix him," said Hilary easily.

"And there'll have to be an inquest, of course."

After a moment Adela said with difficulty: "An inquest!"

"Why, yes, of course. A violent death. Murder. There's got to be an inquest."

There was another long moment of silence in the little study. The window was closed, and we could not hear a sound from the outside world, and it was as if no one lived or breathed in the small room. And yet that stillness was oddly palpant, as if unspoken words, unuttered apprehensions, unwelcome thoughts were beating upon our ears. Then Adela stirred, reached out her hand, and closed the gaping door of the safe. It made a heavy, silence-shattering clang.

"An inquest," she repeated. "And what, Daniel, will you ask us at the inquest?"

He ran his fingers worriedly through his thick dark hair.

"It won't be easy," he said unhappily. "There'll be plenty of people just looking for a chance to get at us. To say there's something fishy about it."

Warm though the room was, I saw Adela shiver slightly, and Hilary's plump face all at once looked drawn and haggard.

"Suppose," said Adela, "suppose we go back to the library and talk it over . . . before the sheriff comes." The last words were separated from the rest of her speech in a way which gave them significance.

I followed them back into the large, cool library; I remember feeling as if I were moving about in a nightmare and would presently come to my senses. Everything in the nightmare was,

however, extremely clear and vivid. The windows in the long library were open; the shadows on the green lawn were long now and cool looking. It was with a shock that my eyes went to that huddle under the scarf.

"Now, then, Daniel," said Adela. "What will you ask us?"

"Don't put it like that, Adela," he said worriedly. "You make me feel like a conspirator."

Adela's eyebrows slid upward rebukingly. There was a suggestion of outrage in her stiff, desperate dignity.

"My dear Daniel," she said in a remonstrating way.

"He'll want to know when Bayard was last seen alive and who saw him," said Hilary. He rubbed his handkerchief again over his forehead and touched his mouth with it.

"Very well, Janice, you left the house before I did this afternoon, didn't you?"

Janice nodded; her face was still cold and rigid; there was not a trace of beauty in it then, it was a regular, colorless mask.

"Janice, you see, drove out to the farm this afternoon. Dave and Allen Carick went fishing. They aren't back yet. I went to the Benevolent Society, and Janice stopped on her way back and brought me home. Emmeline was in the summer kitchen making jelly. Higby was mowing the lawn. There was no one but Bayard here all afternoon. Bayard and—the thief."

"No. Wait a minute, Adela," protested Hilary miserably. "You are wrong. I was here. About four o'clock."

Adela turned slowly and very stiffly.

"You! You were here! You saw Bayard?"

Hilary glanced at his wife, started to speak, but she interrupted him.

"Yes, Hilary was here," said Evelyn directly. "He came in to see how Bayard was getting on. And I was here, too. I was to stop for Hilary in the roadster. Hilary had gone when I arrived, and I left at once and went to Hilary's office."

"Then you—" began Adela in a frozen way.

Dr. Bouigny interrupted.

"Then Bayard was alive then? What time was that?"

"Yes," said Evelyn, and Hilary said: "About four o'clock."

"That limits it, then," said Dr. Bouigny agitatedly. "That limits it. What time did you leave the house, Evelyn?"

"It must have been about 20 minutes after four. I was to meet Hilary at four here. I was a little delayed, and he'd gone. I didn't stay at all, and when I reached his office it was exactly 4:30 by the post-office clock."

"And about what time was it when he was found dead?"

"We'd just returned," said Adela. "Janice and I. Emmeline found him. She met me there on the step of the porch saying—" her voice left her and she finished in an unexpected whisper which was inexpressibly shocking—"saying he—was—shot!"

"Then he was killed sometime after 4:20. It was after 5 when you called me—about a quarter after. I take it you telephoned at once? Yes. Where's Emmeline? See here, how did you happen to discover—"

Emmeline advanced, her black back stiff, her stained fingers working.

"Are you talking to me?"

"Yes. About finding Bayard."

"She's deaf, you know, Daniel," reminded Adela.

"Oh, God, yes," Dr. Bouigny rubbed his hands frenziedly over his hair. "About Bayard," he shouted. "When did you find him?"

"What did you say?" asked Emmeline, watching his heavy mouth.

"I said when did you—"

INDIAN FIGHTER ASKED PENSION

El Paso, Tex. — (UP) — If the government owed Jose Gallegos anything, it had been forgotten until the 100-year-old Indian fighter recently applied for pension.

Gallegos is one of two known survivors of Lieut. Frank H. Mills' famous detachment of Pueblo Indian scouts who fought the Apaches of New Mexico a half century ago. The other is Sastinas Gonzales also of this city, already receiving pension.

Before Gallegos was dispossessed of his farm six years ago, he had no need for pension, he told an interpreter. Now he needs assistance.

Indian fights still are vivid to the aged scout. He likes best to tell of the time he and 30 others routed 160 Apaches who had attacked a wagon train. "Our only casualties were a few mules," he recalled.

A few days later another train was attacked by 230 Indians and Gallegos remembers the outcome was more disastrous. Before the scouts arrived the Indians had killed the entire group of freighters. Overtaken 25 miles away, the Apaches fought the scouts all day before being routed, leaving 60 dead and wounded. Ten scout were slain.

Breeding Resulted in Two Strains of Rabbits

Detroit — (UP) — Two strains of rabbits, bearing fur which rivals that of the silver squirrel and the black silver fox, have resulted from selective breeding, conducted by Oliver E. Jones, of Dearborn.

Jones' biological experiment shows no apparent difference in the appearance and quality of the two furs, except that the "black silver fox" rabbit has a shorter pelt. The rabbit fur could be distinguished from the genuine only by the expert furrier or advanced biologist, even to when one blows on the fluffy coat and is unable to expose the skin beneath.

Jones said he had established the permanency of the types by keeping the identical strains without variation for seven years. Since a rabbit matures in six months, he reasoned, that takes the process through 14 generations and proves their permanency.

Jones feeds his young rabbits twice a day on a small ration of oats, potato peelings or shorts along with what alfalfa they can nibble. Regularity in feeding and freedom from drafts is the secret of developing them in this way Jones said.

Detroit Claims Lowest Death Rate for 1932

Detroit — (UP) — For the second consecutive year, Detroit has claimed the distinction of having the lowest death rate for any of the large cities of the world.

Annual figures compiled by the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Henry F. Vaughan, indicate that the record low of 8.8 deaths per 1,000 population in 1931 has been eclipsed by the 1932 record of 8.6 per 1,000.

While figures from other cities are not yet available, Dr. Vaughan said he believed that Detroit would again lead the world in healthfulness.

The tuberculosis death rate was revealed as having dropped 3.5 per 100,000 to a low figure of 70.3 per 100,000 during 1932. No deaths from smallpox occurred in Detroit all during 1932, and deaths from diphtheria were appreciably lowered to 4.1 per 1,000 population, the reports showed.

On the other hand, the birth-rate dropped to 17.1 per 1,000 during the year just past as compared with 18.6 for 1931.

Picture of Murderer May Lead to Reunion

Seattle — (UP) — The picture in the paper of a convicted murderer may lead to reunion of sister and brother long parted, if present efforts reach fruition.

John Zerfass, "kiss slayer" who is awaiting appeal from a life sentence for killing a naturopathic physician who kissed his wife, is the murderer in question. His picture recently appeared showing him playing poker with other murderers in a Seattle cell.

Miss G. Zerfass, Queens Village, N. Y., saw the picture and wondered if the convicted man wasn't the son of her long missing brother. In his cell here, Zerfass said his father, John Zerfass, Sr., is a plasterer in Stockton, Cal., and asked police to forward his father's address to Miss Zerfass.

BARRED FROM RESORT

Hampton Beach, N. H. — (UP) — Wary wives of Hampton county farmers have enjoyed unusual vacations here this year. They spent a week at the seashore, with their husbands barred from the resort.

Crockery Bottoms Form Sidewalks

Tyler, Tex. — (UP) — Crockery bottoms form the queer sidewalk at the home of Mrs. A. B. Pitts, in the Starrville community near here.

Necks of the crockery are turned down, leaving the smooth surface of the bottoms for the walk.

Who made the strange walk, Mrs. Pitts does not know. It was there when she acquired the property.

Generous Pat.

Pat's wife was suing him for maintenance.

"We have decided," the jury foreman reported, "to allow your wife \$10 a week."

"Why, that's very generous of you," said Pat. "I'll see if I can add a quarter or two now and then."

Make Strange Trade

Detroit — (UP) — It's a strange trade that Jack Ireland, Curator of the Belle Isle zoo, wishes to

make, but he avows that he has never more in earnest than when he offered to swap 25 razorback hogs for \$200 worth of wild ducks. It all came about this way:

Last summer the wildfowl sanctuary at Belle Isle suffered from the ravishes of a bird disease and many of the ducks died. At the same time, the razorback hogs were enjoying a healthy season and a normal increase was recorded.

Ireland now has many more hogs than he feels necessary. "Besides," he said, "hogs are not

beautiful to look at, but they should make excellent game."

He suggested some northern hunting club make the trade and free the hogs on their preserves to furnish an American duplicate of wild boar hunting.

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December Took Record as Year's Longest Day

December 22 is, strange to say, the "longest" day of the year, and not the shortest, thus taking the record for length from June 21, the first day of summer. Here is the explanation of this apparently contradictory state of affairs, as given by Dr. C. C. Wylie, associate professor of astronomy at the University of Iowa:

"Because of the fact that we use mean time rather than apparent time, sun noon is later from day to day by thirty seconds near the date of the winter solstice. In mid-November, for those living near a standard meridian, sun noon occurs about sixteen minutes before 12:00, while in February it occurs about fourteen minutes after 12:00."

"When sun noon is falling later from day to day by a clock running on mean, or average, time the length of day defined as the interval from sun noon to sun noon is more than twenty-four hours. In this sense the longest day last year was December 22."

Last June 21, the first day of summer astronomers point out, was the longest day of the year in the number of hours of daylight, whereas December 22, when measured from noon to noon, had just 30 and two hundredths seconds more than 24 hours. A very close race but December 22 stretched ahead barely enough to win the title of "the year's longest day."

What SHE TOLD WORN-OUT HUSBAND

QHE could have reproached him for his fits of temper—his "all in" complaints. But wisely she saw in his frequent colds, his "lagged out," "on edge" condition the very trouble she herself had whipped. Constipation! The very morning after taking N-R (Nature's Remedy), as she advised, he felt like himself again.

Keenly alert, peppy, cheerful, N-R—the safe, dependable, all-vegetable laxative and corrective—works gently, thoroughly, naturally. It stimulates the eliminative tract to complete, regular functioning. Non-habit-forming. Try a box, 25c—at drugists.

N-R TO-NIGHT
MORNING LUBRICANT

"TUMS" Quick relief for acid indigestion, heartburn. Only 10c.

WOMAN LOST 20 POUNDS OF FAT

Lost Her Prominent Hips—Double Chin—Sluggishness Gained Physical Vigor—A Shapely Figure

If you're fat—first remove the cause! Take one half teaspoonful of Kruschen Salts in a glass of hot water in the 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—you feel younger in body—Kruschen will give any fat person a joyous surprise.

But be sure it's Kruschen—your health comes first—and SAFETY first is the Kruschen promise.

Get a bottle of Kruschen Salts from any leading druggist anywhere in America (lasts 4 weeks) and the cost is but little. If this first bottle doesn't convince you this is the easiest, SAFEST and surest way to lose fat—your money gladly returned.

CATARRH

Can Now Be Washed Away

Get a little nasal douche and an economical bottle of SINASIFTEC from your druggist and in a few minutes you can start to wash away every trace of matter caused by nasal catarrh. Keep using SINASIFTEC in warm water and soon all stiffness disappears, catarrh pressure is gone and your nose, head and throat feel marvelously clear. Tear this out. SINASIFTEC is pronounced Sina-sip-tek.

Children Need Cuticura

To keep skin and scalp clean and healthy, and to lay the foundation for skin health in later life. The Soap protects as well as cleanses, the Ointment soothes and heals rashes, itchings and irritations.

Soap 25c. Ointment 25 and 50c. Proprietors: Potter Drug & Chemical Corporation, Malden, Mass.

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If your bladder is irritated, either because your urine is too acid or because of inflammation, just try GOLD MEDAL HAARLEM OIL CAPSULES. This fine, old preparation has been used for this purpose for 237 years. That its popularity continues is the best proof that it works. But be sure you get GOLD MEDAL. Accept no substitute, 35¢.

Negro Thanked Judge For 30-Day Jail Sentence

Salt Lake City, Utah — (UP) — City Judge C. F. Dalby has often been abused by prisoners who were sentenced and blessed at least once. When B. F. Rolston, 77, Negro pastor from Cleveland, Ohio, came to Salt Lake City, streets were heavily covered with snow.

"Dis snow, it's ject got me do'n." Rolston told Judge Dalby when brought before him on a vagrancy charge. "If you don't

mind, Judge, I'd like to go to jail fo' about fo'ty days."

Judge Dalby demurred that 40 days was considerably long for vagrancy charges, but compromised on a month.

"God bless you, Judge," the preacher said. "Thank de Lawd fo' that much."

Curator Wishes to Make Strange Trade

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