

MURDER By An ARISTOCRAT

Mignon G. Eberhart

"I think we are letting things get away from us," she said bluntly. "There's no need of making a scene. We are talking too much and not getting any place. The burglar could have picked up Dave's revolver and used it. Just because it was Dave's revolver, there on the floor, doesn't prove anything. Doesn't prove Dave used it. Doesn't even prove Bayard was killed by a bullet from that gun. Doesn't prove anything. Janice was frightened and shocked and acted hurriedly. The burglar must have just escaped. I think we ought to concentrate on finding the burglar. When I left, Bayard was alive. And Dave and Allen were together."

"Not all the afternoon, Evelyn," said Adela. "I have just discovered that Dave took a walk alone, and Allen went for a drive, met Janice near the east farm, and they talked awhile. Mrs. Steadway happened to mention it. Janice and Allen thought it unwise to tell that, after all, Dave and Allen did not each have the complete alibi we all thought they had. Janice and Allen acted as they thought best. But it makes it difficult."

"But didn't you meet again, Allen? You returned together. You came into the library together," said Evelyn.

"Yes," replied Allen. "After leaving Janice I drove directly back to the lake, and Dave was there. We fished for quite a while and then came home together."

"Why, then, that's all right," said Evelyn, relieved. "You see, Adela, they were together from—what time, Allen?"

"About four, or a little earlier," said Allen. "And you left Bayard alive at 10 after four. So you see, Adela, Dave's alibi is still good."

"And yours too, incidentally, Allen," said Hilary rather bitterly.

Allen shrugged.

"I can't help that." "That is right," I said, addressing Evelyn. "You were here after four. I am sure of that, for I saw you. The burglar must have come after you were here. You just came to the door of the library, here, and glanced in?"

"Yes," said Evelyn.

"Bayard was here?"

"Yes. I didn't speak to him. He didn't see me."

"Oh, yes, I remember you said that. The burglar must have come in directly after. When you were here, was the safe open?"

"Why, no," said Evelyn, frowning. "I remember distinctly. It was closed."

"Evelyn!" shouted Hilary. "Good God, don't you know what you've done? That woman has tricked you." He was purple with rage. "She's tricked you. You've admitted that Bayard was—" He stopped, thoroughly frightened now, staring at me, on the verge of apoplexy.

"Why, no—I—" said Evelyn.

"The safe," I said, watching Hilary, "is in Dave's study. Bayard was actually killed there. There was blood on the rug by the desk. He was killed in Dave's study. He was dead—" I looked at Evelyn—"when you saw him."

Evelyn stared back at me. She was not a liar by inspiration; she had to be coached, and there was no time for that.

She nodded slowly. Hilary sucked in his breath with a sort of groan and sat down as if his knees had weakened under him.

I heard Allen say under his breath, "Dave's study."

Adela's face was granite. I met their eyes—all of them, it seemed to me, hating me.

And perhaps fearing me. "Janice," said Adela, "call Dave. I think we must question him."

The room was so still that Janice's small heels made tap-taps of sound along the floor. She knocked on the door of the study. There was no answer, and she put her hand on the doorknob, opened the door, and stepped inside. No one spoke. There was no sound from the study.

It seemed a long time before she stood in the doorway again. She just stood there, her back to the room beyond, facing us, swaying a little. We were all standing. She said:

"You can't question Dave. You can't ask him anything—ever—again."

CHAPTER XIV

From the first it was not so much a question of Dave's having been murdered as it was a question of whether he had taken the veronal accidentally or intentionally. In other words, whether or not he was a suicide. And if he had committed suicide, was it a confession of guilt? Had he murdered Bayard?

For Dave was dead. And he died of an overdose of veronal. Dr. Bouigny established that fact within 20 minutes of Janice's shocking announcement.

I do not remember much of the few moments immediately following her words as she stood there at the door of the little study, nor of how we crowded into that room, nor of what we said and did and how we looked. I do remember kneeling in the long couch where that silent body lay and making sure that Janice was not mistaken, that Dave was actually dead. And I remember how peaceful his face looked. It is true, of course, that most faces of the dead look peaceful, but there was a look about Dave's face as of one who seeks his rest with the tranquillity of complete surrender.

Singularly enough, while we were all thinking of Adela and trying to spare her, it was Hilary who went to pieces and collapsed on a chair in the library where Allen led him and sat there shivering and shaking with his hands over his face trying to hide dreadful man hysteria. Adela was like a woman carved in stone. She stood at the foot of Dave's couch and looked at him with a still hard face and told Evelyn to telephone for the doctor, and told Allen to take Hilary away and Janice to bring her a chair.

"I intend to stay here," said Adela stiffly. "Thank you, Janice."

Janice looked and moved as if she were in a daze. It was only when Adela reached out and took one of Dave's hands that Janice sank down on the floor beside Adela and buried her head in her arms. The toe of her slim white slipper rested exactly over the spot on the Sarouk rug where I had discovered that damp crimson patch.

Evelyn turned away from the telephone.

"He will be here right away," she said. "Don't look like that, Adela. You know how sick Dave has been. For such a long time he has not been himself. Perhaps it is better."

"Death," said Adela, "is never better."

And Janice lifted her dark head and looked at Evelyn as if she were a creature of a different world. I am sure that, then, Janice only felt a great pity for Dave and for Adela; she had not yet thought of her own freedom. There was nothing hypocritical about her grief; it was the sorrow of affection and pity. She might not have loved Dave,

but she had not tried to escape any of the responsibilities of her marriage. And then, she must have loved him once. Even an unsentimental and an honest woman may weep at the end of a marriage which has failed or at the grave of a forgotten love. And Dave was much more than that: He was her husband, an integral part of her world, a vital and important factor in her life.

Dr. Bouigny came very soon; his thick black hair ruffled, his coat baggy, his face growing somber and troubled as he listened to what we said and looked at Dave. He took Adela's pulse, I remember, and sent Evelyn for some wine, and got us all out of the study and into the library with the door closed between. Adela never resisted him, and she did not do so then; she put Dave's poor limp hand carefully on the edge of the couch and obeyed Dr. Bouigny. At his request I closed the door and followed them. The examination had taken only a few quiet moments.

"You'd better," he said to Adela, "go straight to bed and take a bromide. You can't stand this."

Adela was sipping the wine Evelyn had brought. I have always marveled at Adela's fortitude at that dreadful time; but then all of them behaved rather well. All but Hilary, and perhaps Hilary had more for which to reproach himself; he must have drifted far from Dave during recent years.

"Why did Dave die?" asked Adela directly, brushing aside his suggestion as if it had not been made.

Dr. Bouigny looked worried. He ran his fingers through his thick hair, further disheveling it.

"We'd better all of us sit down and talk quietly. Here, Hilary—give him some wine, Miss Keate, please. If you are determined to thresh this thing out here and now—" He paused, looking anxiously at Adela. "Well, perhaps it is best. You are sure you can bear it all?"

"What do you mean, Daniel? Dave is dead—my little brother—" Adela's mouth twisted a little over the words. They were her only audible expression of the turmoil of grief and pain and desolation in her heart. It was a moment before she could continue. Presently she said, her face gray and blank and set, and her eyes like a cold wall between us and her thoughts, and her voice rather harshly deliberate: "Why did Dave die? Tell me, Daniel."

Dr. Bouigny sighed heavily. I gave the small glass to Hilary, who took it and gulped the wine in a dazed fashion. I don't think he realized what he was doing or that I, whom he disliked so fervently, had given him the drink. He did seem to come to himself, however; he rose and approached the small tragic group and, I believe, began to consider the matter of Dave's death in its possible relation to our dreadful problem.

"Dave died," said Dr. Bouigny, "of an overdose of veronal."

"Veronal," said Hilary in a breathless way. He was still very pale and had none of his usual self-assurance. "How did Dave get veronal? Why did he take it?"

"I don't know where he got it," Dr. Bouigny said. "Janice, my dear, do you mind answering a few questions? You see, I've got to sign my coroner's certificate."

"What is it?" The girl was like a pale, still little statue in her white gown; her hands were clasped rather desperately together as if to restrain their trembling, but otherwise she held herself with amazing courage.

"About Dave," he said. "How's he been feeling lately?"

list. Some air-mail stamps are worth \$2,000 each, and there are not many of them, which makes it easier for the forgers to dispose of their imitations. A member of the Royal Philatelic Society stated in London that in some cases so clever was the forgery that it had taken weeks to establish the fact that the stamp was spurious. "Often a stamp is sent to the other side of the world to prove whether it is genuine or not," he said. "The most difficult forgeries to detect are those that have been made by photographing originals."

"About as usual, I think," said Janice slowly.

"Has he been sleeping well?"

"I don't know. He never sleeps well, but I've not heard him complain recently. You see, he spends so much of his time here in his study. And we never disturb him. I think, though, that he—" she stopped.

"That he's been taking something to make him sleep?" asked Dr. Bouigny.

"Why, yes, I think so," she said. "But he never told me, and I've seen nothing, though I've watched."

"He hasn't said anything about having any difficulty with his eyesight lately?"

"Yes," said Janice, "a little. He didn't care to read. And once or twice he said things blurred."

"What about his speech? And his walk? Has he been a little slow of speech? Has he seemed to lack a certain exactness of movement?"

I longed to reply to Dr. Bouigny, as I saw what he meant and marveled that I had not seen it in Dave days earlier.

But Janice said hesitantly: "Yes. A little. He—oh, he's not been himself at all, Dr. Dan."

Dr. Bouigny stared at the rug for a moment, running his fingers through his thick hair.

"I don't know why I didn't see it," he said slowly. "You should have told me—I didn't realize—"

"What is it, Daniel?" said Adela.

He looked at her slowly.

"It's going to go hard with you, Adela," he said. "But I suppose you've got to know. You see Dave's been—Dave was a drug addict."

"Drug," said Adela, as if she were merely repeating words without any comprehension at all of their meaning. "Addict."

"Yes," said Dr. Bouigny miserably. "He took veronal. He must have taken too much at last. Poor fellow. I could have cured him if I'd known it in time."

Adela was on her feet. Her eyes were no longer blank and cold; they were blazing blue fire. There was a very fury in her eyes and in her broken voice as she said harshly:

"Veronal! Veronal! And you could have cured it!"

Dr. Bouigny, his eyes pitying, nodded his great head.

"I could have cured it, Adela," he said gently. "But I didn't know. Dave has been vaguely unwell for so long—I didn't see it, and none of you knew. If it had been morphine or cocaine or any of those drugs, I wouldn't have been at all sure of success. But veronal—I could have cured him of that habit."

That was the second time I saw Adela falter. All that rocklike strength suddenly left her; she sagged down into her chair again, her thick body loose and old, her face flabby, her eyes closed.

"She's fainting," said Dr. Bouigny. "Evelyn, help me." Adela motioned them back with her blunt white hands.

"No. No. Let me alone."

There was such vehement command in her gesture that Evelyn and Dr. Bouigny and I paused involuntarily. After watching Adela for a moment, Dr. Bouigny sat down again in his chair, and Evelyn went back to stand beside Janice. Allen, tall and brown and grave, stood a little in the background and scarcely took his eyes from Janice during the whole time.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

California Marriages And Divorces Declined

San Francisco —(UP)— Despite the examples set by Hollywood, Californians lost interest in marriages and divorces last year, according to figures compiled by the census bureau.

Marriages declined 9.2 per cent and divorces dropped off 6.7 per cent. Marriages for the year totaled 73 per 1,000 of population and divorces, 2.37.

Confederate President's Hymnal Given Library

Baton Rouge, La. —(UP)— The hymnal used by Jefferson Davis, lone president of the Confederacy, when he attended Sunday services, is one of the rare volumes found in the Louisiana University library.

On the cover, Davis' signature is written in old-fashioned, slanting scrip. The hymnal was donated by his grandmother, Mrs. Nannie Davis Smith, of Baton Rouge.

Side Glances

By George Clark



"Oh, John, you must ask Mr. Waff to teach you some card tricks, so we will be invited out more."

Blood Test Gives Physician Valuable Clew to Many Ills

EXAMINATION MAY REVEAL PRESENCE OF BACTERIA IN BLOOD STREAM AND DEFECTS THAT CAUSE VARIOUS DISEASES

BY DR. MORRIS FISHBEIN Editor, Journal of the American Medical Association, and of Hygeia, the Health Magazine

Few people realize the exceedingly intricate nature of the content of the blood and the valuable information that a competent investigator can obtain by study.

The most elementary study of the blood includes, first, a determination of the number of red blood cells; second, the amount of hemoglobin, or red coloring matter; third, the number of white blood cells, and, fourth, an attempt to determine whether or not the blood coagulates or clots normally.

There are, however, many other examinations which yield information of the greatest importance. There is, for example, a study of the volume of the blood and the relationship of the hemoglobin or red coloring matter to the total number of red blood cells. There is a differentiation of all of the white blood cells into many types.

There is possible a counting of the reticulocytes, giving to the physician definite information as to the rate at which the blood is regenerating itself and forming new red blood cells to replace those destroyed.

In disease of various types, it may be necessary to determine the number of platelets in the blood.

By all these investigations the physician is able to determine the nature of the blood and from that nature, some understanding of its relationship to various diseases.

Certainly the blood is the most important element in the human body, since it gives by its circulation nutrition to all of the tissues and serves at the same time to collect waste materials and poisons and to eliminate them from the body.

Moreover, the white blood cells attack and destroy bacteria and thus aid to keep the body in health.

Centenarian Enjoys Reading Snappy Stories

Millersburg, Ohio. —(UP)— Although "Aunt" Sophia Lelly, of the Holmes County Home, is celebrating her 101st birthday, she enjoys reading a "good snappy love story"—and she reads without the aid of spectacles.

She thinks women should have their say in government affairs and subscribed to that conviction by casting her first vote last year when she was 100.

"I've never married, so I've never had to worry about a husband," Miss Lelly declared when asked to what she attributed her unusual span of years.

Livingston, Tex. —(UP)— Despite the fact there are no oil refineries in this section of the state, gasoline produced in Polk county is for sale at many filling stations here.

It is produced by nature, and comes directly from the No. 1 Dick Schwab well, 10 miles southeast of here.

A heavy flow of gas was struck in this well several months ago. Tremendous pressure liquifies a certain amount of the gas, creating a certain amount of the gas, creating a certain amount of the gas, creating a certain amount of the gas.

Unwanted Crop Led To Unlooked-for Profit

Lindsay, Cal. —(UP)— A seed house sent William Wilson, local orange grower, the wrong kind of seed, but he grew a profitable crop anyway.

Wilson ordered mustard seed. When the seed arrived, he planted

Long Lost Medal Found After 14 Years

Littlefield, Tex. —(UP)— Sixteen years ago Pat Boone, son of a pioneer southwestern rancher, won a medal for fleeciness of foot in a New Mexican high school meet. Fourteen years ago Boone, then a cowboy employed at a dipping vat corral at Kenna, N. M., lost the medal. He offered \$25 reward to no avail.

Recently Boone, now a city commissioner here, recovered the long-lost emblem. It bore the scars

Marriage Certificate Filed After 54 Years

Pueblo, Colo. —(UP)— Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Benham decided they might as well register their marriage certificate.

They had been married 54 years ago. Colorado was too busy then digging gold and watching for hostile Indians to bother much about registration of marriage certificates, so there was no law concerning them.

The law has long been in effect, but the Benhams, pioneers of the

AIR STAMP FORGERS ACTIVE

A fresh epidemic of stamp forgeries has appeared in Europe, and stamp dealers and collectors are being warned against them. The forgers appear to be concentrating on spurious air-mail stamps and so many have appeared on the market that a philatelic organization has sent out to its members a check

MAN SMASHED BARBER POLE

Salt Lake City, Utah. —(UP)— "Curb that impulse," said police to D. C. Christensen when arresting him for smashing a revolving barber pole, which had annoyed him.

Married Couple Found Marooned

Gold Beach, Ore. —(UP)— A message purported to have been put into the sea by a couple stranded on an island of the Hawaiian group in 1931 was washed ashore in a bottle here.

1931 Message from Marooned Couple Found

The note said that Gertrude Atkinson and George Harfeystone left Honolulu August 16, 1931 in a 16-foot canoe and got out of sight of land. They landed on an island about 90 miles southwest of there, and had seen no ships at the time the message was written.

Exhibit Commemorates Pepy's 300th Birthday

Philadelphia —(UP)— In commemoration of the 300th birthday of Samuel Pepy's, famous diarist, a collection of first editions and autograph letters of Pepy's and John Evelyn, 17th Century contemporaries, have been placed on exhibition at the Free Library.

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