

# MURDER By An ARISTOCRAT

Mignon G. Eberhart

Hilary shrugged. "Call it what you will, Adela. We know he took that veronal. No one else could have given it to him. He knew it for what it was; took it as a habit. Dan explained all that. What easier than for Dave to take the overdose intentionally? Especially since he could readily have overheard our conversation in the library by merely opening the door of the study a trifle—the inquiry you insisted upon, Adela — and would have known that we all realized he must have killed Bayard. But I think, too, that it might be better to forget the whole business."

"That is like you, Hilary," said Adela. "You never like to face anything disagreeable. But I will finish what I've begun. Miss Keate has brought up the question of the gun. I think any questions she wishes to ask ought to be answered. Miss Keate—?"

Her voice was lifted in inquiry. There was a complete silence in the library. The long room was cool and shady. Someone had removed the pale green heap of bath salts and had rearranged the table, and there were fresh crimson roses in the bowl. Dr. Bouigny was not there, nor Emmeline. But there was Adela, stately in her high-backed chair; Evelyn, cool and matter-of-fact; Janice, very quiet and grave but with a certain anxious, tight-drawn look erased from her lovely face. Allen was standing near her, watchful; it was rather curious to note the slight but very definite difference the night had brought to Allen. Yesterday his bearing toward Janice had been removed, careful, withdrawn; today, while he was exactly as unobtrusive, there was a certainty about him, a kind of authority. It was as if he felt, as I suppose he did, that he had a right to protect Janice openly and frankly.

Hilary stirred impatiently and I realized that they were still waiting for me to speak.

"Was Dave's revolver the only one in the house?" I asked.

"Yes," said Adela definitely. "We all know that. Even Hilary has no revolver now."

Evelyn smiled faintly. "Not since the boys left for school this last term," she explained. "They appropriated Hilary's revolver. He didn't replace it. We have no use for revolvers in C—"

I repressed a desire to say that they seemed to have discovered a use for them, and said instead:

"It seems to me, then, that the possession of the revolver is a rather important part of the evidence."

I suppose no one liked to say, "Janice, explain. Explain where the gun was when Adela found Bayard dead. Where it was when Evelyn and Hilary saw that shattered body. When did you put the gun in the egg basket?" But they all looked at her. Even I, who felt so certain that she was innocent of Bayard's murder—so certain that I dared inquire further about the revolver when, if I had left it to the Thatchers, it would probably have never been mentioned again—even I felt a quail of doubt as we waited for her to speak.

And it was just then, to add to my anxiety, that I recalled what she'd said when she told me of the quarrel between Dave and Bayard when Bayard was wounded, and she and Adela had interfered in time to save Bayard's life. Janice had said, "I managed to get the revolver away from him and out of sight." Had it remained, then, in her possession?

"Don't say anything, Janice," said Allen again. "There's no need to. They can't make you talk."

"But I'm quite willing to talk," said Janice. Her dark, troubled eyes met our combined gaze openly. "I want to tell exactly what I know of this."

"Then do so, my dear," said Adela rather crisply. She sat very stiff and straight, her blunt white fingers fumbling with her eyeglasses, and the arrogant curve of her nose rather sharp.

"Where was the gun when you picked it up, Janice?" asked Allen.

"It was on the rug. On the small Sarouk in Dave's study."

The lines about Allen's eyes tightened a bit.

"But Adela, Evelyn, and Hilary all say there was no gun when each of them entered the study during the afternoon. And you found the gun, remember, late in the afternoon after all three of them had visited the study." Allen was speaking very deliberately, as if to give Janice time to word her answer carefully. I suppose, after warning her not to talk, and seeing that she meant to do so in spite of his warning, he had resolved quickly to question her himself and thus give her a measure of protection.

A moment of utter silence followed his inquiry. We were all watching Janice, waiting a bit breathlessly for her reply. It was only then I think that she knew she was trapped. For I saw the horror flare into her eyes. She sprang out of her chair.

"Oh, I see," she cried with a sort of incredulous gasp. "The basket! That is what you mean, the basket! I could have taken the revolver out of the house in the basket, couldn't I! I could have shot Bayard myself with Dave's revolver and hidden it in the egg basket and left Bayard's body there in the study. Left his body there for Adela to find when she came downstairs only a few moments later. I know now why you are all looking at me so strangely. How stupid I was not to see it at once. Oh, how can you! How can you think that of me!"

A half sob caught in her throat, and Allen put out his hand, and she brushed it away and flung up her little white chin and cried, "I did not! I did not shoot Bayard. I did not kill him. When I left the house that afternoon Bayard was still alive. I spoke to him. But I did not kill him with Dave's revolver and then hide the revolver in the basket and leave. It all happened just as I told you. I never dreamed Bayard was dead until I returned from the farm and walked into the house just ahead of Adela and found Bayard dead. And moved him. I moved him, you know. I moved him from the study into the library."

Hilary cried out something incoherent, but Adela did not speak. And Evelyn said directly, "But the revolver, Janice. When did you hide the revolver?"

Janice's eyes went slowly around the group, traveled deliberately from one intent face to another before she walked gracefully out of the trap.

"The revolver," she said quietly, "was under Bayard's body."

It was Hilary, of course, who exploded into the silence. "Under Bayard's — And you moved him, Janice? It was you who moved him?"

"Yes, yes, Hilary. I moved him. I thought Dave had killed him. I moved him out of Dave's study into the li-

brary, and I found the revolver and hid it in the egg basket."

"I hope," said Allen with a rather grim look around his mouth, "that that satisfies all of you. And now that you've hounded Janice into telling 'exactly what happened,' no matter how painful, suppose the rest of you tell a few things. Who, for instance, put those diamonds among Janice's things? And why?"

"Allen!" Adela made an ex-postulatory gesture. "Don't speak so. We didn't try to make a victim of Janice. You can see for yourself how much better it is now that she has explained about the revolver. And as to the diamonds—I put them in the jar of bath salts myself. You didn't give me time to finish my story. I had only a few moments, you see, there in the study to make it look as though no one in the family had murdered —"

"You mean Dave?" asked Allen sharply.

"Dave," conceded Adela. "That Dave had not murdered Bayard. The safe caught my eyes, and I remembered the diamonds were in it, so I opened the safe and took the diamonds out and dropped them into one of the lower drawers of the table there, and left the safe open. The next morning after the murder I took them upstairs, and since I feared there might be considerable search for them, I hid them in what I thought was a safe place and one that was unlikely to be looked in, no matter what happened. I imagine the rather frenzied things I did may seem foolish and disconnected to you—"

Adela adjusted her eyeglasses carefully and looked bleakly at us through them—"but I thought that with the telephone to establish a sort of alibi for Dave, and the safe open, and the diamonds actually gone, there would be little chance of anyone suspecting that any of the family had killed Bayard. I cannot tell you what a shock it was to find that everything I had planned had gone wrong. The worst thing—" she faltered a second and touched her gray-blue lips with a delicately laced handkerchief—"the worst thing was finding Bayard in the library. Not in the study." She paused again, regained her resolute manner, and said with just a touch of her former blandness, "not that I am admitting that Dave killed Bayard. I only knew that he would be thought to have killed him. I am convinced it was a burglar, in spite of everything you say. I am trying to prove it."

"Adela, it is so hopeless," said Hilary despairingly. "Don't you see that what you are actually doing is to involve every one of us in the affair? Since we all know that Dave tried once to kill Bayard, why don't we let it—"

"Did you know why Bayard and Dave quarreled?" I asked Adela directly, breaking in upon Hilary's rambling reproaches, which threatened to involve us all in one of those long family discussions which told so little and so much and were so deliberately inconsistent and so dreadfully cruel.

A gray shadow passed over Adela's face, but she answered with a barely perceptible evidence of the effort it must have been to force the words from her tongue.

"Yes, I know. It is a very terrible thing, but we all know now that Dave was a drug addict. Bayard had been furnishing Dave with veronal. They quarreled somehow over that; I do not know exactly why it reached such a shocking climax that night, but I believe Bayard was trying to get more money from Dave and was keeping a new supply from him. Bayard, of course, had ways to provide the drug, and Dave depended upon him for it. I heard only a word or two of it while

Janice had slipped out of the room to hide the revolver."

The revolver again, and Janice. Allen said quickly: "When you took the gun from Dave's hand that night what did you do with it, Janice?"

"I put it in my own room. In the drawer of my desk."

"Do you keep the drawer locked?"

"No."

"Then anyone in the house had access to the gun by merely walking into your room and helping himself?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so. But, Allen, I don't think that anyone would—"

"When did you last see the gun in your desk?"

"I'm not sure. Wait, let me think. I didn't look at it again at all. I didn't see it again until I found it under Bayard's body there in the study, when I found him dead. Why do you question me like this, Allen?"

Allen's grim face softened a little as he looked down at the slim girl shrunk into the corner of the chair. It seemed to me then that with Dave's death a certain air of maturity had left Janice; she was younger, less rigidly controlled and poised now that she was released from the tragic load of care and anxiety and responsibility she had carried so resolutely.

"For your own protection, Janice," said Allen.

Hilary flared immediately. "I don't like your tone, Allen. I don't like your implications. We are not trying to blame Janice. None of us has even hinted that things looked rather black for her—"

"Hilary—" Allen had taken a step forward so quickly and suggestively that Hilary backed off a little. But Allen checked himself abruptly and said more quietly, "Look here. Janice has been everything that is good and fine. She's stayed by Dave and tried to take care of him and help him, and has been a loyal wife to him when most women would have simply walked out. And it's because she tried to protect Dave and thought nothing of herself that she has become involved in this murder. This," said Allen grimly, "this family murder."

Hilary had been swelling and empurpling with every word, and I really thought for a moment or two that we were about to witness an out-and-out fight between the two men. But Evelyn said quickly:

"Allen, what are you saying! You must not talk like that!"

And Adela in her stately manner said with cold reproach:

"I think you two are forgetting yourselves. Certainly you have forgotten the rest of us."

Hilary cast his wife and sister an outraged glance and returned to Allen.

"While you are defending others who don't need your defense," he said hotly, "why don't you defend yourself? Or do you think you are above suspicion? Because, if you think that, I must deceive you. Your quarrel with Bayard was overheard. Your—"

Hilary paused as if to give his words more emphasis—"your threat to kill Bayard was overheard."

If Hilary's knowledge was a blow to Allen, he gave no evidence of it. And if it was news to the others I could see no evidence of that either; I dare say there were family conferences at which I was not in uninvited attendance.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Cafe Owner Sent for Prohibition Agents

Dallas, Tex. —(UP)— When officers raided the Dinty Moore's cafe to obtain evidence 3.2 per cent beer was being sold in violation of the state law. Proprietor W. G. (Bill) Singletary told them he was sorry, but he had just sold out. He would call them when more beer arrived. He did, and the officers carried him away to face grand jury indictment.

## Crow Has Record For Plain Speaking

Columbia, Mo. —(UP)— A plain-spoken crow is Jimmy, owned by Miss Ino Evans, of Christian college, here. When the bird sees a girl, he crows, "Boy, you're fat." Seeing any person carrying a bundle, the bird crows, "You old sap, what's that?"

# Adrift With Humor

## NO DISAGREEMENT

"For whom are you going to vote?"

"For the same man as my husband."

"Good. Whom is your husband voting for?"

"The man I tell him to."—Gutierrez (Madrid).

## The Difference

A sixth grade class was studying about Benjamin Franklin, and the question was asked: "What is the difference between electricity and lightning?"

A thoughtful youngster volunteered:

"Well, I think the difference is that you don't have to pay for lightning."

## Cats

"Your fiance spoke to me last night."

"I know. He is doing advertisement pictures for beauty preparations and wanted a model for 'Before using.'"—Die Woche im Bild (Ottens).

## Expressive

Two caddies were discussing, in the way caddies do, the players whose clubs they were carrying.

"What's your man like?" asked one.

"Left-handed," was the laconic reply, "and keeps his change in his right-hand pocket."

## Louise's Lesson

Little Louise had been in the beginners' class at Sunday school for some time. Her mother wished to know what she was learning so she said to her one day: "Louise, what did the teacher tell you today?"

"She told me to sit down and be still for once," was the reply.

## HIS ANSWER

Two little boys had put away in the larder over night two small cakes for consumption the next morning. When, however, one of them went the next morning to secure his cake, he found only one there, and that had a large piece bitten out of it. Full of wrath, he went in search of his brother.

"I say," he demanded, "I want to know who took that bite out of my cake?"

"I did," answered his brother.

"What did you do it for?"

"Well, when I tasted it I found it was your cake, so I ate the other one!"—Chelsea Record.

## Too Much Democracy

Friend—Don't you worry—tomorrow, when you give your speech you will have all intelligent men on your side.

Candidate for Parliament—That is what is worrying me. I would rather have the majority.—Lustige Blätter (Berlin).

## PUTTING IT STRAIGHT



Mr. Goodcatch—Can I light a cigarette?

Miss Wideawake—Do you wish me to regard you as a match?

## Home Life

"You attend many bridge games and lectures?"

"I enjoy them," admitted Miss Capene.

"Don't you think a woman's place is in the home?"

"Yes, but not necessarily her own home."—Washington Star.

## Both Satisfied

"But, dear," gushed the flapper, "is it fair to go to the picture with a boy you dislike?"

"Well, it's like this," replied her friend, "I enjoy the picture and he enjoys my company."—Stray Stories.

## CROSSWORD "TEASER"

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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	20				21		22
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43						44	

## Horizontal

- 1—Mohammedan call to prayer
- 5—Fatten
- 9—Large vehicle
- 10—By way of
- 12—South American reptile
- 13—Beast of burden
- 14—Boy's name
- 16—Initials of a famous President
- 17—Possesses
- 18—Elongated fish
- 20—To allot
- 21—At a distance
- 23—Body of water
- 24—To fix
- 25—Envelop
- 28—Luck
- 31—Crafty
- 32—Card game
- 34—Impersonal pronoun
- 36—Sets of three
- 38—Note of scale
- 39—Notch
- 41—Unit of work
- 42—Human beings
- 43—Metal
- 44—A landing place

## Vertical

- 1—Acknowledge
- 2—Tool for trimming slates
- 3—Indefinite article
- 4—Species of pine
- 6—Hebrew month
- 7—Decay
- 8—Attempt
- 10—Receptacle
- 11—Region
- 14—Head covering
- 15—Coniferous tree
- 17—Listens
- 19—Cowboy's rope
- 20—Cat's cry
- 22—Affirmative
- 26—High in the scale
- 27—Funeral pile
- 28—Dancing shoe
- 29—Goddess of Dawn
- 30—Islands of the South Sea
- 33—Simpleton
- 35—A sailor
- 37—Anger
- 38—Meadow
- 40—Proceed
- 42—Greek letter

The solution will appear in next issue.

## Fighting Policemen

### Were Taken to Court

Palo Alto, Cal. —(UP)— Everyone knows that a policeman goes for a walk on his holidays, but it was not until today that local residents learned that policemen are invited to see a judge on their days off.

It all happened when a San Francisco policeman engaged in a fist fight with a man who, he asserted, ducked his son in the municipal pool. A fellow policeman,

to clinch the fight, aided his pal, but both were defeated when a fourth man entered just to even up the sides.

Both policemen were charged with disturbing the peace and scheduled to appear before the local judge.

## French Senator Seeks

### To Aid Countrywomen

Paris —(UP)— Senator Rene-Renoult struck a new blow for women's rights here when he placed before the Senate a bill

to remove some of the checks on feminine liberty imposed by the Code Napoleon, whose author was inspired by the belief that "nature has made women our slaves."

The Legislative Commission set aside the part of the bill detailing changes in the marital regime, but Rene-Renoult hopes to get some action at least.

The Senator indicated that the war had shown woman's capacity to work on an even footing with men, and declared it was high time that France should change the restrictions on women laid

down by Napoleon, this being the only country still holding out.

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IN STEP WITH THE NATION