

Hidden Ways

By FREDERIC F. VAN DE WATER

CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

Annie returned and announced Senator Groesbeck.

"Alone?" Miss Agatha asked and the wistfulness in her voice hurt me. "Then I'll see him in the living room, Annie."

The maid pushed the wheel chair down the hall. I sat at the desk and strove to set down on paper, after Miss Agatha's prescription, my own outline of the Morello mystery. I found it hard, for each item bore innumerable streams of surmise and suspicion. I do not know how long Allegra had been standing in the doorway when I looked up.

I rose clumsily. She was still pale but she seemed more tired now than angry. There was a droop to her shoulders and I cursed myself for feeling pitiful. She said at last: "You make it just as hard as possible, don't you?"

A few hours earlier she had pointed out the abyss that lay between her and me. I had sworn then never to strive to rebridge it. Sense still assured me that it was best for her to remain on her side and I on mine. Hunger for her, desire to aid her were checked by memory of my recent, adolescent idiosyncrasy. It hurts to have even a silly dream kicked apart. I said: "I beg your pardon."

"You heard me."

I made no reply. She went on, like a child reciting a lesson: "If I've misjudged you, I'm sorry."

"Miss Paget," I told her, "I misjudged you—and am even sorer."

"I came in here," she told me, "to apologize because Agatha thought I should."

She might have been talking to the butler. There was no call for her to put me in my place. I was there already and had sworn not to leave it again. I said: "That seems to me about the worst reason in the world."

Again she apparently hoped for something in my face that was not there. She muttered: "You make it very hard."

She was just a kid after all. Which was still another reason why things should stay as they were. So I said: "You said that before—which leaves us just where we started."

"Do you want to leave it there?" she asked directly, and I forced myself to answer: "Why not?"

There was a stir in the hall and the sound of voices. I did not know whether I was relieved or desolate when she left. Senator Groesbeck, now sleek and pompous, passed the doorway. Miss Agatha trundled herself into the room.

"What was Allegra doing in here?" she asked.

"Apologizing," I said.

She gave me one of the looks that made me feel she was counting my vertebrae and then said, "Hah!" in an odd tone. Thereafter, her mind dwelt on other matters.

"I wish," she complained, "that I hadn't so respectable an attorney. I need a scoundrel who'll help an idiot who won't help himself."

"As bad as that?" I asked.

She nodded and lighted a cigarette.

"Grove," she said, "is being held as a material witness. He still won't talk, so they're going to take him before the grand jury presently. If he doesn't talk then, he'll be indicted."

Her brisk voice was armor that I know, hid great distress. She brooded a minute, while I spoke for words and then asked: "Where's the typewriter?"

"You said," I told her, "that it was in the storeroom."

"Why didn't you get it?"

"Miss Agatha," I asked, "can you imagine Higgins letting me rummage through a basement storeroom without a writ of mandamus, a habeas corpus and a strong-arm squad?"

The lines of worry in her face slackened and she chuckled.

"No," she admitted, "I'm an old fool, David, but just the least bit befooled today. We'll go down together."

I trundled her into the hall and rang for the elevator. She said nothing till the car appeared, but the grim lines had deepened again on her face and I knew she was eating her heart out for her nephew. Hoyt took us down. I could see his ears pricked for tidings, but we did not speak. I had propelled Miss Agatha into the basement hall. A wan light burned there and the air was heavy with the familiar smell of lime and coal gas and cabbage for the Higgins' dinners, past and present. Miss Agatha dug in her handbag and chose a key from a ring.

Along one side of the basement hall was a series of iron doors, with gaps at lintel and threshold for ventilation. They guarded the cubbies that served as attics for tenants of the Morello. It was against one of these that I had reeled during my dark struggle with the intruder. I thought, as I fumbled with the lock, how brief a space by actual measurement, yet how long ago, that had been. Perhaps if I had been less clumsy that night, I might have ended the mystery. I might have saved innocent folk much danger and distress. The smell and gloom of the basement allied themselves with memory to tighten my nerves so that

I flinched when Miss Agatha said impatiently: "Can't you do it?"

She rolled forward to take the key. It turned as she moved and I pulled the door open before her advancing chair.

"There it is," Miss Agatha said, "over—"

Her voice died. The harsh sound of her indrawn breath set my neck to prickling. The light of the ceiling bulb poured into the maw of the storeroom. It shone upon something at Miss Agatha's feet at which she stared, at which I gaped, first stupidly, then in frantic disbelief. I bent forward.

"Careful," Miss Agatha warned in a dry whisper. "Don't touch it."

CHAPTER XVIII

Wind boomed in the elevator shaft and I heard the whine and catch of a car shifting gears in the street. The rest of my mind had stalled under its sudden load. Close to my ear Miss Agatha's breath came and went quickly. So we remained for a palsied instant, watching the object on the storeroom floor.

It lay just within the ventilation space at the iron door's base—a bizarre item for a spinster's storeroom, yet, in itself, nothing to wake dread. It was a knife with a black leather handle and a worn gray blade, streaked with what might



"I came in here," she told me, "to apologize."

have been rust. We both knew whence it had come.

It was the knife that had hung in the sheath they had found on Blackbeard's murdered body. It had been driven into its owner's heart. It had uttered the flat sound of smiting metal when it had fallen during my struggle in the basement, to lodge inside the door of the Paget storeroom.

I bent over it again. Miss Agatha made no further protest as I picked it up by its point, swathed it loosely in my handkerchief, and asked a question. I feared to answer. I heard myself say: "We had better go upstairs."

She nodded. I placed the handkerchief-wrapped knife in her lap and trundled her to the elevator shaft. We were silent on our upward journey. In the work-room, I picked up the muffled weapon carefully and laid it on the desk. Then I faced Miss Agatha.

It was hard to ask the question. The knife had killed; it might kill again. It was the link between the murdered and the murderer. My voice was hoarse: "What shall we do, now?"

She blinked. Her speech was calm as her face: "I think we had better telephone Captain Shannon."

I said: "There may be no one's fingerprints on that knife. There may be—anybody's."

I could not speak her nephew's name, but she understood.

"Call Captain Shannon," she said, and there was a lump in my throat as I obeyed. I spoke only briefly, asking the Homicide Bureau chief to come at once with a fingerprint man; then hung up on his further questioning. The receiver clattered as my shaking hand restored it. Miss Agatha said: "We both need a drink," and rang for Annie.

I nursed the liquor I would willingly have gulped. Miss Agatha sipped hers and at last spoke part of her thought aloud: "This was what you heard fall, that night in the basement, but how—why—I don't see—"

Her voice ran down. I said feebly: "Unless it is a maniac—"

Uncertainty left her. She gave a crooked smile.

"Who had designs on Higgins?" she scoffed. "David, Lyon Ferriter is no maniac. He is amazingly clever. I told you that this morning."

"But Lyon," I pointed out, "was in your flat when—"

She did not let me finish.

"I know, I know," she said. "But he did it. He killed the visitor to his

flat. I object less to that, David, than to the knowledge that he is laughing at us now. I never have liked to be laughed at. It's been my legs, I suppose. Heavens, our assembled brains should be as good as his. If only we could find a flaw, a weakness."

She drank again and then went on: "Everything radiates from Lyon Ferriter, but none of it reaches back to him."

A thought pricked me and some of the jumble of fact fell into coherent pattern.

"That's why," I blurted, "Lyon tried to kill me; that's why my room was searched. He thought I had found that knife. His own fingerprints must be on it."

"They won't be," Miss Agatha promised grimly. We were still for a moment. Then she said: "Day after tomorrow is Grove's birthday."

Her voice was so bare of sentiment that it was piteous. The day when Grove attained his inheritance, the day toward which, all his life, she had steered her foster son, would find him in disgrace and danger, unless—

I jumped at the telephone's ring. Could Shannon have arrived so soon?

"Answer it," Miss Agatha bade and her voice quavered a little.

I obeyed and was ashamed of my own agitation.

Jerry Cochrane drawled: "Dave, I want to see you. I've got hold of something a bit interesting, my laddie. Where can you meet me?"

He slipped away from further questions. It was too important to discuss over the house telephone, he said, and for like reason I forbore to tell what we had found. At last I clapped my hand over the mouthpiece and said to Miss Agatha: "It's Cochrane. He sounds so sleepy, I know he's excited. May he come here?"

At once she refused and then, to my amazement, gave way before my arguments. I pleaded that it might be important before Shannon came, to learn what Cochrane had discovered. I said we needed the alliance of Jerry's quick mind. Miss Agatha consented at last: "Have him come, David. You're very stubborn and I—I imagine I'm getting old."

I bade Cochrane hasten and hung up as Miss Agatha said: "Allegra, my dear, will you tell the hall force that Mr. Cochrane is to be admitted?"

The fur collar of the girl's cloak softened her face and the February wind had lent it color. Her aunt told her dryly and briefly of our discovery. Allegra glanced past me at the swathed weapon on the desk. Then a thought startled her.

"Agatha, you've sent for the police. And no one knows whose fingerprints may be on that knife. Even—"

"Even Grove's," her aunt completed in a level voice. "Yes, my dear. I'm not a Roman matron, but I have a respect for law. If they are there—"

Allegra had stepped quickly toward the desk. I knew her purpose and moved between her and the knife.

"They aren't your brother's," I told her. "He was here when that knife was lost."

Anger lighted her eyes but her face went white.

"If you think," she said in a taut voice, "I'm going to let my brother's life be juggled about because a spy has hoodwinked an old woman—"

Miss Agatha's quiet speech stilled her.

"I'm not too old, Allegra," she said, "to be obeyed in my own house. Will you tell the hall force to admit Mr. Cochrane, or shall I?"

I saw what was coming. The girl's face seemed to break apart into quivering fragments. Her voice shook with ghastly mirth.

"I won't. It can't be happening. It's a funny, hideous—"

I said sharply: "Get hold of yourself. You aren't lone Paget."

She looked at me like someone just waked. Then she drew a deep unsteady breath and went to the telephone to do her aunt's bidding. Thereafter, she turned and looked at me again.

"Thank you," she said. "That's the first time—"

"Forget it," I told her.

She drew up a chair beside Miss Agatha. Their hands joined. The girl bent over and kissed the still old face. So we waited for Shannon while the crumpled mound of handkerchief on the desk kept us still.

It was Cochrane who arrived first. His chubby face, his mild prosaic air loosened the atmosphere. He bowed and acknowledged Miss Agatha's introduction to her niece so easily that I think the girl was partly reassured. Then he beamed at me.

"This is in confidence," he said, including the whole room in his smile. "This, my lad, is banner-line stuff, if we can get to use it. Did you see the Sphere this morning, any of you?"

I shook my head. I felt the sting in Allegra's voice as she answered: "We read the Press."

(TO BE CONTINUED)



NEW YEAR PARTIES MUST HAVE PLENTY OF ZIP

(See Recipes Below)



Household News

By Eleanor Howe

Celebrating the advent of a new year is excuse enough for a party in any crowd. Whether it's youngsters or the "oldsters" that gather to see the old year out, the new year in, the party must have plenty of novelty and "get-up-and-go"—new games, new music, new refreshments, too, and something to drink is a requirement!

Drink a toast to the new year with a piping hot punch; while the winds of winter howl and fling sheets of snow against the windows, a hot, tangy drink will cheer your guests (both young and old) and it starts them on the homeward trip warmed from within.

"Hawaiian Hot Cup" is a drink that is new as the brand new year. Serve it steaming hot in small cups, with crisp crackers and wedges of cheese to accompany it.

Hot Spiced Cider and Holiday Mulled Grape Juice, served with Ginger Cookies or Doughnuts, make simple and satisfying refreshments for a crowd, and crisp, buttery popcorn or salted nuts are good to nibble on while the entertainment is under way.

If you'd like to start the evening with a buffet meal, here's a menu you and your guests will like.

Tuna Curry on Chinese Noodles
Mixed Salad With French Dressing
Hot French or Italian Bread
Orange Ginger Bread
With Whipped Cream
Coffee

Tuna Curry.
(Serves 10 to 12)
6 tablespoons butter
½ cup flour
1 teaspoon curry powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 quart milk
3 cups tuna (coarsely flaked)
½ cup mushrooms
Mushroom liquor
6 hard cooked eggs (sliced)
Melt butter, add flour and seasonings, and stir until smooth. Add milk gradually and cook, stirring constantly, until sauce is smooth and thick. Add remaining ingredients. Serve hot on Chinese noodles, and if desired, sprinkle with shredded, salted almonds.

Orange Gingerbread.
(Serves 15)
½ cup shortening
1 cup sugar
4 teaspoons orange rind (grated)
2 eggs (beaten)
¾ cups flour
1 teaspoon soda
2½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 teaspoons ginger
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 cup molasses
1 cup sour milk
Cream shortening and add sugar gradually. Add orange rind, and beaten eggs. Mix well. Sift together the flour, soda, baking powder, salt and spices. Add to first mixture alternately with milk and molasses. Place batter in 2 greased 8-inch square pans and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) for 35 to 40 minutes.

Mixed Salad.
(Serves 10 to 12)
1 large head lettuce
2 cups carrots (shredded)
3 cups red skinned apples (diced)
2 cups red grapes (halved and seeded)
3 tablespoons onion (minced)
French dressing
Separate leaves of lettuce, wash and dry thoroughly. Tear into pieces. Place in large salad bowl with carrots, apples, grapes and onion. Add French dressing and mix very lightly, using forks for the mixing.

French Dressing.
(Makes 1½ cups)
½ clove garlic (grated)
4 lumps sugar
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon paprika
1 cup salad oil
½ cup lemon juice or vinegar
Grate garlic on lump sugar. Combine with remaining ingredients, pour into fruit jar, and shake until well blended.

Hot Spiced Cider.
(Serves 20 to 25)
1 gallon cider
2 cups brown sugar
3 sticks cinnamon
12 whole cloves
2 teaspoons all-spice berries
Combine ingredients in sauce pan. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Strain and serve hot in small cups.

Holiday Mulled Grape Juice.
(Serves 10 to 12)
5½ cups grape juice
2½ cups water
¼ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
12 whole cloves
2 sticks cinnamon
½ teaspoon orange rind (grated)
½ teaspoon lemon rind (grated)
Combine ingredients in sauce pan. Bring slowly to a boil. Strain. Serve hot.

Hawaiian Hot Cup.
(Serves 10 to 12)
2 cups kumquats (sliced)
1 cup sugar
5 cups canned unsweetened Hawaiian pineapple juice
4 tablespoons of lime juice
2 tablespoons of lemon juice
Place sliced kumquats in bowl and mix well with the sugar. Let stand for 1 hour. Heat pineapple juice piping hot but do not boil. Pour over sugar and kumquats and stir until sugar is dissolved. Add lime and lemon juice, and serve at once.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

When cooking oatmeal, cornmeal, rice or anything likely to stick to the pan, just before serving remove from the fire, cover tightly and let stand five minutes. The steam will loosen the mixture from the bottom and the pan will be easy to wash.

Try peanut butter frosting for covering white or spice cakes. Add one-third of a cup of peanut butter to your regular uncooked white frosting. Blend in the peanut butter well before icing the cake. Decorated with a few roasted peanuts.

Pineapples may be used for holding salads or desserts. Use pineapples of uniform size. Cut them in halves lengthwise and using a fork, scrape out the pulp. (It may be used later.) Wash and chill the cases. Stuff them with fruit, melon balls or berries.

Try making edible place cards for children's parties. A simple one may be made by cutting out cards of cooking dough 1 by 2 inches in size. Bake them carefully and then write the name of each guest on his card with thin icing squeezed through a pastry tube.



By VIRGINIA VALE

REMEMBER that beloved book of your childhood days, "Little Men," by Louisa May Alcott? Well, imagine what it might be like with the addition of two new characters, to wit, Major Burdle, a fast-talking, amiable swindler who sacrifices everything for the love of his adopted son, and Willie the Fox, "a lovable, amusing 'living corpse,'" according to information from RKO. When you've finished this little picture puzzle, go to see the picture.

It's been turned out as adult entertainment, yet it's still a story for young folks. Kay Francis, George Bancroft and Jack Oakie head the cast, which includes Jimmy Lyfon, Richard Nichols, Sammy McKim and Elsie, the glamour cow.



Ruth Hussey

Ruth Hussey's work in Metro's "Flight Command," with Robert Taylor, and in "The Philadelphia Story," with Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart and Cary Grant, have won her a new long-term contract. Incidentally, "Philadelphia Story" is the picture that Cary Grant made for the Red Cross—he accepted the assignment with the idea of turning over his salary to them—\$125,000.

Bitter words were said in Hollywood recently when various producers needed stunt women and found that 14 of the best had been corralled by Paramount for "Las Vegas Nights," which already had Phil Regan, Lillian Cornell and Tommy Dorsey and his band.

The maddening part of it was that the daring demoiselles weren't scheduled to do stunts, just to dance with cowboys and drink cold tea, that would screen as Scotch and soda.

Carole Landis is beginning to think there's something about her that makes scenario writers want to see how near they can come to killing her. In her last three pictures she has been (1) chased by a prehistoric mammoth, (2) scheduled to climb a flagpole on top of a skyscraper, and (3) requested to get chummy with a cage-full of lions.

In her newest one, "Topper Returns," she is the target for a falling 250-pound chandelier. Plenty of precautions were taken when it was shot—after all, there's just one Carole Landis. Then, too, the chandelier cost \$800. A retake was just out of the question.

Bing Crosby's brother Bob, well known on the radio, makes his movie debut in "Let's Make Music," which, oddly enough, is a musical comedy. There are four musical numbers that may turn into hit songs, and Jean Rogers, Elizabeth Risdon and Joyce Compton are in the cast.

If you know of a waltz that Wayne King doesn't know you're one in a million. Fourteen years ago he started his library of waltz music; then he became known as "The Waltz King," and the demand for waltz music began to exceed the supply on hand. Since then he's been collecting what has grown into probably the largest library of waltz music in the country. His research staff includes three men in Chicago; two in New York; and one in South America.

The Pittsburgh Symphony men were rather startled when they learned that they were to play "Melancholy Baby" on that recent Musical Americana program. By the way, the song was written by Ed Burnett back in 1916 when he was waiting for his sweetheart to arrive on a train that was 18 hours late. And "If I Forget You," which Helen Jepson sang on that same program, was inspired by an editorial in the New York Times; Irving Caesar saw the editorial, which began with a quotation from the Psalms—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning"—and wrote the song.

ODDS AND ENDS—The University of California has engaged Rudy Vallee for a series of lectures before the radio class—he'll give practical advice on broadcasting and radio showmanship.

Kenny Baker has flown back and forth across the country so often, usually at night, that he declares he's travelled more and seen less than anybody else.

Mary Martin would like to leave that air show so that she can concentrate on motion picture work.

Bill Stern, director of "Sports Newsreel of the Air," has been offered a lecturing post in a radio announcing course, by a prominent university. He'll accept if he can find time.



New Year Begins More Than Once, Believe It or Not!

New Year's day isn't always New Year's day. The actual date varies among the Egyptians, Chinese, Jews, Romans and Mohammedans from September 6 to March 1.

January 1 was designated to be New Year's day when Julius Caesar established the Julian calendar in 46 B. C. However, the calendar year thus established was 11 minutes longer than the astronomical year.

To correct this discrepancy, Pope Gregory III suppressed 10 days in 1582 by ordering that October 5 be called October 15. England and its colonies, however, did not adopt this new calendar until 1752. For almost three centuries, therefore, New Year's was celebrated twice every year—both times on January 1.

New Year's never fell on the same day two years in succession in old China. The new year began on the first moon after the sun entered the sign Aquarius. This date varied from January 21 to February 18. Jewish New Year's, when translated into dates of the Gregorian calendar, varies from September 6 to October 4.

Mohammedans celebrated Muharram, or New Year's, on February 10 last year. But it wasn't the beginning of 1940 for them; it was the first day of 1359. Because the Mohammedan calendar is arranged differently from ours, the new year does not always fall on the same date according to the calendar in use by the Christian nations.

Happy New Year! When will YOU celebrate?