

# MURDER at PIRATE'S HEAD

By ISABEL WAITT

## CHAPTER I

Pirate's Head always reminds me of a Summer squall. Its long neck juts out of Rockville, Mass., into the wild Atlantic. Once, according to legend, this rocky promontory was the lookout for buccaniers, who hid their treasure in a deep fissure called the Pirate's Mouth. Just the mention of that slippery shelf in the foamy sea makes my flesh creep!

It began to creep the day I received a queerly fat letter, the first week of my visit at the inn. How would you feel to receive a missive from an unknown, containing forty old twenty-dollar bills?

Postmark, Boston. Date blurred. Penmanship, sprawling, as if an attempt had been made to disguise it. Spelling, excellent. Astonished, I read:

"The old church should go for a song at the auction. Please bid for one who doesn't wish to be known in the transaction. Sentimental reasons."

"In return, you may later use it for tearoom or lending library, rent free."

"Please don't touch a soul, but buy at any cost. If not enough, will reimburse. If too much, keep the difference and oblige"

## "A FRIEND."

Nobody knew I was summering at the inn. As for the auction of the homely little church, scheduled for July 3, the following day, I'd planned to go just for fun. Everybody at the Head would be there to take a whack at buying that desolate, long-unused place of worship, standing on the bluff.

That odd letter, though I didn't realize it at the time, was my first clue in the series of dreadful things which were to occur. Thrilled to death at the mystery, and speculating as to my unguessed correspondent, I pinned the bills into a stocking and tucked the missive itself under the lining of my top bureau drawer.

Maybe this vacation wasn't going to be so dull, after all! I'd visited my Aunt Nella before, and found it dead. But then she'd never had any murders to offer. I'll say this for murder—it's never dull.

Aunt Nella rents the inn at Pirate's Head, the only one there. In a way it was a comedown for her to open her lovely old colonial home to paying guests. For more than 150 years it had sheltered the Gerry family in decent privacy. They might have been comfortably off, except for the failure of the Lane Bank. This crippled Uncle Wylie, Aunt Nella's husband, worse than his rheumatism. Old Man Lane put a bullet through his head when his pet went into receivership, dragging down all his neighbors, but Aunt Nella went to making blueberry pies.

That's where I came in. She wheeled me into being hostess and general factotum, greeting the tourists and answering the phone while her hands were in the dough, as she put it. "You'll have a nice change," she said. "The Head is always so quiet and peaceful."

My funds were minus X, and I'm without near relatives, my parents both having died in a plane crash. Even Aunt Nella was only a play aunt, who had been my mother's dear friend.

We had only a few guests the first of July. Nice people, all of them, apparently, but merely names to me: The Reverend Jonas De Witt, Miss Lily Kendall, Hugh Norcross and his sister, Bessie; Mr. Thaddeus Quincy and Mr. Potter. The house staff consisted of Aunt Nella, Uncle Wylie and myself. A town girl came in to wash dishes, but she lived out and had nothing to do with the things that happened.

You can wager I didn't mention my letter to a soul. Visions of tearooms danced in my head. I'm going to skip the auction here, except to say that I bid for the old church and got it finally for \$300. I still had \$500 of somebody's money!

Along with the squat old building came sturdy, hard benches for seating maybe 125 people, a few dilapidated hymn books, and down in the basement the most wonderful sea chest you ever saw. Cedar. "There's my hope chest," I gloated. "A little polish and a lot of elbow grease—" "The thing was locked when I examined it after the sale. I was prying at it with a bobby pin when Uncle Wylie said Aunt Nella wanted me right away back at the inn."

Not until evening did I escape. Then I discovered Mr. Quincy out on the porch sitting patiently in his wheelchair, as usual. I liked Thaddeus Quincy, perhaps because he refused to use his infirmity as a topic of conversation. Though about 66, wizened and always alone, still whenever he was included he was the life of the party. Just then he looked dejected enough, amusing himself by strumming on the piazza rails with the malacca cane he always had handy.

"Want me to take you for a ride?" I asked. "My, the fog is creeping in."

"Would you, Judy? Just down the

ramp? Then I can manage for myself." He called me Judy since the first day, and I liked it, from him. To the others I was Miss Jason.

"How'd you like to see the inside of a church?" I asked. I held my breath while we made the planks Uncle Wylie had put over the side steps of the porch for this wheelchair.

"Saw all I wanted to this afternoon at the auction," he answered.

"Yes. From the outside. Shouted your bid through the door. Only made one bid. Why?" I asked.

"Wanted you to get it cheap. Think I'd bid against you? What'd you want of that old eyesore?"

"Wait till I get it fixed up. Tea and crumpets. My, it's getting foggy! Left my handbag down in the basement. Taking you down while I get it. Guess how much money I have left?" I queried.

He eluded my little trap, but appeared grateful for the companionship. "How should I know what scads you make at the inn? Tell me something about the Lane castle." He pointed at the great stone mansion that loomed up ahead of us, beyond the inn but to the left of the church, known to Pirate Headers as the castle. Hideously ornate it was, by daylight, with too many turrets. It had been vacant for years.

"Not much to tell," I replied.

"Been closed since Mr. Lane committed suicide after his bank failed, three years ago. There was a nasty scandal hushed up, implicating son Roddy—Roddy, Jr.—whom you saw at the inn last night. He lives out West and never's come back here since."

That odd letter, though I didn't realize it at the time, was my first clue in the series of dreadful things which were to occur. Thrilled to death at the mystery, and speculating as to my unguessed correspondent, I pinned the bills into a stocking and tucked the missive itself under the lining of my top bureau drawer.



From beneath the cover of the chest a dead white hand protruded.

since. His mother went mad on account of his escapades, they say, and leaped into the ocean from one of those towers. No wonder the old man shot himself."

"Nice family," Mr. Quincy said. "Who's that?" A figure scuttled ahead of us, across our path to the Lane driveway. Believing it to be one of our guests, I called good evening. There was no response. I had thought it the shadow of a worn-out until Mr. Q. said: "So-o-ciable fel-low." He received the bump from the huddled path unconcerningly. "Somebody's in an awful hurry. Suppose it was Lane? No light in the castle."

"Oh, I doubt if it was Roddy. After the reception he got last night! Bet he left town. Didn't show up for breakfast at the inn, as ordered."

We were passing the old fish house, from the cracks of whose single window a feeble light shone. Mr. Quincy was all curiosity. Had I seen the old man who was staying there, he wanted to know.

"No, and nobody else," I said.

"Only Uncle Wylie, and he at a distance, when Mr. Brown was fishing off the rocks earlier in the season. Sort of a recluse, I guess. Stone deaf. Uses an ear trumpet, funny old-fashioned kind, Uncle Wylie says."

Not a star to guide us. It was all I could do to keep on the path, but finally we reached the church, which faced the ocean.

"Got a match? I won't be a minute. Left my bag at the auction and have got to get a key out—"

"That you, Judy Jason?" As we rose a beemoth of darkness. As we recognized the voice of Miss Kendall, one of our guests, she became conscious of the wheel chair. "Why, if it ain't Mr. Quincy!" She gave the "C" an "S" sound, instead of the

correct "Z." "Been watchin' the sunset. Must of dropped off. Lemme push you back? Oh, I get it! Two's comp'ny." For once the kittenish Lily wasn't going to butt in.

As she moved away chuckling, I heard Mr. Quincy breathe, "Thank Heavens!" Poor Lily Kendall—corpulent, gabby, good natured, lovable, 40-odd, forever twisting her countless string of beads till they spilled all over the house, and heavens—what a pest! She'd seen mighty little of a sunset in all that gathering mist.

Once the door was open, I struck one of the two matches Mr. Q. had given me and hurried down the aisle of the musty auditorium. Wrong word for this little meeting place, but never mind. The flame went out, and for a moment I stood hesitant, listening to the ghostly lashing of the waves on the rocks. But I'd promised Bessie Norcross, our fustiest guest, a key for her door, having swiped said key from Albion Potter, our artist boarder. His key fitted Bessie's room, too, and he never bothered to close his door, let alone lock it. He'd probably never miss it. I'd stuck it in my handbag, having intended to go to Rockville and have a duplicate made. The bag must have been left in the basement near my new hope chest when Uncle Wylie called me away.

The basement stairs, very narrow and steep, led from a door at the side of the front platform, the church being built back-to, in a way. I didn't want any more complaints. I'd promised Bessie she'd have her key. I didn't want to break my neck, either. I groped down a step or two, deciding to the stone wall. Then I decided it was too precarious. The other match should last until I snatched the bag and started back, so I struck it.

The damp chill of that black little cellar penetrated my thin blue dress. Shivering, I hurried as best I could. There weren't many steps. The church had literally been built on a rock, so the floor was uneven, one end having a patch of dirt floor. A strong breeze came from somewhere.

I remembered the chest was against the wall abutting the sea. I could have reached it more easily by taking the path around the cliff to the tiny basement door, but I knew that would be locked from the inside. I'd told Uncle Wylie to lock up when he'd summoned me. He'd said he had, and hung the entrance key where I'd just found it. He was absent-minded, but in an emergency could be relied upon. Yet holding up that tiny flame I could see that the basement door was open a crack, and was swinging wider!

Would the match last till I closed the door, locked it and found my bag? I measured the distance with my eye, approaching the white, and kicking at the door as I passed. From the darkness something twinkled at me. Was it a firefly? Another step. I held the flickering match closer. It couldn't be! I was seeing things. A final spurt and the glow faded, burning my fingers. Automatically I dropped the match. The pain brought action.

"You mustn't faint! You mustn't faint!" I kept telling myself. In utter darkness, with the moan of the sea and the creak of the door that wouldn't stay closed unless locked, I staggered for the stairs. Nothing on earth would have made me take the cliff path. It's mighty lucky I didn't, as it happened.

Finally I found the stairs, missed a step and stumbled. Down, down, down, I rolled to the bottom. Every second I expected someone to reach out and grab me. I scrambled to my feet, more careful this time, but sobbing till I made the main floor.

My skin prickled. The middle aisle—the door! I stumbled ahead, straining my eyes at the shadows. It wasn't a firefly I'd seen by that flickering match. From beneath the cover of the sea chest a dead white hand had protruded, and on it a huge square-cut diamond had winked at me. I'd admired it—was it only yesterday?

Somebody was screaming terribly. Below a door banged. Blindly I bumped into a human being near the entrance.

"Judy! Stop screaming! What's the matter, child?"

Thaddeus Quincy! In relief I grabbed at and nearly threw him. Not till afterward, in the safety of my own room, did I pause to wonder how he'd ever managed to reach the spot where he stood unaided.

"Quick!" I cried. "He's after us!"

"Who's after who? What are you talking about?"

I yanked at his arm, my one thought to get out of the church.

"Now then," he panted. "Who's after us?"

"The murderer. I—I heard it squeak."

"Are you crazy?"

"The door, I mean. When he ran out of the cellar. After he killed Roddy!"

"TO BE CONTINUED"

## Bright Colors and Dependable Fabrics Distinguish Woolens

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



glamour and eye-appeal if it is colorful. The little wool dresses that are outstanding in the winter mode are just like that—classically simple and gloriously colorful. Bright, singing reds are so universally accepted they are considered as basic as blacks or navies or browns.

There is a new warm yellow brown in fashionable wools that is second only to black in popularity. There are many vibrant blues, "uniform" blue being a special favorite. A bronzy green and a softer grayed green are being chosen by blondes and brunettes alike. Then there are the much-talked-of fuchsia shades that stress purples and rich reds. There is the new ginger color and an attractive gold hue. And "winter white" wools make conversation wherever they go.

The vogue for simplicity is artfully interpreted in the dress pictured to the right in the group illustrated above. Fashioned of Forstman 100 per cent virgin wool, it carries a thoroughbred look that is recognized at a glance. Note how expertly it is detailed with unique darts in bodice and skirt. The accompaniment of a huge pillow muff adds to its chic.

Very style-right is the dress to the left. Made of choice wool, this gown is slim-silhouetted to a nicety. Touches of trapunto quilting, so popular this year, lend interest to the simple lines. Note the tight sleeves and the subtly molded bodice.

Each feature points to fashion trends of the future.

Centered in the group you see a version of the modern business girl—fresh, tailored, efficient, but not too much so. Her suit of the same high-grade virgin wool as that which fashions the other modes is the type that retains day-long good looks even when given strenuous wear.

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

## Leopard Trimmed



Here is a smartly styled outfit that makes use of the popular fur trim. Flattering, too, is the brimmed black felt hat, rolled high on the left side like the military sombrero worn by the Australian. Spotted furs are very popular this winter, and designers are using them intriguingly for the entire coat, or as trimming, or for hat, bag and muff ensembles.

## Bib-Shaped Dickey

A bib-shaped dickey comes with long ends that can be wrapped around the neck like an ascot tie or looped into a big, floppy bow.

## White Gloves Seen For Winter Wear

We will have with us this winter white gloves in greater numbers than for many a season past. They look charming worn with the new white hats that are so fashion-right this winter.

Included in the gloves shown in current displays you'll find perky little short gloves with notched wrists to wear with your suits and your furs. These little white lamb-skin types are washable.

There are also white string gloves lined with cozy wool which will companion perfectly with your man-tailored tweeds. White pigskin gloves is this year's rage. You'll like, too, white capeskin gloves with a swoop of white fur about the wrist. Cunning are the snowy bunny-fur types, and it's difficult to keep them in stock, what with every teen-age girl making a firm resolve to be the happy possessor of a pair. For the most formal and gayest of evenings you will find lovelies that are long, longer, longest. These have wee pearl buttons at the wrist.

## Exotic Flower Prints Are Embroidered With Sequins

Just about the prettiest print frocks that imagination might picture are the new black crepes patterned with perhaps not more than two or three huge flower prints in gorgeous colors.

But that tells only half the story of their fascinating charm, for these exotic frockings scintillate with multi-colored sequin embroidery. Newly arrived, these eye-entrancing prints have a big future before them. To see these beautiful gowns is to feel that you must have one.

## History in the Heels

By FLO SCOT WATSON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Christmas Card Centennial

THE Christmas card is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. The first known example of what has become an essential part of our holiday celebration was published in England in 1842 and this is the way it looked:



The original of this card is on display in the British museum in London but its history is obscure. It is said that this card was etched by a 16-year-old English boy named W. M. Egleby but other details of the incident are unknown.

Somewhat clearer is the record of another Christmas card which appeared four years later and which gave to its author some claim to the title of the "Father of the Christmas Card." He was Sir Henry Cole, later famous as a social and educational reformer, who had already begun applying the fine arts to manufacture and was the pioneer in illustrating children's books with woodcuts of famous paintings.

In 1846 Sir Henry sent to his friends a Christmas greeting card. Just where he got the idea is not known. Possibly it was from the greeting card issued in 1842 or it may have been from some other source. Lover cards and illustrated writing paper had been popular in Europe for many years. In Germany illuminated cards were sent on Nomenclature, the feast of one's patron saint. In 1844 some unknown person in the city of Leith, Scotland, is said to have sent out New Year's cards to his friends bearing a laughing face and the words "A Gude New Year to Ye," but since this did not have a wide circulation, it is doubtful if Sir Henry got the idea there. He may have got it from the custom of English school boys of writing "Christmas pieces" on paper which they decorated with many scrolls and much flourish of penmanship.

But wherever Sir Henry got his inspiration, after deciding to send out cards to his friends at Christmas time, he went to J. C. Horsley, a member of the Royal Academy in London, for the design, and this was the result:



The German influence may be seen in the Germanesque style of leafy trellises which divide the card into three panels. The smaller side panels show two of the acts of charity—feeding the hungry and clothing the naked—and the central panel shows three generations of a family party at the festal board quaffing their Christmas cheer. This card was six by four inches, colored by hand, and a thousand copies were issued. For some unexplained reason, Horsley issued his design under the nom de plume of "Felix Summerly."

Since this card bears the inscription "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You," it can be regarded as one of the first, if not the first holiday greeting card ever printed and sent out as the forerunner of a custom that was to become world-wide. Strange to say, Sir Henry Cole's friends were not especially pleased at this remembrance and it is said to have received much unfavorable criticism. So he did not repeat the experiment and it looked as though the Christmas card idea was to die a-borning.

However, in the early sixties ornamented note paper and envelopes began to appear in the stationers' shops around the holiday season and the use of these began to increase each year. Next these designs were stamped in relief in the center of a card with colored or embossed edges decorated by stencil or by hand. Thus the business of making Christmas cards got under way slowly. It was even slower in getting started in America and it was not until 1873 that the beginnings were apparent in this country.

In that year Louis Prang, a lithographer of Boston, exhibited samples of his flowered business cards at the Vienna exposition. He had an agency in London and one of his women employees there suggested to him that he put a greeting in place of the name of his firm and issue them as Christmas cards. This was done the next year, so 1874 marks the beginning of the Christmas card in this country. By 1876 the Christmas card idea became widespread due to the exhibits of printers and lithographers at the Philadelphia Centennial.

## Star Dust

STAGE SCREEN RADIO

By VIRGINIA VALE

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

SOME movie stars can appear in public without being recognized, if they choose to, but not Gary Cooper.

Several times lately your correspondent, doing a spot of dog-walking, has met him striding along one of the streets of the neighborhood—his New York residence is nearby. With his hands in the pockets of his dark blue overcoat, the hero of "For Whom the Bell Tolls" marched past women out doing their marketing and nursemaids out with infants—and left behind him a trail of people with their heads turned, looking after him. He's so tanned and so thin and walks so well that he'd be noticed anywhere.

Incidentally, Director Sam Wood did a smart thing on the new Cooper-Ingred Bergman picture; not being sure how the Hays office would react to certain scenes, he shot two versions of each—one for possible censor objections, one as Hemingway wrote it.

Claire Trevor thinks a red coat is just the thing to be murdered in. When buying her own wardrobe for "Street of Chance," a murder mys-



CLAIRE TREVOR

tery in which she's working with Burgess Meredith, she bought a nurse's uniform, a print dress, a green suit—and the significant red coat.

Remember that old favorite, Matt Moore, one of the popular screen brothers of the movies' silent days? He's working in Metro's "Half Pint Kid"—it is his first appearance at the studio since 1934. He's been doing stage work in the meantime.

Pedro, a baby airplane, battles a mighty mountain in a raging blizzard so that the mail can go through, in one of the sequences of Walt Disney's "Saludos Amigos"; this is the picture based on the three-month tour of South America made by Disney and a group of his artists. Donald Duck, Goofy and a sporty parrot share honors with Pedro. RKO will release the picture early next month.

Mapy Cortes and Marcy McGuire make their Hollywood debuts in "Seven Days' Leave"; discover your eye on them, for they're discoveries of producer Tim Whelan. Formerly a gag man on Harold Lloyd's pictures, he's acted, written scenarios and directed—and he discovered Vivian Leigh, and brought to screen prominence Geraldine Fitzgerald, Laurence Olivier, Maureen O'Hara and Wendy Barrie.

Bill Robinson, the 64-year-old tap dancer, returns to the screen after a four-year absence to play the leading role in 20th Century-Fox's "Thanks, Pal," a cavalcade of Negro music and entertainment. Remember the delightful scenes he and Shirley Temple used to do together?

Claudette Colbert's planning to raffle off a lock of Joel McCrea's hair the next time she goes to Mexico. After the barber got through with him on the set of "The Palm Beach Story" one morning, she salvaged the lock, put it between sheets of cellophane, and announced her plans. Just why she's waiting till she goes to Mexico to do it she didn't say. After all, he's a favorite in this country too!

Franchot Tone and his wife, Jean Wallace, celebrated their first wedding anniversary during the filming of "True to Life," in which he stars. The part of the celebration she'll remember longest is the lesson in riding his motorcycle which he gave her.

ODDS AND ENDS—Veronica Lake, who died without honor in "I Wanted Wings," dies most heroically in "So Proudly We Hail," just to even things up... Cecil B. DeMille's learning to ride a motorcycle, a sight which Hollywood certainly never expected to see—but his teacher accompanies him... Bob Hope gets married for the first time on the screen in "They Got Me Covered"—she's a dancer, "Gloria the Glow Girl," played by Marion Marion... Mimi Chandler, daughter of Senator Chandler of Kentucky, has the feminine lead in "Henry Aldrich Plays Second Fiddle"—perfect training for an aspiring starlet.