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eletent beadache, attacks of dizzinesa
ting up nights, swelling, puffiness
der the eyes—a feeling of nervous
elety and loss of pep and strength
Other ans of kidney or bladder dis
ler are sometimes burning, scanty o-



vestigating the murder of Curt Vallain-

court, who was about to marry Veronica

Bigelow, heiress to thirty million dollars.

She is the principal suspect. McCale

questions members of the family and ob-

tains important clues, uncovering a deep

the key to the puzzle. He hurries to her apartment, only to find that she has been

shot dead. On looking around, he no-

tices that a picture is missing from the

wall of her apartment. He later talks

CHAPTER XIV

But how can I be sure it's the

emptiness of lost love? It's more

like-oh-" She broke off, burying

her head in her arms. "I don't

"I think I understand," he said

quietly. "It hits you sort of in the

"Yes, yes. That's it." But she

grimaced as though the thought so

stated was a trifle vulgar. She

"About the scrap of letter you

"Yes, that. I was sure it was

from Vicky. She's always been so

funny about Curt. Her attitude

seemed to be that because she had

known him first, she had priority

rights over him. Something like

that. I was shattered by that note

and what it implied. And when I

accused her, she was so hard in

spite of her denial. In a foolish

moment I gave it to Aunt Addy.

"I know that," he said. He hesi-

tated, not sure whether to go on;

then decided to risk her shock at what he had to say. "It is cruel,

perhaps, to tell you now," he be-

gan, "but necessary. We haven't

much time. The inquest is the day after tomorrow and—"

"You see," he said bluntly, "the

thing you suspected, the plot to gain

control of your inheritance, was

He expected her to cry out or to

huddle away from him. He was

nearly bowled over himself when

she almost laughed, saying, "But

no-no. You're wrong, Mr. McCale.

Oh, I don't mean about the plot.

You're wrong in thinking I didn't

know about it. I was so horrified

"You went to Chris Storm?" A

signal flashed through his mind He

"Yes. He was furious, of course.

He wanted to have it out with Curt

then and there, but I persuaded him

not to. I said it was my job and

"Yes. I went right to Curt be-

fore the rehearsal, the day before-

before he died. But you see, I was

wrong in one thing. Curt confessed

to the original plot. That was true

"But what?" McCale's mind was

working furiously, conjuring up all

kinds of absurd visions. He pulled

"You see," she said carefully, a

tremor in her voice, "Curt loved

me. He really did. Oh, I know.

He'd been a hellion all right. He

for the first time in his life. He was

going to turn his back on them all.

We were going to be happy togeth-

er. There wasn't anything they

could have done after we were mar-

"Oh, no. I think he realized the

langer, because someone was

"Yes. He told me we'd have to

be careful right up to the hour of

the wedding. He joked about it a

lot because he considered it funny.

He said. 'Set a thief to catch a

Things like that. He supposed they

were suspicious because he'd been

seen with Shari Lynn. The papers

"Didn't he know who was follow-

"No. He said I wasn't to worry

about it. That was all." She began

He helped her out and paid the

driver. He didn't speak until the

"That afternoon-the one before

yesterday - when you and Curt

came into the living room, he

"It meant that everything was all

right, that he'd destroyed everything

-his letters, his associations, ev-

erything that had tied him to the

past. It was as if he said"-her

voice broke-"as if he said, 'Look,

darling, the past is all finished. I'm

flashed you a signal with his eyes."

"Yes. What did it mean?"

ing him about? Did he say wheth-

er it was a man or woman?"

An Attempt on

taxi had driven off.

"You noticed that?"

McCale's Life

to cry softly.

clean.'

had got hold of it, you know."

that I would do it."

"And did you?"

enough, but-

himself up abruptly.

vas soft, insistent.

watching him."

"You mean-"

clamped his teeth together hard.

Well, I went first to Chris-

I was so upset."

"after this afternoon."

were in it."

found-a letter to Curt."

stomach instead of in the heart."

Murder in Plain by GERALD BROWN

up, now. I'll see you tomorrow.

Good-night."

Duke McCale, private detective, is in- | his throat. "All right," he said. Then, "I'm not going in with you. Things to do. Lots of them. Chin

> "Good-night." She made an attempt at a smile. "And thank you." Of one thing he was sure. Curt Vallaincourt had really loved Ver-onica Bigelow. Start with that fact. He had burned his bridges, carefully and conscientiously. Including Shari Lynn? He thought so. Funny what love will do for a guy. But he must have been aware of his antagonists-of their viciousness if what he intended doing became known. He was certain that he knew of his danger. He had woven his spell with the blackest of arts

and had been caught at it. That was his undoing. He must have been conscious of playing a long chance those last few days. But he went to his death blithely all the same, even welcoming it in the knowledge that something fine had happened to him that had never happened before. He had been betrayed, however, by hope. brushed a tear from the corner of

McCale was silently deriding the philosophizing he had been indulging in when he came abreast of his own doorway. Just when it was that the first warning came, he couldn't afterwards recall. He had just looked up to see the lights of his office gleaming faintly. He was



He didn't hear Ann scream.

only a few feet from the doorstep when it came—that intuitive message from his nerves, his glands. Call it what you will, it reaches up out of the vastness of our primeval beginnings to warn us. It gripped him now, thrusting icy claws down into his diaphragm. He started to turn: then thought better of it. Then he began to run.

The report came like a firecracker, hard by on his right. He heard the sound of running feet. He felt a ghastly blow near his heart. He reeled, stopped in his tracks, A low whisper escaped his lips. knees buckled as a pain shot through his side. He climbed up the steps somehow. He thought, "Oh, God, this is how Curt Vallaincourt died. I wonder what went through his mind-crawling up those endless stairs?"

told me a great deal about himself that day-about his past-about After a thousand years, the door Shari Lynn. But for once, it was swung open. Ann stood there. She the real thing with him. He could seemed far away in the dark. He hardly understand it himself, but forced a smile. there it was. He was truly in love

'Hello," he said, conscious of slobbering. "You're tight," she said.

A Narrow Escape From Death "Had he told them?" His voice

"No." His own voice sounded different and from way back somewhere. "I don't drink. You know that. I've been held up." "Yeah-all the way home, I'll

bet. What have you done with Veronica Bigelow?" "Don't tell me you're jealous of her." He swayed, hardly aware of

this insane stalling. It must have been then that she saw pain glaze his eyes, bare his teeth. She moved forward, sudden terror striking her.

"Duke!" she gasped. His legs gave way again. Slowly he slid to his knees, crouching there. His face twitched a moment and he made a mumbling noise before he pitched forward.

He didn't hear Ann's scream. Once during the night, he became conscious. It was like being dragged up into the light from the depth and darkness of a great well. He felt a breath of cool air and opened his eyes. He realized his throat was parched. He asked for water and a phantom floated into view. It was Ann. She held a glass of water for him. Her eyes, he noticed, were big and filled with

love for him and fear for him, too. "That's Ann," he thought. "I'm sick and she's worried about me. She loves me and she's worried.

That's great. That's fine." When the black curtain of morphia lifted again, it was another day. The room was light. The first thing he saw was big black letters. They formed slowly out of the mist McCale blinked his eyes, cleared | that still clouded his vision some-

what. They read: DETECTIVE SHOT. His mind struggled with this and he made a slight motion with his head. A golden blonde angel leaned over and kissed him

lightly on the brow. "Where am I?" He mouthed confused thoughts.

"Why, darling, this is Ann. You know where you are." "Uh huh." Fuzziness began to

leave the edges of his brain. "This is heaven. Do that again, angel." He started to put an arm about her. Pain seared his shoulder. He groaned a bit coming wide awake.

"You're in no condition to become amorous. Good lerd, did you see that?" She flung the morning paper on the floor. "The papers have you at death's door. Here, let me lift you up a little."

She propped a pillow behind him and sat down. There were deep shadows under her eyes.

"Have you been here all night?" he asked. "Sure, why not?"

"Do you think I'd leave you to the tender mercies of that behemoth? Every time you asked for a drink, he reached for the bottle of Scotch." She scowled.

Just then the door opened and Rocky stuck his head in. He grinned and sitting up.

dropped a curtsey to Ann. "Preble!" McCale howled. "The

coroner! What is this? I'm not dead-or am I?"

Ann chuckled. She did not look too tired or harassed now that she

"When you fell in the doorway last night, you looked pretty dead to me. I fainted. Rocky had the two of us in his hands. Of course, he simply let me lie there. With the door wide open, I wasn't unconscious long. I came to and stumbled up the stairs to find he had stretched you out on the office desk. too much like a corpse for me to think of anything else. What with Rocky beating his own brains out and cursing that someone had bumped off the boss, I dialed headquarters. The homicide squad. down to the last legman, were here in three minutes flat."

Preble was short and thin and past middle age and sported a goatee. He had the typical medical man's all-seeing eye.

He looked McCale over shrewdly, examined the wound, and rebandaged it in short order.

"You'll do." he said. "Stay in bed for twenty-four hours. Don't want you running a temperature. You're a lucky guy. The bullet was deflected by the cigarette case you carry in your upper vest pocket." 'Was it a forty-five?"

"Undoubtedly, from the nature of the wound. If it hadn't been for that cigarette case, it would have ripped you wide open. Well, mind what I say now. This girl needs some sleep." He turned to Ann. harumphed, and went off, giving Rocky the stare of an anthropologist ignoring an interesting but inferior specimen.

Donlevy Calls And Talks

A half hour later, McCale was interrupted in the middle of exasperated resentment at the "light" diet ordered by the doctor and carried out to the letter by Ann. The telephone rang. Ann, provokingly placing the bedside telephone out of his reach, and with a smug expression on her face, went into the outer office to take the call.

"That was Veronica Bigelow," she said matter-of-factly. "I had the devil of a time before she'd trust me with the message. She's upset no end. It seems that Donlevy has arrested Christopher Storm." "When?"

"Last night or early this morning. She's been trying to get the office ever since, I suppose." "You suppose?"

"Well, I-I stuffed blotting paper in the telephone bell last night. I thought the ringing might disturb your rest-the doctor said-"

"God Almighty. Between you and the doctor, I might as well be a corpse. I was all hopped up with morphine, wasn't I?" He turned himself around with a painful ef-

"Now, Duke, you're not to excite yourself. You'll raise a tempera-

"To hell with my temperature. Get Donlevy on the wire.'

Obediently she called police neadquarters, only to learn that the homicide man was on his way there at that very moment. McCale patted her hand, feeling

ashamed of his irascibility. He resigned himself to waiting for Don-In less than twenty minutes, the lieutenant strode in, in the wake of Rocky. The two of them so big.

but so different, bulked hugely in the doorway, Donlevy, with a muttered greeting to McCale, flung himself into a chair. Crevices of fatigue and worry lined his face. (TO BE CONTINUED)

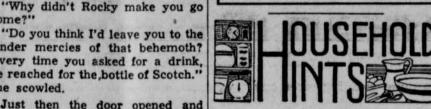
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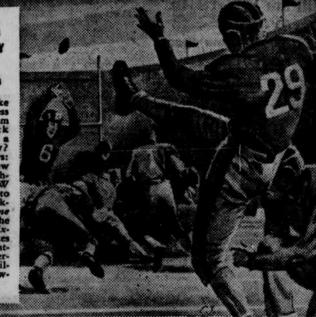
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