THREE SHUTTERED HOUSES

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

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CHAPTER XII—Continued
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Tope handed June the pad on which he had been writing, and Clint stood at her shoulder so that they read it together.

Miss Leaford began getting supper before dark. Everyone came to supper except Mrs. Bowdon. They came in relays.

About 7:50 Mrs. Taine came to put Mr. and Mrs. Hurder to bed.

About eight, Asa Taine came for a cup of tea, used milk out of the bottle.

After he left, Mrs. Taine heated milk for Mr. and Mrs. Hurder. Rab Taine came in to say good night. The milk was on the stove. He stood near the stove. Then he left for Providence.

About 8:25 Mrs. Taine left, Mr. and Mrs. Hurder in bed.

About 8:30 Miss Leaford turned out downstairs lights and went to her room. About 8:45 she met Clint outside.

About 11:05 Clint and Miss Leaford returned and stopped in front of the house.

About 11:10 they saw the fire.

At 11:19 exactly, the alarm was rung in. The apparatus arrived at exactly 11:23. Mrs. Taine and Asa arrived at the fire about 11:21.

At exactly 11:51 Mrs. Taine put in a call for Providence to her son.

While June and Clint studied this schedule in silence, Tope explained: "You know when you went upstairs, and when you went out to meet Clint; and I've guessed at the times before that. I know when the alarm was rung in, and when the apparatus arrived; and by allowing for all you and Clint did after you saw the fire and before the apparatus arrived, I can figure out about the time you saw the fire."

"Yes," June said. "This seems about right."

"I've a record of the call to Providence," Tope added. "How bad was the fire then—when your aunt went to phone?"

"The whole house was burning," June decided.

Tope nodded. "There's one other question I've got to ask you," he said gravely. "Do you think any one of—your relatives might have given your mother poison? Or set the house on fire?"

"No, no," June whispered. "They were hard and stubborn; but— No. No."

"Did any of them except your mother ever take a sleeping-powder?" he insisted.

She hesitated. "Why, yes," she said doubtfully. "Uncle Justus did." And she explained in a faint amusement: "He really had insomnia, sometimes. It seems odd, because he could always sleep in a chair; but sometimes he couldn't sleep in bed. Doctor Cabler gave him some tablets once; but Aunt Evie took them away from him, wouldn't let him use them. So poor Uncle Justus used to ask me to give him a tablet out of Mother's bottle, now and then; and I know Rab took some for him once."

"When was that?" Tope asked gravely.

"About a month ago," June reflected. "I found Rab in the bathroom; he told me."

Tope wagged his head; but he did not push this matter further. "Did you know Miss Thayer?" he asked. "Her name's Lissa."

"Yes," June assented. "That is, I saw her sometimes, when I was walking in the woods."

"Did you ever see your cousin Asa with her?" Tope asked. The girl shook her head; and Tope explained:

"I saw them kiss each other tonight, at the fire. They were back in the shadows, but I saw."

"Asa?" June cried incredulously.

"You never knew anything about that?"

"Oh, no," she declared. "But if Asa loved her, he wouldn't have dared tell anyone. They'd have been furious. Aunt Evie, and Grandma Bowdon, I mean."

"You think so?" Tope prompted her.

"Yes! Mother used to tell me—" She hesitated, went bravely on: "Mother used to tell me that if I married without their consent, they would crush me. They did crush her, you know."

Inspector Tope nodded; and he picked his words with care. "You remember Mr. Glovere, who lived in the cabin in the woods—the man you called Uncle Jim. You liked him, didn't you?"

"Yes," she said. "So much. He went away, after Mother died."

"He's come back," the Inspector said.

"Where is he?" she cried eagerly.

Tope hesitated, he confessed at last: "Inspector Heale is holding him."

"You mean—arrested him?" Her cheek was pale.

"Heale thought he might have had something to do—"

"Oh," she protested in loyal pride. "Uncle Jim wouldn't. No, no."

"He came back at noon today," Tope explained. "Came back asking for you . . . Miss Leaford, I used to be a policeman. I'm trying to find out what happened out there. You understand that we are sure your mother, somehow, was poisoned. Someone put some extra tablets in that glass of milk she drank. It might have been done while the milk was still in the bottle, in Mrs. Bowdon's refrigerator. Or afterward in your grandmother's kitchen, or on the way upstairs, or after it was taken upstairs. And anyone might have done it. Anyone at all."

The girl was trembling, but her eyes were steady.

And when he did not speak, she cried: "Why should they do a thing like that?"

He said slowly: "They might have been afraid—afraid of something we don't know about. Or wanting something." And he spoke to Miss Moss. "Justus Taine has all the wills, Bowdon's and Hurder's. He wouldn't tell me what's in them. They'll be public by and by, but—there may not be time." His tone was deeply troubled. He spoke to June. "You and your cousins would inherit all the money, I expect," he said. "All the money in the family."

"I don't know," she confessed. "Was there much?" But before he could answer, she cried: "That doesn't matter now, though." Rising anger steadied her. "I want to know who killed my mother," she said.

Tope looked at her apprisingly. "Mean that, do you?"

"Of course."

"Because," he said, "you can help find out! This is ugly business to talk about, hard to believe. But Miss Leaford, your grandpa, Mr. Hurder, is out there, in that house, near dying. It wouldn't take much to make him die. Whoever set fire to the house last night wants him dead." And after a moment Tope added soberly: "They refuse to have a nurse for him."

He shook his head; he said in a grim and stricken tone:

"I think there's an insane murderer loose out there—insane, and

"Clint, whoever did this is a monster, not human."

clever as a cat. He's managed to get by so far without leaving a trace. It's the first time in forty years that I've seen a case without one single lead."

Clint cried: "What are you getting at, Inspector?"

Tope hesitated for a moment. He ignored Clint, said slowly then: "There's one more thing you ought to know, Miss Leaford: Inspector Heale has arrested this man you call Uncle Jim. Heale thinks he did it."

"But why should he?" she protested. "What reason had he?"

And Tope said briefly, kindly: "He's your father, June."

For a long moment then, silence held them all. June sat still, and the color drained out of her cheeks till she was white as snow. Clint caught her, and she clung to him; yet she did not hide her face from them. She stared at Inspector Tope, and her eyes were streaming, and her lips worked as though she would speak, but no words came. She watched him, and tears streamed down her cheeks, and she began to hiccough with smothered sobs.

Tope spoke slowly, in explicit terms. "Your mother ran away with him when she was a girl," he said. "By and by they came home to live; and after two years there, the old folks broke it up. Mrs. Bowdon and Mrs. Taine, he told me, turned your mother against him. He said Mr. and Mrs. Hurder were on his side, but the others broke them down. Finally he left. He wanted your mother to go with him, but she was afraid, so he went away alone."

And he explained: "He didn't know about you till afterward, years afterward. When you were about ten years old, he came back and met you in the woods, and you told him who you were. So he stayed, to be near you, lived in the cabin there. They wanted to put him off the land; but there wasn't any divorce, and he threatened to make trouble unless they let him stay. He didn't ask anything of them except to be near you, to see you sometimes."

He looked at Miss Moss, sure she would understand. "I guess he still loved Kitty Leaford," he said. "When she died, it hit him hard. He went away; but he came back yesterday, says he was asleep in his cabin all last night. So Heale has locked him up."

"It would seem simple enough to Heale," she pointed out. "Heale will say that Mr. Leaford killed Mrs. Leaford and then the Hurders, so that June would inherit their money. Then he could claim June as his daughter, and get her and the money too."

June moved, about to speak; and Clint held her close, protectingly. She said faintly:

"I can remember once, when I was a little girl, Aunt Evie tried to make me stay away from him, and I told him, and he came to the house to see her, and after that she never bothered me . . .

"But he didn't do this!" She rubbed her eyes with her hands like one just waking; she stood up, supporting herself by Clint's arm. "Oh, I want to do something!" she cried. "What can I do?"

The Inspector said soberly: "This, if you want to," he said. "I know it's not safe for you—"

"Safe!" she exclaimed almost scornfully. "I don't want to be safe, with my mother dead, and my father—"

"Mr. Hurder's in the Bowdon house," Tope explained. "They aim to keep him there. They won't have a nurse in to take care of him. But Miss Leaford, they'd have you. They want you home, and if you went, and insisted on nursing him—"

Clint made a swift indignant protest; but June hushed him.

"Yes, I understand," she told the man steadily. "I'll go. But why? What am I to do?"

"To watch," he said. "To be ready."

"Ready for what?" she insisted.

So, reluctantly, he put the thing in words. "Whoever did this wants Mr. Hurder dead," he pointed out. "I think there'll be another try at killing him."

And he said gravely: "There might be more than that. There might be a try at killing you."

CHAPTER XIII
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Clint had listened to Inspector Tope's suggestion that June return to Kenesaw Hill with an incredulous and angry horror. Now he cried in a bitter wrath:

"No! I won't stand for that. June's been through enough—"

"We'll be there to take care of her," Tope urged. "You and I, Clint. We'll be on the job. It's only for tonight. I've a notion tonight will tell the tale."

"No," Clint insisted. "She's through with them out there, all those people. I'm going to be all her family from now on. If you think I'm going to let her go out there for bait, to bait a trap—" And he cried: "Why do you have to mix in, Inspector? Let them wash their own dirty linen."

Tope urged gravely: "It's any citizen's duty to do what he can, Clint." His tone was grim. "And son, there's a murderer loose out there. Maybe a maniac. I think he is. There's a terrible, mad persistence in him. Or her."

"Her?" Clint echoed, startled by that pronoun.

Tope hesitated. "Him or her, whoever it is," he repeated. "Clint, whoever did this is a monster, not human. No telling what will come next."

"And you want to risk June's life?"

"I don't aim to," Tope argued. "She'll have her eyes open. I'll tell her what to watch for. She'll have a pistol, to use if she has to. We'll be right outside." He spoke to June herself. "You won't go into it blindly," he said. "Nor at all, unless you want."

"Let Heale work it out," Clint cried. "It's his job."

June was a long time in taking any part in this discussion between them: But when she spoke at last, it was decisively.

"I don't trust Inspector Heale, Clint," she said. "If he thinks Uncle Jim—my father—did this, he must be a dull, witless man."

They watched her; she seemed to think aloud. "It was money, the money always," she cried, half to herself. "I can see that now. Everything had to be done to keep the money in the family. That was why they were so furious when Mother married Uncle Jim—for fear some of the money would get away from them. Oh, I've heard them talk, and plan!"

Clint said warmly: "Sweet, hush! You're never going back there again."

But June smiled at him, and she said: "Yes, I am, Clint. I can go back and watch and see things now that I couldn't see before. I can understand."

Inspector Tope said slowly: "Heale is afraid of your people. He won't go after them hard, the way he would after other folk. And I never saw an uglier business. This senseless, pitiless butchering! There's a maniac loose out there; and Heale won't act. I've got to find some way."

"I'll do whatever you say," June insisted; and Clint knew at last that he could not dissuade the girl. He said slowly:

"I wish you wouldn't, June. But—I can see, can feel the same way. Inspector, what do you mean to do?"

Tope considered, his eyes on the floor, his head wagging. "I think the thing will ripen tonight," he confessed. "If it seems sure that Mr. Hurder will live, the murderer will try to end him tonight."

He watched June intently. "And maybe you too! I'm guessing at this; but I'm a good guesser. Some one out there is money-crazy. Mr. Hurder is a rich man; and someone out there wants that money. Maybe wants it quick. Maybe has to have it quick.

"I'm guessing," he repeated. "Justus Taine wouldn't tell me what was in the wills. But my guess is that the Hurder money is in a trust agreement for Mrs. Leaford—but she's dead—and then for you, Miss Leaford. With trustees. Maybe Taine himself. Maybe his sons. It doesn't matter—wouldn't help us any if we knew, because they're all in the same pot together. But it comes down to it that you're the only one left in the way, Miss Leaford. With you dead, the Hurder money's bound to stay in the Taine family."

June nodded. "Yes," she said. "Yes, they could make Grandpa Hurder write his will the way they wanted it. They'd leave him no peace till he did."

"So there it is," Tope agreed, with a grim simplicity. "The money waiting, ready to run into their pockets as soon as Mr. Hurder dies. You're the last dam in the way, the last thing that holds it back. They'll be after you."

"I'm not afraid!" said June.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Play Clothes Smartly Styled Of Dependable Wash Fabrics

By CHERIE NICHOLAS

PLAY clothes have come to be a theme of themes with costume designers. The idea of wearing just any old duds when you go out to play or to rough it in camp life or mountain climbs or just simple cross-country hikes is completely taboo these days. No woman of modern outlook can afford to sidetrack the issue of being smartly and appropriately garbed wherever she goes. There's absolutely no escaping the new demand for "style" tuned to environs of the time, the place and the game. Indulge in any outdoor pastime you will, but be sure you "look the part" in the matter of correct attire.

Designers have risen so valiantly to the occasion of creating an entire wardrobe of play clothes that all one has to do is to go to specialized departments and make your needs known and you will be outfitted to the 'nth degree of correctness for this sports occasion or that.

However, there is more to the play clothes challenge than just style, for dependable wearability that will withstand the ravages of roughing it is of such vast importance one needs must meet the issue with all the art and science at command. Which is exactly what fabric manufacturers are doing.

Note the play clothes pictured. They are extremely fabric conscious we can assure you, demonstrating perfectly the fact of their non-shrinkableness and their color fastness. Describing these timely modes, from left to right, the perfectly tailored slacks and shirt on the standing figure is of a wool and cotton flannel which has been scientifically sanforized shrunk in Switzerland.

A dark blouse with lighter skirt, both of sturdy cotton gabardine that has been pre-shrunk, as shown centered in the group will undoubtedly be a first choice with outdoor girls who know their 1939 fashions. Note the impeccably tailored pockets.

The Gay Nineties dressmaker bathing suit comes back again. Full skirt, basque bodice, snug-fitting waistband and tiny puffed sleeves with touches of narrow black velvet ribbon against demure yellow and white and black printed cotton describes the 1939 version of this quaint type as illustrated above to the right. Underneath this sanforized-shrunk cotton outfit jersey tights fit snugly making a complete trim and ship-shape ensemble.

Full of Nineteenth century charm, yet intensely modern with its brief bras is the beach ensemble on the seated figure in the foreground. It can be relied on to give perfect wear in that the flower print cotton which fashions it is pre-shrunk and fast color. Quaint ruffles edge the snug shorts and finish the formal little semi-fitted basque-like coat. The platform shoes are also interesting.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Hats, Tiny or Big

There is no excuse for not having a flattering hat this summer for every type is included in the showings from tiniest toques to brims that go to extremes in the matter of size. The diminutive hat for dinner and evening wear, as shown below, gains daily in popularity. It is here interpreted in soft irridescent feathers with a touch of shell pink velvet. The black veil is strikingly embroidered. Compared to some of the new brims the large mushroom hat shown here of black Milan is in reality quite conservative. There's no limit as to brim dimensions.

Favor Tweed-Like Linens for Suits

Although this year's linens abound in the traditional smooth finishes of the sort that denote well-bred aristocracy, many new versions are appearing. Something for the home make-your-own-clothes designer to get excited about is the smart new slubbed, nubbed and tweed-like linens which combine the celebrated coolness of flax with a fine aptitude for tailoring that insures a suit of distinction and comfort for town or travel wear.

Fruit Trims New White Straw Hats

Perfectly charming among summer-girl fashions are the new, usually large, rough white straw hats that are trimmed with clusters of gay colored fruit instead of the usual flower garnitures. This new fashion is wonderfully effective whether the hat be worn with an all-white costume or with a gay and festive silk print. It adds to the glory of this mode to carry a matching white straw handbag that is similarly fruit-trimmed.

Deck White Suits In Brass Buttons

There is a tendency to impart a military air to summer dresses and suits made of white sharkskin or white gossamer sheer wool by the use of handsome brass buttons, and in some instances epaulets of gold braid have been added. The fad for all white with gold trimming is also carried out in that gold kid belts are being worn with classic white dresses the draping of which takes on a sculptural beauty.

Fishnet Trim

A New York designer, on the search for something different to distinguish summer clothes, has turned to fishnet.

Picked Up in Studios of Style Designers

Even the lowly ticking is going slightly high-hat.

The suede jacket has come out of the strictly sports class.

All kinds of sleight of hand fashion tricks can be done with sport clothes.

The Dutch influence which began with the blue and white Dutch boy suits has spread into patterns for print fabrics.

Of interest in hosiery styles, is a new interest in colorful types.

In the fabric choice for new dress coats the designers are showing originality.

Those comfortable huaraches, or straw woven sandals, are in the shoe departments again.

You'll be calm, cool and collected this summer if you happen to fancy any of the net blouses.

Floyd Gibbons' ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!

"A Dog's Life"

HELLO EVERYBODY:

Today's Distinguished Adventurer didn't write his own story. He can neither read nor write.

That, of course, is nothing new in the realm of adventure. Plenty of great adventurers couldn't as much as sign their own names, but that didn't stop them from getting into tight spots or from living lives that were packed full of thrills and danger.

And it's the thrills and the danger we want in this column. I don't give a whoop how well you can write, or whether you can write at all. The writing part of it is my job, and all I want you boys and girls to do is give me the facts. Write 'em down on an old piece of wrapping paper, or if you can't write, get somebody else to write 'em down for you.

That's what today's Distinguished Adventurer did. His name, by the way, is Jip. He is one-half foxhound and one-half pointer, and he's one of the best all-around bird and rabbit dogs in the state of Illinois.

Jip's boss, Newton Belgum, of Chicago, sent me all the dope about Jip's adventure. Newt raised Jip from a pup, and he was right there when things began to happen. It was on a cold day in December, 1933, and Newt and Harry Russell and Frank Blackford were off on a hunting trip along the Kaskaskia river near Sullivan, Ill. Newt, of course, had Jip with him.

After Breakfast They Started for the River.

They arrived in Sullivan about four o'clock in the morning, had breakfast and started for the river. It was a bitter cold morning, with the mercury down to five below.

Newton was hunting through a cornfield, when suddenly he heard a yell that came from the river.

There was Jip, swirling about in the icy water. He had become thirsty and started out to get a drink, but the thin ice near the edge had broken and he had fallen in.

The three men stood on the bank and looked helplessly at one another. There wasn't a thing they could do for Jip, so they stood watching on the bank while the game little animal did his best to help himself.

The current was strong at that spot. Already it had carried him down from some point farther up the river. Now it was tugging at the poor

And then Newt had another idea. He loaded his gun and began firing at the ice.

little animal, trying to pull him away from the bank and whirl him out into the stream.

Gamely, Jip tackled the ice with his paws. He broke it for about five feet toward shore, but he couldn't climb up on it when it became too thick to break.

Again and again the current pulled him out. Each time he managed to swim back. But already he had been in that icy water for 10 minutes, and he couldn't keep on fighting that current forever.

And all that time, Newt, standing up on the bank, was going through a hell that was almost as bad as the one his dog was fighting.

"Each time Jip fought his way back to the little cut he had made in the ice," Newt says, "he would look up at us with appealing eyes, as if he were trying to say, 'For God's sake, save me!'

"By this time I was bewildered and desperate. I wanted to try to go out on the ice, but the other fellows told me it would be suicide and reminded me that I had three daughters at home depending on me.

"As I stood there, watching him fight for his life, I felt as though the whole world was going to pieces. To Frank and Harry I said, 'Fellows, he's done for, and I can't go home without him.'

They Started to Gather Up the Dead Branches.

"Finally I hit on an idea. We started gathering up all the dead branches we could find and throwing them into the water, hoping the current would drive them back of my dog, giving his hind legs something to kick against and enabling him to climb up on the ice."

But that idea of Newt's didn't work. The current was in the wrong direction. Jip had been in the water for 15 minutes by that time.

"There was ice on his eyebrows and nose," Newt says. "I couldn't stand it any longer so I went back and got my shotgun. I was going to shoot him and put him out of his misery, but my friends stopped me—told me not to shoot him as long as he had a fighting chance."

And then Newt had another idea. He loaded his gun and began firing at the ice!

Jip was out in the stream again, fighting his way back. The first shot ripped out a chunk of ice, lengthening the cut Jip had already started. Newt fired again—and again—and then the other two men got the idea. Newt was blasting a channel in the ice so the dog could swim closer to the bank! They picked up their own guns and started to help.

They cut that channel almost to the shore. Jim swam into it, but still he couldn't get his hind legs up on the ice. Then Newt had another idea. All three men fired at once at the ice on the upstream side of the dog. That did the trick. A big, triangular piece of ice, half sunken in the water, floated down and got under Jip's hind legs, and Jip kicked himself up to safety.

They called Jip down to a spot where the bank was lower, and then went and got him. The poor pup was all in. His tail was frozen stiff by an icicle. He was cut and bleeding, and there was ice on his face and ears.

Newt put his coat around him and rubbed him until he could stand up. He carried him to a gully where he'd be out of the wind. As he set him down, out jumped a rabbit from a brush patch a few feet away.

"And when Jip got through chasing that rabbit," says Newt, "he was O. K. again."

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Bowler Hat, or 'Derby,' Designed by Farmer

The bowler hat, known in this country as the derby, got its British name through having first been made more than 60 years ago by William Bowler of St. Swithin's lane to the design of a Norfolk farmer. The bowler or derby is popular in Britain and has many adherents here. The bowler is a symbol of solidity. The high silk hat represents lofty social standing. John Hetherington invented the "topper" in London some 140 years ago. When he first wore it he was arrested for inciting a riot; the complaint was made that timid persons were frightened by its sheen. A century ago a Frenchman, Antoine Gibus, contributed the opera hat spring. This is the only successful mechanical device in the hat business, and the inventor's family receives royalties from it. High hats are all made by hand.

Playwright's Woe

The odds were 56 to 1 in 1937, against a playwright getting his work produced on Broadway. Approximately 4,500 new plays were copyrighted in Washington but only 79 appeared in Manhattan theaters.

Got Top Marks Up to College

James Wilson, of Macon, Ga., went through kindergarten, grammar and high school and into his third year at college before receiving a single grade below A.

1,600 Research Laboratories

Industrial research laboratories are rapidly increasing in number in the United States, the latest estimate showing approximately 1,600 compared with about 500 in 1923 and only a handful 25 years of age.

Cow Sets Production Mark

Regisborne Alice Alcarta, a Holstein cow owned by an Ontario farmer, produced 25,460 pounds of milk and 916 pounds of butter in 365 days, setting a new world record for three-year-old cows.