CRUCIBLE

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

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CHAPTER XIII—Continued

—28—

Linda dared not tell Mr. Wines, dared not admit to herself how important this might be. He stopped uncertainly; and she said, half-sobbing with excitement:

"No one had seen this bullet hole till you did, Mr. Wines. I want you to stay and tell them how you found it. Wait. You will, won't you? Till I telephone?"

"Why, guess't I can," he decided. "But—what's the idee?"

She closed the door, carefully, as though afraid that to do so might erase the indications his keen old eyes had been the first to see. Her thought was of Phil; but she would not give Phil a hope that might yet fail. She must first be sure. While old Mr. Wines watched in a puzzled way, she called Mr. Falkran.

He was, his office reported, out of town; to be gone till tomorrow afternoon.

In sudden frantic haste and fear, she called the District Attorney's office, asked for Mr Flood. The operator said: "He's away for the week-end. Will anyone else do?"

"Someone who knows about the Sentry case," Linda pleaded desperately. "Anyone."

"Who is this, please?"

"Miss Dane, Mr. Phillip Sentry's secretary."

"I might give you Mr. Weldon? He assisted in the trial, and he is here."

"Oh, do, please!"

And a moment later she had Mr. Weldon on the phone. He said guardedly, "Mr. Weldon speaking."

"I'm Miss Dane, Mr. Weldon. Mr. Phillip Sentry's secretary."

"Yes."

"Can you come down to Mr. Sentry's office, quickly, please?"

"Why, if necessary, yes. What is it? Let me speak to him."

"Oh, he's not here! But it is necessary. We've just found—" She hesitated, then spoke carefully, explicitly. "Mr. Wines is here," she said. "The father of—the dead girl, you know. And he has found what looks like a bullet hole."

"A bullet hole?" Weldon's tone was puzzled.

"Yes. In the lock of the door."

"But I don't see—"

"It might mean," she urged, "that Miss Wines was shot by someone else; was already dead when Mr. Sentry got here. You remember they said the gun was pushed against her, but he said he didn't feel her when he fired. Can't you come, please?"

"I see!" Weldon was alert now. "You've found a bullet?"

"No, just a hole."

"Don't touch anything," he directed. "I'll be down there in ten minutes."

So Linda waited, and Zeke Wines waited; and when Weldon arrived and had seen what there was to see, he sent for another man who was expert in such matters to examine this that they had found.

Time thereafter dragged interminably; while Weldon questioned Wines and Linda, and while the expert made his examination. Linda, watching, fretted with impatience; and once she urged, "Oh, can't you hurry?"

But Weldon reassured her. "We've plenty of time. Miss Dane. Today and all tomorrow."

"Something might happen!"

He said gently: "Trust me, please. We've time to make sure of our ground."

And Linda, longing to telephone Phil, nevertheless held herself in check. Better that he should remain in ignorance of this crumb of hope than find it turn to ashes in his mouth.

It was mid-afternoon before Weldon was satisfied. He told her then:

"Miss Dane, there's no doubt a bullet did strike here. There are bits of lead in the wood. And the bullet was pried out, later, with a knife blade, or something of the kind. And it was of the same caliber as the one which killed Miss Wines. Or at least approximately so.

"But Mr. Sentry fired only one shot. At least, there was only one empty cartridge in the gun when we recovered it. And we found where his bullet hit the wall at the end of the corridor out there. That bullet matched his gun.

"Of course, that shot of his may still have killed Miss Wines. There is just a chance it didn't. Just a chance, the Medical Examiner says, that if she were shot here in the doorway she could have taken two or three steps to where she fell. It is possible, that's all." He hesitated. "There are many possible explanations of this other bullet hole," he said.

She nodded fearfully. "I see. But mightn't it mean—What will you do?"

"I'll get in touch with Mr. Flood," Weldon explained. "He's down on the Cape; probably playing golf just now. He will have to decide what to do."

"Can I—tell Mr. Sentry's family?"

"Suppose you wait," he suggested kindly. "Wouldn't it be better to have something definite to tell them?"

"But doesn't this prove Mr. Sentry is innocent?"

"Hardly that," he warned her. "I think you'd better wait, really."

"Can't we drive down to the Cape and see Mr. Flood?"

"I intend to."

"Please let me go with you."

He smiled. "I don't know why not," he agreed. "Yes." He added, "I'll locate the Governor before we start, so that we will know where to find him, later today, if Mr. Flood wishes to do so."

Half an hour later they were on the road. At a little before five they met District Attorney Flood at the golf club near his summer home. At a quarter of eight they were all back in Phil's office, while the District Attorney himself examined the bullet hole.

He turned at last to Linda. "Well, Miss Dane," he said, a deep relief in his tones, "I shall see the Governor, ask him for a reprieve."

"What does that mean?"

"A postponement." He hesitated.

Occasionally Mr. Hare Stopped In to Discuss Affairs.

"In fact, I may even suggest a commutation. This other bullet certainly creates a grave doubt that Mr. Sentry actually killed Miss Wines."

"But then won't the Governor pardon him?"

"I'm afraid not. Not yet, certainly. Of course, this means a further investigation of the case. The Governor—I'm speaking frankly, you see—may suspect that some of Mr. Sentry's friends have faked this evidence. But there must be a reprieve at least. I'll see the Governor this evening—"

Linda considered. "When you know what he decides, Mr. Flood, will you let me tell them? Tell Mr. Sentry's family? You can telephone to me at my home."

"Of course. You've certainly earned that."

"Mrs. Sentry isn't well," she explained. "The shock even of good news—"

Linda meant to wait, to hold her peace, till she could go to Phil proudly with this word; but when she came home, she found it hard to wait. In the end, despite her resolution, she telephoned the Sentry home.

Barbara answered. Linda asked for Phil.

"He's with mother," Barbara told her. "They're outdoors somewhere. I couldn't bear to be with them." Barbara's tones were shaken. She said: "I can't bear to see mother. She's so strange and still."

Linda said quickly, "Come over here, Barbara." She hesitated, then added: "Don't let them know you're coming. I've — something to tell you."

"Something about my father?" Barbara cried, a quick hope in her voice.

"Come," Linda insisted. "I'll be here."

So Barbara was the first to know what had been discovered; and when, at last, the District Attorney telephoned, Barbara was after Linda the first to know the Governor's decision. Mr. Sentry's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Barbara was still weeping when in Linda's car they raced to the Sentry home; and Phil met them in the hall there, and the quick word was spoken, and the three young people for a moment clung fast together, half-laughing, half-crying, in a happiness almost too great to be borne.

Then Mrs. Sentry appeared on the stair landing above them. Wakeful, she too had heard Linda's car arrive. They did not see her till she was halfway down the stairs. They heard her then, and turned, and Phil leaped up the two or three steps to her side. He caught her close and tenderly.

"Mother! Mother!" he cried. "The Governor has commuted the sentence to life imprisonment!"

CHAPTER XIV

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The newspapers were again filled with the story of the case. The Governor had to meet editorial and public criticism for his commutation of the sentence; but he met it silently, and without revealing the fact that the discovery of new evidence had been responsible for his change of mind. The secret of the bullet hole was well kept. The District Attorney believed that—assuming Mr. Sentry was not the murderer—the actual killer, whoever he might be, would feel a false security if he supposed Mr. Sentry's guilt remained unquestioned. So except for a few individuals, no one knew the truth; but the District Attorney's office meanwhile was busy, checking back, following every line that promised a solution.

The secret was well kept; but Dan Fisher knew. Barbara wrote him the truth; and over the next week-end he came on from Cleveland, and he saw Falkran and saw Flood.

He told Mrs. Sentry and the others afterward, "You know as much as they do." And he said, abashed before them: "I feel pretty—rotten. I thought he did it, you know."

Barbara said honestly: "So did we all, Phil. I thought so myself—but I never admitted it."

Mrs. Sentry remembered something Falkran had said at their first interview. "And just because everyone knows he is innocent now," she said. "Dan, when will they let him go?"

Dan confessed: "Maybe never; not yet, anyway. Really all this bullet hole means is that he might not have done it. But they'll never rest now till they get the answer."

"It's already been long," Mrs. Sentry said, half to herself. "But I can wait, now."

When the time came for Dan's departure, Barbara went with him; and days passed, and Phil's first hope for some quick proof of his father's innocence insensibly faded.

Days ran to weeks; and hope began to die in Phil again. He and Mrs. Sentry, though they stayed at home, considered a North Cape cruise, and they thought of California, Canada, Europe; and Phil brought home travel folders and they studied them diligently, and at night they might be decided on an early departure. But in the morning Mrs. Sentry always reflected:

"You know, Phil, we're perfectly comfortable here. And I don't want to go away from him."

Yet toward the end of July, at Linda's suggestion, they decided on a fortnight in York. Mrs. Sentry would go a day or two ahead, with the servants, to open the house; Phil and Linda would follow later. That Linda should go with them seemed a matter of course. Phil found as always deep happiness in her companionship. She demanded nothing—except to be with him. And—he could give her nothing. If any dreams ever took shape in his thoughts, he remembered his mother's pleading cry, "Stay always with me, Phil!"

And more than ever she needed him now.

His mother and the servants left for York on Wednesday; and on Friday morning, Phil and Linda followed, in Linda's car. The girl drove; and as they picked their way through traffic toward the Turnpike, Phil said:

"Linda, I saw your father, yesterday. He suggested that he put my name up at his club." He added, "I was mighty grateful to him; but they'd be sure to turn me down."

"Father wouldn't have offered, if there were any chance of that."

"He's like you, Linda. He and your mother. So darned—loyal. But others may not feel the same."

"Haven't all your friends been the same?"

"Some have. Some have not. Mother felt hurt at first when Mr. Hare suggested another to defend father, though doubtlessly it was for the best. Occasionally he stops in to discuss affairs and to encourage Mother.

"The Warings—the way they acted grieved Mother," Phil continued. "And then, she resigned from all her committees and things; and they accepted her resignations. That was tough on her. She's been happier lately. Happy in just—loving father. But she doesn't really seem well. I'm pretty worried about her, Lin."

Linda, grave eyes upon the road, changed the subject. "Do you hear from Mary?" she asked.

Phil nodded grimly. "She's married again, a South American; beef baron, something of the kind." Their thoughts, as sometimes happens with two people as close to one another as they had come to be, ran together. Thinking of Dan and Barbara, they said aloud in a sort of chorus:

"But Barbara—"

Then they looked at each other, and laughed, and he said, "We were going to say the same thing!"

"Yes. Just the way married people do—"

He protested: "Lin, do you have to keep—torturing me?"

"My dear," she said, "don't you know by this time that you and I are already married, in so many real, deep ways? And I'm not asking anything more than we already have, Phil." She added, half to herself, "At least, I don't think I am."

He said: "There's no help for it, Lin. I can't ask—"

She smiled, her eyes upon the road. "You wouldn't even have to ask me, Phil."

"And—mother needs me. I'm all she's got to hold to now, with Mary and Barbara both gone."

Linda did not argue with him; but during the next few days at York, watching Mrs. Sentry and Phil together, she was sometimes secretly angry.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Find Student Interest Lags When a Game or Sport Lacks Prestige

Many are the college men who, with neither the inclination nor the ability to take part in the major sports, have consoled themselves with the thought that after graduation they will still be able to play their golf and tennis, which is more than those who have gained fame in football and baseball can say of their sports, says the Hartford Courant. They may now take further cheer from the recommendations of Prof. Eugene C. Bischoff, of the athletic department of Pennsylvania State college, and Mrs. Elizabeth Meyers, of the school of education, New York university, both of wom advocate greater collegiate emphasis upon individual as opposed to team sports.

Meritorious as is this proposal, most colleges would have difficulty putting it into effect. Athletic departments of major universities that have attempted to encourage general participation through emphasis on informal, intramural competitions have found that student interest lags when a game or sport lacks prestige. As long as they are major attractions from the spectator's point of view, the team sports will undoubtedly continue to be the center of student interest. Many students believe, too, that they can shift with little difficulty from the group sports to golf or tennis or any other generally available type of recreation when they are graduated.

It would be hard to prove that shifting the emphasis from the team sports to the individual sports would increase the number of students participating in athletics, if such is the purpose. Students who like a sport will take part in it regardless of its importance. There is a large group, however, that would probably have but a passing interest in any sport were it not for its prestige value.

Fingers Before Forks

At meals in Arabia there are neither knives nor forks, eating being done with the right hand. In time, one develops the knack of forming the incredibly hot rice which the Arabs serve into artistic little balls, and if one is particularly skillful one manages it without burning the fingers.

WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK

By LEMUEL F. PARTON

Robot Planes Is Ex-Pug Denny's Hobby-Business

NEW YORK.—Reginald Denny, the one-time professional boxer who became a motion picture star, develops his toy airplane hobby into a business. He rings up a sale of six robot planes to Uncle Sam, to be used in army experiments next summer. They are expected to be curtain-callers for larger and more business-like robots, flying without pilots, guided by radio beams, dusting TNT on intruders.

Reginald Denny will be remembered as the actor extolled a decade or so ago as "the typical, wholesome young American." Then he turned out to be an Englishman, a flier and machine-gunner in the British royal air force in the war. A light comedian, he had two absorbing interests—his screen antics and what seemed at the time a juvenile absorption with miniature airplanes. From the latter, he developed some ideas about radio-controlled planes. He established the Reginald Denny Industries, with James Blackton, an experienced technician, as manager. He is making a small "flying torpedo," designed for flying in swarms, with no pilot, and with land-control of the bomb-dropping as well as guidance. When completed the United States will get it.

He ran away from school at the age of 16 to play for Charles Frohman at the Duke of York's theater. His first featured role was in the "Merry Widow." Then he became a professional boxer, later champion of the Second corps of the royal air force.

A Scholar and Gagster--That's Envoy Johnson

NELSON T. JOHNSON, ambassador to China, coming home by a side door as Japan slams the open door, probably will have in his hip pocket a copy of the "Analects" of Confucius, barring possibly "Alice in Wonderland," which he also packs around with him, it is his favorite reading.

Like Henry R. Curran, deputy mayor of New York, he believes that public activities and attitudes should be infused with humor. More than any other American, he has been successful in translating our best anthology of pullman car gags to the Chinese. Following the labyrinth of Confucius and Lao Tze, he finds a unique approach to the Chinese mind and has been one of our most successful ambassadors. But, back home, he is sharp, exact, statistical and thoroughly occidental, among which attributes is a line of up-and-coming Chamber of Commerce oratory. He lives in two worlds.

After his graduation from George Washington university, Mr. Johnson mixed with the Indians of the Southwest, picked up Indian dialects with remarkable facility, thereby discovering his linguistic gifts. That sent him to China as a student interpreter in 1906. In the Far East, he has occupied many important posts and is a former assistant secretary of state. He finds the Chinese have a lot more humor than the Japanese.

Group Aims to Keep Scientific Inquiry Free

IT WAS about three years ago that the head of the German National Institute of Physics denounced the "debased Jewish atom," and promised to deliver to the Reich an untainted "Aryan" atom. Under the banner of "The Pragmatic and Dogmatic Spirit in Physics," this scientific revolution has been advanced by the Nazi savants, and at last American scientists mobilize against it. Dr. Franz Boas, 80-year-old German-born American anthropologist, heads a committee of eight distinguished scientists in publishing a manifesto, signed by 1,284 of their colleagues, leaders in all branches of science throughout America. They "defend the right of scientists to speak the truth as they understand it."

Dr. Boas spent about 55 years studying long heads and round heads, but was stymied by the square heads. "If the world goes crazy, what can we do?" he said, resigning from Columbia university two years ago.

He came to this country to attend the Chicago World's fair in 1893, after an Arctic expedition which had launched his career as an anthropologist. He remained to coach virtually all great American anthropologists and to become a world authority in linguistics, primitive mentality, folklore, ethnology and senility. The old Germany honored him. The new Germany made an extra-special bonfire of his books.

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New and Different, Yet Easy to Make

EACH of these new designs is a treasure trove of clever ideas. You'll enjoy making them, during long winter evenings to come, not only because they're so attractive when finished but because they're no trouble at all to do. Each pattern includes a detailed sew chart for the guidance of beginners, so you don't need experience. Just follow the easy, explicit directions, and see how quickly you'll have them finished.

Five-in-One-Dress Fashion.

Just look at the different personalities this smart dress has—and every one of them is charming! You can make it as shown in the large sketch, with high neck-

line and sash. Also, as shown in the little sketches, either with a round collar or with turnback revers, with shawl collar and wrap-around sash—or with high neckline, and beltless. The basic line is lovely. It has shrugged-shoulder sleeves, a softly gathered bodice, a doll-waistline cut high in the front, and a slim-hipped skirt. Silk crepe, velvet, thin wool or print are pretty materials for this.

Four-in-One Closet Set.

A laundry bag, combing cape, hanger cover and a pair of pretty slippers comprise this gay closet set that you'll like as well for its looks as its usefulness. If you know any girls who are going back to college or boarding school, they'll love to have the set, or any one of the four pieces. Make them of chintz, cretonne, sateen or calico, in the gayest colors and prettiest patterns you can find.

The Patterns.

No. 1597 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 40. With short sleeves, dress without collar or belt requires 3⅞ yards of 39-inch material. With long sleeves, 4⅛ yards. Specific requirements for collars, revers and belts appear on your pattern.

No. 1644 comes in one size—medium. Cape requires 1⅛ yards of 36-inch material; 4¼ yards of binding; 1¼ yards ribbon for bows. Hanger requires ½ yard of 36-inch material, with 2¼ yards binding. Bag requires 1 yard, with 4¼ yards binding. Slippers require ⅓ yard, and ⅓ yard more to line. Purchase the soles and pompoms.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., 247 W. Forty-third street, New York, N. Y. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

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as thousands have already successfully done. No magic about it, but repeated applications give gray, faded hair a shade approximating the original without that "*dyed*" appearance so quickly detectable in many hair-coloring products on the market. Even the first bottle gives appreciable results! If your druggist doesn't have it, send a dollar and your name and address—money cheerfully refunded if not satisfied.

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