

The Unlatched Door

By Frank Price

PART II
Above her head there had been a blinding flash and that stunning report; a jerking movement of Borden's hands and her own as the weapon they were struggling for ricked at the explosion; an echo—no, it wasn't an echo; it was that motor cycle in the street!—and then Borden's collapse as he fell, leaving the revolver in her hand. Had she fired or had he? Was the shot purely accidental? Or had he, indeed, meant to kill her and been the victim of some instinctive, unremembered effort by which she had wrenched the weapon round to point at him?
She could not tell. Her mind was a blank as to those frantic moments; but it was fearfully clear as to the present. She was alone with a dead man, holding the weapon which had killed him. She had entered his flat surreptitiously, without a witness, and she could give no explanation of her presence. Whatever happened she could not shield herself behind Nancy. Her lips must be sealed as to her motive for being there! If she were found—if the report, which had sounded so loud to her, had been heard by others and people came knocking at the door and forced an entrance, what would her position be? There seemed only one answer to that: She would be accused of murder and arrested on the spot!

She pressed her left hand against her breast to still the tumultuous beating of her heart, which she could hear thudding like a steam hammer and listened for any sound of movement in the building. Footsteps and voice came to her but she identified them as being in the street below and they passed and faded. Inside the flats she could detect no sign of anyone stirring and she began to hope for escape. She told herself that, just as she had taken the noise of the motor cycle back-firing for an echo of the report of the revolver, so other hearers might have taken the report for part of the sounds from the street. If that were so chance had befriended her in one respect, at least. If she could get away un-

seen . . .
The weight of the revolver was dragging at her arm. She looked at it with horror. Memories of the detective stories she had read and discussed with her father came to her mind. Clues—finger-prints! Thank heaven, she was wearing gloves! Stopping with averted face, she laid the weapon on the floor beside Borden's body and stood up. It was as if a load had been lifted from her shoulders.

Her impulse now was to run from the room and the flat, but the magnitude of the crisis in which she found herself had made all her senses curiously alert and she forced herself to remain where she was while she examined the floor of the room with her eyes. Her vanity bag lay on the carpet a couple of yards away, where it had fallen when she made her desperate leap at the revolver. She could see nothing else of hers.

She stepped lightly to the bag and picked it up. The silver chain was unbroken and the clasp was fast but she opened it to make sure

Wage Increases For CNR Conductors

MONTREAL, June 26 — A joint statement issued by the Order of Railway Conductors and the Canadian National Railways announced the signing today of new wage agreements calling for an 11% increase in basic rates of pay, with no rule changes.
The agreements which are effective until June 25, 1953, cover more than 1,800 Canadian National conductors on the Western Central and Atlantic Regions of the Railway, excluding Newfoundland district. The wage increase is retroactive to May 16, 1952.

Buchanan-Forsythe Wedding

A pretty June wedding was solemnized at the United Church Manse, Canning, N. S., on June 14th at 3:00 P.M. when Josephine Pauline, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Forsythe, Delhaven, N.S., was united in marriage to Leonard William, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. William Buchanan of Bonshaw. Rev. J. W. Barbour was the officiating clergyman.
Given in marriage by her father, the bride was becomingly attired in a navy blue suit with white accessories and corsage of yellow roses.
Her sister, Joyce, attended as bridesmaid. Joan Langley, niece of the bride, was flower girl. The groom was attended by his brother, Malcolm, of Moncton, N. B.
The bride's mother wore a navy and white dress with white accessories and corsage of Talisman roses. The groom's mother was attired in a navy two-piece dress, with corsage of sweetheart roses.
Following the ceremony a reception for 65 guests was held at the home of the bride's parents at Delhaven, after which the happy couple left on their honeymoon, which was spent in different parts of the U. S. A. They are residing in Bonshaw, P. E. I.

that nothing had fallen out. All her belongings were in place; there was Borden's card, the one he had given to Nancy, the means by which Barbara had found her way here. She was tempted to tear it into minute fragments and throw it into the wastepaper basket beside the writing table, but she refrained. Better take it right away! She fastened the bag, slipped the chain over her arm, and went quickly and silently over the thick carpet to the door.
She had a horrible feeling that the fixed eyes of the dead man were following her and that she must turn round and meet them, and she had to resist it with all her strength. She was sure that if she looked at him again her nerve would break and she would run madly from the flat down to the street, possibly screaming out her horror. That must not happen! She had to reach the street without a sound. She saw an electric light switch on the wall beside the door and knocked it up with a flick of her hand. She had never been afraid of the dark, and the blackness which enveloped her now brought comfort and reassurance. She stepped into the narrow hall and moved cautiously towards where two dim oblongs of light showed the position of the front door faintly illuminated by an electric bulb on the landing. The door was as she had left it, closed but not latched, and she had opened it slightly when she paused, listening breathlessly. There were footsteps outside. She judged that someone had come up the stairs and was crossing the landing. It was the tread of a man. Was he coming to Borden's flat?

Her heart seemed to stop beating and her throat was so constricted that she could not swallow. Then the steps ceased and immediately she heard the shrill, distant trilling of an electric bell. Apparently she was safe, but she must wait, and delay was terrifying. She held the door as it was, with her ear to the slight opening, and listened. She heard the impatient shuffling of feet, a quickly repeated ringing of the bell and the opening of a door. Then came a voice—a young woman's, Barbara thought, but shrill with irritation:
"You, is it? What do you want? And what do you mean by digging your ugly thumb into my bell push like that at this time of night?"
"I didn't know if you were in," a man's voice replied. It was a harsh voice with a trace of some accent Barbara could not identify, though she guessed it as Colonial rather than foreign.
"Well, you know now!" snapped the woman. "What about it?"
"I want to know why you're in. Why did you cut off like that leaving me all alone when the night had hardly begun?"
(To be continued)



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