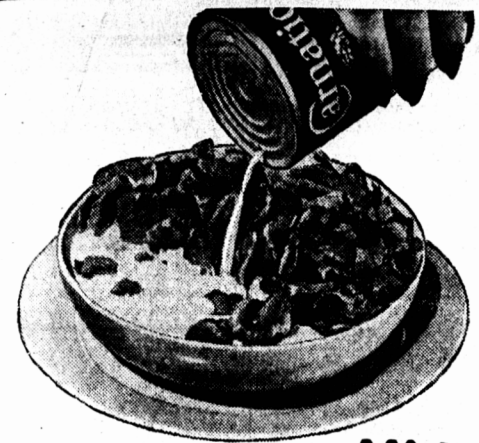


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Murder Is Forgetful

By WILLIAM BOGART
(Continued)

"You say you live in New York most of the time?" he asked. She nodded. "At the Barclay." "I'll bet Nick Walker would rather have you stay out here." She said nothing. Her eyes never rose above his chin when she looked at him. Then they glanced beyond him and Johnny heard a quiet movement in the room. Turning, he saw the butler moving to close the terrace doors. Johnny's mouth was pulled straight across his teeth as he covertly watched Nancy England's eyes follow the butler's quiet movements.

The butler, finished, left the room. His movements were so quiet he reminded Johnny Saxon of a wraith. He thought perhaps Homer was sore about something. The man's features looked more severe than usual.

With the terrace doors closed the air in the room had become motionless and dead. Perspiration dampened Johnny's forehead.

He said, "Do you mind if I ask you a rather personal question?" She looked at his chin. She studied various parts of his face except his eyes. "What is the question?"

"Are you going to marry Nick Walker?"

She stood up and walked over to the mantel. "Why do you ask that?" she said.

"Well," he said slowly. "I was under the impression he's loved you for a long time."

Nancy looked at him sharply. She started to say fiercely, "Nick doesn't know the meaning of—"

CHAPTER XIII.

She stopped, eyes going sultry. "Look, Mr. Johnny Saxon, there's nothing we want more than to have all this unpleasant business cleared up. It's a pretty horrible thing to see your own sister walking around her home and not recognizing us. We're all going through a nasty strain. As if Martin's murder weren't enough to have happen to us."

She got up and paced jerkily in front of him. Her eyes were blazing. Johnny was astounded at this change of events.

"But Mr. Saxon," she continued, "you can't go around prying into lives like you've been trying to do. What Nick Walker is to me has nothing to do with Irene and the murder. I hope I make myself clear. Crystal clear."

"I'm sorry to hear all this. I don't much like prying, as you said, into lives. But it happens to be my bread and butter. There has been a murder committed. The police are satisfied it was done by a highway robber. I don't think that. Neither did T.J. Smith or he wouldn't have hired me to dig around. And when a detective digs around, people are bound to get their toes stepped on. It's all part of the game. Your resenting it makes it all the more difficult for everyone."

She dropped her eyes and turned away from him. There was a longish pause, then she said, almost under her breath, "Please overlook what I said. I don't feel very well. I suppose I just can't drink brandy."

Then she turned and walked toward the stairs.

Johnny followed and went along with her.

At the doorway to her room, the one next to Kay's, he asked, "Are you sure you're all right?" He wondered why Kay had not come downstairs again. He could see a silver of light from beneath her door.

Nancy England started into her own room. "Will you please ask Homer to stop by a moment before he retires?" She spoke slowly and deliberately.

"Certainly," said Johnny.

She closed the door. He listened a moment, then returned along the hallway. The butler's tall, stiff figure had just appeared at the landing.

"Everything's locked up, sir," he announced. "If there's nothing else—"

"Miss England wants to see you, Homer."

"Very well."

Johnny saw a frown in the man's eyes as the butler turned and went toward the woman's room.

Reaching the left wing leading to his own room, Johnny paused a moment. He heard Nancy's door open, then close an instant later. Homer's unhurried footsteps were returning along the hall.

The butler went down the front stairs again. Johnny waited. In a moment the man appeared at the top of the stairs and swung right toward Nancy England's room. In

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his hand he carried a small package. Johnny murmured aloud, "What's the matter with her?" Shortly the butler appeared again and started up the stairs to his own room. Johnny heard his door close. Silence fell over the big house.

Before entering his own room, Johnny Saxon stepped outside the screened door at the end of the wing. He stood on the balcony and looked toward the bedroom windows that faced on the porch. He checked them off: Irene's, the nurse—Karen's, an empty guest room, Grandpoppa Smith's. All were in darkness.

It was cooler now. A slight breeze came from the direction of the Sound. Johnny wondered if that explained the slight dampness in the air or if it were going to rain. Overhead, the night was dark and starless. He wondered if Steve, the guard, was down there below any place, keeping his all-night vigil.

(To be continued)

Dorothy Dix Says—

Continued from page 2

ably pay more attention if the warning came officially. Her intentions undoubtedly are good; she may enjoy having the youngsters around every day, and a gentle hint may be enough to make her see the light. Youth is thoughtless, but not hard. Children get used to being dependent on Mom for everything, and after marriage they continue to return to the maternal roof, totting the babies along and never realizing that the years are catching up with mother and she just can't stand the wear and tear of active grandchildren as well as she stood it with her own small fry.

DEAR DOROTHY DIX: I am 24. He is 41. We have been married six months. Within a week I realized our marriage was a mistake. Here are some of my difficulties: My husband was previously married and widowed. Has two children living with a married sister, all of whom visit us regularly; an ordeal for me. His ignorance nearly drives me to distraction. He has nothing to say in company. Evenings when I wish to dance or go to a place of amusement he claims fatigue and the necessity of arising at 7 in the morning, so we can't go out. I have no parents and was poor, so I married thinking a home would suffice, but too late I have learned that a support is insufficient for happiness. Do you think separation would be the best course for me to take?

MRS. D. R. N.

ANSWER: Your trouble is solely that you married without love and you are paying the penalty of a mercenary marriage. Your complaints against your husband are not worth considering. If he is not a brilliant conversationalist, you were bound to have known that before marriage. Nor are you ill-used because he does not wish to go out to places of amusement of evenings after a long day's work. And certainly you have no right to object to his sister and his children coming to see him. You are lucky that they do not live with you. I agree with you that if you are so unhappy and discontented after six months of wedlock, it is better to end the farce of such a marriage at once rather than go through a long-drawn-out lifetime of misery. But if you do leave this good man, don't ask for alimony. Don't expect him to support you when you have reneged on your end of the bargain.

DEAR MISS DIX: My boy friend is in the army, and may be gone two or three years. We are more or less engaged but have no definite date set for marriage. Should I accept dates with other boys and tell my boy friend or accept them and not tell him?

LENA

ANSWER: As you don't say anything about not accepting the dates, I think your feelings for your boy friend cannot be too involved, and I think this "more or less" engagement better be called off. Then accept all the dates you can get, but be sure to let your soldier know about them. Don't be a sneak, or a liar. Whatever you do, let it be in the open.

DOROTHY DIX cannot reply personally to readers, but will answer problems of general interest through her column.

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