

The Unlatched Door

By Frank Price
CHAPTER TWELVE
Continued

"I haven't said so," Kenway took up the unfinished letter. "All I wanted to ask was if you could suggest who this letter was intended for. It's addressed to 'Snorty'—not much to go on!"

"I'm afraid I can't help there. It sounds like a nickname, the sort of thing that's common enough in South Africa—Borden was generally called 'Kruger.' Judging from the letter this Snorty knew my father. The police over there might be able to trace him, if it's worth while. Why not ask them at Durban?"

"Thanks for the suggestion. I'll think it over."

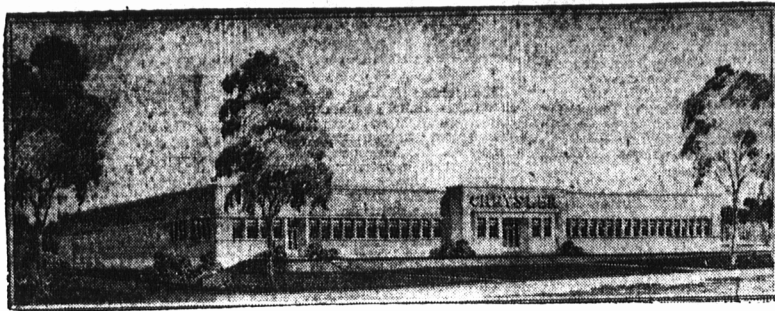
Kenway reached for the telephone and Roy went out of the room. Nobody stopped him nor seemed to notice him as he traversed passages and crossed into the busy street. He paused there, collecting himself. He had been a long time in the inspector's room and the strain of the interview had tired and shaken him. He was on the point of calling a taxi to take him to his boarding-house when the sign "Public Telephone" outside the neighboring post office caught his eye. He went in, found a box disengaged and got through to Martin Winterton's house.

The maid answered. Mr. Winterton was in, she told him, but he there. . . . Are you joking?"

"I wish I were—but look here, stairs. It was just on their dinner as the sound of an agonized wailing. Could she take a message? clamation came over the wire.

"No. I want to speak to Mr. Winterton. . . . don't worry about that. They

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Winterton—or, is Miss Calendar haven't a bit of real evidence against me?"

"That was entirely my own fault. He asked me about Borden and I told him just what I thought of the scoundrel and why—you know what I told you this afternoon. I sounded pretty bloody-thirty. But this is what I wanted to know. Mr. Winterton to know: The police know about that row at the Boldovina. They have been questioning waiters and people. They know I was there. Borden mentioned it in that letter the paper spoke of—and I let out that the trouble was with Mr. and Mrs. Winterton. I don't really see how I could have kept it back. Anyhow, I didn't. Then I had to tell what the row was about."

"About? Do you mean you told all about the advance Borden wanted, and how he found it was prevented by Mr. Winterton?"

"I see. Was that the only reason you gave for the quarrel?"

"Of course. There wasn't any other to give, was there?"

"No, none of course not. Did you mention me?"

"Not a word!" Roy was emphatic and, listening, thought he heard a sigh of relief, then, anxiously: "But does he really suspect you? How can he?"

"Don't worry about that, darling. They have to suspect everybody who could possibly be supposed to have a motive, and if anybody had one for killing Borden, I had! But I didn't, and they can't frame it on to me. What I rang up for was to tell Mr. Winterton I mentioned him so that he won't be taken by surprise if the police go making inquiries."

"Here? The voice coming over the wire quivered."

"Yes."

"But why? What can they want here?"

"Confirmation of my story. I expect they will check every word I said. That's all they can want."

"Oh! I see. Yes, of course that's all they can want, isn't it? There followed an indistinct murmuring of which Roy could make nothing; then Martin Winterton spoke, his voice sounded hurried and agitated:

"Are you there, Hemersley? Are you there?"

"Still here, Mr. Winterton."

"Barbara has been telling me what you said. Is this true about your having been to Scotland Yard?"

"Quite true. I've just left there—feeling like a bit of chewed string. I'm frightfully sorry about having had to mention you, but I really couldn't help it. The police seem to have been interviewing all sorts of people at the Boldovina, and I had to tell all I knew about Borden."

"About the business with the bank, you mean?"

"Yes."

"You didn't tell them anything else?"

"Not with reference to you. There wasn't anything else to tell."

"No. No, of course not. I appreciate your position and I'm obliged for your warning that I may be questioned."

"Only for confirmation of my story, you know."

"Yes, yes. Only that. Were you serious about their suspecting you? Barbara seems quite alarmed."

"Tell her not to be. I shall be all right. But the detective chap certainly put me through it—sort of third degree on a small scale. Why he even got hold of my hat and started examining it."

"Your what?"

"Ha—H-A-T. I quite expected him to get a microscope to it."

"There came a queer sort of choking sound and then silence. Roy spoke again; then he joggled the receiver arm but there was no response. The line was dead. He hesitated a moment before hanging up and leaving the box. He was too tired to wait any longer.

As he stepped out of the post office he bumped against a man in a brown suit, who was reading a letter beside the door, but was too weary to utter even the conventional "Sorry!" A taxi with its flag up was coming along the street, and he signalled. It drew to the curb, the driver honking furiously at a bedraggled figure in the gutter with a tray slung on it. Roy called his address: 176, Whittington Street, West Kensington; got in and was driven off.

A moment later the man in brown was following him in a second taxi. The match seller looked after both for a while, then he, too, followed, shuffling along, offering his wares as he went and seeming, perhaps on account of his forlorn appearance, to be gathering in quite a good harvest of coppers.

(To be continued)

BULLETINS FROM BIRDLAND

BY WINIFRED E. WILSON



VICTIMIZED

A great many birds, from the tiny, five inch Warblers to the eleven or twelve inch Brown Thrashers, suffer from Cowbirds. Not that the adults are injured by them, but they are victimized, having to nurse Cowbird children when this is apt to mean destruction to their own. Mrs. Cowbird is no respecter of persons, laying her eggs in any available home.

No shape of nest at any height is safe from intrusion, whether it be the open cup of a Savannah Sparrow placed beside a branch of daisies, or the basket of a Red-eyed Vireo hanging from a branch 25 feet from the ground. One, two, three, or even four Cowbird eggs may be placed there to be incubated. The alien eggs nearly always hatch first. Cowbird babies have insatiable appetites, and snatch most of the food, grow quickly, and push the rightful owners from the nest.

Some householders, as the Veerys, give in easily, but Song Sparrows, Yellowthroats, and many, many other kinds of birds are too submissive. There are those that feel obliged to accept the foreign egg if they already have a family of their own, but when the unwelcome guest is found in their otherwise empty nest, they abandon the home. This is the plan of the Mourning Warbler, a species that until recently was seldom disturbed by Cowbirds because its nest is always so well hidden.

For some unknown reason, Cowbirds deposit their eggs more frequently in the homes of Yellow Warblers than those of any other bird. Few species are able actually to throw out the extra egg, though some manage to. But this little Warbler often displays unusual cleverness. It either abandons the site entirely, or builds another nest right on top of the first one.

Seemingly, the parasitic Cowbirds are increasing. At one time they kept pretty much to grasslands, where they followed the cattle around, using only nests that could be reached conveniently from there. Now we are discovering their eggs in wooded country. More than once Phoebes nesting in shanties in a sugar bush have provided homes for young Cowbirds. Not even Oven-birds escape, though their habitat is the mature forest. The villains are extending their range to the northern coniferous



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The Registrar, Collège Militaire Royal de St-Jean, St-Jean, Qué.

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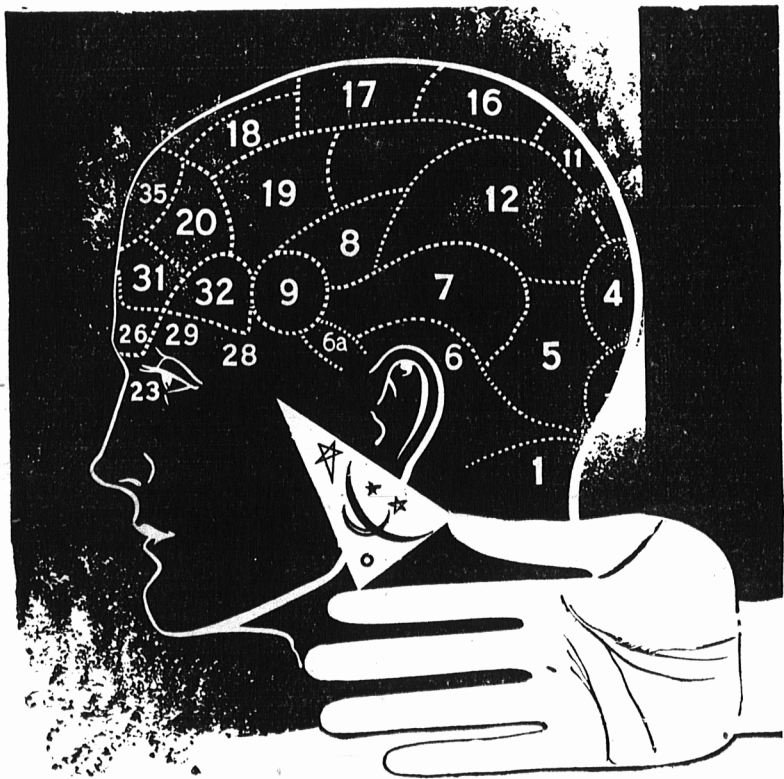
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THE CANADIAN SERVICES COLLEGES

woods. Goldfinches that provide babies with seeds and Cedar Waxwings that bring them cherries used to evade the danger of late nesting. Phoebes supply flying insects, most Warblers consider little green worms perfect baby food. The foster children thrive on anything.

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BUNYANESQUE TOOLS

BURNABY, B. C. (CP)—Evidence that giants once inhabited British Columbia has been found by W. E. and E. M. Norman, a father and son geology team here. In a 30-year-search of their two-acre plot they found weapons only supermen could use—200 to 300 pound granite axes, huge belt axes, knife-handles and spears.

NO LOSSES

AMHERST, N.S. (CP)—For the first time, Amherst High School saw all 26 of the grade 12 students who had written their final examinations gaining their graduation diplomas. Dr. A. E. Kerr, president of Dalhousie University, congratulated the graduating class.

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