

The Birthday Murder

By Lange Lewis

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Part Two

There was the soft scuffle of footsteps, and Hazel came through the open French door, a tray containing a plate of sandwiches and a tray of glasses of coffee held high. She set the tray down on the table with a metallic sound. She looked at Victoria and said: "But I'm sure I didn't make any mistake and use the ant poison instead of the sugar. I've told Mr. Tuck that I've sworn to it."

Then she turned and went away, her black kid slippers with their pom-poms making a sibilant sound. Victoria stared after her. The calm finality of Hazel's statement, coming as it did, unnerved her slightly.

"Well," said Sawn. He added: "Well, well, well." Victoria looked at him, and was shocked. His whole face seemed to have come alive. Then he leaned forward toward her, and the reflection of the sun in the white table warmed his face, put a sparkle into the dark irises of his eyes. "There is a dead woman named Lucia Rio," he said, "who killed herself with sleeping pills. At first her death puzzled me; but I think I know now how it happened. She had thought so often of doing that, that one night her hands did it by themselves. She was drunker than usual, I imagine, and one more man had hurt and angered her. It was late and she was alone and the tablets were there beside the bed, and the hands reached out to them and used them." He stood up. He walked to the door and turned to say, "Ladies make so little of a life, a death, a little blood. I have to remind myself that it's quite different here."

Victoria knew that she would never forget his face, looking down at her.

The coroner's inquest into the death of Albert Hime took place at 1 o'clock on the Tuesday following his death. It was held in a small tan-paneled courtroom in the Los Angeles City Hall. The inquest could have been delayed pending the uncovering of further evidence by the police, but Tuck, Guttery and the district attorney were of the opinion that the nature of the case did not warrant such a delay. The district attorney was sure that only a confession of guilt would conclusively solve it. Tuck was fairly certain what the outcome of the inquest would be—a verdict of murder at the hands of a person or persons unknown, although this would depend to some extent on the coroner and on the coroner's jury also. He had seen coroner's juries whose personalities ranged from lethargic stupidity which docilely went by the letter of the coroner's summing up of the evidence to juries who boldly brought forth an unexpected decision as to where the guilt lay. So he could not be sure.

Victoria Hime, wearing a gray striped suit and a wide, tilted black felt hat which clung to her short raven hair by means of a black handanna, looked hard, capable and determined. Tuck noted the strength and purity of the line of her jaw, the coolness of her clear gray eyes, the sternness of her wide mouth. She testified as to the identity of the deceased.

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Mr. MacLean Describes Parliamentary Procedure

"Impressions of Ottawa and Parliament" is the subject of the following interesting address by Mr. J. Angus MacLean, M.P., for Queen's, which is scheduled to be broadcast this evening.

"I arrived here in Ottawa a couple of days before Parliament reassembled on October 9th. For me, coming to Ottawa was in many ways like coming back home, for I had spent two and a half interesting and busy years at the Air Force Station at Rockcliffe, just outside the city, during the war.

"The day before Parliament opened, I met the other three new members, who are also Progressive Conservatives and were elected in by-elections on the same day that you elected me. I would like to tell you a bit about each of them now.

"Howie Meeker, is the new member for Waterloo South. He succeeds Karl Homuth, also a Conservative, who represented Waterloo South for many years. Howie is the star hockey player with the Toronto Maple Leafs. So between hockey and Parliament, he is a very busy man. He served in the Army in the last war and was wounded twice. He is married and has one daughter four years old. A second daughter was born only a few days ago and this event was headlined in the Toronto paper with the words 'Blessed are the Meekers'.

"Howie is a very well-informed young man of 28 and is an impressive speaker. I think that there is an excellent future in store for him in Parliament. In the by-election, Howie increased She asserted her belief that he had not killed himself. She described briefly the last dinner they had eaten together.

The coroner, a precise man, gray of face and hair, showed some confusion over the matter of the sugar, for which Tuck could not blame him.

"The gist of it, then, Mrs. Hime, is that you used no sugar from the bowl on the table, whereas your husband did?"

"Yes."

"You yourself placed this bowl on the table?"

"Yes."

"About an hour before we ate."

"Did you fill this bowl?"

"No."

"Who did?"

"My servant, Hazel Bennett."

To be continued

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the Conservative majority in his riding by more than two thousand votes. His riding also voted Conservative in the recent Ontario election, although prior to that it had been held by the C.C.F. provincially.

Other Newcomers

"Another of the new members is Gordon Churchill, who is 52 and represents Winnipeg South Centre, formerly a Liberal stronghold. Gordon is a veteran of both world wars and left the Army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was a school teacher during the period between the wars and while the war was on, was elected to the Manitoba Legislature, representing the Armed Forces. On his release from the Army, although he was 44, he went back to college again and studied law which he

now practices in Winnipeg.

"Gordon Churchill's victory at the polls was perhaps the most remarkable of the four. He ran in the 1949 general election and was defeated by more than eight thousand votes by his Liberal opponent, yet on the by-election, he overcame this huge majority and won with plenty to spare. His election gave many complacent M.P.'s cause to think for there are few very few members of Parliament with majorities of 8,000 or more. Gordon is an experienced and capable parliamentarian. His chief interests are defence and veterans' affairs.

"The other new member is Walter Dinsdale of Brandon, Manitoba. Walter is 37 and succeeds Mr. Matthews who was a native of Albany, P.E.I., and who defeated John Bracken at the last general election. Walter is a member of one of the old pioneer families of Brandon, and his father was Mayor of that city for some time. Before the last war, Walter spent some time as a social worker in the slums of Montreal and during the war, he served with great distinction as a night fighter pilot in

the R.C.A.F. and was decorated with the D.F.C. Since the war he has been a professor at Brandon College. He has two young sons, one three years old and the other three months.

Walter defeated the much publicized Grant MacEwan, former Dean of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan, and who according to rumour, was to become the new Minister of Agriculture in place of Mr. Gardiner. All these rumours stemmed from plans which were hatched without referring to the people of Brandon whose plan it was to elect Walter Dinsdale to represent them, and elect him they did with a majority of over two thousand votes.

"All three of these new members are young, keen, capable men who are a great contribution to Parliament and a tower of strength to the Opposition. If I am able to do half as well as they, the people of Queen's will not regret having elected me.

"On the morning of the day Parliament reassembled, we four new members went to the office of the Clerk of the House of Commons, where he were sworn in and

then we signed the roll. After photographs were taken, we were shown up to the entrance of the Commons Chamber where the House was already in session.

"At the appointed time, we were met at the door by the leader of our party, Mr. Drew, and were escorted by Drew and a Conservative member from our home Province, one at a time down the carpeted floor of the Commons to the end of the great oak table of the Clerk of the House.

"We were introduced in the order in which our elections had officially been reported to the Clerk,

so it happened that I was second. I was escorted, of course, by Mr. McLure and Mr. Drew. The latter introduced me in the traditional way with these words:

"Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce Mr. Angus MacLean who has been elected to represent the constituency of Queen's. He has

Continued on page 14

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