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Murder In Duplicate

CHAPTER SIX

Overcoming a natural repugnance, Jim leaned over and touched the crumpled figure. The body was still warm. It had been wedged in a corner of the back seat, propped upright so that it had the ghastly air of a passenger waiting for the car to start.

He could visualize the scene. The car stood at the curb, outside the gate of Corder's house. The road was dark, silent, deserted, apparently not often used.

Another car must have driven up behind it—so softly, so as not to rouse their attention while they were talking with Corder. Out of that car had stepped a man. He must have peered stealthily up and down the road, to see that the coast was clear.

His next grisly task would occupy only a few moments. From his own car he had taken a heavy burden, walked a few feet with it, and then conveniently rid himself of a dead body. Then he had driven off.

Hamilton, Jim judged, had been shot not more than a half or three-quarters of an hour ago. In other words, it must have been very soon after they had left him in Mary's flat, unconscious, but alive.

Hamilton was obviously a tough specimen. The effect of the blow Jim had struck would soon wear off.

Jim could imagine him staggering to his feet, cursing when he realized his quarry had got away. What would Hamilton do then?

Whitcombe had seen Hamilton enter the flat, and he had seen them come out. Whitcombe knew Hamilton, or at least knew of him. He had said that Hamilton was no longer a detective, as the big man claimed, but had been sacked from the force and had turned crook. His game was blackmail. Smith, also, was apparently a blackmailer.

Jim experienced a little stir of excitement. Suppose Hamilton, a blackmailer, had belatedly discovered who the real killer was! Suppose, during that conversation with them in the flat, Hamilton had suddenly realized the truth! Hamilton had been following Smith! It seemed obvious that he knew a great deal about the Dornier case.

If he thought he now knew the real murderer, he might be bold enough to try to blackmail him. Only he had underestimated the ruthlessness of his intended victim. The murderer had been first off the mark.

It all fitted smoothly together, with the inevitability of a jigsaw puzzle. Jim came out of a brown study to find Mary tugging at his arm. Her face was pale.

"What are we going to do now?" she whispered. "The police may be here at any minute..."

"If they find him in our car, we're sunk," Jim agreed.

All the same, he stood a moment longer. He was beginning to grasp the murderer's plan. It sent a cold shiver down his spine.

Corder had received a phone call "from the police," warning him that his visitors were wanted for murder. But the police hadn't really made that phone call. The only person who could have told the police about Smith's death was Hamilton, and Hamilton obviously hadn't been near the police.

So it was the murderer—the slayer of both Smith and Hamilton—who had made that phone call. Why?

Because he wanted another witness against them: Corder. More than that. He wanted the police to find them with Hamilton's body in their car. A dead man in Mary's flat, another dead man in Jim's car—that would make the case against them indeed formidable.

It wasn't sufficient for the murderer to plant Hamilton's body in their car for this plan to succeed. He had to make sure that

the police found it there.

Therefore, in addition to ringing up Corder, the murderer must have telephoned the police, telling them where to go, and what they would find. Which meant that, though it wasn't the police who had phoned Corder, nevertheless the police would soon be tearing in a high-speed car towards Corder's house...

Jim seized Mary by the shoulder, and almost threw her into the front seat of the car. He raced round to the other side, leaped in, and started the engine. They shot away from the house, turning a corner almost on two wheels. They were just in time. From behind, they heard the rapidly approaching sound of a fast-moving car...

To be continued

DOROTHY DIX SAYS—

Continued from page 3

afterwards. Dan came home from war as a knight errant, ready, verbally, to take on his lady's trouble. Had you been otherwise situated, his gallantry would not have been so vociferously asserted.

Are you going to compound this tragedy of errors by leaving a husband, who is the father of your child and provides adequately for you? You aren't even sure that Dan still loves you, or is willing to take a wife away from her husband.

Think it over carefully before jumping into another mess. Mooning over past loves is a sure path to unhappiness taken by all too many wives. Of course, it is a human weakness to feel that the grass is greener in the other fellow's yard, or the fish that got away was the best of the catch, but when the factions involved are as fundamental as one's family, a far-distant graveyard is the safest place for dead romance. Don't try to revive the past—especially at 24. You have a long and productive future ahead of you; make the most of it.

DEAR MISS DIX: I am a woman of 58, widowed for the last thirty years. I raised my two children alone. Both are now married and doing well. Now I am unable to work, and have been under doctor's care for some time. My children completely ignore me. They offer no financial assistance, though they know I need it; when they

do visit, which is rarely, they stay for a few minutes and run along.

ANSWER: Children who neglect a needy parent are the most contemptible breed of humanity I know. And, shameful as it is, their number is legion.

It's a humiliating course to take, but sometimes the only way a mother can obtain even a modicum of help from her offspring is to appeal to a welfare agency or the Family Court. Understandably, a mother would often rather starve than admit such brutal neglect on the part of her sons and daughters. There is nothing else you can do to force them to part with money, and absolutely nothing you can do to awaken them to a sense of duty. Prayer may produce results—it's all you can depend upon.

DEAR MISS DIX: Is there some way that help can be obtained for those of us who are partially blind, who have over 10% sight without glasses, and up to 50 or 60% with them? Some are being helped by the Institute for the Blind but others of us find it very hard to get along. There must be work we can do. We seem to have too much eyesight to be eligible for help from institutes for the blind, yet we certainly need assistance from someone. Sometimes it seems that it would be better if we were totally blind.

ANSWER: There is a widespread need for organized work among those who are partially or almost totally blind. If any of my readers can offer suggestions, or help for these unfortunates, I would be very happy to forward the information to those who need it.

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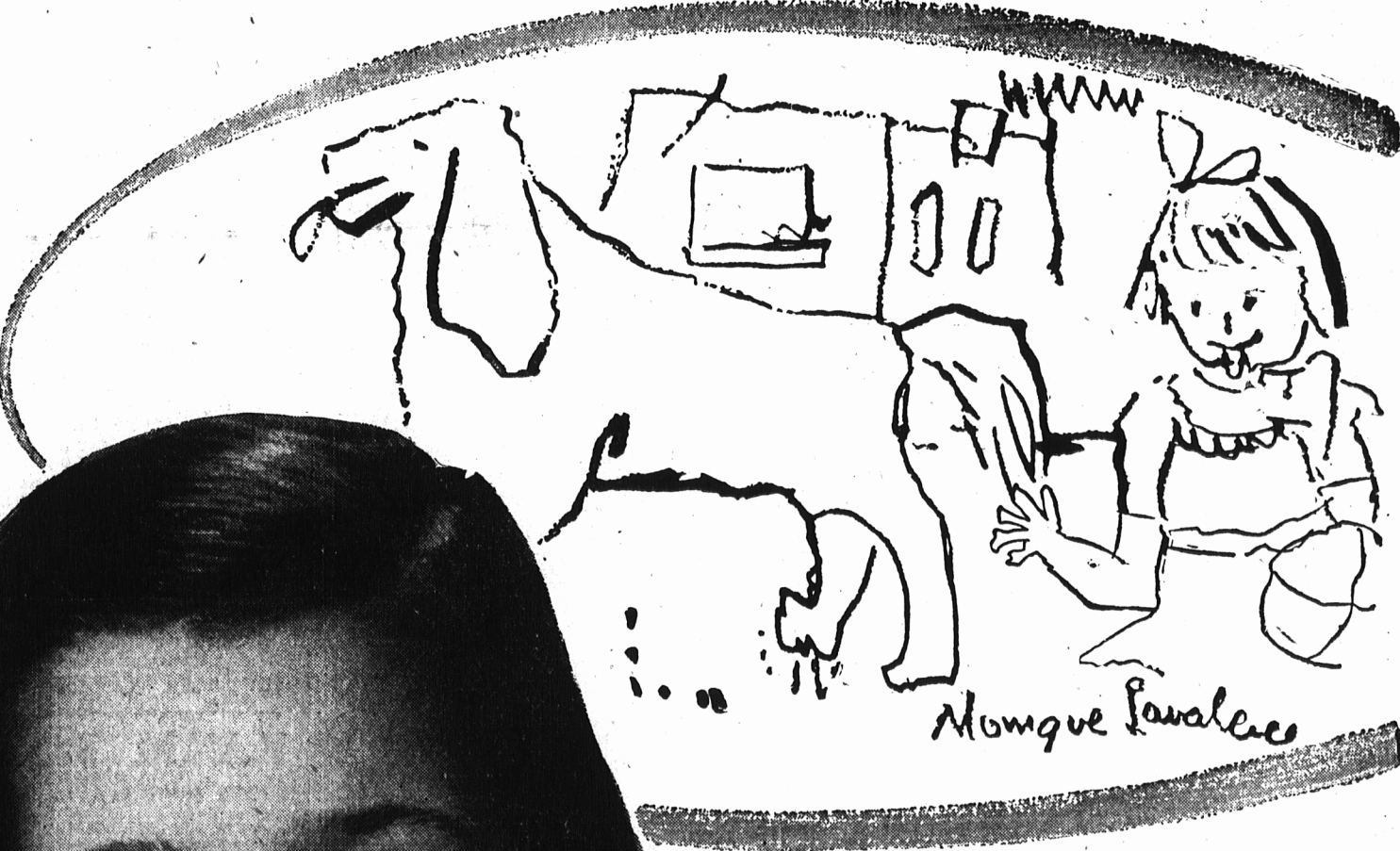
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as pictured by little Monique Lavallee

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