

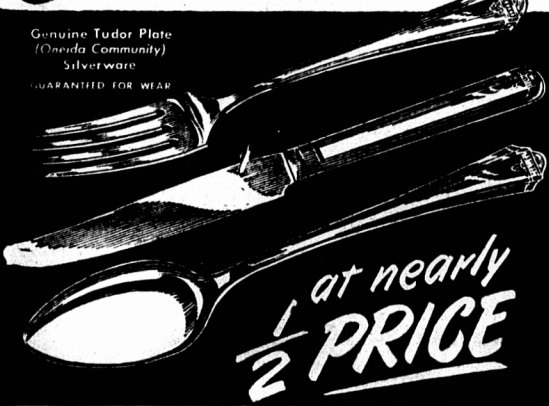
# SPECIALS

- Sliced BACON, lb. .... 49c
- Corned SPARE RIBS, lb. .... 17c
- Roasting PORK, very meaty, lb. .... 45c
- Loin PORK CHOPS, lb. .... 59c
- ORANGES, very juicy, 288's, 3 doz. . . 95c
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- TOMATOES, Ripe & Firm, pkg. .... 23c
- CRANBERRIES, 2 lbs. .... 31c
- LEMONS, doz. .... 55c
- WALNUTS, 1/2 lb. .... 35c
- LARD, 2 lbs. .... 45c
- JELLO, assorted, 3 pkgs. .... 29c
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- PURE HONEY, 2 lb. carton .... 45c
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.....	Teaspoons	3 Aylmer Soup labels and 25c
.....	Soup spoons	3 Aylmer Soup labels and 35c
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.....	Luncheon knives	3 Aylmer Soup labels and 50c
.....	Luncheon forks	3 Aylmer Soup labels and 35c
.....	Butter Spreaders	3 Aylmer Soup labels and 35c

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### The Birthday Murder

By Lange Lewis

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT  
Part One

Proody lived in a small, neat bachelor apartment on a street that sloped up from Westlake (now MacArthur) Park. No alteration in nomenclature would add splendour to the park itself. It had been there for as long as Tuck could remember, surrounding a shallow turgid lake on which white swans, rowboats and little mud hens swam. The lake was entirely circled by green slatted benches on which people sat by day for the reasons which prompt people to sit on park benches. At night, though, the park was empty. Rowboats and canoes drifted about, fragmenting the long reflections of light. An occasional stroller paused to look reflectively at the black mirror of the water puffing his pipe. On some of the benches young couples sat close, the man's arm about the woman's shoulders. The darkness gave a privacy to everyone, to the strollers' thoughts, the lovers' words.

When Tuck's knock at his friend's door brought no response, he knew that Proody was either at the movies or walking around the lake. Tuck had become accustomed to the flat smell of the water, the damp smell of the grass, when he saw Proody's dumpy, unmistakable form walking slowly toward him. He fell into step. Proody showed no surprise. Their familiarity with each other's ways explained Tuck's having found him.

Tuck told about Mrs. Hime's discovery concerning the ant poison.

Proody removed from his mouth a briar pipe as short and stubby as himself and asked: "And Mrs. Hime told you that Mrs. Saxe got rid of the poison because she thought she—that is Mrs. Hime might have killed her husband with it?"

"She did."

"Him. Now it doesn't seem to me she'd say that. If she really did kill him. Does it to you?"

"No. Unless she realized that it would sound better coming from her."

Proody looked doubtful at this subtlety. "Yes. There's that." He thought a minute. "Of course, the fact that this Hazel is willing to swear that she didn't put ant powder in the sugar doesn't prove a thing. That's the last thing she'd want to admit, when she has to make her living as a housekeeper."

"True," said Tuck.

"So at one end we have two alternatives: Hazel did or didn't. And at the other end there's two more: Mrs. Hime did or didn't. And both of them have a mighty good reason to say they didn't. So we can't believe either of 'em."

"And then," said Tuck, "there's the middle. The other three people who had as good an opportunity to poison the sugar as either Hazel Bennett or Victoria Jason Hime."

"Only no motive," reminded Proody.

"No known motive," said Tuck.

From the bench they were passing a girl said: "All right, Harry."

"But aren't you changing all around?" asked Proody cautiously. "Last time we talked about these people you washed 'em out complete and utter."

"That was when I believed the murderer had to bring the poison with him. But now it was in the kitchen, waiting for him. All he had to bring was himself. Himself, and a certain psychological setup within himself of which we don't yet know. It may have been the sight of that green can with its red-edged poison label that brought the plan for murder into being in his brain."

"It SOUNDS good," said Proody. "Only who? And why?"

"Well, once more Miss Hastings drops out. She wouldn't kill the man she hoped to get that part from."

Proody took the pipe from his mouth. "What if she meant to kill Mrs. Hime?"

"Would she choose a way which would kill him, too?"

Proody put the pipe back into his mouth without comment.

"That leaves Saxe and Harris," said Tuck. "The old friend and the first husband."

"And he'd never set eyes on Hime."

"That's right."

"And she doesn't seem to have had anything against him, does she?"

"No."

"What does the fact the poison was right there in the kitchen do to Mrs. Hime's story?"

"I can't see that it changes it much. If you argue murder in passion you still have the whole character of the woman to contend with; if you argue premeditation you have the presence of the ant poison in her cupboard to contend with. It's conceivable that she may have forgotten it if she's innocent, but if she's guilty, the use of the poison in the kitchen would surely have called it to mind, and she'd certainly have destroyed it before we got to the scene."

"Yes."

To be continued

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