

OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS

"The VANITY CASE"

A Tale of Mystery and Love

By CAROLYN WELLS

In Harry's, the Long Island, in an elaborate bungalow owned by PERRY HEATH and his wife, MYRA. At this time the story opens the Heath's were still the most popular couple in town.

LAURENCE INMAN, a distant relative of Myra's and, aside from Perry, the only heir to her considerable fortune.

BUNNY MOORE, young, vivacious, golden-haired, an old friend of Myra's. She was cold, sarcastic. She did not love her husband, but seemed charmed of him.

That night, after Bunny and Inman returned from a dinner at Perry's, the "secret" was revealed. When Perry goes to bed, Inman comes down stairs, and he and Bunny are discovered in each other's arms later by Perry.

The next morning, Mrs. Pierce, who lived in a dingy room, was telling her nephew, Todhunter Buck, of some mysterious lights she had seen the night before.

Then, putting his pocket with a soft sigh of satisfaction, he went out of the room and sought the other servants.

He found them in the pantry, agog with excitement at the tales of Katie and Mrs. Pierce, but not daring to report for duty until summoned.

Herrick was unstrung himself, but kept his head, and assumed an extra dignity as he issued orders. "No gossiping now," he said: "Mrs. Pierce, you go on with getting the breakfast ready. We've no call to neglect our work. Carter, you go up to Miss Moore's room, and—well, you do the best you can. Tell the young lady that Mrs. Heath has—has—say, she's had an accident—that will do, an accident. And get Miss Moore to dress at once, for the doctor is coming and after that goodness knows what goes on there will have to be."

"Oh—I can't tell Miss Bunny!" Carter burst into sobs. "Poor Mrs. Heath—are you sure, Herrick, she's dead? Let me see her."

"No, nobody, must go into that room till the doctor comes,—or Mr. Heath."

"Where is Mr. Heath?" exclaimed Carter.

"I don't know," Herrick said, slowly. "There's a lot to be learned yet. You go along, Carter, get Miss Bunny dressed and take up her breakfast. I'm at my wit's end! Nobody to boss—or, anything; Mr. Inman, he's all flabbergasted like—I wish Mr. Heath would come back—wherever he's gone!"

Carter obeyed the orders of her superior, and taking a tray with coffee and rolls, started for Bunny's room.

But even as she tapped at the door, she heard the sound of wild sobbing within.

No summons bade her enter, and after another knock, Carter opened the door and went in.

Bunny was huddled in a forlorn heap in the middle of her bed, and was crying bitterly.

"There now, there now, Miss Bunny," Carter said, moved to pity at the sight of the girl's intense grief, "take a cup of coffee, do—"

With an air of bewilderment, Bunny looked up in the maid's face, and docilely took the cup she proffered.

As she swallowed, she looked over the rim of the cup at Carter.

"What is it?" she whispered. "What's all the excitement about?"

"Well—Miss, you see, Mrs. Heath, she—she isn't so well."

"Not well? Myra! What do you mean?"

"She's—she's had an accident, ma'am."

"Accident! What sort of accident?"

"She—" but Carter's powers of vague prevarication were limited, and she blurted out, "why, she's dead, ma'am."

"Dead?" said Bunny, not hysterically, but with an awed, dazed air, her intent gaze fixed on Carter's face.

"Yes, ma'am," the maid returned, ready, the Rubicon crossed, to dilate on the subject.

"Dress me," Bunny said, almost sharply. "Never mind the bath, give me my clothes."

And in utter silence the girl rapidly donned her garments.

A plainly tailored white voile gown was forthcoming and Bunny put it on, adding a necklace of small jet beads.

"Do you know where Mr. Heath is, ma'am?" said Carter, timidly, but determined to raise the question.

"No, how should I? Isn't he here?"

"No, ma'am, Herrick can't find him anywhere."

"Oh, he's around somewhere, of course. No, I don't want any more coffee. Where is—Mrs. Heath?"

"Oh, ma'am, she's in the studio—she's—"

"Never mind, Carter, I'll go down now."

Bunny went slowly downstairs, pausing on every step.

Just as she reached the lounge, Dr. Conklin entered. He was a brash, alert sort of person, with sharp, penetrating eyes and a quick jerkiness of movement.

Though he had turned toward the studio, he paused at sight of Bunny, and looked at her inquiringly.

"Belong here, do you?" he said, shortly.

"I am a guest of the Heaths," Bunny returned, a little brusque, because she was not accustomed to such abrupt manners.

"Oh, you are. Where is Mr. Heath? What am I wanted for, anyway?"

Herrick, who had admitted the doctor, said, respectfully: "If you will come this way, sir."

He led the way to the studio, and Dr. Conklin walked in silence after him.

Bunny followed timidly, and with hesitating steps.

She saw the doctor pause suddenly as he reached the studio door, and clench his hands, while his face took on a look of horror.

But he said no word, and strode over to the body that lay on the floor.

The candle had gone out; a black wick fallen over in a small pool of melted wax being all that remained in each tall candlestick.

He eyed what was left with the air of a connoisseur, decided it was as little as he safely dared leave, and closed the drawer again.

He then turned his attention to the dead woman, and silently contemplated the strange details of Myra Heath's appearance.

Never before had he seen his mistress with artificial color on her cheeks or lips; never before had he seen her wearing a crimson scarf;



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES—By MARTIN



colored beads and scarf, the glaring tints of the make-up on the dead face, and the terrible wound on the temple, that was visible only in part.

Quickly, then, he stooped and gently turned the head the better to examine this abrasion.

It was obvious to him at once that death had resulted from a sudden and powerful blow, delivered by a strong hand.

Also, the weapon used was in evidence.

Beside the fractured skull lay the broken fragments of a brown bottom of thick, heavy glass.

About to pick these up, Dr. Conklin thought better of it, and contented himself with looking closely at them.

"A brutal job," he said, indignant. "This woman was struck on the temple with this heavy bottle, and killed almost instantly! Who did it?"

His question was addressed to no one in particular, but as he raised his eyes, he discovered he had seven auditors.

Bunny, wide-eyed and white-faced, had sunk into a chair, and was clutching at the window curtain nearest her.

Larry Inman had come in also, and stood, leaning against the man, his face set and horror-stricken.

Herrick was inside the room, on duty, but the other servants were hovering just outside the studio door, all more or less moaning their grief or murmuring their opinions.

"Where is Mr. Heath?" the doctor asked, rising from his examination.

"Who is in charge here?"

There was a moment's silence and then Inman said: "We do not know where Mr. Heath is, doctor. He has not been seen this morning at all. In his absence I suppose I would better assume charge of things. I am a cousin of Mrs. Heath's. Is it its master?"

Though he balked at the terrible word, every one listened breathlessly for the answer.

"Murder? Yes! Of the most brutal, dastardly type! Where is this woman's husband?"

He turned to the butler, who shook his head.

"Nobody knows, sir. Mr. Heath was here last night, but he is not here now. His bed seems not to have been slept in."

"Well, the further proceedings are not for me to conduct. I will tell the police, and they will take charge. Mr. Inman, will you call up the Harbor Park police station?"

But Inman turned this task over to Herrick. For one thing, Larry had no intention of taking orders from the family physician, and, too,

he was much shaken as to nerves, and it was more than he could face, to call in the police to investigate the death of Myra, his beautiful cousin!

He made no apology for shifting the errand to another, and turned

solicitously to Bunny, as he saw her face blanch afresh at the police call.

Dr. Conklin looked at the pair curiously. They were not at all friendly in their attitude toward him, and he wondered why.

(To Be Continued.)

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GOING HOME

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