

OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN

"The VANITY CASE"

A Tale of Mystery and Love

By CAROLYN WELLS

BEGIN HERE TODAY

In Harbor Gardens, Long Island, lived PERRY HEATH, and his wife, Mrs. Heath. The story opens the first day of the week, August 1st, 1926.

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

MYRA MOORE, young, vivacious, golden-haired, an old friend of Myra's. She did not love Perry. She never used cosmetics and her hair and colors amounted almost to a passion. She collected rare old bottles and her latest was a whiskey bottle which she had just acquired from a collector of the Country Club. The other leading character was a man named SAM ANDERSON.

Myra, becoming provoked at the growing intimacy between Perry and Lawrence, decided to play a trick on him. She had a bottle of "The Work of Perry Heath" which she had just acquired from a collector of the Country Club. The other leading character was a man named SAM ANDERSON.

The next morning Myra Heath's body was found in the study. A candle was burning at her head and feet, she was made up with cosmetics and dressed in her favorite gown. She was lying on her back, her head resting on a cushion. Her eyes were closed, but her face was as pale as death. She was lying on her back, her head resting on a cushion. Her eyes were closed, but her face was as pale as death.

HERRICK, the detective, came to the house. He found the body in the study. He was looking at the body when he heard a sound. He turned and saw a shadow on the wall. He was looking at the body when he heard a sound. He turned and saw a shadow on the wall.

Now go on with the story.

CHAPTER VII

Dr. Conklin was fairly well acquainted with the Heaths, for, on occasion, he had prescribed for their minor ailments, and had, too, once or twice met them socially.

He was a Gardens man himself, for, of course, no Gardens woman would have a Park physician.

But the police had to come from the Park, and it was astonishing how quickly they managed to appear.

Three or four men arrived, but the coroner and a detective sergeant took the case in hand.

With a perfunctory nod at the brief summary Dr. Conklin gave him, the coroner went about his own examination of the body.

He had never known Myra Heath in life, and therefore, was not surprised at the pronounced make-up of her face.

But he showed his amazement at the candlesticks with their traces of burnt-out candles, and especially at the pennant card.

"The Work of Perry Heath," he read, with an incredulous expression on his shrewd, small countenance. "Her husband, eh? Where is he?"

Informed that Heath was inexplicably missing, he nodded sagaciously.

"Made his getaway, did he? Well, it'll be a hard job to find him, for if he had the nerve to sign his handiwork, he must be well out of the neighborhood by this time. What say about how long she's been dead, Conklin? Some seven or eight hours, eh?"

"Hard to tell, Dr. Osborn. Perhaps your guess is about right. I'd put it eight, anyway."

"Well, seven or eight. It's 9 now—say she was killed 'long about 2 o'clock."

"I don't see how we can set it any more positively. The skull is fractured, you see—"

"Yes, beautifully! And with an old whiskey bottle! Must have been a tram thug—"

"Well, the bottle is no elow to the intruder. For that's one of Mrs. Heath's own bottles."

"Her bottle! This old booze holder?"

"Yes, she collected them. See the row of them in that cabinet?"

"My stars!" Osborn looked in amazement at the neat row of old liquor bottles on the shelf. "Whatever did she want of them?"

"They have a certain value to collectors. Anyway, I'm confident this was one of hers. I've seen her collection before, and I've heard her exult over certain specimens. Wasn't this bottle the property of Mrs. Heath?" he added, turning suddenly to Inman.

"Y—yes," Larry stammered, not so much ill at ease as startled by the abrupt question.

"Have you any idea who used it to brain her?" put in the coroner. It was a pet device of Osborn's to fire an unexpected question at a witness, and watch its effect.

"I? No, indeed! How could I have?"

Larry had regained his composure, and was ready for any ordeal. Mott, the detective sergeant, took up the matter then, and in a quiet, almost gentle tone, began to ask definite questions.

"Who discovered Mrs. Heath's body here?" he said.

"Katie, the parlor maid," Herrick answered.

"Where is she? Tell her to come here."

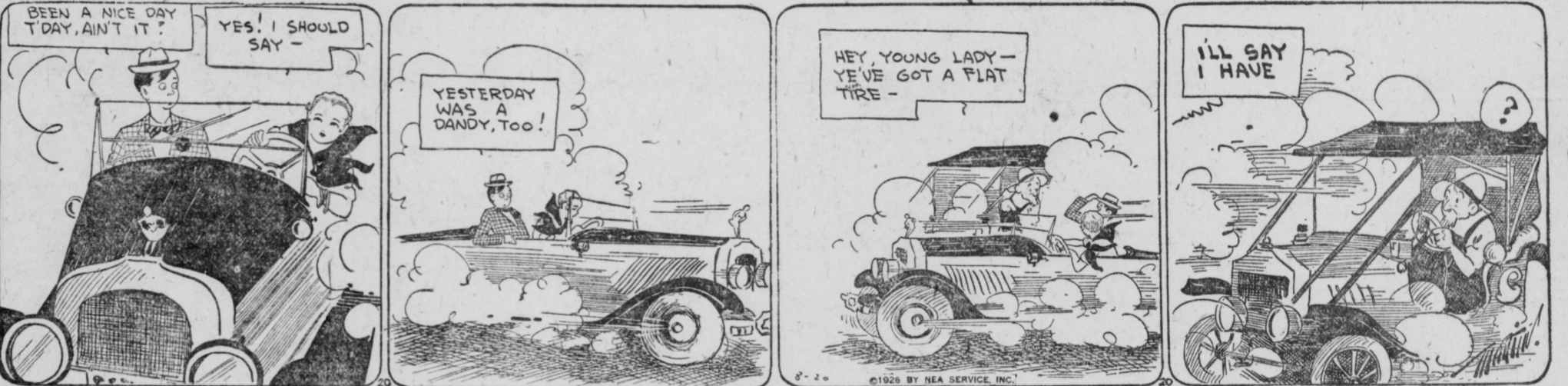
Herrick nodded to the girl, who came slowly into the room and stood before Mott.



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That's what's puzzling me. I ask you, sir, how did he get out? For get out he did, since he ain't now in the house. But how did he do it—and why?"

"Those are questions for wiser heads than yours, Herrick. You saw him go upstairs?"

"Yes, sir. After Mrs. Heath had gone up and likewise, Miss Moore and Mr. Inman. Master was the last one up, and now where is he?"

The blank despairing look on the man's face would have been amusing had the matter been of less grave import.

"Could Mr. Heath have had a telephone or any sort of message that called him away late last night, or in the early morning hours?"

"He could have had messages, of course, but he couldn't get out of any door, and leave it locked behind him, on the inside. Nor out any window, for they all have patent catches and they were all locked."

"None left open for air?"

"There's patent ventilators to take care of that. Ever since the burglary scares two years or so ago, Mrs. Heath has been most particular about the locks everywhere."

"We'll go into all that later. Where, then, do you think Mr. Heath is at the present moment?"

"Laws, sir, if I only knew! But I can't think of any place he could be, or any way he could get there."

Detective Mott transferred his attention to Inman, who had seated himself, turning his chair so that the body of Myra was not in his line of vision.

Mott looked at Larry a moment before he spoke to him, and his keen eyes noted Inman's hands clenched themselves, involuntarily, and his whole body tensed a trifle, as if preparing himself for an ordeal.

CHAPTER VIII

And ordeal it was, for Mott had a way of making his most casual remarks seem accusatory, and his slightest question often hinted at vital import.

"Being the nearest relative of Mrs. Heath present, I assume, Mr. Inman, that you are deeply anxious to learn who committed this shocking crime."

"Yes," said Larry, and no more.

"Then, will you tell me, in your own words, of the events of last evening, up to the time you last saw Mrs. Heath alive?"

"We spent the evening quietly at home," Larry replied, with cold politeness. "Miss Moore and myself are staying here, and there were no other guests at dinner. After dinner here in this room, and when that was over, we chatted a bit, and then Miss Moore left us and went to her room. A few moments later I went up to bed, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Heath here. That is all I can tell you, Mr. Mott."

"At what time did you go upstairs, Mr. Inman?"

"Something after 11, I think. I don't know more accurately than that."

"Did you hear Mr. and Mrs. Heath come upstairs, later?"

"That I can't say. If I did I didn't notice it."

"Were Mr. and Mrs. Heath in their usual good health and spirits last evening?"

"I noticed nothing at all unusual."

"Was Mrs. Heath high-tempered? Or is Mr. Heath of an impulsive or fiery nature?"

"I have always known them to be cultured, high-bred people. Far removed from quarrels that might lead to physical violence."

"Then we must look elsewhere for the murderer. Now another mystery is the disappearance of Mr. Heath. Can you shed any light on that, either by fact or theory?"

"I'm afraid I can't, Mr. Mott. Perry Heath has been a friend of mine for years and while I can't think he killed his wife, I am still more at a loss to imagine a cause for his disappearance just now."

"What significance do you attach to this card, 'The Work of Perry Heath'?"

"Personally, I think that card was dropped by accident. It is a card that we have joked about often. It has been kicking around this studio for months."

"I see. Then you don't think it indicates that Mr. Heath killed his wife, and placed the card there in a spirit of bravado?"

"No, indeed. I think it far more likely that some one else killed Mrs. Heath and placed the card where it was found, in order to seem to incriminate Mr. Heath. That is, unless my other impression is the truth, that the card fell there accidentally."

"These things will be gone into more thoroughly at the inquest," Mott said. "That will take place this afternoon, at 2 o'clock. Please be in attendance, Mr. Inman."

He turned to Bunny with an apologetic glance, as if he hated to annoy her, but his duty was imperative.

"Miss Moore," he said, gently, "your friend, Mrs. Heath, was not in the habit of using what is known as the make-up box, was she?"

"No," said Bunny, frightened at this opening. She had expected questions as to her friendship with Myra and her position in the house.

"Knowing her well, do you think she herself applied the powder and rouge which is now so conspicuously on her face?"

"Oh, no," Bunny said, excitedly. "She never would do that! Never! Why, we often come in here to try it, but she never would."

"Did she possess a vanity box of her own?"

"Why—yes—she had two or three that were given her as presents by people who didn't know her distaste for such things."

"Where are these gifts?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. Up in her boudoir, I suppose."

"Not likely she used one of them then for the cosmetics now on her face?"

"No—no—I shouldn't think so." Bunny had turned pale and was shaking with nervousness. But she forced herself to speak calmly and managed to control her quivering lips.

"Is the red scarf that is so artistically draped around Mrs. Heath's figure her own property?"

"No," the girl replied. "It is mine."

"Yours? How did it get where it now is?"

"I don't know, I'm sure." Bunny had conquered her nerves somewhat, and was beginning to try her natural wiles on her inquisitor. "I was wearing it last evening when I stepped out on the porch, and when I went upstairs to bed, I left it down here. Why Mrs. Heath put it around her, I don't know. I'm sure it was not like her at all. All her scarfs are white or silver gray."

"You were the first to leave the group last night to go up to bed?"

"Yes. We were all about to go, but I chanced to go up first. Why?"

(To Be Continued.)