

# "The VANITY CASE"

A Tale of Mystery and Love

By CAROLYN WELLS

**BEGIN HERE TODAY** MRS. PRENTISS sees lights mysteriously in the Heath household next door one night, and the next day Harbor Gardens, Long Island, is the scene of the mystery and the disappearance of Perry Heath.

Household of the Heaths are LAWRENCE INMAN, heir to Maya's fortune, and his mother, MARY INMAN, a woman with auburn hair, to whom suspicion points because of her refusal to answer questions.

Maya, however, had never used cosmetics, never wore colors. She is a woman of taste.

There was a rare old whisky bottle from her collection that the murderer used to kill her.

On the wall of Perry's room was a card marked "Perry" which was heavily made up and garbed in gay colors.

The mystery is that all the windows and doors had been locked on the inside the night before Perry Heath disappeared the morning. Finger prints of Perry Heath and Inman were found on the bottle.

At the Connoisseur Club, the murder is discussed. SAM HOGG, the new rival for the club presidency; AL CUNNINGHAM, who is trying to solve the crime, and others, including Perry Heath, the murderer. Anderson discusses TODD HUNTER, the man of the house, and in love with Perry suggests to Cunningham that Heath also may have been involved.

EMMA, a waitress in the Heath home, tells of seeing Perry ascend the stairs above the room in which Perry was staying the morning. Perry prints of Perry Heath and Inman were found on the bottle.

Detective Mott learns from HERRICK, the lawyer, that Perry Heath and Perry Heath had quarreled over Perry the night of the murder.

**NOW ON WITH THE STORY**

CHAPTER XXV

While the confab was going on in the Heath studio, Mrs. Prentiss was sitting at her window, wondering whether to go over to the Heaths' house or not.

Her curiosity was as strong as usual and her inclination was to go, but a strange sense of caution held her back.

She felt, intuitively, that she could do no good over there and might do harm. Moreover, she could have a report of what had transpired, when her nephew and her guest reappeared, and so, Mrs. Prentiss sat, waiting and thinking.

The telephone rang, and Mrs. Prentiss answered it herself. This was her custom, for her quick curiosity never could wait for the intervention of a servant's office.

A man's voice said, "May I speak to Miss Moore, please?"

"Who is calling?" Mrs. Prentiss responded, in a tone which she endeavored to make sound like that of a servant.

"No matter. Merely ask Miss Moore to come to the telephone. This is important."

The voice was cold, dictatorial and impatient. Clearly, the speaker was in a temper.

Now Mrs. Prentiss did not know Perry Heath well, but her ever-present intuition hinted to her that it might be she was listening to his voice.

It didn't sound exactly like Heath, but some voices are different on the telephone, and she couldn't be sure.

Taking a chance, she said, still in the deferential tone of a servant: "Is this Mr. Heath?" Miss Bunny said she would not speak on the telephone to any one else."

Mrs. Prentiss heard the astonished gasp at the other end of the line, and grinned with satisfaction.

Even the reply came: "Heath? No, this is—this is Jackson. Please tell Miss Moore I must speak with her. You may say I have important news for her."

Suddenly Emily Prentiss felt that she was overstepping the bounds of propriety. She was a gentlewoman, not a detective, and she had no right to intercept or eavesdrop upon a private communication.

So she said simply, "Miss Moore is next door at the Heath house. If you wish, you can call her there."

"Thank you," was the response, and without further good-by, the voice ceased.

The advice, however, was followed, for a few moments later the telephone bell rang in the Heath studio.

Inman reached for the receiver, but Mott was too quick for him.

Grasping it first, the detective said, briskly: "Hello!"

"Hello," said a man's voice, "I want to speak to Miss Moore, and make it snappy!"

Though not very quick-witted, Mott was ingenious, and endeavored to sound like Herrick. He said: "Miss Moore ain't here, sir."

Bunny turned white, attempted to speak, then swayed in her seat, and toppled over sideways.

CHAPTER XXVI

Todhunter Buck sprang to catch her, his own lips white and quivering with fury.

"How dare you?" he cried, "no police authority gives you a right to frighten a young lady like that!"

"Don't show contempt for the law, or interfere with its processes, Mr. Buck," Mott said, sternly, in no wise disconcerted by Tod's outburst.

It was at this moment that Al Cunningham arrived.

He looked curiously at the little group.

Bunny, whose faintness had been merely momentary, was clinging to Buck's arm, her face drawn with fear and terror, her whole frame trembling with nervous excitement.

Inman was apparently dazed; his hands moved twitchingly and he was looking wildly about; but was seemingly unable to speak.

Mott was stern, implacable, as an avenging instrument of the law, and Todhunter Buck was trying to control himself, and master the situation.

Scouting a good chance, as Cunningham's entrance made a slight diversion, Buck whispered to Bunny, "Come on!" and without further ceremony, he led her swiftly through one of the open French windows, across the terrace, and over across the lawns to his aunt's house.

"My dear child," said that good lady, as she took the distressed girl in her arms, "what have they been doing to you?"

"They've been persecuting her, Aunt Emily," the nephew declared hotly. "That man Mott is a brute!"

"Yes, we all did. We coaxed her to try it now and then. But nobody could make Myra do anything she didn't want to do."

"Did Carter, her maid, want her to use make-up?" said Toddy, suddenly.

"Oh, no!" Bunny looked agonized.

"They were not entirely congenial, but he never would kill her!"

"But didn't he often urge her to use color on her face?" persisted Mrs. Prentiss, still curious.

"Yes, we all did. We coaxed her to try it now and then. But nobody could make Myra do anything she didn't want to do."

"On yes, but she had stopped asking Myra to do so. Myra had scolded her too often for suggesting it."

"I'll bet she's the murderer, then," said Toddy, thoughtfully.

"By reason of Todd's valiant indignation and Mrs. Prentiss' cooing endearments, Bunny began to revive her drooping spirits, and recover her poise.

He was a good boy, though, and I will not say I could not do my housework, such as washing, washing or anything. Could hardly walk across the house on account of my breathing; in fact, they could hear me breathe in the yard. It began in September, 1922, and passed three bottles of it. It used to be that I would have to sit up in a chair for four or five nights at a time. The second night after he began to do it, I slept all night. I have not noticed any attack in over two years breathing fine, no wheezing at all and sleep fine all night."

"I will enjoy reading many other letters from the people who have recovered after years of suffering from asthma or bronchial trouble. Will be glad to read how these troubles were ended for Mrs. George Klefer, Route B, Box 13, Indianapolis. She writes:

"I had suffered from asthma for fifteen years. I took everything any one told me, such as exercise, tonics, serums and chlormophane treatments. I was told I inherited asthma and there was no cure for it."

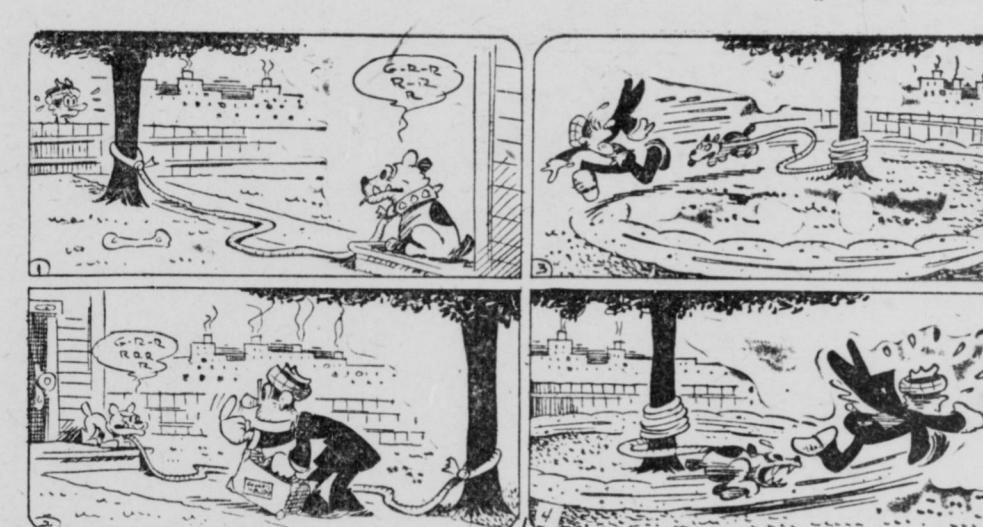
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## OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



## ALESMAN \$AM—By SWAN



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES—By MARTIN



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



## MISS MILLER BREAKS DOWN

Due to a nervous breakdown just suffered by Patsy Ruth Miller, "What Happened to Father?" in which she was to play a featured role and which was scheduled to go into production last week at Warner Bros. studio, has been postponed until later in the season. Miss Miller has been working continually for

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



## Helpless, After 15 Years of Asthma

Cough and Wheeze Were Stopped Two Years Ago. Well Ever Since.

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"You are both so good to me!" she exclaimed, "it sort of makes up for that awful man's treatment of me. How could he say I would—do that to Myra? Oh, Mrs. Prentiss, who did do that? Who killed her? And who could touch up her face after she was dead? Perry couldn't do that! I'm sure he couldn't! I couldn't—and Larry couldn't!"

Bunny gave him a grateful glance. "Of course we couldn't!" she exclaimed. "And, though it seems too dreadful to suspect Carter, yet well, she is a mysterious sort of woman."

"How?" eagerly inquired Mrs. Prentiss.

"It's too absurd to imagine Herrick doing that, and none of the other was about."

"Emma," suggested Mrs. Prentiss. "Oh, Emma, she couldn't use a lipstick as that was used!"

"Her husband could have done it."

"Oh, no!" Bunny looked agonized.

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