

OUT OF THE NIGHT

BY MARION WHITE

CAST OF CHARACTERS
PRISCILLA PIERCE—Heroine, young woman attorney.
AMY KERR—Cilly's roommate and murderer's victim.
JUD KERRIGAN—Cilly's fiance.
HARRY HUTCHINS—Amy's strange visitor.
SERGEANT DOLAN—Officer assigned to solve the murder of Amy Kerr.

Yesterday: Cilly bluffs Mrs. Hunter, who confesses that her husband is not a cripple but instead feigned paralysis in an accident to collect \$50,000 from a hit-and-run driver.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

LONG before dawn on Thursday the rain started; by 9 o'clock it had settled to a dismal, depressing downpour. Alone in her apartment, Cilly shivered, not so much from the cold as from the penetrating gloom. Though she could not foresee it, this was to be the most eventful day of her life; perhaps it was the premonition which provoked this quivering of her nerves.

However, she could not know that. She thought it was a good day for the blues, and would have enjoyed the happiness of work at the office, but there were other things which to attend. Most of all, she had to see Sergeant Dolan, even if it meant waiting at police headquarters all day. They could be no more desolate than her own rooms, and not nearly as lonely.

After a quick breakfast, she put on a warm woolen dress, one which had been held over from the previous winter pending the emergency of just such a day as this. Then, fortified against the elements by a long raincoat and waterproof hat, she ventured downtown.

IT was not quite 10 o'clock when she reached police headquarters. A youthful officer ushered her into a small interview room of the same corridor as the meeting room which had held the investigation the day before. Sergeant Dolan, the officer explained, was busy for the moment, but would see her shortly.

She sat down to wait. The door into the corridor was left open, so that she could watch those who passed by. Beyond the door, she heard a woman sobbing, and the low murmur of a man's voice offering reassuring comfort. There was something familiar in the voice, low-pitched though it was. She watched the door for their approach. The woman was making an effort to control herself now; the sobs ceased, only the sharp intake of steady breathing was audible. They passed the door, directly in line of Cilly's vision. She sat up suddenly.

The man was Harvey Ames! And the woman who leaned against him, her face hidden in one of his voluminous handkerchiefs, was the one who had fled the Bayview Apartments two days before. . . . Mrs. Wheeler!

CILLY walked to the door and stared after them. There was something gently pathetic in their attitude, and she felt a warmth of sympathy toward them, despite the knowledge that they had defied the conventions.

"Good morning, Miss Pierce!"

Cilly turned abruptly to face Sergeant Dolan.

"Being waiting for me long?" he asked. His voice was matter-of-fact and brusque. Cilly thought it lacked the rather cordial friendliness of other occasions. But perhaps she imagined that. He led the way back into the small anteroom, shutting the door behind him. "We can talk in here as well as any place," he observed.

"I see you've located Mrs. Wheeler?" Cilly mentioned. She resumed the same chair she had occupied these several minutes.

"Yes. Ames brought her in this morning," Dolan sat down opposite her. "The old story. Ames and his wife haven't hit it off for years, and Mrs. Wheeler's the other woman. Ames has children, and he's fearful of the scandal. I feel sort of sorry for them. . . ."

"I'm glad to find you so understanding this morning, sergeant," Cilly remarked.

"What do you mean?"

"I hope you'll be as kindly disposed to me."

"Any reason why I shouldn't be?"

"Yes. You believed what Mr. Corbett said about me yesterday."

"Did I?"

"It wasn't the truth, Sergeant Dolan. Please believe that. I went across the street with a definite idea in mind—to get up on the roof and see what was going on in the Bayview. I had to ring somebody's doorbell in order to gain admittance to the house, and Corbett was the first name that popped into my head. I didn't go to call on them, but Mr. Corbett was feeling . . . a little genial, you might say. He met me in the hall, and insisted on my stopping in for a drink—which I didn't finish, incidentally. When I insisted on leaving, he seemed a little dispirited. Perhaps I wounded him in some way. However, I went up on the roof to watch the people in our house, and what I told you about Mr. Hunter is absolutely true."

DOLAN was looking out of the window thoughtfully.

"Well," he said, "I've already started a little investigation on Hunter. Don't think that I wasn't going to consider it. Matter of fact, I guess I'd take your word any day against Corbett's, Miss Pierce."

"Thank you, Sergeant. You know this case means a great deal to me, and you know that I'll do anything I can to disprove the theory you're working on."

Dolan turned his gaze to Cilly.

"I'm sorry you feel that way," he said. "We all make mistakes you know, and I think you make a tremendous one in keeping faith with Mrs. Kerr. He's not worth it."

"Cilly stiffened. "I still prefer to be the judge of that, Sergeant Dolan," she said quietly. "In the meantime, however, we have two new suspects: Harvey Ames and Hunter."

"Oh, they're not on the up and up, perhaps, but I don't think we can tie them to the murder. I'll admit both possibilities. And believe me, we'll check these new angles thoroughly. But I'm still looking for Kerr. I've got a tighter cage against him than against either of the other two."

CILLY sighed. "I won't argue with you on that any more," she said. "I know that Jim will be back, but I can't expect you to feel

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the same way I do. That's not what I came to talk about today."

"What's new now?"
"It's about Hunter. I took it upon myself to call on Mrs. Hunter yesterday when I knew her husband was up on the roof. I thought I could wing the truth from her."

"Did you?"
"Yes." Cilly repeated the story which the woman had told her. Dolan listened attentively. When she finished, he looked at her quizzically.

"Who was this fellow they rooked?" he asked. "Did she tell you his name?"

Cilly shook her head. "No, I

(To Be Continued)

Daily Short Story

RESPITE—By Clifford D. Clevenger



"The blow landed like the crack of a whip."

WE were dining at the Tap & Spigot—George Woods and I—when the thing happened. I've never surprised when things happen at the Tap & Spigot. It's one of those places where the tables and floors are bare and where the souls of the guests are at times like the tables and floors.

"No one is wholly good or wholly bad," I was contending, but George simply laughed his high-pitched cackle, the tone he always uses about ready to prove his point.

George had already seen the young man who was coming in the door and starting across the room to a table on the other side. The young man weaved slightly as he walked, but kept his course without too much effort. He was a big fellow, but his cheeks were already bubby, and a distinct bulge was visible at the waistline.

"You must mean Dwight Grover," George said, and I replied that was the name. I'd been away from New York for over a year and so was out of touch.

"It's a disease that lots of college girls have," said George.

"Grover nodded, and went on. "Grover pestered city editors all over town until finally Bud Murdoch at the Blade had his patience worn out. Murdoch reared back in his chair like he does when he's tired and looked up and down Grover's husky frame.

"I'd give you an assignment," Murdoch said loud enough so everyone in the room could hear, "but I know you'd muffle it."

"Young Grover pleaded he wouldn't so earnestly that Murdoch finally told him to see Stanley Roon for a full write-up of his life."

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