

Not a Case for Science

By Abner Anthony



JIM CREADY laid down his book as I entered.

"I'm glad you dropped in," he said. "I'm full of dope on these new-fangled ways of catchin' crooks—finger prints, cigar ashes and all that sorta thing. Honest, I believe if I was to see you steal the cuckoo clock off the wall there, I'd run for a piece of paper and some lamp black to take your finger prints, instead of bumpin' you on the head and draggin' you off to the can."

"Science has made wonderful strides in your profession," I began.

"Science me eye!" he interrupted me. "It listens all right in a book, but for me, I'll take a chance alongside any of these magnifyin' glass investigators. All I ask is a bunch from old man Human Nature, a good drag-net system, a couple o' stool pigeons where they're most needed—and some luck."

"Give me all that and then bring on your robbery or murder, or whatever else you got a mind to, and I'll come pretty near to gettin' hold of somebody that knows something about it."

"After that, it's not the hardest thing in the world to get at the truth, the whole truth and nothin' but the truth, shep me. There's ways of doin' it that work out pretty good."

"You mean the third degree?" I asked, knowing I would bring a storm about my ears.

"Third degree, h—!" he shouted angrily. "You been goin' to the movies again, ain't you. No, it don't take the third degree, and it don't take one of

these new-fangled machines that tell when a guy's tellin' the truth, either."

He poked the book on the table with a contemptuous forefinger.

"Them machines may do all they say they will, but I'd hate to depend on a lot of zig-zag lines instead of the shiftin' look in a liar's eye and the slip-up he always makes. The more a man tries to alibi himself, the more chance there is for him to give himself away. If they'd say a thing and no more, and just stick to it, they'd get by much better, but they're always tryin' to strengthen their story by addin' this and addin' that until, finally, they slip up and crab the whole works."

Too many times the up-to-date methods add a lot of frills and make a mystery out of what ought to be nothin' but a plain pinch."

Now that Cready had gotten under a full head of steam, I carefully refrained from making any comments. Nor did I give him any visible signs of encouragement. I know well the best way to get a story from this veteran of the police department.

"Take that Lyons murder two years ago," he continued. "To the public that looked like a dead open and shut proposition. Dick Lyons was killed and Harris Andrews was arrested less than an hour later. Of course, you remember the outcome of the trial—Guilty, first-degree murder."

"I made that pinch and there was lots of chance to do some scientific investigating that may or may not have ended in the same thing, but I'll bet a week's pay that the stories that flew around for a few minutes after I got there on the job would have tied that truth machine up in a double knot."

"I'm stallin' around headquarters the night it happened, with not much on my mind except a Stetson. Things are slow and I'm waitin' for four bells when it's my time to hit the hay."

"Along about twelve o'clock the telephone rings and a few minutes after the Chief yells for me."

"Jimmie," he says, 'take a couple of men with you and get up to the Everglade Apartments on Ninety-first street. A Mr. Harris Andrews telephones that his friend Lyons was shot by a burglar who made a get-away. Get up there as fast as you can and keep your eye-peeled for bad actors in the neighborhood.'

"Well, me and three cops start off and it don't take us no time to get to Ninety-first street. We're just going in the door of the Everglade when, I'm a sucker if there ain't a guy dodgin' behind steps and actin' mighty suspicious."

"I got one of the cops to grab him and he makes a holler, and swears he's waitin' for somebody. I give the sign to bring him along. It won't hurt him any and it might do us some good. Anyway, his actions looked bad."

"We go up to apartment five, which is the number the Chief gets over the phone. I goes in first with one of the cops and the other two stay outside with the guy we picked up."

"Andrews meets us, and he's excited—as h—. As soon as I looked at the man stretched out on the floor, I knew he was dead. The whole top of his head was blown off, pretty near."

"Andrew's story is as straight as a whip. He and Lyons had been out on a theater party with a woman and

they had come to the woman's apartments. They're sitting and talking when the door opens and in comes a fellow with a gun."

"Lyons makes a jump to get the gun and the crook lets him have it. Then, frightened, he covers Andrews and makes his get-away."

"When he had finished, I mentioned the guy we picked up and had the cops bring him in. Andrews gets one look at him and says 'That's the man!'

"Are you sure?" I asks him. The other fellow, who was not much more than a kid, looked puzzled and wanted to know what was coming off."

"Positive," answers Andrews. "Wait, and he calls out: 'Blanche! Come here!'

"Out of the next room there comes a woman who looks about thirty-five, although I guess she might be more. She's all dolled up in evening clothes and she's been cryin'."

"Come here," said Andrews. 'Here's the police and they've caught the man that killed Dick. Take a look at him.'"

"The woman comes over and takes one look at the kid."

"Waiter!" she cries, holdin' out her arms."

"Mother," says the kid and makes as though to go to her, but the cops yank him back. "What does this mean?" he asks her."

"The woman turns to me. 'Let him go,' she says, and her voice is awful weary and tired. 'Let him go. He didn't do it. He did it, and she pointed to Andrews."

"It's a lie," hollers Andrews. 'She's tryin' to save her boy. Take him away.'

"I don't know what gave me the idea, but I had a hunch that Andrews was as much surprised at the kid being her son as he was although he don't say anything about it."

"The woman is cryin' now and wringin' her hands. Here's two different stories and it's up to me to find out which is nearest to the truth. I guess one of them machines woulda had to go some, eh?"

"How did it happen?" I asked the woman.

"She looks at the kid for a minute and then moves her shoulders in a funny way, just as if she was 'browin' off a heavy weight."

"I live here in this flat. Tonight I had gone to bed. I did not expect Andrews. After I had retired Dick Lyons came to the door and I got up. He was in love with me and wanted me to break away from Andrews."

"It's a lie!" shouts Andrews. "You shut up!" I tells him and motions for the woman to go on."

"Dick begged me to go with him, and then Andrews came in. He is very jealous and without saying a word he shot Dick."

"After he shot him, he called up the police department and made me change to these clothes. Then he invented the story he told you and made me promise to back him up in it."

"I guess I would have done it, too," she went on, "only— and her look at the kid finished what she meant to say."

"Of course, by this time Andrews was wild. One of the cops had grabbed him by the arm while the woman was talkin' or I guess he'd made a spring at her."

"Well," I said to him when she finished, "what about it?"

"All this time the kid stood lookin' from one to another without sayin' a word."

"It's a lie, Captain," said Andrews. I guess he thought that "Captain" stuff would help some with me. "I'm a fool to have let myself in for this, but it's my own fault. I didn't give it to you quite straight before, but I will now," and he shot a glance of hate at the woman."

"Dick Lyons was my best friend, and it was to save his reputation that I lied. I figured that as long as you got the right man, a little lie wouldn't do any harm, particularly if it saved others from pain and suffering."

"Lyons was in love with this woman. He was making a fool of himself over her and neglecting his family. I knew he was here tonight and that he was going to try to get this woman to run away with him. I came to prevent it. She pretended that she loved Lyons, but she wanted only what money she could get out of him, and when she saw that Lyons was listening to reason and was beginning to get a little sense and see her in her true light, she signalled to her confederate and tried to pull off the old badger game."

"The badger game?" I asked him.

"Yes; this fellow came in and pretended he was her husband. He swore he was going to shoot Lyons for leading his wife astray. You know how they work it, I guess. They had it framed up well. Their game was to have Lyons come across with a lot of money to keep it quiet and get out of trouble."

"I guess it might have worked, except for something. Lyons wasn't the sort to stand for that kind of a hold-up, and suddenly he made a dive for this fellow, who was covering him with a gun."

"As soon as Lyons jumped, I jumped also, but he, pointing to the kid, grabbed me by the throat and held me off at arm's length while he shot Lyons."

"Then he covered me with the gun and got away. After he had gone, I made the woman dress and we rehearsed the story I told you. I wanted to save his family. I told her if she didn't back me up I would tell the truth and that she would be held as an accomplice, so she agreed."

"There's the man that killed Dick Lyons, and now you know the truth!"

"Yep," I said to him, "I know the truth," and I motioned for the cops to put the bracelets on Andrews."

"The woman stood with her head hangin' down, and when the cops let the kid go, he went over to her and looked into her eyes. The next minute she was cryin' and sobbin' all over him."

"You see," said Cready, "there was a plain pinch that came near being a mystery. And from the lies that was flyin' around that room, I'll bet one of them machines would have busted a spring."

"But," said I, "I don't see—"

"Certainly you don't see. But if you had listened to Andrews tell how the kid held him off with one hand while he shot Lyons with the other, you'd see. Especially," he mused, "if you knew, as I did, that one of the kid's arms was paralyzed so that he couldn't move it an inch."

When Realization Came to Her

By Phil Moore



AS soon as she stepped into the room Monica felt the keen eyes of her aunt studying her.

"Changed your dress, h?" inquired the old woman.

"Yes, auntie."

"Put on your best white one, too. Come here and let me straighten the skirt. It's all crooked."

Monica approached and stood patiently while Aunt Betsy twitched the folds of the dainty white voile into place.

"Expecting Jason?"

Monica had known it was coming. She flushed and jerked away. "No, I'm not expecting Jason."

"I see. Then it's that Darry Kent," Monica bit her lip. "Oh, dear, Aunt Betsy, I just wish you wouldn't quiz me so," she cried.

The old woman, who had kept and loved Monica since her babyhood, sighed as she resumed her knitting. "It's for your good, child," she said, quietly. "Don't lose your head over Darry Kent. He is every girl's beau. And besides—" She paused as if she could have said more if she chose. "Jason is worth a roadful of Darry Kents," she ended.

"Not to me," Monica muttered as she escaped to the porch.

There she sat down apparently to read—in reality to wait for the big black car that so frequently now of an evening came bounding down the humpy street to Aunt Betsy's door. It was Darry Kent's car, and Darry Kent himself always sat behind the wheel. Monica had gone to school with Darry, and she had a foolish notion that he had been in love with her. It flattered her to have the best car in town pause at her door and to be seen riding in it. All the other girls envied her and it made Jason jealous. She enjoyed making Jason jealous. Jason lived in the next house, and even if he

did not always see her with Darry, his mother would tell him. There was a sort of pact between Jason's mother and Aunt Betsy that their young people should marry. And Jason was willing—too willing, Monica thought, when she was not willing enough. She liked him, but she had no intention of marrying him for he did not suit her. He was common.

As she sat waiting she saw Jason swing out of his own house and start down the street. Although she was there in plain sight, he did not look toward her. He walked quickly, with his head down. There was something so boyish and so sulky in his appearance that Monica giggled softly in amusement. Jason knew that Darry was coming, and he was having an extra attack of jealousy.

"Jason!" It was his mother's voice. She had run out after him and was calling. "Jason!"

He turned obediently, Jason was dutiful to his mother, and Aunt Betsy

persisted in holding this fact up as an earnest of the kind of husband he would make.

"If you are going over to Mary's, Jason, will you ask her mother to send over her recipe for pineapple conserve?"

Monica's mouth opened in a gasp. Mary! Mary who? Why, Mary Armstrong, of course. There was only one Mary whom Jason would be going to see. What did it mean? Could it be possible that he was actually paying attention to her? Monica's heart sank. He was whistling as he turned the corner. Perhaps he was not jealous after all—just absorbed in the thought of Mary—whom he was going to see.

Monica had never dreamed of such a thing, but she had every reason to believe it now. She began to feel very sober. For a whole year she had grown used to the idea that Jason belonged to her. She had rested assured of his devotion. And now it was per-

haps snatched away by some one else—by Mary Armstrong.

Monica waited until 9, but Darry Kent did not appear. She sat biting her lip and tapping her foot between nervousness and anger. He had promised and he had broken his word. Or perhaps something had happened to him—an accident—or—

"Monica!" Aunt Betsy was calling sharply. "Somebody wants you on the phone."

It was Darry to explain. It was, however, not Darry's voice that came but another's—a girl's voice.

"Oh, that you, Helen?" Monica said, with a too apparent note of disappointment in her voice. "What do you want? To tell me something? What? No, I shan't care. Go on. About somebody getting engaged? Oh, I know! It's Jason Worth! To Mary Armstrong. No news at all. I know all grown used to the idea that Jason belonged to her. She had rested assured of his devotion. And now it was per-

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She Accepts His Proposition

By Elsie Endicott



WHILE they sat on the steps that early spring morning Bobby Moreland devotedly stared at Dorothy Preston. She, however, did not return his gaze. She was very much more interested in her thoughts than in his presence, that much was certain, and for the hundredth time Bobby sighed heavily. Bobby was desperately in love, in fact he had been desperately in love ever since he had known Dorothy and that had been ev-

er since he could remember. But Dorothy was such a very disconcerting little person that Bobby had never been able to tell her anything about how much he loved her, and this morning sitting there in the sunshine she was being cruelly convinced that he never would be able to do so. He sighed again.

Dorothy seemed suddenly to remember he was there. "I am going to buy a house," she announced thoughtfully, her pointed little chin in the pink cups of both hands.

"A house?" echoed Bobby puzzledly.

"Exactly," agreed Dorothy cheerfully. "I am going to buy a dear little gray house, way out on the West road, a house all covered with red and brown woodbine and with wide, tinypanned windows and a little flower garden in back. It has four rooms and a dove of a fireplace in the living room. There is no one living in it now, and I am going down to see the owner this morning."

"And you said this house was out on the West road and covered with woodbine, and untenanted?" inquired Bobby interestedly.

"Yes, and the caretaker gave me the

address of the owner, and I am to see him this morning," finished Dorothy cheerfully.

Bobby rose lazily and looked at his watch. "Well, I must be getting on down to the office. Dad and I expect to put over a big deal with a Montana man this morning."

Dorothy flashed him a smile. "How fast we are growing up, Bobby," she laughed. "I'm buying real houses and you're one of the firm. It doesn't seem possible, does it?"

"I've been thinking a lot about it lately," admitted Bobby, and then, with a confused "Good-by," he was off

down the walk to his car.

"Now what in the world is the matter with him?" puzzled Dorothy, watching the car disappear down the road.

"But I didn't have the slightest idea it was you!" gasped Dorothy, sitting down suddenly in a big chair.

"If you called on me more often at the office you would have recognized the address!" he retorted cheerfully.

"But you'll sell me the house, won't you, Bobby?" she smiled.

Bobby picked up a paper-weight and considered it gravely. "On conditions."

"But what are they?" questioned

Dorothy, a surprised frown wrinkling her pretty forehead.

"Well, there is really only one. You see I've always wanted to fix that little house up and run out there weekends. Now this could be arranged very nicely. All you will have to do is marry me and—"

"Oh!" Bobby looked at her suddenly. She was sitting very still with her hands on the arms of the big chair. Her eyes were very big and dark and her cheeks were flushed a deep rose. The next instant Bobby was kneeling beside her, quite oblivious to the possible appearance of the office boy or

the man from Montana. "Won't you, dearest?" he pleaded.

Dorothy met his eyes slowly. Her own were softly shining. "I want the house so badly, dear, that I think I'll take it conditions and all." She breathed ever so low and the next instant—well, the office-boy did appear, but being an exceptionally considerate young fellow with a sweet heart of his own he withdrew noiselessly and told the man from Montana that, "Mr. Moreland will see you in a few minutes. He has some business on hand just now that can not be delayed."

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The Little Peacemaker

By Joella Johnson



EVERYTHING had run so smoothly between them that Iris was very much surprised and hurt when the village gossip dropped in one afternoon and remarked:

"That's a pretty girl John was with last night and Mrs. Brown said they stayed the whole evening in his office. Hope you're not losing your beau."

Iris' face went red, then white, for it was last night that John had tele-

phoned her he could not call as he had some business to attend to—and so that was the business! She must not let Mrs. Jones know she cared. "Oh, yes, she is pretty, and—ain't that Mary calling me?"

When John called that evening it was a very determined young lady who met him at the door, and, drawing the ring from her finger, said: "If you wish to spend your evenings with other ladies you can not expect me to keep this."

"But, Iris, let me ex—"

"Two days went by and a very sad-

facéd Iris dragged herself up the stairs to her room, for she had not realized she could miss John so much, and now she wished she had waited for his explanation. She would write him a letter telling him how sorry she was.

Little Mary, Iris' favorite niece, looked in the door several times, wondering why Auntie did not come and play, and saw her tear the letter and throw it in the basket, and then cry as though her heart would break.

Mary went away, her childish mind troubled, wondering why Auntie Iris

looked so cross whenever she asked her why John didn't come any more and why she should cry over the letter she threw away.

She wanted someone to play with her, so soon she trudged upstairs again and finding no Auntie, saw the torn letter. She picked up a small piece and saw the word "John," the name he had taught her to read and write. "Why, it can't be Auntie's and she tore it." Downstairs she went with the paper in her hand, and seeing no one around ran down the street to John's office.

John was a lawyer and was busy

with several men, but when he saw Mary he left them and picking her up in his arms asked her why she had run away. Mary slipped the paper in his hand. "I brought you your paper, Auntie tore it up and then was sorry, for she cried."

John was very much surprised and put Mary down. She ran home as fast as her little legs could carry her, glad she had given John what belonged to him. In the meantime John looked at the slip of paper and read, "Dear John: I am so sorry—" That was all, but quite enough for John, who with

all haste disposed of his clients and hurried to Iris.

When he reached the house, not finding anyone around, he went into the garden, where he found Iris and Mary. When Iris saw him with outstretched arms, she ran to him quickly, hiding her face on his shoulder, so glad he had come to her without her sending for him. Mary looked on in wonder and in a wee little voice said: "You didn't care 'cause Iris"—John shook his head, but she went on—"tore your letter up, did you, John?" Iris looked up, bewildered. "What

does she mean, John?"

"I'm sure I do not know—run and play, Mary."

But Mary stood still. "I picked up John's letter you tore and gave it to him," she said, half crying.

John quickly produced the paper. "It is time for explanations, dear. That lady was sent to me by a friend to get my advice about securing her divorce and I was going to tell you all about it the next night. Can you forgive me?"

"Let's have that paper framed," whispered Iris.