

# CRUCIBLE

© Ben Ames Williams.

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

**SYNOPSIS**

Barbara Sentry, seeking to sober up her escort, Johnnie Boyd, on the way home from a party, slaps him, and attracts the attention of a policeman, whom the boy knocks down. As he arrests him, Professor Brace of Harvard comes to the rescue and drives Barbara home. On the way they see Barbara's father driving from the direction of his office at 12:45, but when he gets home he tells his wife it is 11:15 and that he's been playing bridge at the club. Next morning, while Barbara is telling her mother about her adventure, an urgent phone call comes from Mr. Sentry's office after his departure. Arriving home in the late afternoon, Sentry reports his office has been robbed and a Miss Wines, former temporary employee, killed. The evening papers luridly confirm the story, and Sentry takes it hard. Mary, elder daughter, in love with Neil Ray, young interne at the hospital where she works, goes off to dinner at Gus Loran's, Sentry's partner, with Mrs. Loran's brother, Jimmy Endie, Mr. and Mrs. Sentry call on old Mrs. Sentry, and Barbara, alone, receives Dan Fisher, reporter, who advises her not to talk. Phil Sentry, son at Yale, is disturbed at the possible implications and suspicion of Miss Wines' absence from her rooms for three days during August. He goes home to help. Sentry is arrested and booked for murder.

**CHAPTER III—Continued**

But when Phil opened the door he saw a young man he did not know, and the man said: "I'm Professor Brace. Is Miss Sentry at home?"

Phil was bewildered; but then Barbara, drying her eyes, came past him. "Of course!" she said. "I'm sorry, Professor! I'd forgotten you were coming."

She shook hands with him uncertainly. He said, looking at their pale faces, at Barbara's red eyes, "I'm afraid I've come at the wrong time."

No one had asked him to come in. He still stood in the open door. Phil started to speak; but Barbara said, "Oh no!" She put on, quickly, like a mask, a bright vivacity. "Come in," she invited. "There's just the family here, and grandmother." She took his hat. "Take off your coat," she said.

He followed doubtfully. In the living-room Barbara said: "This is Professor Brace, mother. You remember I told you about him? How kind he was?"

Mrs. Sentry spoke composedly. "Yes, indeed! Good evening, Professor Brace. Barbara told me you rescued her from some embarrassment." She thought: We must go on in normal ways, as if nothing had happened; and she added: "Mr. Sentry was called out on business; and when you rang, we expected him. That's why you had such a reception committee."

He nodded, perceiving the tension on them all, uncertain what to do or say. Barbara introduced him to her grandmother. He sat down; and the talk ran haltingly, with many silences, till Mary, unable to endure this, presently rose.

"I've letters to write," she said. "If you'll excuse me." She escaped upstairs.

Phil asked old Mrs. Sentry, "Grandmother, want me to take you home?"

"Not yet! I'm not sleepy."

Silence oppressed them, till Barbara, forcing herself to talk, told over again the story of Johnny Boyd's battle with the policeman, and the resulting situation from which Professor Brace had rescued her. Phil and his mother scarce heard her, sat with stony faces, listening for any sound outside. But old Mrs. Sentry cut in at last, said sharply: "Stop talking nonsense, Barbara! It's no time for chit-chat! We ought to be finding out—"

Barbara turned to look at her; looked past her, came sharply to her feet, pale and shaken, pointing. "Look!" she cried. "Who's that?" They saw no one. "There was a man at the window!" she whispered.

Phil raced through the hall, and Professor Brace followed him. When they opened the front door, they faced two men. Something exploded, glaringly, in their faces, and Phil uttered an angry cry, and one of the young men said:

"It's all right, Mr. Sentry! Just a flashlight. We got word of Mr. Sentry's arrest. We're supposed to ask whether you have anything to say. Or perhaps your mother—"

Professor Brace, very still, looked at Phil. Phil demanded hoarsely: "Arrest? Who said so?"

"Inspector Irons."

"It's not true!"

"I'm afraid it is," said the reporter. "He's been booked for murder." And he urged: "Better take it easy, Mr. Sentry. I know how you feel, but there'll be a lot of newspaper men around here in another ten minutes. If you want to say anything—"

"I've a notion to knock your block off!"

The other grinned sympathetically. "I know. Don't blame you. It's tough, all right. But keep your head, if you're wise." He looked at Professor Brace. "Are you their lawyer?" he asked.

"I'm Professor Brace of the Harvard Business School. But I'm afraid it's too early for the family to have anything to say to reporters."

Phil looked at him in surprise, then gratefully. The reporter nodded. "Sure," he agreed. "That's sensible. Be polite, but don't talk. And—take a friendly tip from me. Don't get mad and lose your heads, don't say something you'll be sorry for. And—don't take a crack at reporters. We're just doing our job."

He added: "Another thing that will save you some trouble, change your telephone number; get an unlisted number. Then no one can call the house except your friends."

Phil nodded grudgingly. "Thanks," he said, "What's your name?"

"Fisher. Dan Fisher. Anytime you can give me a break on the story, I'd appreciate it, of course."

Old Mrs. Sentry called from the living-room. "Phil, who's that?"

"A reporter, grandmother!"

"Well, bring him in here. I want to talk to him."

Phil hesitated; he heard his mother's whispered protest, heard the older woman say: "Nonsense! He can tell us what we want to know." She called again, "Phil!"

Then Barbara came into the hall, herself conveyed the invitation. "Mr. Fisher, my grandmother wants to see you, please." And it

Sentry said quickly, "Hush, child!" She spoke to Fisher. "I told you we were adults," she reminded him. "Don't mince words. I suppose you're trying to say that the girl was, as my generation used to put it, in trouble; and that the police believe she went somewhere with my son in August; and that they sometimes met in his office, to which he had given her a key; and that they met there the other night and that my son killed her. Is that it?"

Fisher said honestly, "I'm afraid so."

"Why should he kill her?"

"She told the man who brought her to town that she was going to get some money."

"Blackmail?" The reporter did not speak; and in the silence Barbara hiccoughed like a sob; and the old woman said: "Thank you! Good evening."

Fisher half-smiled. "I'm supposed to be interviewing you," he confessed. "But—"

"You've too much intelligence to try," the old woman interrupted. "Come in to my hotel and have a cup of tea with me some day, young man. Phil, show him to the door."

The reporter nodded. "I will come," he said, and he added: "If



The District Attorney Bowed.

was she who made the introductions in the living-room. "Mr. Fisher was here the other night, mother," she explained. "He's a Princeton man, and he knows Joe Dane." As though these were credentials.

Her mother nodded icily; and old Mrs. Sentry said, "I heard you say Mr. Sentry had been arrested."

Fisher said quietly, "I don't know that he's been booked yet, but they're holding him."

"They think he killed this girl?"

The young man hesitated; and she insisted: "Speak up! We're adults!"

"Yes," he admitted. "I believe they do."

"Why? They must have some reason?"

Fisher nodded. "I can tell you what little I know, if you want."

"That's exactly what I want."

He said: "Well, you see, the robbery was a fake. Whoever opened the safe knew the combination—or else was an expert safe-cracker. The combination had been changed since Miss Wines worked in the office. Only Mr. Sentry and his partner and Miss Randall knew it. There wasn't enough money in the safe, ever, to make it worth the trouble of opening, not for a professional."

"So the girl didn't come there to rob the safe. She came to meet someone. A man brought her; drove her in town, let her out at a corner four or five blocks away at about eleven o'clock. A policeman saw him do it; and the man parked there and talked to the cop while he waited for her. He stayed there till half-past twelve and then decided she had made a fool of him. He told the cop she had promised to be back at twelve."

Fisher hesitated, but no one spoke; and after a moment he went on, "If you've read the papers, you know that the Medical Examiner found a reason why she might have been killed." And he added hurriedly: "She was missing for three days in August. Mr. Sentry was away at the same time. His office had his address, but they tried to get in touch with him during those three days and couldn't."

He finished quickly: "And she had a key to the office that was a duplicate of Mr. Sentry's key. So—Irons took him in for questioning—and the man that made her key recognized Mr. Sentry, identified him, before I left Headquarters."

Barbara, her eyes very wide, started to speak; but Grandmother

you haven't thought of it, you might call up Mr. Sentry's attorney." He turned toward the door, Phil on his heels. And no one spoke till Phil came back.

Then Mrs. Sentry asked, "Mother—was that necessary?"

"I've had my eyes open all my life, Ellen. Pretending not to see things doesn't keep them from existing. I've known for fifteen years that you and Arthur—"

"Mother!"

Old Mrs. Sentry hesitated; she looked at Barbara, pale and still like one who gazes upon unimagined horrors, and was silent. After a moment Phil spoke.

"I'll call Dean Hare, shall I, mother?" Phil asked.

She nodded. Professor Brace suggested, "I think that idea of an unlisted telephone is a good one, too."

While Phil was at the phone, old Mrs. Sentry remarked, "Ellen, I think you'd better put me up here tonight."

"I think so too, mother," Mrs. Sentry agreed. "You mustn't go back to the hotel, be there all alone." She seemed to welcome the opportunity for physical action, rose, said vigorously: "And I'm going to put you to bed right now, too! No use in your getting so dreadfully tired. Come."

**Small-Mouth and Large-Mouth Bass of Different Type and Habits, Expert Says**

The general rule for telling the difference between a small-mouth and a large-mouth bass is that the mouth of the small-mouth does not extend beyond a point below the eye, while the mouth of the large mouth does extend back of the eye, according to a writer in the Indianapolis News. The small-mouth is found in most clear-running streams and clear cold lakes from the St. Lawrence river to Dakota, and southward to South Carolina. It varies in different localities, but at maturity is usually one to two feet long, with a weight of two to five pounds. The adult is generally olive-green, often darker on the head. It has the arrowy rush of the trout, the untiring strength and bold leap of the salmon, while it has a system of fighting tactics peculiarly its own. It will rise to the artificial fly as readily as the salmon or the brook trout, under the same conditions; and will take the live minnow,

Phil was telephoning from the library. The two older women, Grandmother Sentry with a word of farewell to Professor Brace, departed. Barbara looked at the professor helplessly.

"I feel—funny!" she confessed. "I keep thinking I ought to cry, but I don't really feel a thing."

"You're still numb," he suggested. "If a person is shot or stabbed, he just thinks at first that someone pushed him! He doesn't realize how badly he's hurt till the first shock is over."

"And of course," she reflected loyally, "I know it's not true! It couldn't be, could it?" Then, as Phil returned, she asked quickly, "Did you get Mr. Hare, Phil?"

Phil nodded. "Yes," he said. "He's on the job." He mopped his forehead. Then they heard Mrs. Sentry coming downstairs, and Phil and Barbara went to meet her as though to help her.

But she came in strongly, went to a chair, sat down. Only when she was seated did she slump with weariness. She looked at Professor Brace, her guard for a moment down.

"I feel as though we were all dreaming, insane," she said. "I'm glad you're a stranger. If you were one of our friends, you'd be sympathetic, and—I don't think I could stand that." She added, "At first I didn't feel anything; but now—I'm beginning to!"

Phil on one side, Barbara on the other, pressed close to her, as much seeking comfort as giving it; and Barbara said miserably, "I think the worst part of it is not knowing what has happened, or what is happening!"

"Mr. Hare is on the job, Barb," Phil reminded her; and he explained to his mother, "I asked him to come later and tell us—whatever there is to tell—as soon as he knows."

Mrs. Sentry nodded. "We can't do anything but wait, I suppose!" Her head lifted. "It's outrageous!" she cried. "We're respectable, decent people. The police, the newspapers—"

No one spoke; and after a moment she said indignantly: "I turned off the lights in mother's room and looked out. There are cars in the street, Phil, and men standing around."

"Reporters, probably."

"I won't have that. Tell them to go away!"

Professor Brace said: "They'll stay, Mrs. Sentry. That's their job, you see."

"Well, it's a thoroughly disreputable job!" The doorbell rang, and she exclaimed, "If that's one of them, don't let him in!"

Phil nodded, and he and Professor Brace went together to the door. A man stood there; reporters grouped behind him a policeman by his side. Phil would have closed the door; but the man said: "Hold on! I'm District Attorney Flood."

Phil hesitated. "Oh, hullo, Mr. Flood," he said. "I've heard father speak of you. You played cards together sometimes, didn't you?" And he explained: "I'm Phil Sentry. Come in, won't you?"

The District Attorney came in and Phil closed the door, and introduced Professor Brace. "My mother's in the living-room," he explained, and led the other that way. "This is Mr. Flood, mother," he said.

Mrs. Sentry, without rising—she could not trust her knees—extended her hand. "Good evening. I've heard Arthur speak of you. This is our daughter, Barbara."

The District Attorney bowed. He was a big man, florid, physically powerful, a successful politician, and with a record of success in his profession too. Yet he seemed smaller now, and ill at ease. Barbara sat on the arm of her mother's chair, watching him; Phil and Professor Brace stood at one side, their faces somewhat in shadow.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



**SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT**

It was baking day and the new maid and her mistress were having a very busy time.

"Mary," said the mistress, "just go and see if that large plum cake in the oven is baked yet. Stick a knife in it and see if it comes out clean."

In a few minutes Mary returned. "The knife came out wonderful clean, ma'am," she said, beaming, "so I've stuck all the other dirty knives in, too!"

**Got His Share**

The train halted for a moment at a small station. A traveler reached out of the window, called a boy, and said:

"Here, son, is 50 cents; get me a 25-cent sandwich and one for yourself."

Just as the train started to pull out, the boy hurried to the window and shouted:

"Here's your quarter, mister. They only had one sandwich."

**YOU MAY BELIEVE IT**



"There is a fellow on shore has been feasting his eyes on you for an hour."

"Let's go then—I've no desire to encourage gluttony I'm sure."

**Clear**

Instructor—Mr. Martin, what fundamental theorem of the calculus is involved there?

Martin—I don't recall the theorem but it is all based upon something trying to approach something else and it never does quite get there.—Coast Guard Foretop.

**Bare Facts**

"Yep, I had a beard like yours once, but when I realized how it made me look I cut it off."

"Well, I had a face like yours once and when I realized that I couldn't cut it off I grew this beard."—Portland Express.

**Your Stop, George**

Passenger—Conductor, that fellow sitting opposite us is a lunatic and is scaring my wife and children. He claims he is George Washington.

Conductor—I'll take care of the matter. (Shouting) "Next station, Mount Vernon!"

**Economy**

"Is Mr. McPherson in?"

"He's gone to lunch, sir. The governor always goes to lunch early. He doesn't have to eat so much as he would later on."

**In and Out**

"Is it an eight-day clock?" asked the pawnbroker.

"I don't know," replied the man, "I've never had it more than four days at a time."

**Detour**

Oliver—Hello!

Bobby—You just left.

Oliver—Yeah, but I went the wrong way and came back to turn around.

**MUST BE IN STYLE**



"I thought you said Jane didn't take any interest in yachting?"

"That was before she bought a yachting costume."

**No Pet**

"What do you call the piece your daughter just played?"

"I don't know," answered the proud mother. "What I enjoy is the way the piano makes good the guarantee that it will stand up under any kind of treatment."

**Can't Resist**

Grandma—No, Eleanor, not another story tonight.

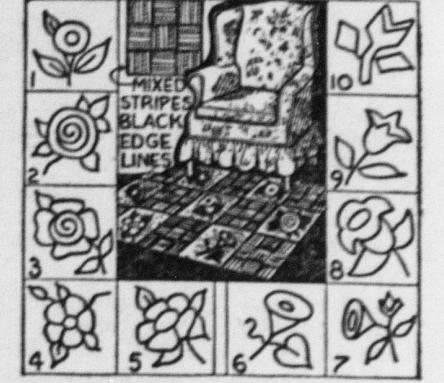
Eleanor—Well, then, grandma, just tell me about your operation.—Exchange.

**How to Make Your Hooked Rug Designs**

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

ANOTHER letter today from a reader who says she has made so many things from the books offered herewith that she has almost worn them out, but would like more information about rag rugs. So here is the answer to her question about making flower designs.

Use a wax crayon or soft pencil to mark the pattern on a 51 by 33-inch piece of burlap. Then divide



the rest into 9-inch squares. Now, mark every other one of these big squares into small squares to be hooked in mixed stripes.

We are now ready for the flowers; here are ten poses of the type that grandmother drew. No. 1: Just two circles. No. 2: A spiral outline with a circle around it makes a rose. No. 3: a spiral with four petals. Sometimes more petals were used. Nos. 4 and 5: a circle or an oval with five petals becomes a wild rose. Nos. 6 and 7: one oval inside another with a triangle added becomes the morning glory type of flower. Nos. 8 and 9: draw a big U and add petals at the top. No. 10: another kind of trumpet flower drawn with straight lines.

Tan is a good background color for the flower squares. Rags or rug yarn may be used. A rug hook, which is like a big steel crochet hook with a wooden handle, may be purchased in fancy work departments. Just pull loops of the yarn or rag strips through to the right side of the burlap with this hook.

With the help of Mrs. Spears' Book 1—SEWING, for the Home Decorator—you can make many of the things you have been wanting for your house. Book 2—Embroidery and Gifts—is full of ideas for ways to use your spare time in making things for yourself and to sell. Books are 25 cents each. If you order both books quilt leaflet illustrating 36 authentic stitches is included free. Address: Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

**How Women in Their 40's Can Attract Men**

Here's good advice for a woman during her change (usually from 35 to 45), who fears she'll lose her appeal to men, who worries about hot flashes, loss of pep, dizzy spells, upset nerves and moody spells.

Get more fresh air, 8 hrs. sleep and if you need a good general system tonic take Lydia E. Finckham's Vegetable Compound, made especially for women. It helps Nature build up physical resistance, thus helps give more vivacity to enjoy life and assist calming fitful nerves and disturbing symptoms that often accompany change of life. WELL WORTH TRYING!

**Encroaching Zeal**

Zeal is very blind, or badly regulated, when it encroaches upon the rights of others.—Pasquier Quessel.

WORMS quickly removed from children or adults by using the famous remedy, Dr. Peery's "Dead Shot" Vermifuge. No castor oil or anything else is needed after taking "Dead Shot." 50c a bottle at druggists or Wright's Pill Co., 100 Gold St., New York, N. Y.

**Ruinous Moments**

The ruin of most men dates from some idle moment.—G. S. Hilliard.

**FREE**

4 cups of GARFIELD TEA

to show you the easy way to KEEP CLEAN INSIDE!

You'll like the way it maps you back, overblat, the feeling of "rain" to "no" fitness and inside cleanliness! Helps eliminate the left-over wastes that hold you back, cause headaches, indigestion, etc. Garfield Tea is not a muscle worker, but if CONSTIPATION bothers you, it will certainly "do wonders!" 10¢ and 25¢ of dispenser—WRITE FOR FREE SAMPLES of Garfield Tea and Garfield Headache Powder to GARFIELD TEA CO., Dept. 2, Brooklyn, N. Y.

WNU-4 43-38

**ADVERTISING**

IS as essential to business as rain to growing crops. It is the keystone in the arch of successful merchandising. Let us show you how to apply it to your business.