

CREDIBLE

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

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SYNOPSIS

Barbara Sentry, seeking to sober up her escort, Johnny 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 day Sentry reports his office has been robbed and a Miss Wines, former temporary employee, killed. The evening papers justly 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 Endle. Mr. and Mrs. Sentry call on old Mrs. Sentry, and Barbara alone, receives Dan Fisher, reporter, who dines 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. Dan Fisher explains the evidence against him—that the robbery was a fake, the safe opened by one who knew the combination, changed since Miss Wines' employment there—that a back door key, a duplicate of Sentry's, was found in the girl's purse, and that Sentry, too, had been away those three days in August. Brace calls, and backs up Barbara in her denial that Sentry could have done it, because of the discrepancy of time between the slaying and their seeing Sentry on the road. Phil, showing the police over the house, finds his father's box open and his gun, which only his father knew of. Meanwhile, the police find the stolen money burned in the furnace. Mrs. Sentry sees her husband, who swears his innocence, and tells her he had known of the robbery and murder the night before, but failed to call the police, and came home at 12:30. Mary quarrels with Neil Ray, and runs away with Jimmy Endle to the Caribbean. Linda Dane, friend of Barbara and Phil, tries to comfort Phil. Falkran, noted criminal lawyer retained, inspires hope but not admiration. Dan Fisher, whom Barbara has been meeting at her grandmother's, tries to use influence to keep the family out of the papers, and everyone shields Barbara, on the verge of a breakdown.

CHAPTER VI—Continued
—15—

One day when Brace was to meet Barbara at her grandmother's for tea, and arrived before the girl, the old woman spoke to him of Barbara's condition, said stoutly: "I wish someone would marry her and take her away from here! She can't stand much more. She hasn't the strength to go through all this. She shouldn't have to do it!"

He dissented gently. "People can't shirk such things. Barbara's sister did, I know; but she will always regret it. We have to accept our burdens, our responsibilities. Face them squarely."

She said grimly: "Maybe! No doubt you are a level-headed young man, but I suspect you're too level-headed for your own good!"

He smiled tolerantly. "I'm sorry," he said. "But—dear as Barbara has come to be to me—I can't advise her to dodge or to evade."

"Dear to you, is she?"

"Very!"

"Then marry her," the old woman counseled. "Sweep her off her feet. Marry her and take care of her."

He said gravely: "I hope to, some day. But if I asked her now, she might come to me just to escape. I want her to come to me because she wants me."

"Fiddlesticks! If you want her, take her, on any terms at all."

He shook his head. "I shall have to be a witness at the trial, you know," he confessed. "The District Attorney has warned me to be ready. Barbara need not know yet; but if we were married, and I testified, she would blame me, never forgive me."

"Get out of the reach of a subpoena while you can."

"I can't do that. I've given my word!"

"Pah! If you've the courage of a—"

But Barbara arrived, putting a period to their words; and after that Mrs. Sentry did not attempt him again.

She found Dan Fisher more to her taste. Between these two something strong and binding had developed. He came to her often, even when Barbara was not there. Once he came dispirited, and she saw this and demanded, "What are you so down in the mouth about?"

He grinned. "Been barking down a rat hole," he confessed, "and the rat wasn't at home."

"Talk sense!"

He hesitated. "Well, Linda Dane and I have been putting our heads together, trying to see some way out of this. I thought we had a lead. Old Mr. Wines, the dead girl's father, told me that in her letters home the girl spoke of a man's having asked her to dinner. I started to check on him."

"Who was it?"

"I can't very well—"

"Nonsense! I can keep my mouth shut when I choose."

"Well, it was Mr. Loran."

"Gus Loran?" She considered, nodded. "He's an old goat," she agreed. "He never would have married that Endle woman otherwise. Go on. What about him?"

Dan Fisher said: "The thing looked possible at first. I found that Mr. Loran was away in August, at the same time Miss Wines was

away. But that blew up. Two ways. It turned out that Loran was in Maine. I've talked with his guide. He has a camp on a lake up there. Flies up, flies his own plane. He was there."

He added: "And just to make sure, I checked on him for the night she was killed. We know what time she went to Mr. Sentry's office. Mr. Loran boarded a New York train about the same time, went right to bed. The porter saw him in his pajamas a little after eleven; and the porter's sure Loran didn't get off the train after that."

She demanded, "Why couldn't Miss Wines have been in Maine too?"

"Guide says, No."

"Maybe he's lying."

"Didn't seem like a liar."

"Maybe she was near there. Maybe he flew over to where she was." He hesitated, and she said sharply, "Speak up, man!"

"Miss Wines wasn't in Maine," he said reluctantly. "They've found where Miss Wines was. She was at a hotel in New Jersey."

The old woman's fingers twitched, her eyes closed, then opened again, shrewd and keen. She said in a



"Why Couldn't Miss Wines Have Been in Maine Too?"

low tone: "You're not looking at me. I suppose Arthur was with her?"

He nodded. He said miserably: "But it's Barbara that gets me! She'll have to go through it all, the trial, everything. She may even have to testify! I wish I could—marry her, get her out of this—"

"In love with her, are you?"

"Yes!"

She demanded, "Then why don't you?"

Dan looked at her quickly, and he colored, and then he chuckled. "You're a girl after my own heart!" he declared. "I'd do it in a minute—if she'd have me—but I can't!"

"Why not?"

"Money," he confessed. "And—this is the only job I've got. If I could land a promise of a job somewhere else—But these are tough times in the newspaper game."

"I'll finance you."

He grinned, shook his head. "Easy come, easy go," he reminded her. "I've never been able to hold on to money unless I earned it myself." He added: "But I'd like to find some way to keep her out of this. Keep her out of the trial, anyway. Why don't you take her away yourself, to Europe or somewhere?"

The old woman said quietly, "The next trip I take, I shall have to go alone, Dan."

He met her eyes honestly, without denial. "This must have—hit you hard," he assented. "The shock, the worry, the uncertainty." She said, half to herself: "There's no uncertainty. I've accepted that. It's more Ellen's fault than his, perhaps. She shut him out of her life long ago. He had to turn somewhere. Yet I don't mean to blame her. At least she went on living with him. This is hard on her; but—it may change her, soften her." She added: "Yet he is my son! Whatever he has done!"

Dan's eyes filled. He gripped her hand. She said with a sudden faint smile: "Professor Brace thinks it's Barbara's duty to see it through. I judge you don't agree?"

He shook his head. "Lord love you, no!" And his eyes began to blaze. "Sometimes Brace—" Then he checked himself. "I wish I could take her away!"

So in these days all their solicitude came more and more to center upon Barbara. Phil sought in every way to cheer her; and as Christmas approached he tried to enlist her interest in planning some holiday observance that could be endured. They were in her room one night, Barbara a-bed, Phil sitting beside her while they giped for some device, when with no warn-

ing she interrupted their discussion to say:

"Phil, tell me truly, do you think father killed her?"

He was shocked into silence for a moment; countered then, "Gosh, Barb, what do you take me for?"

"Do you?" she insisted.

"No, of course not."

"I read all the newspapers," she said. "If he didn't, how could all the things they say be true?"

He said: "But you haven't read father's side of it, Barb. Wait till he tells his story, Phil?"

"What is his story, Phil?"

"Why, he doesn't know anything about it at all."

She looked away from him. "Phil, shall we all have to testify?"

"Not mother," Phil replied. "Probably not any of us." He added: "Mother can testify if she wants to, though. She probably will if he wants her to."

"I won't!"

"Well, if he wants us to—"

"I won't!" she repeated tensely, eyes still averted. "No matter who wants me to. I won't! I'll—cut out my tongue first."

Her voice shook, and he said: "Whoa, Barb! You're scared."

There's nothing to be scared of!"

She looked furtively all around. "Phil," she whispered, "do they know for sure when Miss Wines was killed? The papers said at first someone heard the shot a little past one, but—Mr. Hare said they think maybe she was killed earlier."

Phil hesitated. "I don't think they're sure, Barbara. But—it wasn't a shot that man heard. They've found a truck that backed off about that time." And he said: "They know when Miss Wines ate dinner; and they know about how long it takes food to digest, so they go by that, partly; and partly by—well, things doctors look for."

"What time do they think she was killed?" He did not answer; and she whispered: "Phil, father got home that night at quarter of one. I told Dan Fisher, and Dan told me not to tell anyone, but I had already told Mr. Flood." Her voice rose, was shrill. "I won't tell it again, Phil. Never! I won't! They can't make me!"

He took her, shaking, in his arms, intent to comfort her. "You won't have to, Barb. I won't let them bother you."

She clung to him. "I'll cut out my tongue first."

"Don't get so excited, Barb!"

"But why did Dan tell me not to tell, Phil?"

Phil said almost sternly: "Now listen, Barb! Quit worrying! It's all right. What do you read the papers for anyway? Where do you get them?"

"In at grandmother's," she confessed. "I have to, Phil. No one

ever tells me anything, and I have to know what's going on." And she cried desperately: "Phil, I won't tell! They can't make me, can they?"

He evaded answering. "Say, you're doing a great job on grandmother, Barb," he said. "You surely take a load off mother and me. Of course, we miss you at home, but someone has to be with her. Is she all right? Is there anything she wants?"

And the shot at random was successful. "Yes, there is," Barbara remembered. "She told me to tell you, she wants to see Mr. Falkran!"

Phil seized on this. "Sure!" he cried. "I'll get in touch with him; we'll take him in to see her this afternoon. Right away."

And the enterprise at once engaged them. Barbara went in town to make her grandmother ready; and when at half-past two Phil appeared with the lawyer, the old woman received him in state, sitting very erect in her great chair. But at once she sent Phil and Barbara out of the room, and when they were alone she asked Falkran questions, watched him, studied him.

He suggested at last, "You haven't been to see Mr. Sentry."

"No."

"He asks often for you," Falkran told her. "I shall be glad to tell him I have seen you so hale and well."

She eyed him shrewdly. "You want me to go see him?"

"I know it would—help him," he admitted.

"Then I will," she promised, in a curiously submissive tone. "The first fine day."

"Splendid!" he said, beaming. "If you do, Mrs. Sentry, I guarantee everything else."

Old Mrs. Sentry tried to carry out her promise to see her son. "But I shall want to be with Arthur alone," she said, then added: "Yet I'd like for you—for all of you—to ride down with me, wait for me outside. My courage is good, but I'm not as strong as I used to be."

They waited for a fair day, but that winter in Boston was a bitter one. Not till the first week of February, on the eve of the approaching trial, did the season serve. Then came a day when spring seemed just around the corner, and the sun shone warm. Old Eli brought the ancient limousine. Barbara and the nurse helped Mrs. Sentry dress; Phil and Barbara steadied her to the elevator and down into the car. She sat between Barbara and Mrs. Sentry, Phil on the small tip-up seat in front of them. They drove through scant mid-afternoon traffic to the jail; and the old woman's cheeks shone bright and brighter, flushed and hot, and Barbara saw a pulse pound in her thin throat.

But she could not, when the time came, go in. As the car stopped, she collapsed suddenly, not falling, not even toppling sideways, but just shrinking down into herself so that she was small. Even their untrained eyes saw that she was ill; that this was not faint-heartedness. In a sudden terror, uncertain what to do, Phil and Barbara stammered and fumbled; but Mrs. Sentry said steadily:

"We'll have to take her home. It was too much for her."

They all stayed in town that night with her; for the doctor had forewarned them. Once the old woman spoke, in a surprisingly strong voice. She said:

"Tell Arthur I loved him." And she added, with no irony in her tones, "And tell Mr. Falkran I hope he can use—this—just as well."

Her death, toward dawn, made headlines. "Sentry's Mother Stricken at Jail," said the morning paper. "Mrs. Sentry Dead on Eve of Trial," said the afternoon editions. Her funeral occurred on Saturday, two days before the trial was to begin. The brief and premature warm spell had ended in a blizzard that clogged traffic. They followed her to the cemetery between banked walls of snow.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Boys and Girls of 4-H Clubs Protect Animals and Birds of Rural Districts

Few persons realize the important contributions the members of the 4-H clubs are making to the cause of conservation, writes Albert Stoll, Jr., in the Detroit News. These clubs, operating throughout the nation and composed principally of rural boys and girls with the motto, Head, Heart, Hand and Health, have been in a particularly fortunate position to become intimately acquainted with their native plant and animal life and realize just what these resources mean to their communities.

In many instances the groups are responsible for reforestation projects and the conservation of farm woodlots. They have encouraged, through protection and refuges, the maintenance of a cove of fur-bearing animals in their communities. Through winter feeding operations

they helped carry quail, pheasants and winter song birds through severe periods. In Michigan alone the clubs have been given thousands of pheasant eggs for incubation and after rearing them made liberations when the birds were able to shift for themselves. They have taken on active interest in the preservation of rare wildflowers. They have discouraged the indiscriminate killing of beneficial hawks and owls, a practice which their forefathers considered good preservation.

In the more remote districts they have rendered valuable services in the prevention and control of forest and brush fires.

In short, they have given a splendid demonstration of what youth can accomplish if it becomes interested in a subject and applies head, heart and hands to the task.



WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK

By LEMUEL F. PARTON

NEW YORK—Reginald Denny, the one-time professional boxer who became a motion picture star, develops his toy airplane hobby into a business. He

Robot Planes Is Ex-Pug Denny's Hobby-Business

He rings up a sale of six robot planes to Uncle Sam, to be used in army experiments next summer. They are expected to be curtain-callers for larger and more business-like robots, flying without pilots, guided by radio beams, dusting TNT on intruders.

Reginald Denny will be remembered as the actor extolled a decade or so ago as "the typical, wholesome young American." Then he turned out to be an Englishman, a fier and machine-gunner in the British royal air force in the war. A light comedian, he had two absorbing interests—his screen antics and what seemed at the time a juvenile absorption with miniature airplanes. From the latter, he developed some ideas about radio-controlled planes. He established the Reginald Denny Industries, with James Blackton, an experienced technician, as manager. He is making a small "flying torpedo," designed for flying in swarms, with no pilot, and with land-control of the bomb-dropping as well as guidance. When completed the United States will get it.

He ran away from school at the age of 16 to play for Charles Frohman at the Duke of York's theater. His first featured role was in the "Merry Widow." Then he became a professional boxer, later champion of the Second corps of the royal air force.

NELSON T. JOHNSON, ambassador to China, coming home by a side door as Japan slams the open door, probably will have in his hip pocket a copy of the "Analects" of Confucius, baring possibly "Alice in Wonderland," which he also packs around with him, it is his favorite reading.

Like Henry R. Curran, deputy mayor of New York, he believes that public activities and attitudes should be infused with humor. More than any other American, he has been successful in translating our best anthology of pullman car gags to the Chinese. Following the labyrinth of Confucius and Lao Tze, he finds a unique approach to the Chinese mind and has been one of our most successful ambassadors. But, back home, he is sharp, exact, statistical and thoroughly occidental, among which attributes is a line of up-and-coming Chamber of Commerce oratory. He lives in two worlds.

After his graduation from George Washington university, Mr. Johnson mixed with the Indians of the Southwest, picked up Indian dialects with remarkable facility, thereby discovering his linguistic gifts. That sent him to China as a student interpreter in 1906. In the Far East, he has occupied many important posts and is a former assistant secretary of state. He finds the Chinese have a lot more humor than the Japanese.

IT WAS about three years ago that the head of the German National Institute of Physics denounced the "debased Jewish atom," and promised to deliver

Group Aims to Keep Scientific Inquiry Free

to the Reich an untainted "Aryan" atom. Under the banner of "The Pragmatic and Dogmatic Spirit in Physics," this scientific revolution has been advanced by the Nazi savants, and at last American scientists mobilize against it.

Dr. Franz Boas, 80-year-old German-born American anthropologist, heads a committee of eight distinguished scientists in publishing a manifesto, signed by 1,284 of their colleagues, leaders in all branches of science throughout America. They "defend the right of scientists to speak the truth as they understand it."

Dr. Boas spent about 55 years studying long heads and round heads, but was stymied by the square heads. "If the world goes crazy, what can we do?" he said, resigning from Columbia university two years ago.

He came to this country to attend the Chicago World's fair in 1893, after an Arctic expedition which had launched his career as an anthropologist. He remained to coach virtually all great American anthropologists and to become a world authority in linguistics, primitive mentality, folklore, ethnology and senility. The old Germany honored him. The new Germany made an extraordinary bonfire of his books.

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New and Different, Yet Easy to Make

EACH of these new designs is a treasure trove of clever ideas. You'll enjoy making them, during long winter evenings to come, not only because they're so attractive when finished but because they're no trouble at all to do. Each pattern includes a detailed sew chart for the guidance of beginners, so you don't need experience. Just follow the easy, explicit directions, and see how quickly you'll have them finished.

Five-in-One Dress Fashion. Just look at the different personalities this smart dress has—and every one of them is charming! You can make it as shown in the large sketch, with high neck-



line and sash. Also, as shown in the little sketches, either with a round collar or with turnback revers, with shawl collar and wrap-around sash—or with high neckline, and beltless. The basic line is lovely. It has shrugged-shoulder sleeves, a softly gathered bodice, a doll-waistline cut high in the front, and a slim-hipped skirt. Silk crepe, velvet, thin wool or print are pretty materials for this.

Four-in-One Closet Set. A laundry bag, combing cape, hanger cover and a pair of pretty slippers comprise this gay closet set that you'll like as well for its looks as its usefulness. If you know any girls who are going back to college or boarding school, they'll love to have the set, or any one of the four pieces. Make them of chintz, cretonne, sateen or calico, in the gayest colors and prettiest patterns you can find.

The Patterns. No. 1597 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 and 40. With short sleeves, dress without collar or belt requires 3½ yards of 39-inch material. With long sleeves, 4½ yards. Specific requirements for collars, revers and belts appear on your pattern.

No. 1644 comes in one size—medium. Cape requires 1½ yards of 36-inch material; 4¼ yards of binding; 1¼ yards ribbon for bows. Hanger requires ¼ yard of 36-inch material, with 2¼ yards binding. Bag requires 1 yard, with 4¼ yards binding. Slippers require ½ yard, and ¼ yard more to line. Purchase the soles and pompons.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., 247 W. Forty-third street, New York, N. Y. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

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