

# CRUCIBLE

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

The questioning of Sentry on the witness stand by Mr. Falkran continued:

Q. Under what circumstances? A. Miss Randall came in to say that Miss Wines had asked to see Mr. Loran. Mr. Loran was not in. Miss Randall suggested that I see her.

Q. Never mind what Miss Randall said. The District Attorney might object to your telling us that. But as a result of something Miss Randall said to you, and of your reply, what happened? A. Miss Wines came into my office.

Q. She talked with you? A. Yes.

Q. Did she ask for something? A. She wanted money.

Q. How much? A. A hundred dollars.

Q. Why that exact amount? A. She said—

Q. No, you had better not tell what she said. Do you know of your own knowledge, and not because of anything she said, why Miss Wines wanted the money? A. No.

Q. Was it in consequence of anything you had done? A. No.

Q. Where was Mr. Loran that afternoon? A. He was out of town.

Q. Refused Dead Girl Help.

Q. As a result of what Miss Wines told you, Mr. Sentry, did you give her any money? A. No.

Q. Or advice? A. I went into the reception room to speak to Miss Randall.

Q. Immediately? A. Miss Wines had been with me perhaps five minutes.

Q. She came to you for money and you sent her away? A. Yes.

Q. Why? A. I was afraid of being involved.

Q. Afraid? A. Yes.

Q. You sent her away? A. She was crying. I went into the reception room and spoke to Miss Randall, leaving Miss Wines alone in my office.

Q. Did you ever after she left your employ give her any money? A. No.

Q. Did she offer that day any reason why you personally should give her money? A. Only that she needed it.

Q. No attempt to blackmail you then or later? A. No. She asked, but she did not demand.

Q. By the way, you had a duplicate key to the back door? A. Yes.

Q. Where was it that day? A. In the side drawer of my desk.

Q. When you went into the reception room that day, what did you discuss with Miss Randall? A. I asked her to get rid of Miss Wines.

Q. Did she? A. She went into my office. I went downstairs.

Q. Down the main stairs? A. Down the back stairs.

Q. And on that occasion you did not see Miss Wines again? A. No.

Q. When you came back to your office—if you did? A. I did, half an hour later.

Q. Did you notice anything unusual? A. The side drawer of my desk was open.

Q. The one in which you kept the duplicate key? A. Yes.

Q. Tells of Bridge Game.

Q. Had you left it open? A. Perhaps. I did not know.

Q. Did you notice whether or not the key was gone? A. No.

Q. And was this before or after you began to carry a revolver in the car? A. Before.

Q. How long before? A. A week or more.

Q. How long before Miss Wines was killed? A. About three weeks.

Q. Was Mr. Loran in town after that day and before Miss Wines was killed? A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether Miss Wines saw him? A. I do not.

Q. Now, on a certain Thursday evening, Mr. Sentry, did you play bridge after dinner at your club? A. Yes, every Thursday evening.

Q. I am referring to the evening Miss Wines was killed. A. Yes.

Q. Till what time did you play, on that occasion? A. Till about ten thirty.

Q. You left the club when? A. Eleven o'clock or a little after.

Q. In your car? A. Yes.

Q. With the revolver in the dash locker? A. Yes.

Q. You went where? A. I started home, got almost there, then went back to my office.

Q. Why? A. Mrs. Sentry had arranged that day to have a package delivered at the office from Butler's.

Q. Dealers in kitchenware? A. Yes.

Q. What was in it? A. A drip coffee-pot.

Q. What was to be done with it? A. Mrs. Sentry had asked me to bring it home.

Q. Was it in the car? A. I forgot it on my desk when I left the office.

Q. And you went back to your office? A. To get it, yes.

Q. You got there—when? A. Some time between eleven thirty and twelve.

Q. Stopped where? A. At the curb by the back door.

Q. Did you lock the car? A. I left the key in the lock.

Q. And went immediately upstairs? A. No. I unlocked the door, and started up, and I thought I heard voices.

Q. Voices? A. A voice.

Q. A woman's or a man's? A. A man's.

Q. And what? A. I listened, but the sound was not repeated. I was nervous, came out and looked for a policeman, saw none, decided it was my imagination.

Q. Admits Killing.

Q. So you did what? A. I took the revolver out of the car and went quietly upstairs.

Q. Suddenly braver, Mr. Sentry? A. Playing a game, like a fool kid. I didn't really think there was anyone there.

Q. Took the revolver and went upstairs? A. Yes.

Q. How far upstairs? A. To the third floor.

Q. Was anyone there? A. Yes.

Q. You saw some person or persons? A. It was dark.

Q. You had no light? A. There is no light on the back stairs.

Q. So you came up in the dark? A. The stairs are familiar. I've been using them for thirty years.

Q. Is there a door at the head of the stairs? A. Yes.

Q. And what did you do? A. Opened the door, stepped through it.

Q. Still in the dark? A. Yes.

Q. And did anything happen? A. Someone jumped against me.

Q. Man or woman? A. A man.

Q. What then? A. The impact knocked me against the wall. It jarred me so that the gun went off.

Q. Had you cocked it? A. Yes.

Q. And it went off. Then what? A. The man who had bumped me ran down the back stairs.

Q. You saw him? A. I heard him.

Q. What did you do? A. I turned on the light.

Q. Where? A. In my office.

Q. You went into the office? A. I stood in the doorway and reached the switch.

Q. Did that light the hall? A. Yes, enough.

Q. Did you see anything? A. I saw a woman lying on the hall floor.

Q. And you did what? A. Turned on the hall light to look at her.

Q. To see who she was? A. To see how badly she was hurt.

Q. Did you see who it was? A. It was Miss Wines.

Q. Tells of Robbery Plan.

Q. And what did you do? A. I started to telephone the police.

Q. And did you? A. No.

Q. Why not? A. I realized that I might be blamed.

Q. In other words, you were afraid? A. Yes.

Q. And you did not telephone? A. No. When I went into the office, I saw that the safe was open. There is a money drawer in it, and this drawer had been taken out and was on my desk. The money was still in it. About three hundred dollars.

Q. Yes? A. I realized that no one would believe there had been a robber there unless the money was taken.

Q. Yes? A. I decided to make it look like a robbery.

Q. What did you do? A. Took the money.

Q. You had gloves on? A. Yes, the night was cool.

Q. And then what? A. I turned off the light and went downstairs.

Q. Did you take the package for which you had come back to the office? A. No, I forgot it again.

Q. When you got downstairs, did you notice anything about the car? A. It was gone.

Q. What did you do? A. I supposed it had been stolen. I walked to the corner at random, and then I saw my car.

Q. Where was it? A. It was just around the corner, half a block from where I had left it, parked the wrong way of a one-way street.

Q. What did you do? A. Got in and drove home.

Q. What did you do there? A. Put up the car. Then I threw the pistol in the

Linda cried, "There, Barb! I told you he would be." She explained, in a tender tone, "She's been worrying so!"

Mrs. Sentry thought how little Barbara seemed, and how young, and so terribly hurt. This, too, Arthur had done; yet—suddenly today she could not hate him. She said again to Barbara: "Yes, he was fine! I was never so proud of him."

She saw Phil watch her wonderingly; and she said calmly: "Lunch must be ready. Linda, will you stay?"

While they were at table—Barbara had a tray in her room—Mrs. Falkran telephoned, spoke with Mr. Sentry.

"He's going to see Mr. Sentry first," she reported, "then come out to consult with me. He feels that Mr. Sentry made an excellent witness, that the jury was impressed."

"Of course," Linda agreed.

"After lunch, Mrs. Sentry suggested: 'Linda, take Phil away for the afternoon, will you? Take him for a

Yes, I'm afraid I have. Mr. Loran called me. He resented Falkran's bringing him into this."

"Oh!" She conceded, "Oh, yes, I suppose he would."

Hare explained, "He wants to dissolve his partnership with Mr. Sentry."

"Does he?"

"He has named a figure," Hare told her, "based on what he believes the business—real estate, accounts receivable, contracts, cash, good will—is worth. He offers to buy Mr. Sentry's interest, or to sell his own, on the basis of that figure. The decision is up to you."

"Suppose I wish neither to buy, or sell."

"He will take court action to force a dissolution."

"Can he do that? Force it?"

"Certainly," He added: "That of course might involve the sacrifice sale of many assets."

"What do you advise?"

The lawyer made a doubtful gesture. "You can hardly run the business yourself." And he suggested: "Suppose I ask Mr. Loran to make his offer in writing, to let it stand open as long as possible. Meanwhile you can consult Mr. Sentry, or I will—"

"Perhaps you had better."

"Very well. And after you decide—"

"Exactly."

She had a grateful interval before Falkran came. When he arrived, they went into the library, were there alone.

The attorney professed confidence. "I have just come from Mr. Sentry," he said. "He made an excellent witness this morning. I timed things so that we could adjourn as soon as he was done, in order to allow his evidence to make a maximum impression on the jury's mind over Sunday. Mrs. Sentry, the State lost, this morning, all the ground it had gained. They must begin again from the beginning now."

"Yes?"

"You may take my word for it," he assured her, watching her, sensing something new under her rigid calm. "You see, they expected him to make a complete denial; but Mr. Sentry told the jury what actually happened, and the truth fitted the pattern of the evidence the State had presented in every detail. Their case, so far as first degree murder is concerned, is destroyed."

She did not speak. After a moment he went on: "Of course, I appreciate your feelings this morning. I know quite well that Mr. Sentry did not appear in an admirable light."

Still she said nothing; and he spoke almost hurriedly. "He will face cross-examination on Monday. That will be distressing. The State will emphasize the—unpleasant aspects of his testimony. Yet you must be there."

After a silent moment, when her head bowed, he took this as assent and rose to go; but he made one more demand. "You will see Mr. Sentry tomorrow, no doubt?" he suggested.

Panic did for a moment flicker in her eyes. "Must I?"

He said gently, "If I were District Attorney, when you took the stand, my first question on cross-examination would be: 'Mrs. Sentry, have you visited your husband in his cell since you heard his direct testimony?'"

She stared at him, still sitting motionless. Then she cried desperately: "Yes, yes, I will go! I will go!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)



river back of the garage. I went in the house and down cellar and burned the money in the furnace.

Q. And then? A. I went to bed.

Court adjourned till Monday morning.

Mr. Falkran afterward announced that he had finished with direct examination, so that Mr. Sentry's cross-examination will begin at once when he resumes the stand.

That state like a hypnosis, in which Mrs. entry had found herself so much of the time since the trial began, persisted during Mr. Sentry's direct testimony.

When at adjournment Mr. Sentry left the stand, her eyes met his and she smiled at him firmly as he was led away. Then she and Phil went out together, slowly, surrendering themselves to be a passive part of the sluggish stream of spectators which banked at the door and trickled through, and dispersed along the marble corridors.

She clung to Phil's arm, and they came down to the limousine, and many eyes pinned them and whispers galloped like hounds hot on their trail as they drove away.

They rode in silence for a while, till at last Phil mopped his brow and looked at her and asked miserably, "Want to talk, mother?"

"No, not yet, Phil!"

He said with a jealous loyalty: "I don't believe he ever looked at any woman in his life but you. No matter what he says."

But she did not answer him. After a while he asked huskily: "Mother, did you know what he was going to say? I mean, about the night she was killed?"

She remembered with a pitiless clarity that day she first saw Arthur after his arrest. She said: "He told me, yes. Told me he went there and found her dead." And she added, quickly, "He didn't know then that his shot had killed her."

Phil cried, "Why didn't you tell me?"

"It couldn't have done any good, Phil, to tell you."

"But it was an accident!"

"Yes," She added, unable to check the word in time. "If they believe him."

"Why, they've got to, haven't they? It all fits." He pounded his fist on his knee. "It's rotten enough; but at least he's not a murderer." She said nothing; and he spoke half to himself: "I've never seen him except with you; never—asked him any questions. Did he tell Mr. Flood all this?"

She said wearily: "I think not. I think Mr. Falkran and Mr. Hare both advised him to answer no questions, say nothing at all, after he was arrested."

When at last they came home, Linda was there with Barbara. Barbara as they came in looked at her mother and then at Phil, searchingly; and Mrs. Sentry said quickly: "He was fine, Barbara!"



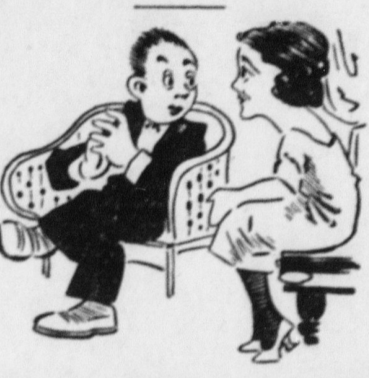
ENCOURAGED HER A LOT

A little girl, on her first day at school, was found by one of the teachers in tears, says London Answers Magazine. "Why, dear," asked the sympathetic lady, "what's the matter?"

"They tell me," said the child between her sobs, "that I shall have to stay here until I'm 14."

Teacher patted her on the shoulder. "Cheer up," she said gently, "you're better off than I am. Just think, I have to stay here until I'm 65."

PATTERN 6243



OH, MY, NO

"Do you spend your evenings holding hands?"

"I'm no gambler—whatever you mean!"

The Lesser Evil

As the small boy came running round the corner he collided with an old lady.

"Dear me," she said, "where are you off to?"

"Home," he panted, "mother's going to spank me."

"But do you mean you want to be punished?"

"No," said the little boy, "but if I'm not back before father, he'll do it!"

Appropriate Confession

"A nickel's worth of liquorice, please," said the little girl.

"I'm afraid I have no liquorice, dear," said the candyshop proprietress. "Must it be liquorice?"

"Yes, I'm afraid it must," replied the child. "You see, our canary is dead and I'm in mourning."

—Stray Stories Magazine.

Bum Luck

Two members of the legal profession, one decidedly glum of countenance, met on the street.

"Well, how's business?" the first asked the second one.

"Rotten," the pessimist replied, "I just chased an ambulance 12 miles and found a lawyer in it."

Valuable Warning

DeTwitter—He's not a handsome dog, but he's very useful. No tramp or beggar can come near the house without our knowing it.

McTweet—What's he do? Snarl?

"No, he runs upstairs and crawls under the bed."

The Trap's All Set

Barney—I'm sorry to keep you waiting, but I've just been setting a trap for my wife.

Paul—Good heavens! Who do you suspect?

Barney—A mouse in the kitchen.

Breezin' Along

Mr. Jones—Bring me another sandwich, please.

Waiter—Anything else, sir?

Mr. Jones—Yes, a paper weight. The last sandwich blew away!

On His Way

Visitor—Am I headed right for the monkey cage?

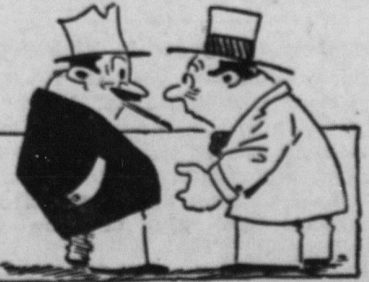
Little Boy—Yes, sir, but you would stand a better chance if you had a tail.

Nor Rabbit in the Rarebit

Guest—Say, ma'am, you didn't put any chicken in my chicken soup.

Waitress—That's right. And I didn't put any horse in the horse-radish, either.

MANY KICKS, TOO



"The mule lives a comparatively short life."

"Yes; but it's a life full of kick."

Too Late

Author—Well, sir, the upshot of it was that it took me 10 years to discover that I had absolutely no talent for writing literature.

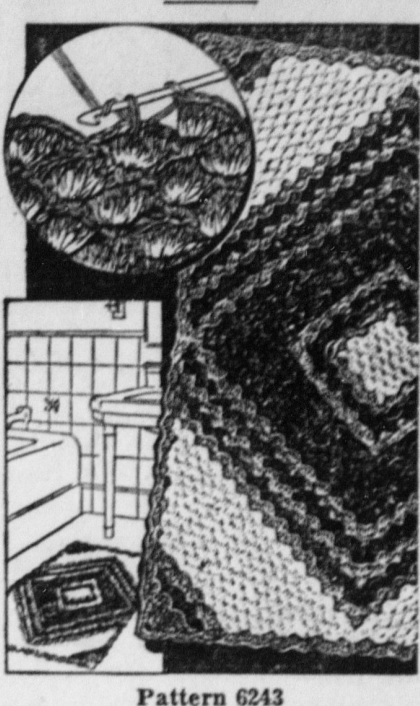
Friend—You gave up?

Author—No, no; by that time I was too famous.—Valdosta Times.

Getting a Lift

"My 'usband's nerves are that bad, 'e's afraid to ask his employer for a rise. Do you think it would do any good to give him a dose of them aspiring tablets?"

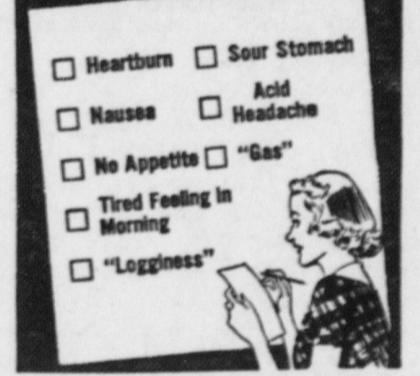
Use Shell Stitch for This Bathroom Rug



Four strands of string or rags in three colors or in black, white, and a color worked in shell stitch, make this durable rug. It's crocheted in five parts—the center and four identical corners—and that makes it easy to handle. It's a lovely rug for bathroom or bedroom. Pattern 6243 contains instructions for making rug; illustrations of it and of stitches; materials needed; color schemes.

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