

# CRUCIBLE

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By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

## CHAPTER XIII—Continued

Linda dared not tell Mr. Wines, dared not admit to herself how important this might be. He stopped uncertainly, and she said, half-sobbing with excitement:

"No one had seen this bullet hole till you did, Mr. Wines. I want you to stay and tell them how you found it. Wait. You will, won't you? Till I telephone?"

"Why, guess I can," he decided. "But—what's the idea?"

She closed the door, carefully, as though afraid that to do so might erase the indications his keen old eyes had been the first to see. Her thought was of Phil; but she would not give Phil a hope that might yet fail. She must first be sure. While old Mr. Wines watched in a puzzled way, she called Mr. Falkran.

He was, his office reported, out of town; to be gone till tomorrow afternoon.

In sudden frantic haste and fear, she called the District Attorney's office, asked for Mr. Flood. The operator said: "He's away for the week-end. Will anyone else do?"

"Someone who knows about the Sentry case," Linda pleaded desperately. "Anyone."

"Who is this, please?"

"Miss Dane, Mr. Phillip Sentry's secretary."

"I might give you Mr. Weldon? He assisted in the trial, and he is here."

"Oh, do, please!"

And a moment later she had Mr. Weldon on the phone. He said guardedly, "Mr. Weldon speaking."

"I'm Miss Dane, Mr. Weldon. Mr. Phillip Sentry's secretary."

"Yes."

"Can you come down to Mr. Sentry's office, quickly, please?"

"Why, if necessary, yes. What is it? Let me speak to him."

"Oh, he's not here! But it is necessary. We've just found—" She hesitated, then spoke carefully, explicitly. "Mr. Wines is here," she said. "The father of—the dead girl, you know. And he has found what looks like a bullet hole."

"A bullet hole?" Weldon's tone was puzzled.

"Yes. In the lock of the door."

"But I don't see—"

"It might mean," she urged, "that Miss Wines was shot by someone else; was already dead when Mr. Sentry got here. You remember they said the gun was pushed against her, but he said he didn't feel her when he fired. Can't you come, please?"

"I see!" Weldon was alert now. "You've found a bullet?"

"No, just a hole."

"Don't touch anything," he directed. "I'll be down there in ten minutes."

So Linda waited, and Zeke Wines waited; and when Weldon arrived and had seen what there was to see, he sent for another man who was expert in such matters to examine this that they had found.

Time thereafter dragged interminably, while Weldon questioned Wines and Linda, and while the expert made his examination. Linda, watching, fretted with impatience; and once she urged, "Oh, can't you hurry?"

But Weldon reassured her. "We've plenty of time. Miss Dane. Today and all tomorrow."

"Something might happen!"

He said gently: "Trust me, please. We've time to make sure of our ground."

And Linda, longing to telephone Phil, nevertheless held herself in check. Better that he should remain in ignorance of this crumb of hope than find it turn to ashes in his mouth.

It was mid-afternoon before Weldon was satisfied. He told her then:

"Miss Dane, there's no doubt a bullet did strike here. There are bits of lead in the wood. And the bullet was pried out, later, with a knife blade, or something of the kind. And it was of the same caliber as the one which killed Miss Wines. Or at least approximately so."

"But Mr. Sentry fired only one shot. At least, there was only one empty cartridge in the gun when we recovered it. And we found where his bullet hit the wall at the end of the corridor out there. That bullet matched his gun."

"Of course, that shot of his may still have killed Miss Wines. There is just a chance it didn't. Just a chance, the Medical Examiner says, that if she were shot here in the doorway she could have taken two or three steps to where she fell. It is possible, that's all." He hesitated. "There are many possible explanations of this other bullet hole," he said.

She nodded fearfully. "I see. But mightn't it mean—What will you do?"

"I'll get in touch with Mr. Flood," Weldon explained. "He's down on the Cape; probably playing golf just now. He will have to decide what to do."

"Can I—tell Mr. Sentry's family?"

"Suppose you wait," he suggested kindly. "Wouldn't it be better to have something definite to tell them?"

"But doesn't this prove Mr. Sentry is innocent?"

"Hardly that," he warned her. "I think you'd better wait, really."

"Can't we drive down to the Cape and see Mr. Flood?"

"I intend to."

"Please let me go with you."

He smiled. "I don't know why not," he agreed. "Yes." He added, "I'll locate the Governor before we start, so that we will know where to find him, later today, if Mr. Flood wishes to do so."

Half an hour later they were on the road. At a little before five they met District Attorney Flood at the golf club near his summer home.

At a quarter of eight they were all back in Phil's office, while the District Attorney himself examined the bullet hole.

He turned at last to Linda. "Well, Miss Dane," he said, a deep relief in his tones, "I shall see the Governor, ask him for a reprieve."

"What does that mean?"

"A postponement." He hesitated.



Occasionally Mr. Hare Stopped In to Discuss Affairs.

"In fact, I may even suggest a commutation. This other bullet certainly creates a grave doubt that Mr. Sentry actually killed Miss Wines."

"But then won't the Governor pardon him?"

"I'm afraid not. Not yet, certainly. Of course, this means a further investigation of the case. The Governor—I'm speaking frankly, you see—may suspect that some of Mr. Sentry's friends have faked this evidence. But there must be a reprieve at least. I'll see the Governor this evening."

Linda considered. "When you know what he decides, Mr. Flood, will you let me tell them? Tell Mr. Sentry's family? You can telephone to me at my home."

"Of course. You've certainly earned that."

"Mrs. Sentry isn't well," she explained. "The shock even of good news—"

Linda meant to wait, to hold her peace, till she could go to Phil proudly with this word; but when she came home, she found it hard to wait. In the end, despite her resolution, she telephoned the Sentry home.

Barbara answered. Linda asked for Phil.

"He's with mother," Barbara told her. "They're outdoors somewhere. I couldn't bear to be with them." Barbara's tones were shaken. She said: "I can't bear to see mother. She's so strange and still."

Linda said quickly, "Come over here, Barbara." She hesitated, then added: "Don't let them know you're coming. I've—something to tell you."

"Something about my father?" Barbara cried, a quick hope in her voice.

"Come," Linda insisted. "I'll be here."

So Barbara was the first to know what had been discovered; and when, at last, the District Attorney telephoned, Barbara was after Linda the first to know the Governor's decision. Mr. Sentry's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Barbara was still weeping when in Linda's car they raced to the Sentry home; and Phil met them in the hall there, and the quick word was spoken, and the three young people for a moment clung fast together, half-laughing, half-crying, in a happiness almost too great to be borne.

Then Mrs. Sentry appeared on the stair landing above them. Wakeful, she too had heard Linda's car arrive. They did not see her till she was halfway down the stairs. They heard her then, and turned, and

Phil leaped up the two or three steps to her side. He caught her close and tenderly.

"Mother! Mother!" he cried. "The Governor has commuted the sentence to life imprisonment!"

## CHAPTER XIV

The newspapers were again filled with the story of the case. The Governor had to meet editorial and public criticism for his commutation of the sentence; but he met it silently, and without revealing the fact that the discovery of new evidence had been responsible for his change of mind. The secret of the bullet hole was well kept. The District Attorney believed that—assuming Mr. Sentry was not the murderer—the actual killer, whoever he might be, would feel a false security if he supposed Mr. Sentry's guilt remained unquestioned. So except for a few individuals, no one knew the truth; but the District Attorney's office meanwhile was busy, checking back, following every line that promised a solution.

The secret was well kept; but Dan Fisher knew. Barbara wrote him the truth; and over the next week-end he came on from Cleveland,

California, Canada, Europe; and Phil brought home travel folders and they studied them diligently, and at night they might be decided on an early departure. But in the morning Mrs. Sentry always reflected:

"You know, Phil, we're perfectly comfortable here. And I don't want to go away from him."

Yet toward the end of July, at Linda's suggestion, they decided on a fortnight in York. Mrs. Sentry would go a day or two ahead, with the servants, to open the house; Phil and Linda would follow later. That Linda should go with them seemed a matter of course. Phil found as always deep happiness in her companionship. She demanded nothing—except to be with him. And—she could give her nothing. If any dreams ever took shape in his thoughts, he remembered his mother's pleading cry, "Stay always with me, Phil!"

And more than ever she needed him now.

His mother and the servants left for York on Wednesday; and on Friday morning, Phil and Linda followed, in Linda's car. The girl drove; and as they picked their way through traffic toward the Turnpike, Phil said:

"Linda, I saw your father, yesterday. He suggested that he put my name up at his club." He added, "I was mighty grateful to him; but they'd be sure to turn me down."

"Father wouldn't have offered, if there were any chance of that."

"He's like you, Linda. He and your mother. So darned-loyal. But others may not feel the same."

"Haven't all your friends been the same?"

"Some have. Some have not. Mother felt hurt at first when Mr. Hare suggested another to defend father, though doubtless it was for the best. Occasionally he stops in to discuss affairs and to encourage Mother."

"The Warings—the way they acted grieved Mother," Phil continued. "And then, she resigned from all her committees and things; and they accepted her resignations. That was tough on her. She's been happier lately. Happy in just—loving father. But she doesn't really seem well. I'm pretty worried about her, Lin."

Linda, grave eyes upon the road, changed the subject. "Do you hear from Mary?" she asked.

Phil nodded grimly. "She's married again, a South American; beef baron, something of the kind." Their thoughts, as sometimes happens with two people as close to one another as they had come to be, ran together. Thinking of Dan and Barbara, they said aloud in a sort of chorus:

"But Barbara—"

Then they looked at each other, and laughed, and he said, "We were going to say the same thing!"

"Yes. Just the way married people do—"

He protested: "Lin, do you have to keep—torturing me?"

"My dear," she said, "don't you know by this time that you and I are already married, in so many real, deep ways? And I'm not asking anything more than we already have, Phil." She added, half to herself, "At least, I don't think I am."

He said: "There's no help for it, Lin. I can't ask—"

She smiled, her eyes upon the road. "You wouldn't even have to ask me, Phil."

"And—mother needs me. I'm all she's got to hold to now, with Mary and Barbara both gone."

Linda did not argue with him; but during the next few days at York, watching Mrs. Sentry and Phil together, she was sometimes secretly angry.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Find Student Interest Lags When a Game or Sport Lacks Prestige

Many are the college men who, with neither the inclination nor the ability to take part in the major sports, have consoled themselves with the thought that after graduation they will still be able to play their golf and tennis, which is more than those who have gained fame in football and baseball can say of their sports, says the Hartford Courant. They may now take further cheer from the recommendations of Prof. Eugene C. Bischoff, of the athletic department of Pennsylvania State college, and Mrs. Elizabeth Meyers, of the school of education, New York university, both of whom advocate greater collegiate emphasis upon individual as opposed to team sports.

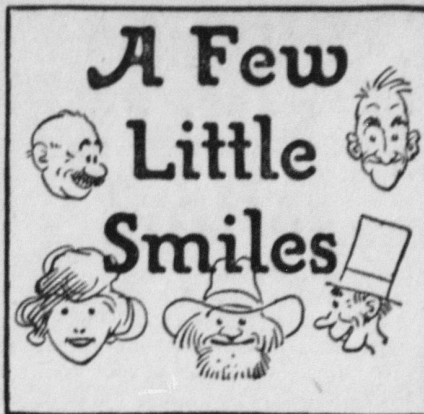
Meritorious as is this proposal, most colleges would have difficulty putting it into effect. Athletic departments of major universities that have attempted to encourage general participation through emphasis on informal, intramural competitions have found that student interest lags when a game or sport lacks prestige. As long as they are major attractions from the spectator's

point of view, the team sports will undoubtedly continue to be the center of student interest. Many students believe, too, that they can shift with little difficulty from the group sports to golf or tennis or any other generally available type of recreation when they are graduated.

It would be hard to prove that shifting the emphasis from the team sports to the individual sports would increase the number of students participating in athletics, if such is the purpose. Students who like a sport will take part in it regardless of its importance. There is a large group, however, that would probably have but a passing interest in any sport were it not for its prestige value.

### Fingers Before Forks

At meals in Arabia there are neither knives nor forks, eating being done with the right hand. In time, one develops the knack of forming the incredibly hot rice which the Arabs serve into artistic little balls, and if one is particularly skillful one manages it without burning the fingers.



## INSPIRED

Teacher turned away from the blackboard, where she had been writing.

"Read out that sentence, Willie," she said.

"He was bent on seeing his old school," read Willie.

"Now, children," continued teacher, "I want you all to paraphrase that sentence."

Chewing his pen, relates London Answers Magazine, Willie regarded the blackboard. Then his face lit up. Busily he wrote: "The sight of the old school doubled him up."

## Exaggeration

The teacher was trying to give her pupils an illustration of the meaning of the word "perseverance."

"What is it," she asked, "that carries a man along rough roads and smooth roads, up hills and down, through jungles and swamps and raging torrents?"

There was a silence, and then Johnny, whose father was a motor dealer, spoke up: "Please, miss," he said, "there ain't no such car."

## QUEER GUY



"My husband's a queer man."

"How so?"

"Says it makes him hot to have to drink his coffee cold."

## Plenty Loud

Chief—I am glad that you have been punctual lately, Mr. Brown.

Clerk—Yes, sir, I have bought myself a parrot.

Chief—A parrot? I recommended you to get yourself an alarm clock.

Clerk—I had an alarm clock but soon got used to it. Now I set the clock beside the parrot and when the clock goes off, what the parrot says is enough to rouse the house.—Lustige Koelner Zeitung, Cologne.

## For Younger Chickens

Just to show you to what lengths some people will go for a gag, we'll tell you about the husband who puttered around in the back yard with some boards and nails while his wife lay in bed with a bad cough.

"How's the wife?" asked a neighbor.

"Not so good."

"Sorry. Is that her coughin'?"

"Oh, no. This here is a hen-house."

## Such Injustice

"Have you any references?" inquired the lady of the house.

"Yes, mum, lots of 'em," answered the prospective maid.

"Then why did you not bring them with you?"

"Well, mum, to tell the truth, they're just like my photographs. None of them don't do me justice."

—Stray Stories Magazine.

## Music to Her Ears

Old Lady to Plowman—Pardon me for interrupting you at your work, but it is so refreshing to hear some one who still speaks the old dialect of the district.

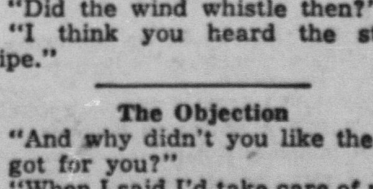
Plowman—That's O. K. with me, old girl.—Providence Journal.

## Remiss

Vicar (benevolently)—And what is your name, my little man?

Small Boy—Well, if that ain't the limit! Why it was you that christened me!

## A QUESTION



"Did the wind whistle then?"

"I think you heard the stove pipe."

## The Objection

"And why didn't you like the job I got for you?"

"When I said I'd take care of your friend's pets while he was away, you didn't tell me he ran a circus."—Houston Post.

## You're Fired

Businessman—Yes, I advertised for a boy about your size. Do you smoke?

Applicant—No, thanks, but you can blow me to an ice cream soda if you want to.

# TIPS to Gardeners

## Plant Seeds Carefully

WHEN vegetable and flower seeds purchased from reputable firms do not germinate as they should, it is safe to assume that conditions are not favorable for growth, or that seeds were not planted properly.

Therefore, it is of greatest importance to plant seeds according to directions on the packets. Extremely small seeds must be covered only lightly with soil, according to Harold N. Coulter, vegetable expert.

The will to grow is strong in seeds, but they have their limitations. To plant a tiny seed, like the petunia, under an inch of soil is like burying a man under a 20-story building and asking him to push it away.

Heavier, larger seeds, of course, may be planted deeper. Beans and cucumbers may be covered with three-quarters of an inch to a full inch of soil. Peas and corn sprout vigorously and may be planted from an inch to an inch and one-half deep.

Many successful home gardeners actually cover peas and corn with an extra half-inch of soil after they begin to push through. This protects them from birds, and also helps keep weeds down.



**Uncle Phil Says:**

**The Other Sounds Highbrow**

"Earning one's bread by the sweat of one's face" may not sound so poetic, but we believe it is correct.

Looking back, how many "new eras" came up to the expectations of those who announced them?

**What Caesarism Does**

Nero was a kind of imbecile. What was to be gained by persecuting the Christians? But then most of the Caesars were lacking in judgment.

We might answer 98 out of 100 questions in an intelligence test but that wouldn't qualify us for any particular kind of a job.

## Plant for a CROP not for a sample!



**PLANT FERRY'S DATED SEEDS**

Now you can distinguish between seeds in their prime and seeds that may be too old to produce a first-class crop! Ferry's Seeds pass rigid tests for vitality and germination each year before being packaged. THEN EACH PACKET IS DATED. This date is your assurance of live and vigorous seeds.

Be sure your seed packets are marked "Packed for Season 1939." Select them from the convenient Ferry's Seeds display at your dealer's. Popular favorites—many at 5¢—and new introductions too. ALL TESTED AND DATED FOR 1939.

Send for Ferry's Home Garden Catalog. Ferry-Morse Seed Co., Seed Growers, Detroit and San Francisco.

**FERRY'S Dated SEEDS**

USE FERRY'S NEW-IDEA GARDEN SPRAY—ECONOMICAL, NON-POISONOUS, NON-STAINING

**Another's Plight**

I had no shoes and complained, until I saw a man who had no feet.—Arabian Proverb.

## OUT OF SORTS?

Here is Amazing Relief for Conditions Due to Sluggish Bowels. **Nature's Remedy** If you think all laxatives are alike, just try this. It's not a laxative, it's a natural, refreshing, invigorating, dependable relief from sick headaches, without opium, used feeding when associated with constipation. It's a life-long habit of N.R. from your Without Risk. If you get a dose, make the test—then if you're satisfied, return the rest to us. We'll refund the purchase price. That's fair. Get N.R. Today. **NO TO-NIGHT** (Gentle Action)

ALWAYS CARRY **STUMPS** QUICK RELIEF FOR ACID INDIGESTION

## MODERNIZE

Whether you're planning a party or remodeling a room you should follow the advertisements... to learn what's new... and cheaper... and better. And the place to find out about new things is right here in this newspaper. Its columns are filled with important messages which you should read regularly.