

THE THREE STRINGS

By NATALIE SUMNER LINCOLN Author of "The Nameless Man"

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READ THIS FIRST

Evelyn Preston, returning to her home in Washington unexpectedly finds a strange man dead in the library. An autopsy develops the fact that his death was due to prussic acid, probably administered in cherry brandy. Evelyn's mother and stepfather, Peter Burnham, arrive but are unable to throw any light on the mystery. Captain La Montagne, in love with Evelyn, learns that his letters to her have been intercepted and suspects Burnham. Palmer, a friend of Burnham, and in love with Evelyn, shares rooms with Doctor Hayden, Burnham's family physician. Maynard, a friend of the family, accompanies Burnham to the laboratory. Burnham expresses the wish that the authorities would arrest the murderer at once.

NOW READ THIS

BEFORE they can do that they must establish the identity of the dead man. Maynard waited until Siki had removed his plate, then continued, "that is the logical end to work from in solving the riddle."

Dr. Hayden nodded his agreement. "The police are working along those lines," he said. "To date they have made but negative progress, and yet—" He paused until Siki departed with the empty chafing dish.

"What were you going to say?" demanded Burnham.

"Only that I stopped to see Coroner Fenfield this afternoon and found him working in his laboratory; he was making a test of the dead man's hair. You noticed perhaps," he broke off to ask Maynard who was sitting for in his chair, "that the man's hair was very closely cropped?"

"Yes," he responded. "It was so short that it made his head look bullet shaped."

"The coroner is nettled because this case has baffled him, so he set his wits to work," continued Hayden. "He pulled out some of the short hair from the dead man's head with tweezers and steeped the hair in diluted nitric acid."

"With what result?" Burnham almost jerked out the question.

"By tests with hydrochloric acid, Fenfield found that the hair had been dyed with nitrate of silver," answered Hayden. "And I found the same result upon microscopic examination of a few hairs."

"Well, what if you did find nitrate of silver?" Burnham demanded roughly. "How does that advance the inquiry?"

"It established the fact that the man had dyed his hair," explained the physician. "The inference being he did so for purposes of disguise."

Palmer, who had been an attentive listener to all that was said, laughed heartily. "Oh, come, Hayden," he exclaimed. "That's a broad statement. I know a number of men, respectable citizens of Washington, who dye their hair for no other reason than to look younger."

"Your friends have not been found dead under mysterious circumstances," said Hayden dryly. "In the case in point we must consider the ulterior motive; therefore this unidentified dead man can be said to have dyed his hair from a motive of disguise and it is proved otherwise."

"I'll admit it's a nice point," conceded Palmer, twisting about in his chair. "Could you tell from the examination the original color of the man's hair?"

"Oh, bother!" broke in Burnham. "Who cares about the color of his hair—how did his dead body get in my house?"

"Walked there," answered Maynard, a twinkle in his eyes belying his serious expression. "The man couldn't have been dead when he entered your house."

"He couldn't eh? Well, will you tell me where he died in my house?" Burnham's manner waxed truculent. "I have searched every room with Palmer and Detective Mitchell and we found no trace of any one, let alone two persons, having been there drinking—what was it? Oh, yes, cherry brandy."

"Every room was in order," added Palmer. "No sign of confusion. Frankly, I agree with Burnham. The man must have been taken to his house, dead."

Maynard stared at the speaker. "Do you mean to tell me seriously that you two men believe a dead body was carried into Burnham's house in broad daylight between the hours of three and five in the afternoon without any one seeing it done?"

"I do," announced Burnham firmly. "As to the hours, don't place too much reliance on Evelyn's statement regarding the time she found the body; Evelyn is very heedless and a few hours' miscalculation in time wouldn't disturb her."

A subtle change in Burnham's tone as he mentioned Evelyn's name caught Maynard's attention and looking up quickly he saw Palmer was watching Burnham, a curious glint in his eye which Maynard found difficult to fathom.

"Evelyn told me that she had her watch examined and that it keeps excellent time," stated Hayden. "Of course we are all liable to make mistakes in the hour; but in this instance Evelyn is unshaken in her belief that she found the body in the library at about 4 o'clock, and that it was not there when she was in the room at half-past two."

"There would be no object in Evelyn lying as to the time," exclaimed Palmer, and his heavy frown indicated his temper was rising. "I hardly think, Burnham, you can impugn her testimony."

"Don't be a fool!" retorted Burnham hotly. "The girl is proverbially careless; carelessness is at the bottom of the confusion in this case."

Only Hayden's strong hand kept Palmer in his seat. "Don't excite your-

self, Burnham," he advised sternly. "and tell us quietly just what your theory is regarding the murder. As for you, Palmer, shut up!" His half-banter tone conveyed a deeper meaning and Palmer, observing Burnham's flushed countenance, held back his angry answer.

"My theory," repeated Burnham thoughtfully, as he passed a damp handkerchief across his face. "The man was taken to my house dead and the murderer made his escape before Evelyn came up from the kitchen."

"Just a moment," Hayden leaned forward. "Why did the murderer ring the library bell to summon Evelyn?"

"How do I know?" Burnham's excitement was mounting the more he talked. "Probably he did it in a moment of—of mental aberration."

Hayden chuckled. "Well, putting that point aside for a moment," he said, "there is the question of getting

trades," he said finally. "The lock on the front door is old fashioned, and the same key opens the outer vestibule door also."

"Not a very secure arrangement," remarked Maynard. "Then you think keys were made to fit the doors in your absence this summer?"

"Yes. It would be an easy matter for a man to get a wax impression of the lock at night without attracting attention. The few people on our block who are home are at work all day and at the club at night; that is why," added Burnham obstinately, "the dead man could have been brought at any hour to the house unknown to any one."

"You mean brought in a cab?" inquired Maynard.

"Of course. A dead man couldn't be carried through the streets without being seen by some one," replied Burnham. "Have a little sense!"

Maynard paid no attention to his companion's irritability. "So you think the dead man was

as the latter rose, "hand me a cigar from the box on the mantel, thanks," and he borrowed Maynard's cigarette to light the fresh cigar.

The silence continued as Palmer, his big form moving quietly down the room, reached one of the front windows and opened it wide. For a short time he stood contemplating the opposite houses, dimly seen in the murky atmosphere, and filled his lungs with the damp air. Hearing his name he faced about.

"Have you disappeared for good, Palmer?" called Burnham. "We must be getting along. I—"

Whatever Burnham intended to say remained unuttered as a stinging sensation caused him to clap his hand to his face. When he removed it his palm showed blood from a graze on his cheek.

"Shot, by God!" he exclaimed, gazing dazedly at his companions.

Palmer moved swiftly from the window and peered over Hayden's shoulder at a hole in the plaster—the



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body through the streets and up your steps unseen in broad daylight by any passer-by."

"Confound it!" Burnham banged the table with his clenched fist until the glasses rattled. "Why do you keep harping on daylight? The coroner claims that the man died between two and three Tuesday morning; the murderer had ample time before daylight to take the body to my house—"

"But Evelyn did not find the body until Tuesday afternoon," interrupted Palmer heatedly.

"She did not find the body in the library until Tuesday afternoon," retorted Burnham. "But I am willing to bet any amount that had Evelyn looked through the entire house she would have found it concealed somewhere on the premises."

In the silence that ensued Burnham glanced triumphantly at his companions, but their expression disappointed him; his theory had not created the sensation he had expected.

"Of course the body was in the house," answered Hayden. "It had to be there that length of time, for the man was dead hours before Evelyn found him. Why the body was moved into the library, why the murderer returned to the scene of his crime, and why he rang the library bell are problems yet to be solved."

"There is a point you are all overlooking," broke in Palmer. "Where did the murderer get the keys to your house? There is no evidence to show he broke into the house, therefore he must have used a key."

Burnham did not reply at once. "There are dishonest locksmiths, I suppose, as well as crooks in other

carried to your house in a cab," he murmured. "If that was the case it simplifies the search."

"How so?" The question came from Palmer and Maynard turned slightly to face him.

"It should be a comparatively easy matter to trace the cab-driver," he said.

"An excellent idea," agreed Hayden. "Provided, of course, that Burnham's theory is correct—that the man was first murdered and then carried into his house. Frankly, as a medical man, I don't agree with Burnham's reasoning; a dead body is a very unwieldy object to move around and would most certainly attract attention."

"The man was only of medium height and thin," protested Burnham, and then added in haste which Maynard was quick to note, "that is, judging from the glimpse I had of his body on the billiard table. Palmer,"

bullet had mushroomed out. Maynard tapped the wall. "Erick," he said tersely, and his face shone white in the rays of the electric lamp which Palmer held aloft to better inspect the bullet. "I heard no sound."

"None of us did," responded Burnham hoarsely. "Whoever fired the shot used a Maxim silencer."

Hayden moistened his finger and touched the hot metal. "Fortunate you moved your head when you did, Burnham," he commented dryly. "Where did the shot come from?"

A sudden stronger puff of air rattled the newspapers lying near the open window and the men turned in that direction.

"Jove! the window!" Palmer sped in that direction. "I saw no one on the balcony when I looked out a few minutes ago; then you called, Burnham."

Maynard, who had hurried with him to the window, leaned far out, and

MY PIPE

My pipe is a thinker who thinks with good will When I'm through with my eating and drinking. I know that his work shows the highest of skill— But he won't tell me all that he's thinking!

My pipe is a poet with loftiest dreams; Sweet lyrics he always is scheming. But on divers occasions (as this one) it seems He won't tell me all that he's dreaming!

My pipe as a friend is devoted to me. In the glow of his bowl I am basking. His thoughts and his dreams are his own, do you see, But his service is mine for the asking.

GRIF ALEXANDER.

FRENCHY—And He Got the Pie



looked up and down the balcony which ran across the front of the apartment. "Who owns the next apartment?" he demanded, observing that another window opened upon the balcony. "There, where the window is."

"That's our hall window," explained Palmer. Turning on his heel he hurried into the reception hall with such speed that he collided violently with his Japanese servant. "Siki, what are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I come to answer the door, most honorable sir," responded the servant and glancing ahead Palmer saw the front door to his apartment was ajar and that a shadowy form stood in the corridor just outside the entrance.

"What do you want?" he asked, pushing Siki to one side and switching on an additional light; by its aid he saw that the man in the corridor was a French officer.

"I come to inform you of the death of Madame Van Ness," the Frenchman stated, observing with well-bred surprise Palmer's agitated appearance.

"Right upstairs, next floor," the latter snapped, and shutting the door he was in time to catch Burnham as he staggered to a seat in nervous collapse.

"It's that damned Frenchman—" Burnham could hardly articulate, and Hayden hastened to his aid. "He tried to kill me."

"He—who?" demanded Maynard who had lingered behind at the window to look up and down the street before joining them. "Why tried to kill you?"

"Rene La Montagne," gasped Burnham and slipped back insensible.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

An Ideal Bedside Book

I am one of those persons, who, having laid their heads upon the pillow, instantly become wrapped in profound slumber. Nothing awakens me. With me the dormouse is an aloes ran. Indeed, once in France—but I doubt if you would believe me.

And so I was surprised last night to find myself lying awake. I was wholly at a loss, and could not understand it. Such a thing had not happened before, and I groped around for an explanation. Manfully I groped, but without result. None of the traditional causes of sleeplessness seemed to fit my case. I had not had cheese for supper—I hate cheese; it could not be change of surroundings, for I had taken the step from military harness to civilian softness without, so to speak, noticing it.

I gave up my quest, and decided to turn from causes to cures. Accordingly I closed my eyes, and (I once Peimanzhad no difficulty in arranging the usual scene of rustic charm—the well-kept but narrow gate and the brigades of sheep passing through in single file, keeping well closed up. On them concentrating, I counted.

At five thousand and two I gave up the unequal contest, and decided to try something fresh. I remembered some one mentioning, "Think about Nothing." I thought of nothing. Then I thought of everything. Rapidly unpelminizing myself, I pondered on the League of Nations, Do Woodcock Carry Their Young, The Place of Ella Wheeler Wilcox in Contemporary Poetry, The Age of Mr. Bottomley, and the Causes of Cramp in the Left Foot—all at the same time. It was a superb effort but unavailing.

Next I lay with my eyes wide open—a remedy strongly advocated by my great aunt. I cursed her. Then I lay on my left side with my eyes shut, and on my right side with my eyes open. Frantic, I lay on my back. Maddened, I lay on my stomach. Finally I lay entirely covered in bedclothes, but this too I abandoned feeling I was too young to die. And then I lost command of my immortal soul and surrendered. Only one thing was left.

To read. To fall asleep reading. I walked across to a small shelf of books which stood on a side table, and bore them back to my now repugnant couch. I put on my glasses, picked up a volume, and opened it. The "Anatomy of Melancholy," "Capital," thought I. "Now we shan't be long"—but old Robert failed me, and after a stout effort to be lulled by his interminable quotations, I threw him into the fireplace.

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DREAMLAND ADVENTURES—By Daddy

"SMILING TEACHER"

(Peggy and Billy take a trip to Africa with Smiling Teacher aboard a Geography plane, and while exploring an oasis in the desert see a handsome young Bedouin.)

THE LIONS' DEN

The Bedouin whirled his horse and galloped away over the sand ridges. Smiling Teacher came from behind the tree, where she was hiding, and gazed after him.

"Isn't he grand!" she sighed. "Wouldn't it be romantic if we were attacked by savages and he came to the rescue."

Peggy thought that it would be, but at the same time she felt that the young Bedouin was pretty much of a savage himself and that any one in his clutches might have to be rescued by some other hero. Later she was to find this to be true.

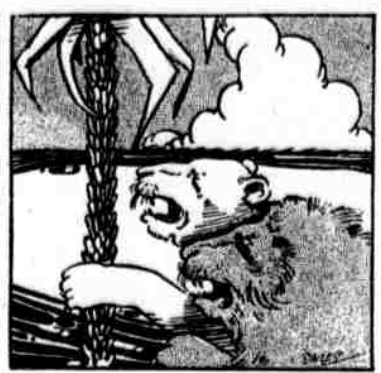
While Peggy and the Smiling Teacher were following the Bedouin with their eyes, Billy was exploring the oasis. An excited exclamation from him brought the others to his side. He was looking into a rocky cave.

"Maybe it's a lions' den!" he whispered.

"Yes. Come away quickly!" answered Smiling Teacher, dragging Peggy toward the desert. But another exclamation from Billy caused them to turn back.

"Oh, see the funny puppies!" he cried. Out of the cave had rumbled two fuzzy, playful little creatures. They were wrestling with each other and having the jolliest kind of a time.

"What pretty doggies!" said Peggy. The doggies, rolling over and over in



Another second and he was beside his mate

their play, came almost to Billy before they saw him.

"Here, puppies, puppies!" he coaxed, holding out his hands to them.

"Up-up-up-ugh!" growled the puppies, scampering back to the entrance of the den. There they turned to gaze at the three humans in scared curiosity.

At the same time they set up a whimpering and whining. Billy took a step toward them and the whine grew louder.

Instantly came a startling response from the desert at the opposite side of the oasis—it was a roar, thunderous and terrifying.

"A lion! Run!" cried Smiling Teacher, grasping Peggy by the hand and dragging her into the desert. Billy started to follow, when a huge tawny creature bounded into view. Billy jumped behind a tree and the creature flashed by, making for the den. It had no mane, and he instantly recognized it as a lioness.

The mother lion snuffed her cubs to

see if they were all right, then looked around to find what had alarmed them. She saw Smiling Teacher and Peggy racing across the desert and leaped in pursuit.

To save them Billy grabbed up a stone and hurled it at the lioness. It caught her in the side and caused her to stop and whirl about. Her eyes fastened upon Billy, and she started for him. At the same instant Billy started up a palm tree, climbing for dear life. He was just out of reach when the lioness grabbed at him.

"Run! Run!" yelled Billy to Smiling Teacher and Peggy. "I'll keep the lioness here!"

The lioness let out a roar of rage. Instantly there came an answering roar from the desert. It was the male lion coming home.

Another second and he was beside his mate, looking up at Billy and lashing his tail savagely. He was heavily maned and appeared huge and ferocious.

Presently the lion saw Smiling Teacher and Peggy fleeing in the distance. With another roar he made after them. It was vain Billy yelled and screamed to distract his attention. The lion was intent upon this new prey, while the lioness stayed to guard the tree.

Smiling Teacher and Peggy seemed doomed. But suddenly rescue came. From behind a sand ridge the young Bedouin dashed into view. His eyes took in the situation at a glance. Lowering his spear, he charged upon the rushing lion.

(Tomorrow will be told how Smiling Teacher, Peggy and Billy are rescued by the Bedouin tribe.)

BRUNO DUKE, Solver of Business Problems

By HAROLD WHITEHEAD, Author of "The Business Career of Peter Flint," etc.

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THE PROBLEM OF THE PROFIT-SHARING PLAN

How the Trouble Ended AFTER getting the facts of the case, I went to the insurance company and asked for Miss Snaller. There was no need to do so, for when I saw a sour-faced woman with several crisis-crises scratches on her face I knew that it was she.

"Miss Snaller," I began in a stern manner, "I have come from New York in the interest of Miss Cliff. I am instructed to act in her behalf. I am given to understand that you accuse her of stealing?"

"Look what she did to my face, the little thief," snapped the woman. "She's in jail now for doing it, and it serves her right."

"That is a matter for future consideration. You tell me she's a thief. That is a serious—a very serious—accusation for which I must hold you to account."

She looked worried at this, but dodged the issue by saying that stamps had been missing lately, and "that creature was the only one who could possibly take them."

"Is that your proof?" I coldly inquired.

"That isn't all; I've missed money here lately, taken out of my coat hanging up there," she nervously pulled at a button on her sleeve.

"I fear that I shall have to bring suit against you on behalf of Miss Cliff. She has been expelled from the business college on the strength of your accusation. Her career here is ruined just because you brought so grave a charge against her—and apparently without any justification."

Then she collapsed and began to cry about her hard life and how she was always being "put on."

"Finally I said, 'We have no wish to be severe on you, so if you will at once come with me to the police station and withdraw your charge of assault and battery, and also give a written denial of your accusation, in which you will clearly state that you had no justification whatever for your charge of theft, we will drop the matter.'"

"So anxious was she to get out of her tangle that I soon had Mamie released and in the train for New York. Her first anxiety was that Bruno Duke should not think her a thief."

"You know, Mister Flint, I wouldn't do nothing 'er double-cross Mister Duke after wot he's done for me. I'd no more a taken that snide's roll than—than nothing" at all.

I assured her that I had Miss Snaller's letter to prove her innocence on that score.

"But what made you scratch up that poor woman so?"

"It—then she stopped short. "The devil, I said I was a-goin' ter cut out the rough talk, an' then I go shootin' it off wot even over. But say, Mister Flint, what 'ud you do if some one called yer a crook?"

I guess the expression on my face gave her my answer, for she laughed and said:

"There y'are, yer see."

"But," I admonished, "it isn't a thing 'at ladies do."

"Ladies!" she tossed her head and snorted. "I ain't no lady. I'm just a scrapper wot 'ud a bin dead years ago if I hadn't knowed how ter look after number one."

It was hopeless to reason with her, for somehow I felt she was right, so I bought her Dress and the Home-maker to read.

"She was quiet for a long time, and I was congratulating myself on getting something that pleased her, when I noticed she had another magazine held inside one of those I bought her."

I seized an opportunity to leave the seat and then saw she was reading "Duke Devil Nell, the Cowboy's Bride!"

"Duke told me he had to send Mamie to that secondary school, 'for when I explained what Mamie was, the schools in town refused to assume the responsibility—and I don't know that for on your regards she'll start on our new problem of the profit-sharing plan.'"

"Well, I'm glad to hear that," I said. "I'll be glad to connect with you some established concern where honest ef-

fecting probably outside some selling enterprise; also have had charge of the execution of a contract, collections and settling of accounts, and also had charge of the management of a business enterprise by letter if desired.

What is the matter with the included ad in your opinion?

The greatest weakness of your ad is that nobody knows what you are advertising for excepting a job, and you have to read over half of the advertisement before you really tell anything about yourself.

People hire you for what you can do for them, not for what you are. The fact that you are twenty-three and deaf is not a recommendation. You are a person whose honest efforts will mean a permanent position, is no reason why they should hire you.

Then you say "preferably outside." What do you mean? Do you want to work on a team? Do you want to be a partner? Do you want to work on your own? Do you want to be a partner? Do you want to be a partner? Do you want to be a partner?

Decide what kind of a job you want and then advertise for it. Your ad is just a blind shot in the dark and is comparable to a man who goes into a wood and points his gun around wildly in trying to hit something.

If you seek a position as a salesman or a collector say, "I want a position as a collector," or as a salesman, whichever it may be and then state your reason for wanting such a job.

Business Questions Answered WELL-RECOMMENDED YOUNG MAN TELLS DESIRES TO CONNECT WITH SOME ESTABLISHED CONCERN WHERE HONEST EF-

THE DAILY NOVELETTE MR. DOOLING HASTENS MATTERS

By Elizabeth Smith

MARY GREELY sat knitting at her desk in a private office of the Woodworth Manufacturing Company, where she had been employed for some time as an engineer. Through the opened sliding windows in the partition, which separated her from the counting room, she could plainly hear Paymaster Truesdale and Mr. Dooling, the bookkeeper, straying about the payroll.

There was also an occasional word from the traveling man, Mr. Bangs, as he caught a glimpse of herself in the large mirror over Mr. Robey's desk across the room. "I'm surely getting old, yet I do it over again just the same. Anyway, mother had every comfort while she lived, if we did live in two rooms. There'll always be comfort for me in the remembrance of that. No, I have no regrets, but I can't deny that I am very homesick."

Mary was getting old. She had just ripened into womanhood with no more plumpness than that which belongs to the well-rounded curves of twenty-eight. She was a girl of twenty-eight, a girl of twenty-eight, a girl of twenty-eight.

"Oh, dear," murmured Mary, sighing, as she caught a glimpse of herself in the large mirror over Mr. Robey's desk across the room. "I'm surely getting old, yet I do it over again just the same. Anyway, mother had every comfort while she lived, if we did live in two rooms. There'll always be comfort for me in the remembrance of that. No, I have no regrets, but I can't deny that I am very homesick."

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