

'IS THERE SUCH A THING AS LOVE?' EDITH LAVOY THOUGHT THERE WAS, FOUND IT 'ONLY A DREAM'

Pretty Teacher's 200 Letters to William Creasy, Now Indicted for Killing Her, Tell of Passion and Despair, but Fail to Solve the Secret of Her Tragic End

HER 'SWEETHEART BILLIE' IN ONE NOTE IS AN 'OIL CAN' SHE 'HATES' IN ANOTHER

Meanwhile Freeport, L. I., Vainly Puzzles Over Mystery—Was It Murder? Yes, Her Friends Assert—Suicide? She Shot Herself, Creasy Insists in Jail

DID the romantic secrets of Edith Lavoy's life—and the tragic secret of her death—die with her? Did the little school teacher of twenty-two, perhaps broken of heart, kill herself with the revolver of the man she loved? Or did this man, William Creasy, a Kentuckian, once engaged to Edith, murder the girl because he had wearied of her? Or because he was jealous?

These are the questions they are asking today in Freeport, L. I., a community which recently has seen much of tragedy, the town where Edith Lavoy taught in the public school and met her death on Friday night, June 23.

Edith loved Creasy with a vast devotion. That is, she loved him once. Whether this love existed at the time of her death nobody knows. Indeed, in a late letter she spoke of her "hate" for him.

But certain little phrases in some of her letters to Creasy laid bare the heart of the girl. And now and then a poignant touch of pathos!

"Don't worry about me falling in love," she wrote once. "I have given up hope. I thought I was once, you know, Bill, but I found it was only a dream. God, is there any such thing as love? I am afraid not for me."

And, again, this in another letter to Creasy: "Billy, dear, how are you these lovely, LONELY spring days? So glad you love Miss Veith so much. Billy, I know she must be a wonderful girl."

Who is Miss Veith? What part did she play in Creasy's life? Was Edith's heart at the breaking point when she wrote to the man she loved—or had loved—"So glad you love Miss Veith so much?"

On the other hand, who are the other men who figured in Edith Lavoy's life? What part did they have in it? What, for instance, of George Davidson, to whom, in a letter just before her mysterious death, Edith wrote:

"I was happy because I was with you. I thought of you many times." And in another letter to Davidson she referred to a surprise visit by Creasy. "I am not nervous, but just annoyed," was her comment. "Do not worry, George, dear, and I'll let you know how things are just as soon as I know."

"Murder!" Say Her Friends; "Suicide!" Is Creasy's Answer

Creasy, whose home is in Kentucky, at Fort Thomas, is now in the Mineola jail, Nassau County, held without bail on an indictment charging murder in the first degree. Arraigned on the indictment, he pleaded not guilty. He insists that Edith shot herself with a revolver she found in the pocket of his coat.

Yet Miss Lavoy's relatives and hundreds of her friends and acquaintances in Freeport rise up to deny Creasy's statement. They say he killed the girl who loved and respected; the girl who was found in the living room of her boarding house at 156 North Main street, Freeport, with a bullet through her head and blood trickling down either side.



Edith Lavoy, the school teacher who was shot and killed in the parlor of her boarding house in Freeport, L. I.



had taken it away from him in April when he came to see her. "You threatened to kill her with it and she took it away from you," cry her friends indignantly. "She took it because she wanted to practice shooting around the woods of Freeport," Creasy replies. One of the first letters is dated March 16, 1921. Edith wrote:

Hello, sweetheart Billie! Say, how is it I never knew when your birthday was? So glad to know now. Am I right in saying it was your twenty-seventh birthday? I hope it was a happy one. Next year you can bet I will remember (that is, if we are still the same old -----).

Billie, I was at a loss what to send you. I sent you a box of cigars last night. Now I don't know how you will like them, but the man who sold them to me vouched for them, and said he knew you would like them. I am so glad you received a letter from me on your birthday.

Well, just think, day after tomorrow I leave for Home Sweet Home. I am packed and all ready. Will leave here at 3:25 Friday and be home Saturday morning. (Oh! Billie, you can't imagine how happy you ----- is!!!) Yes, dear boy, I am having a lovely time, but you are first and foremost in my thoughts. I am glad you have a snap of a job, but am sorry you are missing all the good times.

Bye-bye, Billie. The folks join me in sending -----. Just sent one of my kiddies up after the mail. Just can't wait until 3:30 for it.

Yours till the moon burns out of oil, ME. (ix)

Kissed by ME. The four dashes are supposed to mean "love," and the ten dashes "sweetheart." In another letter dated Freeport, Tuesday, January 12, 1921, Edith wrote:

The first of June Miss Lavoy still had Creasy's revolver, and he sent her a telegram demanding it. The telegram was telephoned to the school, and Miss Lavoy, thinking that it was a message from her mother, asked Edna Shoemaker, principal of the school and a close friend of hers, to take the message.

On June 4 Miss Lavoy wrote to Creasy saying that Miss Shoemaker had been greatly shocked at the message: "What on earth do you do such funny things for? Don't you suppose I am known around here?"

The same week she also wrote: Darling Boy: Will be so glad to get home again, but I do get so tired of living some-thing. It seems we are here only for trouble. No, Billy, mother is no better, and am so anxious to go to her. I fear mother will never be well again, and if such is the case I want to go, too. It never rains but it pours. Good night, darling boy.

One of the last letters Edith Lavoy wrote was dated June 7. In it she said: So sorry, Billie, you are not feeling

sees fit to take me. Certainly there must be sunshine everlasting in our heavenly home, and that is worth while working for and looking for. There is no happiness on earth, and I shall not look for any. You are not friendless and will not be so long as I live. I am your true-blue, sincere friend, and always will be, and you know the old saying goes, 'No man is useless while he has a friend.'

Pieces of letters were found in the yard of the house where Edith boarded, and they are being patched together. An uncompleted letter was found pushed under a blotter on the desk. It was addressed to Edith's family. It read: Dear Everybody: This sure has been a busy week, and it will seem good when everything is done. All my "cherubs" made their grade and every one passed regent geography.

The weather down here for the last week has been just fine; by that I mean plenty of rain, so it made it nice and cool. Last Sunday I went to East Orange, Bloomfield and Newark, N. J., to visit George's folks. We had dinner at his father's at Bloomfield, and an elaborate dinner at his brother's in East Orange. By the way, George sends mother his

lovely spring days. So glad you love Miss Veith so much. Billy, I know she must be a wonderful girl. In a letter of May 22 a small spray of lilies of the valley was inclosed. It said:

Your letter just received. This has been a wonderful day, but rather warm. How is it in Kentucky? Mother is no better and I am almost decided to go home tomorrow. But you can send my mail right here and I will get it in case I don't go home. If I do go I will let you know at once. I am feeling sick today, so shall retire early. I have been so nervous today. Completely unstrung.

The letter was signed "Me." Another letter dated May 9 Edith said: Billie dear, as for that gun, I do not want it and you know it, darling boy. However, seeing that you want it so badly, I sure will send it to you tonight, as I have it all packed up. Sorry if you have really needed it and I

wait until I have served my time in this wicked old world. That was good advice you gave me about falling in love. No, Billy, don't worry about me falling in love. Guess I am not built that way. Sometimes I wish I could. But I have given up hope. I thought I was once, you know, Billy, but I woke up and found it was only a dream.

God, is there any such thing as love! I am afraid not for me. Yours till the moon burns out of oil, ME. (ix)

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other card, undated, bore just a few lines. "You said you didn't want me to write any more, so am just saying good-night." ME. (x)

On May 23 Edith again expressed her desire to die. The letter read: Darling Boy: Will it make you feel any better to really know that I am lonesome for you tonight? I speak the evening at Mrs. Shoemaker's, or I would have gone insane. Oh, I don't know how I can wait six weeks until vacation comes. Will kiss your picture good-night, and God help us both. Oh, how I wish I could die, but I can't go till God wants me. Lonesome and heartbroken, ME. (xx)

sorry you have not received either of the two letters I mailed you this week, but I am sure the fault is all my own, as I am almost positive I addressed same Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets. Of all carelessness! Wonder if you could get them by calling up the postoffice? I wrote you Monday and yesterday.

The first was thanking you for the happy day I had Sunday, George. I was happy because I was with you. I felt too guilty to think that you had to go back on that slow trolley, George. I thought of you many times. The letter was a hasty note, the contents of which I will tell you personally when I see you. My thanks for the folder. You are so thoughtful about everything. It's the little things that really count. In fact, they are the big things after all.

I cannot recall telling you that we were going up by boat, but must have, as I see one of the time-tables is the Hudson River Line. Mercè beautiful! Well, George dear, how is the world treating you? Suppose you are the same busy boy as ever. George, if you have the time and care to run over some evening before I go home, I'll be only too glad to see you. Just a nice, quiet little chat with you. Now please, do not feel it is compulsory. I would just like to have you know that you are welcome. Hastily, but—U know. EDITH.

Affairs With Other Women Revealed by Creasy's Trunk

Creasy and his wife, who was Miss Elsie Cortell, and now lives in Huntington, W. Va., were divorced. In his trunk, which was found at the Freeport station, were letters from many women and envelopes containing articles of women's apparel, with the names of the women to whom they belonged on the envelopes and details of Creasy's relations with each of the women.

At one time, soon after Edith Lavoy's death, Creasy made several statements against the girl's character which he later denied. But with the brother and sister of the dead girl standing before him in the jail, he defiantly insisted that what he said was true and that she had had other affairs. Leroy Lavoy sprang forward to strike the prisoner, but the jail attendants seized



The boarding house at 156 North Main street, Freeport, L. I., in the parlor of which Edith Lavoy was found dead and Creasy sitting in a chair beside her. Above—William Creasy, the Kentuckian to whom Edith Lavoy wrote 200 endearing letters and who has been indicted for first-degree murder in connection with her death.

best regards and says he'd like to have another game of pinch-me with her. He has a studio now in New York and is quite a success. Well, Hazel and I were picked again this year to be ushers. Not too tickled about it, either. I never rains but what it pours. "Who should have popped in this morning but Billie. That 'oil can.' I just hate him. Believe me, he got some cold reception."

The letter was not signed because Creasy's arrival interrupted it. According to Edith's friends it was she who had resolved to terminate the engagement, and, so they reason, in a jealous rage he killed her as he had threatened to do before.

Tells of Creasy's Arrival; 'Not Nervous, Just Annoyed'

A letter said to have been written by Edith Lavoy to George Davidson, of whom she wrote in her last letter to her family, reads as follows: My Dear George: I am very busy with everything, and will write you a nice long letter soon. Have lots to tell you. Hope you are not working too hard. My cherubs are coming on great in their exams. Every one passed in geography and over half were honor mark. Hastily, but—EDITH.

him before he could reach Creasy. Edith Lavoy pointed her finger at him and told him the real truth was known. Then, with tears in her eyes she besought him to retract his statements. Creasy did not reply, but merely glared at the girl, who shuddered and sank on the jail corridor in a faint.

Lester Bedell, of Freeport, who is one of the men mentioned by Creasy, as well as George Davis, clenched his hands when he heard of Creasy's remarks, and prayed for an opportunity to avenge Edith.

"It was not suicide. The girl was murdered," was the opinion of Dr. Otto Schultz, assistant medical examiner of New York, and Captain William Jones, formerly pistol expert of the New York Police Department, after an examination of the body.

Miss Lavoy's roommate was Mildred Semson. Almost prostrated with shock, frantic with grief, she went to Tupper Lake, N. Y., where Edith Lavoy's brother and sister who took the body home. The death of Miss Lavoy is one of the tragedies which has disturbed Freeport recently. The day after Miss Lavoy's death occurred the shooting of Oscar A. Hirsch at a party at the home of Renie Davis, which began Saturday night. Mr. Hirsch was shot through the chest, and his beautiful wife, Mrs. Hirsch, was charged with the shooting.



The "Kissing Bridge" on the outskirts of Freeport, L. I., that at first had an important position in the police theory of Edith Lavoy's death. It was then thought the couple had entered into a suicide pact and had intended to end their lives at this bridge.

have been so mean. But honest, Billie, I did it with the kindest and friendliest feelings toward you. You knew it all along. Gee, Billie, Hazel is still sore, but she can go— you know where. Oh, it just makes me feel terrible to have any one criticize you. I can't stand it and I won't. Some folks are so narrow about such things. If she tells any one about it I'll never speak to her again. Good-by, darling boy, and I will write soon and surely will send you my gun tonight. Bye bye, honey. ME. (xx)

In another letter Edith speaks of a friend of Creasy's, about whom he had evidently written her: Billy, dear, how are you these lovely,