

THE BAT

A Novel from the Play
By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART
and AVERY HOPWOOD

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WNU Service

CHAPTER IX—Continued

"Oh, no! I can't stand it! I'll tell you everything!" she cried, frantically. "He got to the foot of the staircase—Richard Fleming, I mean," she was facing the detective, now, "and he had the blue-print you've been talking about. I had told him Jack Bailey was here as the gardener and he said if I screamed he would tell that. I was desperate. I threatened him with the revolver but he took it from me. Then when I tore the blue-print from him—he was shot—from the stairs—"

"By Bailey?" interjected Beresford angrily. "I didn't even know he was in the house!" Bailey's answer was as instant as it was hot. Meanwhile the doctor had entered the room, hardly noticed, in the middle of Dale's confession, and now stood watching the scene intently from a post by the door.

"What did you do with the blue-print?" The detective's voice beat at Dale like a whip. "I put it first in the neck of my dress—"

"Then, when I found you were watching me, I hid it, somewhere else."

"Did you give it to Bailey?"

"No—I hid it—and then I told where it was—to the doctor—"

Dale swayed on her feet. All turned surprisedly toward the doctor. Miss Cornelia rose from her chair.

"The doctor bore the battery of eyes unflinchingly. "That's rather inaccurate," he said, with a tight little smile. "You told me where you had placed it, but when I went to look for it, it was gone."

"Are you quite sure of that?" queried Miss Cornelia acidly. "Absolutely," he said. He ignored the rest of the party, addressing himself directly to Anderson.

"She said she had hidden it inside one of the rolls that were on the tray on the table," he continued, in tones of easy explanation, approaching the table as he did so, and tapping it with the box of sleeping-powders he had brought for Miss Cornelia.

"She was in such distress that I finally went to look for it. It wasn't there."

"Do you realize the significance of this paper?" Anderson boomed, at once.

"Nothing, beyond the fact that Miss Ogden was afraid it linked her with the crime." The doctor's voice was very clear and firm.

Anderson pondered an instant. Then—

"I'd like to have a few minutes with the doctor alone," he said, solemnly.

The group about him dissolved at once. Miss Cornelia, her arm around her niece's waist, led the latter gently to the door. As the two lovers passed each other a glance flashed between them—a glance, pathetically brief, of longing and love. Dale's finger-tips brushed Bailey's hand, gently, in passing.

"Beresford," commanded the detective, "take Bailey to the library and see that he stays there."

Beresford tapped his pocket with a significant gesture and motioned Bailey to the door. They, too, left the room. The door closed. The doctor and the detective were alone.

The detective spoke at once—and surprisingly.

"Doctor, I'll have that blue-print!" he said sternly, his eyes the color of steel.

The doctor gave him a wary little glance. "But I've just made the statement that I didn't find the blue-print," he reaffirmed flatly.

"I heard you!" Anderson's voice was very dry. "Now this situation is between you and me, Doctor Wells." His forefinger sought the doctor's chest. "It has nothing to do with that poor fool of a cashier. He hasn't got either those securities or the money from them, and you know it. It's in this house, and you know that, too! Tonight, when you claimed to be making a professional call, you were in this house—and I think you were on that staircase when Richard Fleming was killed!"

"No, Anderson, I'll swear I was not!" The doctor might be acting, but if he was, it was incomparable acting. The terror in his voice seemed too real to be feigned.

"You haven't been trying to frighten these women out of here with anonymous letters so you could get in?"

"No. Certainly not." But again the doctor's air had that odd mixture of truth and falsehood in it.

The detective paused for an instant. "Let me see your key-ring!" he ordered. The doctor passed it over silently. The detective glanced at the keys—then, suddenly, his revolver glittered in his other hand.

The doctor watched him, anxiously. A puff of wind rattled the panes of the French windows. The storm, quieted for a while, was gathering its strength for a fresh unleashing of its dogs of thunder.

The detective stepped to the terrace door, opened it, and then quietly proceeded to try the doctor's keys in the lock. This located he was out of visual range, and Wells took advantage of it at once. He moved swiftly toward the fireplace, extracting the missing piece of blue-print from an inside pocket as he did so. The secret the blue-print guarded was already graven on his mind in indelible characters—now he would destroy all evidence that it had ever been in his possession and shift through the rest of the situation as best he might.

He threw the paper toward the flames with a nervous gesture of relief. But for once his cunning failed—the throw was too hurried to be sure and the light scrap of paper wavered and settled to the floor just outside the fireplace. The doctor swore noiselessly and stooped to pick it up and make sure of its destruction. But he was not quick enough. Through the window the detective had seen the incident, and the next moment the doctor heard his voice bark behind him. He turned, and stared at the leveled muzzle of Anderson's revolver.

"Hands up and stand back!" he commanded.

As he did so Anderson picked up the paper, and a sardonic smile crossed his face as his eyes took in the significance of the print. He laid his revolver down on the table where he could snatch it up again at a moment's notice.

"Behind a fireplace, eh?" he muttered. "What fireplace? In what room?"

"I won't tell you!" The doctor's voice was sullen. He inched, gingerly, cautiously, toward the other side of the table.

"All right—I'll find it, you know," the detective's eyes turned swiftly back to the blue-print. For a moment, as he bent over the paper again, he was off guard.

The doctor seized the moment with a savage promptitude and sprang. The window the detective had seen the incident, and the next moment the doctor heard his voice bark behind him. He turned, and stared at the leveled muzzle of Anderson's revolver.

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Dog Denied Grave Beside Playmate

Berlin, N. J.—Request of a mother to bury a pet police dog beside the grave of her daughter, Julie Price, whose death last March, because the two were close friends, has been refused by officials of the Berlin cemetery.

The mother, Mrs. Julie Price, of Stratford, N. J., said the dog, which was killed by a truck recently, followed the little girl's body to the grave and often took boys from a cedar chest and carried them to the cemetery.

The dog was buried in a cedar chest in the Price back yard. Mrs. Price says an image of the dog carved in marble will be placed near the girl's grave.

MYSTERY IN DEATH OF LOVE DOCTOR

His Advice Was Sought in Affairs of the Heart.

New York.—Little Italy's "love healer" is dead. He was bludgeoned to death in the rear of his tiny store in Newark by some person he had failed to help in a romance. Strange love charms and magic talismans were discovered strewn about the room when police entered the store.

Neighbors said Nicola Iacobuzio was the confidant of sweethearts whose affairs were not going smoothly. He was also said to have power against "the evil eye" in that Italian section.

Many pieces of binding tape, cut in lengths and knotted three times with slips of pink paper attached, bearing the names of men and women, were found. Some of these had strands of women's hair tied to them and others had plain white cards attached on which the numbers nine and seven had been written many times.

Italians who lived in the neighborhood said scores of young people had been made happy by the old "love doctor." They could not remember when his charms had failed to work and they were unable to reconcile themselves to the police theory.

None had an unkind word to say about the seventy-year-old "magic maker" and none was found who disbelieved in his power and his charms.

Nevertheless, upon a strand of hair and two of the small pieces of pink paper may hinge the solution of his mysterious slaying.

Patsy Christiano and the woman with whom he lived, Mrs. Carrie Kronk, were held for a time on an open charge in connection with the crime. The woman, formerly a clerk in the "love doctor's" store, was detained as a material witness. She and her sweetheart are believed to have consulted the old man after they separated some weeks ago.

The hair and pieces of paper are said to be charms that he gave them to "ward off the spirit of evilkindness."

Twitching Eyelid Saves Girl From Burial Alive

Luray, Va.—Having listened to a funeral sermon preached over the coffin in which she passed the night, unable to signal those who believed her dead, Miss Fannie Broyles is alive today at her home near here.

A brother, James Broyles, who stood beside the casket with other mourning relatives, noticed a twitching of his sister's eyelid, and the funeral services were halted and resuscitation efforts begun. In a short time the girl was able to talk. She said she was aware of all that occurred around her as she lay in the casket, but, stunned from a blow on the head from a tree limb that fell upon her, was unable to move or speak.

Finally, she said, her fear of being buried alive must have revived her nerves so that one eyelid fluttered.

Under a physician's care recently, when the supposedly dead girl came back to life, she is declared to have fully recovered.

The Broyles live in a remote hamlet on the Madison county line and the story as brought here did not indicate whether a physician had pronounced the girl dead or whether the usual practice of summoning an undertaker had been followed.

Fish Story That May or May Not Stand Test

Washington.—This is a fish story told by an "old salt" that is going the rounds in Washington: As told by Capt. Thomas A. Hewson, just returned from a trip around the world on the good ship *Cokelet* of the Roosevelt line, the yarn concerns a cat that was death on flying fish.

"Jenny (the cat) would sit on the lower deck aft," said Captain Hewson, "and watch for flying fish. When she saw one headed her way she would grab it with her paws and mouth, kill it by chewing the head, and save the rest for the crew."

"Training did it," Captain Hewson explained. "We had a difficult time training Jenny to serve us in this way, but it proved well worth while."

Hen Theft Costly

Flint, Mich.—Three chicken thieves who admitted more than 40 thefts were given severe sentences in court here. One was given 10 to 15 years in prison, another 2 to 15, and the third 6 to 15.

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Welsh Race Vanishing

That the Welsh as a distinct and separate race, with its culture, literature and art, will be practically out of existence in the next 50 years, is the prediction of students of Welsh nationalism. They point to figures showing that in Wales today there are more English, Irish and Scotch than there are Welsh. Cardiff, with 250,000 population, having only 45,000 native residents. It is estimated that only 5 per cent of the population of Wales can speak, read and write Welsh.

Slight Difference

Jerry—You say you're coming out in spots? See a doctor. Ted—No, I said spots.

Call a man a diplomat instead of a liar and he will be well pleased; yet it amounts to about the same thing.</