

DIME DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

COMBINED WITH FLYNN'S DETECTIVE FICTION

EVERY STORY COMPLETE

EVERY STORY NEW—NO REPRINTS

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Published once a month by Popular Publications, Inc., 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois. Editorial and executive offices 205 East Forty-second Street, New York 17, N. Y. Harry Steeger, President and Secretary; Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice President and Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter August 24, 1944, at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under Act of March 3, 1879. Title registration pending at U. S. Patent Office. Copyrighted 1944 by Popular Publications, Inc. All rights reserved under the Pan American Copyright Convention. Single copy price 15c. Yearly subscription in U. S. A. \$1.50. Foreign postage fee additional. Subscription Department, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates address Sam J. Perry, 205 E. 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y. All manuscripts should be sent to Editorial Department, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y., accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return if unusable. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, though all care will be exercised in handling them. Printed in U. S. A.

SLAY, FIDO, SLAY

By

DALE CLARK

Author of "False Colors," etc.



"It's like the cannibal said to the missionary, 'I got to eat,' only I can't live on missionaries—I got to have fees," Highland Park Price, the ace of sharpshooting shakedown sleuths, told Dr. Leverett, the vacillating veterinarian. Five hundred bucks from the reluctant DVM, however, set the mercenary Price on the trail of a small black cocker spaniel that held the key to murder in his distempered jaws.

A "High" Price Novelette

CHAPTER ONE

Dog Gone!

IT WAS Highland Park Price, *Personal Investigations*, on the door—all you needed to know if you walked by his door. If you walked in as a client, you soon found out it was "High" Price, the ace of sharpshooting shakedown sleuths.

Dr. Alexander S. Leverett had walked in, and he was finding out. There are doctors and doctors, and this one's professional card announced him to be a DVM, or veterinary specialist.

Price jerked one end of the mat and the gunman did a comedy pinwheel straight out of the old Keystone cops- and bathing-beauties films.



He sat staring through his pince-nez, complaining: "Five hundred dollars, Mr. Price. I feel that's utterly exorbitant!"

High Price grinned. Mr. Price had big teeth. He was a lean-cheeked, rawhide-and-rattan man whose exact age remained a secret between himself and his draft board. Obviously, though, Highland Park Price had been around a long time, and not just standing around with his hands in his pockets.

"It's like the cannibal said to the missionary—I got to eat," Price joked. He made it clear he was just joking. He said: "I'm joking. I can't live on missionaries. I live on my fees, and my fee in your case will be five hundred bucks. You can get out your checkbook, or you can get out, period."

Seated halfway across the office, Beulah Randy lifted startled blue eyes from the steno book on her shapely knee. Beulah was Mr. Price's blond secretary, and was so constructed that even civilians whistled at her.

Dr. Alexander Leverett, however, excluded the girl from his pince-nez focus. He concentrated on Highland Park Price thoughtfully. "Suppose I do just get out. Of course, all this I've told you will remain—er, strictly confidential?"

"Hell, wild horses couldn't drag a client's secrets from my lips," High Price reassured. He added: "Only you're not a client—yet. All you've done so far is waste half an hour of my secretary's and my time. I figure you haven't paid me a nickel, and therefore I don't owe you a nickel's worth of nothing."

Dr. Leverett said brusquely: "I see what you mean." He reached into his stylish British lounge suit and produced a checkbook. He didn't have to reach for a pen. High Price quickly produced one from his desk set.

Alexander S. Leverett didn't have to look around for a blotter, either. Price helpfully rocked a blotter over the freshly-inked check, said brightly: "O.K., that enrolls you in the Customer-Is-Always-Right Club."

The dog doctor said hoarsely: "Price, you're a damned bandit. You deliberately encouraged me to reveal my professional confidences, and then practically threatened to expose me unless I paid you a five hundred-dollar bribe! It's blackmail! It's highway robbery!"

He slammed around viciously, headed his lank grayhound figure toward the door.

Behind him, Price chuckled. "So what? It's like the old saying—'It takes a thief to catch a thief.' Of course, I'm joking."

THE veterinary specialist let the closing door be his answer. High Price grinned amusedly, said: "Well, Beulah, you can run around to the bank with—"

He broke off before the accusing gleam in

his secretary's blue eyes. "Huh? What's wrong now?"

Beulah Randy spoke bitterly. "I'm not so sure you were joking."

Highland Park Price sighed. He realized the pin-up perfection of Miss Randy's physique, knew full well that visually his secretary was a thermite bomb on high heels. But he also knew that her sultry allure was only skin-deep, that under it she was a very nice girl whose idea of a wild party was a Sunday school picnic with real pink lemonade. He suspected she was still saving her first kiss for Mr. Right, who would undoubtedly be a guy clad in shining armor and riding a white horse.

Beautiful blond secretaries, he mused, are never a dime a dozen, but a beautiful blond secretary you can trust is a pearl beyond price. He looked at Beulah with cold commercial common sense, reminding himself that her physical charms weren't going to frighten any clients away while he was out detecting. And, even more important, it was nice to feel sure that his office girl, having access to all Highland Park Price's professional secrets, wasn't going to do any doublecrossing or sharpshooting on her own.

He didn't want to lose such a pearl, so he fidgeted uncomfortably as Beulah continued: "It certainly sounded to me as if you were hijacking that poor man out of his five hundred dollars! I think maybe I'd better change jobs before I wind up in jail as an accessory to your crimes."

Price winced. He said: "Please, Beulah. How many times do I have to explain it? In this detective business you have to start out first of all by winning the client's confidence."

The girl stared. "I suppose you're joking again. I certainly don't see how you won Dr. Leverett's confidence!"

"It's this way," Price spread his hands. "I never show any sympathy for a client. Guys who want sympathy tell their troubles to their wives, or else to the nearest bartender. Guys who pay to tell me their troubles want one thing, and that's help. Invariably, they're up against something or somebody rough and tough and dirty—something or somebody they can't handle themselves, and don't dare take to the police. So what's the first thing I have to do?"

High Price didn't wait for the girl to answer. He answered himself: "First thing, I have to show 'em I'm rougher and tougher and dirtier than they are—than anybody else is. I convince 'em I'm just the guy who's big enough and mean enough to lick whatever or whoever is ailing them. A client doesn't want a private dick to be kind to stray cats and read good books. In fact they prefer me

to be a crook. It's their only guarantee I won't run to the cops with their troubles."

Beulah shook her blond head. "I know, you've said all that before, but I don't see how it applies to Dr. Leverett. He's a perfectly honest, respectable citizen who happens to be in a jam through no fault of his own—"

High Price interrupted. "Wait a minute, Beulah. Let's go over that story of his." He canted back in his swivel chair, clasped his hands behind his head. "Go through your notes, just hit the high spots. . ."

The girl turned the pages of her steno book, rapidly scanned her shorthand symbols.

"Dr. Leverett," she began, "is a veterinary specialist, a pet doctor. He has a pet hospital on Sumpter Avenue. Last week he was called to the home of a Mr. J. Stafford Browne to attend a black cocker spaniel. He had treated the same dog before, for distemper. He could discover no organic ailment, yet the animal whimpered as if in constant pain and refused food and drink. He removed the poor creature to his hospital to keep it under observation. Last night a thief broke in and stole this dog.

"Dr. Leverett didn't call the police for fear the case might be mentioned in the papers. He explained that he has a distinctly upper-class practice. Wealthy persons frequently board their pets with him while away on vacations, especially since restrictions make it difficult to travel with a pet nowadays. He is afraid other people might take their animals away from an institution which could be successfully burglarized. He stated that publicity of that kind could easily cost him several thousand dollars." Beulah closed her notebook. "Whereupon, you told him *your* fee would be five hundred dollars cash in advance."

Highland Price stacked his fingers into a steeple. He said: "That's right, you got it all down. All he said, that is. So all you've got to do is fill in the part he left unsaid."

"Unsaid?"

"Certainly, Beulah. Doesn't it strike you there's something peculiar about that story, an angle the doc skipped?"

BEULAH RANDY puzzled her blond brows. "No, it sounded perfectly straightforward to me."

High Price asked: "You don't think it's funny that the thief swiped that one sick, constantly whimpering dog from a building full of healthy ones?"

"That," stated the girl, "is the thief's fault, not Dr. Leverett's. He can't help it."

Price shrugged. "No, but he can't help knowing it wasn't just any dog the crook wanted, but J. Stafford Browne's dog."

This meant something to him. From Beu-

lah's blank expression, he decided it didn't to her.

He asked: "My God, angel-face, don't you ever read the financial pages?" He wagged a hand at the window. "Doesn't that hunk of masonry topping off the local skyline spell anything to you?"

"The Browne Building," the girl said. "But that's Albert Browne, isn't it?"

"Albert is J. Stafford's nephew. He and the lawyers run the show, yeah. But the old boy is still alive, though he retired right after World War I." He brooded. "Some say he feigned illness, that he locked himself up to avoid a Senate investigation on charges of profiteering. Others say it was the natural outcome of a lifetime of misanthropy, that he was never known to accept or give a dinner invitation in his whole career. Anyway, he holed up then, and ever since he's been about as accessible as A. Hitler. So I'm going to earn five hundred bucks finding out why somebody kidnaped his dog."

A muffled buzzer sounded taps to his meditation. Somebody had entered the outer reception room. Beulah Randy hurried outside. In a moment she returned.

"You have another client, a Miss Margaret Hale."

Miss Margaret Hale proved to be an eye-arresting brunette type. She entered the inner office as if closely pursued by bogies. The glance she shed in the direction of Beulah Randy's notebook was antagonistic. "It's very personal," she hesitated.

The idea of anyone confiding in High Price while mistrusting Beulah Randy brought a flicker of amusement to the sleuth's features. He was abrupt to the point of discourtesy. "This is my private office, Miss Hale. If you don't like the way I run it, you can go somewhere else—such as the police station around the corner."

"I don't want a policeman. I want a body-guard." Her dark eyes were anxious. "How much do you charge, by the hour?"

"It depends on the case. What do you want to be bodyguarded against?"

Margaret Hale sighed. "I hardly know how to begin. Perhaps I should start by showing you this."

She opened an over-arm purse. From the handbag she placed a picture on Highland Park Price's desk. It was faded, yellowed, as if long entombed in a family album—probably a red plush-bound album with an imitation gold lock.

Stiffly, there stared from the picture a seated young woman and a young man standing with his left hand resting on her chair. Behind them, a canvas background poured down an ersatz, painted Niagara Falls.

It was just the conventional, old-fashioned

wedding photo, unusual in only one respect. The unusual thing was the groom's right hand. He didn't have one. There dangled from his sleeve a wicked, three-taloned iron claw.

Beulah Randy gasped as she arose, looked, and took in that detail. The bridegroom clearly wasn't embarrassed by the talon. In fact, he was posed so you couldn't help seeing it.

"My grandfather and grandmother," Margaret Hale explained. "He lost his hand in an accident, a mining blast."

High Price nodded. Despite the yellowed, dim paper, the old-fashioned pompadour hair-do and balloon-sleeved dress, the pictured bride possessed photogenic loveliness. Margaret Hale had the same Brunette hair, oval face, and liquidly brilliant eyes.

The granddaughter moistened her lips. "I'm afraid my grandfather wasn't a very good family man. He murdered a man in a quarrel over a dancehall girl, and then ran off with the girl. Grandmother didn't live long after the tragedy—she died when my mother was four. So my mother was raised by a family named Hanson. They wanted her to think of them as her own parents. I believe Grandfather had been sending money for the child's support, but they returned his letters unopened. My mother was a grown woman before they told her the truth and gave her a few mementoes—this picture, a ring, and the marriage certificate. The things were put away in an old trunk and practically forgotten."

BEULAH RANDY'S pencil followed every word of the Brunette's genealogy. High Price gloomily asked: "Yeah, so what?"

"Well," Margaret Hale recounted, "several weeks ago a Professor Huckleberry rang our doorbell. He said he was writing a book on the ghost towns of the Old West. He had my mother's name on a list of descendants of the pioneers. He wanted to buy well-preserved pictures showing the old-time costumes and customs. I thought of the old trunk. He offered ten dollars for this wedding photo, explaining that the Niagara Falls backdrop made it historically interesting."

Highland Price stirred impatiently. "When does this stop being historical and get down to date?"

"Right now." The Brunette's voice rose several notes. "Professor Huckleberry lied to me. A notebook fell out of his pocket while he was helping search the trunk. I found it later. It proved he was really gathering material to write a biography of J. Stafford Browne."

Price's frown was thickly thought-charged.

"My grandfather's name," the girl declared, "was James Brown. The J in J. Stafford Browne stands for James. He made

his first million from a gold mine. And according to Professor Huckleberry's research, one of the first things he bought with the money was an artificial hand. It seems J. Stafford Browne had his hand blown off at the wrist in a mine explosion."

"Has he—" Beulah Randy appealed to her employer's superior lore. "Is that true?"

The detective was noncommittal. "I always heard he had a heart of solid iron. Maybe wooden fingers went with it. He was never the type to hang around buying drinks for the boys in the backroom. His private life is just a great big blank to me and practically everybody else."

Price ogled Margaret Hall interestedly. "What other proof have you got?"

She confessed: "Only the marriage certificate and the ring with the initials, J.B.-L.L. But of course those mining camps sixty years ago were full of men named Jim Brown and John Smith. The James Brown on the marriage certificate might have been any one of a dozen men at Gold Rush Creek—that is, if I didn't have this picture of him."

"No living witnesses?"

"Well, my mother's alive, but she's confined to a wheelchair. Illness has affected her memory, and of course she could only remember what the Hansons told her, anyway."

Color climbed in her cheeks. Warmth welled in her dark eyes. Impulsively, she exclaimed: "I don't care for myself! But doctors and hospitals are expensive. My mother is a sick woman. If she's really J. Stafford Browne's daughter, I'm going to see to it he provides the medical attention and comforts she needs."

Highland Park Price turned alarmed eyes toward Beulah Randy. A tinkle of cold apprehension played up and down his spine as he noted the answering flush in her cheeks, the echoing warth in her eyes.

Glumly, he reflected that good-hearted Beulah always expected him to give the shirt off his back to any client who showed up with a halfway convincing hard luck story.

"It's tear-jerking, all right," Price grumbled, "but you still haven't explained why you need a bodyguard."

Margaret Hale sighed. "I went to see J. Stafford Browne. The guard at the gate said I would have to write for an appointment. The letter I wrote was evidently intercepted by Albert Browne. He telephoned for me to come and see him and bring my proof with me."

"Well-I," she frowned, "it might be all right. But this picture is valuable. It's the only one in existence, so far as I know. I don't want anything to happen to it, even if I have to hire an armed guard to be sure."

Beulah Randy nodded her blond head. "You're absolutely right. J. Stafford Browne must be eighty, going on ninety. Naturally his nephew wouldn't want a living daughter to turn up—excuse me."

She went to answer the buzzer. This time, though, the door flew open in her face.

The newcomer was a man with a felt hat slanted low over his eyes, a gun in his curled fist.

Margaret Hale and Beulah joined voices in one shrill shriek. Beulah's was just a scream. The brunette's cry was a name.

"Professor Huckleberry!"

CHAPTER TWO

Git Along, Little Doggy

HIGHLAND PARK PRICE hadn't screamed. At the first glimpse of the gunman he had slid out of his swivel chair and out of sight behind his desk. He peeped around the corner of his impromptu foxhole, and a hard leer curled his lips as he took in the professional gun artist.

The newcomer really did look like a defrocked scholar. Under the tough-guy slant of the hatbrim, his long face was modeled in ascetic hollows and studious furrows. Given a stick of chalk instead of a six-shooter in his tapering fingers, he could have passed for the freshman English instructor in some jerk-water college.

Even his elocution was grammatically precise. As he advanced upon the shrinking Margaret Hale, he declaimed: "Young woman, I'm here to repossess my property, if necessary by resorting to physical violence—"

Highland Park Price hadn't ducked out of sheer, unmitigated cowardice. A rubberized mat ran from the office door past the private detective's desk to absorb the traffic of foot-falls. Mr. Price merely waited until his caller was midway across this mat. He then gathered his own end of the floor covering in a secure grasp and leaped erect.

The gunman did a comedy pinwheel straight out of the old Keystone cops-and-bathing-beauties films. He even seemed to hang momentarily frozen in mid-air as if stopped by a trick movie shot. Then he landed hard. He lay there with his mouth gaping open and his eyes as glazed as a mackerel on ice. The six-shooter skidded several yards distant.

Price placed a foot on it. "Huckleberry, hell," he jeered. "This bozo is really Greenwich V. Huckland."

Mention of the name acted on the fallen man like a whiff of ammonia. He struggled to a sitting posture, forming sounds of denial as shaky as a cockerel's first, tentative crow. "I—yuh—there must be some mistake. . ."

"I'll say. The jury made it when they turned you loose."

"Jury?" Beulah Randy struggled to keep up with her notes.

"Yeah. The last time I saw this guy, he was on trial for blackmailing Winthrop Whipple III," Price vouchsafed.

"Very well, I am Greenwich V. Huckland," Greenwich V. Huckland admitted. "But the rest is a lie, a libelous lie. I am a respectable author, a biographer whose books adorn the shelves of the best libraries."

"Your books," High Price corrected coldly, "are a hodge-podge of newspaper morgue clippings worked over by hired ghosts."

Margaret Hale's dark eyes were wide with bewilderment. "I don't get it? Why? What's the idea?"

"Bookwriting is a blind for his racket," Price enlightened. "He's a blueblood parasite, a cafe society scavenger. He digs the dirt from under the upper classes, and threatens to put it in his next book unless they buy him off."

Greenwich V. Huckland felt his way to his feet. He decided to adopt a lofty tone. "I refuse to be drawn into this preposterous discussion. I have never been convicted of any crime, and, besides, in this case the law is definitely on my side."

He swiveled his head in Margaret Hale's direction, looking like a college instructor who had accidentally run afoul of a freshman-sophomore class rush. He was badly banged up, but he retained a few shreds of dignity, at that.

"Don't forget I have more than one string to my bow," he threatened portentously. "I resorted to violent methods merely as a short-cut, to avoid expensive litigation. I now warn you to hand over that photograph or take the legal consequences."

The brunette hugged the wedding portrait in both hands. "I won't do it! You took advantage of my mother's illness, her poor memory—"

"A bargain is a bargain," interrupted Greenwich V. Huckland, "and a bill of sale is a bill of sale in any court. I can prove in black-and-white that I'm entitled to the sole exclusive possession and use of that picture."

Beulah Randy gulped: "Margaret! What is he talking about?"

The brunette sighed. "I didn't tell my mother about—you know. I didn't want to arouse any false hopes. Knowing nothing of the photo's real value, the offer of ten dollars looked to her like a godsend. She accepted his money and his promise to return the picture as soon as his book was published."

Beulah paled. She swallowed. She turned urgently to her employer.

"Mr. Price!" she appealed. "You're not

going to let him get away with this, are you?"

NOW, her blue eyes urged, was the time for Highland Park Price to pull a large, unscrupulous rabbit from his coatsleeve. Never in the blonde's experience had his shrewd wits failed to function in a tight spot, and Beulah didn't think they ever would.

"Try and stop me." Greenwich V. Huckland's grin was a contemptuous invitation.

Mr. Price merely shrugged. "It'd be a pleasure, only I don't work for fun. Nobody has crossed my palm with silver or even with a promissory note so far."

He turned to Margaret Hale. "It's like the cannibal said to the missionary—I got to eat." So if you wanted to suggest a slight contingent fee, such as, say, a thousand bucks, I'd be glad to play bodyguard games—beginning by throwing this cheap chiseler out on his ear."

The horrified vocalization came from Beulah Randy. "A thousand dollars!" The blond looked at Mr. Price as if he'd crawled out of the woodwork. "Why, that's outrageous! That's the worst shakedown I've ever seen you try to pull, and believe me, I've seen plenty around here!"

Margaret Hale interrupted: "Don't let it cost you your job, dear. It doesn't matter, because I haven't got a thousand dollars."

"Contingent," Highland Park Price explained, "means on the final payoff. It also means it's gonna cost me a thousand bucks if you *don't* get paid off. You can't lose, because it won't cost you a dime until you yourself are in the chips."

The brunette thought it over, said: "Well, all right."

Highland Price turned to the staring Greenwich V. Huckland. "O.K., then, here's the bad news. You purchased that picture for inclusion in a history of ghost towns of the Old West, so your damned bill of sale isn't worth lighting a match to. Miss Hale's mother couldn't sell you the right to publish that wedding pic at any price, because the right isn't hers to sell. You could no more legally buy it from her than you could buy Brooklyn Bridge from me."

Greenwich V. Huckland's features buttoned up in puzzled wrinkles. "Huh? Why not? She inherited it, didn't she?"

Mr. Price chuckled.

"Uh-huh, but a picture isn't a legal commodity and you don't inherit it as you would teaspoons. It happens to be a private photograph exhibiting the physical deformity of a living human being, and the only person who can sell a release to publish it is that same living human being!" So saying, Highland Price advanced on the crestfallen Huckland.

"And the smartest thing you can do, heel, is scam!"

Greenwich V. Huckland seemed to think so, too. "I'm going to see a lawyer about this!" he blustered, but in rapid transit toward the door.

Mr. Price swung around, extending an eager hand for the wedding photo.

"Give, quick! We've got to work fast now!"

Beulah Randy blinked. "It wasn't true, what you told him?"

Highland Park Price concentrated on the brunette. "It's true what I told him—provided it's true what you told me, Miss Hale. Nobody except J. Stafford Browne can release his own pic for publication, but if Huckland sees a lawyer we'll have to prove it actually is J. Stafford Browne in the photo."

IT HAD been a country estate when the gloomy Norman castle was built, say forty years ago. The city had pushed trolley car tracks past it now, the locality was built up on the FHA plan, but inside the stone-walled grounds nothing had changed except that the native stand of timber had grown that much taller.

A guard in a tan whipcord uniform had nothing to do but patrol the front gate and tell callers they couldn't get in without an appointment.

"I've an appointment with Mr. Albert Browne," the girl explained.

The guard's eyes said she was a liar, but he went into his gatehouse to telephone and make sure. He then pressed an electric device hinging open a state penitentiary-style gate. The winding driveway traveled across twenty acres of grounds.

Highland Park Price spoke cautiously. "Remember, just seeing Albert Browne won't improve your score. No law that I know of compels an eighty-year-old parent to support a sixty-year-old daughter. You've got to see J. Stafford in person. Maybe the fact that you resemble your grandmother so much will influence his pur—I mean, his heartstrings."

A wooden-faced butler opened a tank barrier of a front door, led them down a hall nearly long enough for a bomber strip. It was pelted with ankle-deep Oriental carpetry, and guarded by large empty suits of medieval armor.

Margaret Hale was impressed. "It's just like a private museum."

High Price was impressed, too. "It takes about fifty million bucks to live like this."

Impassively, the butler bowed them into a miniature Grand Central Station equipped with more Oriental rugs, antique furniture, and an illuminated globe some six feet in diameter. Standing before the globe, a pot-

bellied, silver-haired man was studying the geography of South America.

The other, a bald-headed and saturnine-faced man parked on a window seat, was Albert Browne. He made no motion of lifting his weight as a lady entered the room. Neither did he suggest she have a chair.

He did, however, perform an introduction. "Miss Hale, let me present Mr. Gulpy, of Gulpy, Burrows, Goodnight & Goodnight. He's my legal representative." With brown pupils swimming in cream gravy whites, he studied High Price. "I suppose this fellow is your lawyer?"

"He's not exactly—" the girl broke off, looked around nervously. "What was that?"

"What was what?"

"It sounded as if somebody were crying," Margaret Hale declared.

Price had heard it also. "More like somebody whining," he deemed.

"I didn't hear anything," the pot-bellied lawyer said. His heavily-lidded eyes were uneasy. He hurried on: "I suggest we dispense with the formalities and get down to the main issue. I propose we begin by examining your proof, or alleged proof, particularly this photograph you assertedly possess."

"That's right." Albert Browne's scowl was aggressive, ill-tempered. "Put up or shut up, see?"

"You're willing to concede that the marriage certificate and ring are genuine?" Price asked.

Gulpy shrugged. "Not at all. We simply don't give a damn about the authenticity of the document in case your picture isn't a picture of J. Stafford Browne."

"Yeah," the detective agreed. "But wouldn't J. Stafford himself be the best judge of that?"

"Uncle Stafford is in Florida at present," the nephew returned shortly.

Margaret Hale exclaimed: "That cry again!"

Highland Park Price chuckled. "I've got it now. What you hear is a catbird calling to its mate in the trees outside."

He noticed an expression of relief steal over lawyer Gulpy's rotund features. He ignored the attorney, focused skeptically on Albert Browne.

"Florida? That's damned funny. Why the devil would an old man past eighty, an old geezer who's famous for being a recluse, suddenly go sun-soaking in Florida—just when this thing came to a boil?"

Perspiration dotted the bald-headed nephew's brow. "I tell you, he's gone. You can't see him."

Highland Park Price turned to the girl, said: "Well, I guess that winds up the interview. Come on."

His fingers closed firmly on the brunette's elbow. He steered her toward the door.

Albert Browne seemed flabbergasted by the abrupt ending. "You're going already?"

For answer, High Price ushered his companion into the hall.

The nephew said thickly: "Wait a minute. Gulpy and I have joint power-of-attorney. In fact we handle all of my uncle's affairs. You might at least show us your proof—"

PRICE kicked the door shut. Out of nowhere, the butler materialized to escort them to the front door. Outdoors, sunshine seemed to awaken Margaret Hall from a somnabulistic trance.

"They called our bluff!" she wailed.

The detective donned his biggest grin. "You don't hear any catbird calling to its mate, do you? That sound came in through an air ventilator." He tugged at the brunette's arm, dragged her along the side of the house.

The tradesmen's entrance was unlocked. Probably the servants deemed a high stone wall and armed guard sufficient daytime protection. Price led the girl through a pantry and a kitchen large enough to feed an entire regiment, before he found a door that opened onto basement steps.

The sound of heartbroken whimpering met them as they descended the steps. Margaret Hale gaped wide-eyed at the huddled, black object on the concrete floor.

"It's a dog!" she exclaimed. "A poor starved dog."

"He's on a hunger strike," High Price diagnosed.

The dog seemed too far gone to do more than lift its head, regard the approaching detective with feverish eyes.

Price coaxed softly. "Quiet boy. Steady, now." Scratch marks on the concrete confirmed a suspicion in his mind. "You don't want to be chained up here, fella. You want to go somewhere else." With one hand, he scratched back of the animal's ears, with the other fumbled to loosen the dog chain from the newel post.

"Atta doggie. Don't bark. We're nice burglars. We go around turning dogs loose—Ah, hell!"

The dog was off like a ricocheting bullet, crossing the basement floor in three frantic bounds. The impact of its charge forced open a door through which the spaniel wriggled frenziedly.

"I didn't think he had it in him." Highland Park Price sprinted in pursuit, racing through a laundry room into a furnace chamber. Here, in cavernous gloom, he momentarily lost the dog, until renewed whimpers and scratching lured him around the fat bulk of a boiler to another plank door.

Margaret Hale arrived in time to find the detective snatching up a furnace poker. It was a weighty tool, constructed for smashing clinkers in the six-foot depths of a furnace. Price jammed its pointed end into the door crack, tossed his sinewy weight vainly against the other end. The door resisted his best efforts.

The detective snarled at his companion. "What's the matter with you? Dames work in wdr plants nowadays. They drive busses. Lend a hand here!"

Under their combined weight, the leverage splintered the lock. The dog was the first one through, Price delaying to fumble for a light switch that illuminated another, downward flight of steps.

Fragrances of high-class potables greeted them as they hurried into the lower cellar. They discovered the dog at a pair of wine casks, trying to scramble up onto a box trestled across the barrels.

The box lid was nailed down. As if he had expected something of the sort, Highland Park Price had fetched the poker along.

This time he worked alone. Margaret Hale had swayed to the support of the nearest cobwebbed wall, her face as white as soapsuds.

Price forced up the box lid. For a moment there was no sound other than the dog's plaintive whining. The detective seemed struck dumb by his discovery.

The girl half-moaned: "Is it—is he. . ."

"It's J. Stafford Browne, all right. There couldn't be two guys this old."

"D-dead!" she chattered. "S-so that's w-what his d-dog was c-cr-crying about. . ."

High Price stared fascinatedly at the waxen, tinted features of the corpse. "He's dead and embalmed."

"What?"

"Sure thing. He's been touched up with that undertaker's rouge they use. I think he's got lipstick on, too. Come and look."

The girl shuddered. "I couldn't!" Belatedly, she thought of something. "Is—has he—his hand. . ."

Highland Park Price muttered: "Wait'll I get this sheet off him."

He tugged at the winding cloth. Startled sound spilled from his lips.

"He's got an artificial mitt, all right. But it's the wrong one."

Sheer astonishment snapped Margaret Hale out of her coma of revulsion, flooded color into her cheeks. "He couldn't have! Let me see!"

She sprang to the box, peered wide-eyed at the hands folded on J. Stafford Browne's chest.

"You're right, it's his left hand! He isn't the Jim Brown in the picture at all."

Aghast, she confronted High Price.

"What are we going to do next?"
"I don't know about you." The sleuth was his usual, coldly commercial self as he stooped and gathered the cocker spaniel into his arms. "I'm going to nail down a five-hundred-dollar fee."

CHAPTER THREE

Baited Hooks

"THE wrong hand!" Beulah Randy repeated. Disillusion and discouragement shadowed her features. "But how on earth did such a mix-up ever start?"

Highland Park Price admitted: "I don't know, and what's more I don't know how it's going to end, either."

He eyed the wedding photo with distaste. Curiously, the three-taloned hook seemed to provide the whole center of interest. It was only after prolonged, musing study that his eyes absorbed the equally curious circumstance that the bride was wearing her wedding ring where no wedding ring ought to be—namely, on the third finger of her right hand.

He turned sharply to Margaret Hale. "Hey! How long had this pic been locked away in a trunk, since you saw it last?"

"Years," the brunette recalled. "Since I was a child."

"And you say your mother's memory is failing, that on account of illness she doesn't remember details that happened long ago."

High Price grimly crossed his office and flung open a closet door. Daylight filtered in over a strange miscellany—a goose-necked apparatus for loading your own cartridges, a capping device for home-brewed beer, a printing press for running off your own letterheads, a lamp for acquiring a suntan in the privacy of your home. The detective rummaged and came up with bottles labeled potassium permanganate and sodium hydroxide.

"They used to call me a penny-pinching Shylock for developing my own snapshots," he confided, "but sometimes a little chemistry is the answer to an awful lot of headaches. Beulah, bring some water from the cooler."

The girls watched as he stirred his chemicals into a delicately violet-hued solution. Margaret Hale gasped as he plunged a corner of the wedding photo into clear water. Price lifted it, let it drip into his test solution.

After a hushed moment, the color changed. Under the three pairs of tensely-fixed eyes, it became an orange tint that ripened into corn yellow. From Highland Park Price's lips came hammered syllables.

"Yeah! Holy hypo!"

"Is that something bad?" the Hale girl gulped.

"It means this pic isn't any sixty years old,"

the detective threw out flatly. "The damned thing's a fake. It was aged overnight with thiosulphate."

Beulah Randy interpreted grimly: "Huckland! He switched pictures on you, Margaret!"

Skirt aswirl around her shapely knees, the blonde dashed to consult her phone book.

"He's listed at the Braepath Apartments on Coburn Street. . ."

Price's lean-cheeked features registered alarm. "Don't you start playing detective, Beulah," he warned hastily. "By the way, did you take Doc Leverett's check to his bank and get the cash?"

"Oh, that. Yes, I did. Why?"

"I was just merely eliminating the possibility of him stopping payment," High Price soliloquized. "Well, in case we get any new clients, and I think we're liable to any minute now, you can contact me at the pet hospital."

His secretary exclaimed: "But, about Huckland—"

Highland Park Price waved it aside. "My motto is 'Always let lying dogs sleep.'"

THIS time he invested cabfare in the haul to Sumpter Avenue. He had an idea that Dr. Leverett's five hundred-dollar check was just a down-payment, that the DVM could be persuaded to foot an expense account.

Affectionately, the detective massaged J. Stafford Browne's cocker spaniel back of its ears. "I'm gonna call you Monkeywrench," he mused, "on account of you're in so many people's gears."

The dog's whine was less heartbroken. He seemed to like the new name.

The cab swung into Sumpter Avenue, braked abruptly. "Sorry," the driver apologized. "I don't think the cops will let me park any closer."

"Cops!" Price exclaimed.

It was true. The curb in front of the pet hospital was stacked with official vehicles. Not all of them were routine squad cars. The private dick's experienced eye swiftly picked out the solid black of a Headquarters' Cadillac, and a smaller sedan wearing the gold-painted insignia of the coroner's office.

Price knew what it added up to. Gently gathering Monkeywrench into his arms, he footed it toward the entrance, gambling that maybe a supposed customer could garner some scraps of evidence.

Just as he arrived, though, the twin plate-glass doors of the pet sanitorium winged open and disgorged the pot-bellied form of lawyer Gulpy. The silver-maned attorney was wasting none of his highly valuable time investigating bystanders. He plunged into a luxurious phaeton ensconced among the official cars, jabbed at a dash starter button, and devoted

himself to the delicate task of seesawing his way out of the traffic jam. It required a lot of maneuvering.

High Price sprang from the curb, unlatched the door of the phaeton. "Going my way, counsellor?"

Gulpy's retort was a nasty, "No, damn you!"

"That's funny, I'm going yours." The detective hurdled into the front seat, making room for the spaniel between himself and Gulpy. "Suppose you share the ride—and the clues. How was he killed?"

The attorney's rotund face thunderclouded. "How would I know?"

"You found the body, didn't you?" Price hazarded a guess.

Gulpy bore hard on the wheel and grazed past the last police fender. He stepped on the gas and spoke severely. "I'm not a criminal lawyer. The clues, as you call the morbid physical details, are of no interest to me. I saw blood. Whether it was caused by bullets or a knife, I left for the proper authorities to ascertain."

Price decided that rated a laugh. He laughed.

"Don't kid yourself. You're not kidding me, or the Homicide Squad. You may be the private braintrust for fifty million bucks, but you've still got to explain why you were calling on a fresh corpse."

"I see no reason to discuss that with you."

"I," said High Price pointedly, "am discussing it with you. That is, unless you prefer I take it up with the cops."

The lawyer's side glance was a visual dagger stab. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

Price petted the dog's head. "I'm alluding to the canine clue here. The beastie was stolen from Leverett's institution last night. I found the animal inside the closely-guarded premises of the J. Stafford Browne estate. A checkup with the gateman will reveal that you are among the suspects who might have taken it there."

"That's perfectly insane!" Gulpy colored resentfully. "The explanation is entirely different. Alexander Leverett was no ordinary cat-and-dog doctor. He was actually a graduate medico, qualified to practice on human patients. A few years ago, he successfully treated J. Stafford Browne's dog for distemper after other veterinarians had given up the case as hopeless. As a result, Leverett was one of the few living men to enjoy the old gentleman's confidence to any extent."

THE attorney drove halfway through a red light as he spoke. He decided he might as well continue the rest of the way. He did so before resuming.

"To be frank, I'm worried. I don't like Mr. Browne being in Florida. Of course, Albert and I have a joint power-of-attorney, so it's perfectly legal. But still I wish J. Stafford were here in person."

"Maybe he does, too."

"What's that?" Gulpy murmured absently. He didn't wait for an answer. He continued: "Of course, that Hale girl is an imposter. But if she could establish her case, and if anything happened to the old gentleman, that girl and her mother would come into the biggest part of fifty million bucks."

Price asked: "Hell, you don't think anything is *going* to happen to him, do you?"

"That's irrelevant. The point is, his failure to mention a daughter in his will would be legal grounds for a law suit, since in this state a legitimate heir *not* mentioned is presumed entitled to an equitable portion of the estate. Assuming J. Stafford Browne actually had a daughter, the only way he could eliminate her as his heir would be to state definitely she wasn't to inherit a dollar. Hence, I urged Albert to wire his uncle and have such a codicil added to the will."

Gulpy pitched a sigh. "It's a strange situation. J. Stafford is an old and—peculiar man. For instance, he will totally ignore financial matters for as much as six months at a time. Then for a week or so he snaps out of it, calls for his books, and demands an accounting of every penny. Right now, though, he seems utterly indifferent to business matters."

"I can understand that," Price grimaced. "Money doesn't mean a damned thing to him, where he is."

The lawyer wove his silvery brows into a frown. He seemed determined to ignore High Price's wisecracks. He said slowly: "I had an idea. The old man is very attached to this dog. I thought maybe I could get Leverett to sign a statement saying the dog was dying. My idea was that such a statement might cause J. Stafford Browne to cut short his Florida vacation."

Highland Park Price giggled. "Why, you old conspirator!" He became solemnly serious. "Stop the car. I've heard enough."

Gulpy braked obediently. Price unlatched the door. The dog got out under its own power. Instead of closing the door, Price fumbled in his vest pocket for a business card.

"Your idea stinks," he said. "It's going to blow up in your face. When it does, give me a ring."

He walked off, leaving the lawyer looking owl-eyed at the card.

The Braepath Apartments enjoyed what is technically known to city dwellers as a "good address." That is, it had a low number on

Coburn Street, which is a street of stylish apartment hotels running to four master bedrooms and four baths, per unit. Unless you happened to know the Braepath personally, you might imagine it to be one of the stylish apartment buildings.

It wasn't.

It was an old-fashioned brown brick residence wedged down into the shadows of taller buildings, and Greenwich V. Huckland's name appeared on a flyspecked list of tenants in the downstairs hall. It was opposite Number 21.

High Price climbed a shabby stairway, pounded his knuckles on Number 21.

Greenwich V. Huckland opened the door a couple of inches. Price opened it the rest of the way with a hard shoulder shove.

"The jig's up, you crook!" the detective snarled.

Greenwich V. Huckland blustered: "You haven't got a damned thing on me!"

"I'm not talking about evidence. You're a professional. You're smart enough to use checked baggage or an envelope addressed to a phony name in care of general delivery," Price admitted.

"What the hell are you talking about?"

High Price shrugged. "Your hideout isn't important. I'll tell you why. It's because the very essence of blackmail is secrecy. The victim pays off in return for silence. Obviously, a blackmailer who can't guarantee secrecy and silence can't collect at all. Why should anyone pay you to play shut-mouth, when I'm shouting the truth from the rooftops? I have to, to earn my thousand bucks from the Hale dame."

The detective paused significantly.

"Of course," he added thoughtfully, "if you wanted to make me a better offer—say, cut me in for half of the shakedown. . ."

"Half?" shrieked Greenwich V. Huckland, aghast. "You're crazy! I wouldn't have anything left!"

Price extracted a card from his vest pocket. "Think it over, anyway," he invited. "In case you change your mind, here's the number to call."

CHAPTER FOUR

Murder Tin-Type

HIGH PRICE paced his office floor with rapid, restless strides. He glared at the wall-clock, muttered: "I can't understand it! I've baited all the hooks! I ought to have had a bite before now—"

The whirr of the outer door buzzer punctuated his complaint.

He stopped short. "Out of sight!" he snapped at Margaret Hale. "In the closet

with you!" He turned to Beulah Randy. "See which one of them it is."

For the second time today, the inner office door was flung violently open before she reached it. This time the intruder was a flush-featured, bull-shouldered individual in wrinkled blue serge plainclothes.

"Sergeant Warren!" Beulah gasped.

Warren ignored her, advanced grimly on Highland Park Price to open his palm and reveal a trio of small copper shells in his fist.

"High, start explaining! Who emptied these into Doc Leverett?"

"Leverett!" Beulah Randy gulped. "Is he—"

Warren kept right on ignoring her. "I'm waiting for the word, High!"

"They aren't mine." Price inspected the shells with casual interest. "I shoot home re-loads, and those are factory-fresh stock."

"But you know damned well who was gunning for him," the Homicide officer urged. He dug into his pocket, produced a checkbook. "I found the proof right on his dead body. He paid you five hundred bucks this very day."

Highland Price eyed the stub, said: "Leaving him a balance of \$2835.42. That proves my innocence. I never bump off a client in a solvent financial condition."

"Very funny! But I want answers, not jokes!"

"I don't know any answers," the private dick denied. "Leverett hired me as a dog-catcher, that's all."

"A—huh?"

"That dog right there in the corner," Price nodded. The cocker spaniel's tail thumped recognition. "It was stolen from the pet hospital. I recovered it for him."

Beulah Randy read disbelief on the officer's face. She volunteered: "It's true. The dog really was stolen from the hospital last night, and—"

"Last night. So Leverett paid you five C's for less than one day's work," Warren stormed at Highland Price. "You've burned over some fast ones in your day, but this is the hottest yet."

He dropped the checkbook in favor of a notebook of his own, walked over and knelt to copy the license tag number attached to the spaniel's collar. Highland Price seized the opportunity to pass a moistened thumb over the check stubs. Ten days ago, he noted, Dr. Alexander Leverett's bankroll had been fattened by a twenty-five hundred-dollar deposit.

"I'm gonna trace this tag," Sergeant Warren growled, "and if you're up to your old tricks again, you'll be wearing a number yourself."

He exited noisily. The closet door opened

and Margaret Hale emerged suspiciously. "What did he mean, up to your old tricks?"

Highland Park Price shrugged. "I've got a shady reputation. I gotta have it, because honesty is a policy I can't afford in this racket! My clients demand immorality of me. High-minded people interested in pure justice and law enforcement go to guys like Warren for results. Only personalities with guilty consciences are interested in hiring a private eye, figuring a private eye will wink at their own misdeeds."

He aimed a forefinger at Margaret Hale.

"You're the same as the rest! You came to me because you really believed your Professor Huckleberry had a legal bill of sale to that picture."

The telephone ended his lecture. Price snatched up the instrument, said: "Yeah?" O.K., I'll be right over."

He snatched up the dog's chain. "Come on, Monkeywrench. Come on, girls. That was Gulpy, Burrows, Goodnight & Goodnight, and its the payoff!"

THE Browne Building lifted twenty stories of concrete from the heart of the downtown business district. A paneled express elevator swallowed the first twelve stories in one bound. The law firm of Gulpy, Burrows, Goodnight & Goodnight occupied manorial offices on the eighteenth floor. A red-haired receptionist ushered Price, Beulah and Margaret Hale into a private sanctum which looked more like a gentleman's study than a business office. It even boasted a log crackling in a wood-burning fireplace.

High Price saw, without surprise, that Albert Browne stood before this fire. The nephew's saturnine face was drawn tight as a drum head.

Gulpy himself was cordially pleasant. "I want to apologize for a natural mistake. At first I thought you were merely one of those shyster attorneys who disgrace the legal profession, and, incidentally, crucify their clients for two-bits," the silver-maned barrister explained. "Knowing that you are a properly licensed private investigator naturally makes all the difference in our—er, relations."

"Oh, cut out the chatter!" Albert Browne snapped. "They broke into the wine cellar. They know my uncle is dead—has been dead almost two weeks. His death meant paying millions in inheritance taxes. It meant that a lot of local real estate investments had to be dumped on the market. I knew damned well the speculators would hammer prices to hell if they knew we were forced to sell. All I did was try to keep the obituary out of the papers until the property was peddled."

Price probed: "And, incidentally, break all laws pertaining to the disposal of bodies?"

"I broke no laws." The nephew smiled slyly. "A legally qualified medico signed the death certificate. I merely had him use the name J. S. Brown, without the final *e* which Uncle Stafford only tacked on after he came into the chips, anyway. The undertaker was told he was fixing up the body of an old family servant to be shipped out of this state. I was really going to ship it, and then announce that my uncle had died in Florida."

Price asked: "What about this property you sold after his death?"

"It doesn't make any difference," Gulpy assured hastily. "The technical ownership was in corporation form, anyway. The sole question was whether or not the general public realized that these corporations, in which the old gentleman owned a majority of the stocks, had to be put on a cash, liquid basis in a hurry."

Albert Browne said: "You can kick up a dirty stink, but it won't get you anywhere, because no crime was committed." He stroked his chin. "Of course, we don't want a stink. I'd be willing to take care of the doctor bills Miss Hale's worried about, provided, of course, she drops her silly claim to being Uncle Stafford's granddaughter."

"Silly?" Beulah Randy exclaimed. "What's silly about it?"

Gulpy shrugged. "That's all been settled." He flipped the switch of a plastic inter-office communicator. "Miss Karrel, send the Professor in."

Greenwich V. Huckland had evidently been waiting for the summons. He entered briskly through a side door. A growl formed in Monkeywrench's throat.

Beulah Randy said sharply: "He's no professor! He's nothing but a low, common blackmailer!"

"Regardless of who or what he is," the lawyer chuckled, "you can't get around *this*."

He tugged open a desk drawer, removed from it a small paper-wrapped packet. "Miss Hale, you spoke of photographic proof which would establish your claims. You meant, of course, a wedding photo depicting your maternal grandmother and a man known to you as Jim Brown—"

High Price said: "We all know what she meant. What the hell do *you* mean?"

Gulpy wagged a hand at Huckland. "Tell your story, my man."

"There's nothing to it. I figured there was something funny in a man as rich as J. Stafford Browne living the life he did. All I did was trace his life back to the mining camps where he came from. I found records of a murder of which a James Brown had been guilty. I also found he deserted a wife and child, and that the child was raised by a

Hanson family." Greenwich V. Huckland smirked. "The rest was easy. I got on Mrs. Hale's trail, eased into the house one night, and found some stuff in an attic trunk. I took the original photo and made a copy of it, and put back the copy of the real one. Then I got to thinking: I'd better have a legal title to it, so I bought the copy off the old lady for ten bucks."

Beulah Randy protested: "You're being paid to say these things!"

"He's being paid, but you can't deny the main fact." Gulpy's finger undid the paper packet. Beulah sprang to look at what seemed to her an exact duplicate of the first picture.

"It's another fake!" she cried.

HIGHLAND PARK PRICE bent to look.

He said: "No, it isn't. It's an old-time tintype. They don't make them any more."

"A tintype!" Margaret Hale said thinly. "Oh, I remember now. It'd been so long ago, I'd forgotten. . ."

Beulah said blankly: "But it's still the wrong hand. It shows the *right* hand missing."

"Precisely," nodded Gulpy, "the point. J. Stafford Browne had lost a left hand, therefore this is not J. Stafford Browne's portrait."

High Price nodded. "A perfect argument. Now finish it. It's only a picture of Miss Hale's grandfather, therefore it belongs to her. I'll take charge of it."

Beulah pivoted, stared at her employer suspiciously.

Price closed his fingers on the tintype. "That's all, folks—except you're wrong as hell. The old-fashioned daguerrotype, or tintype pic, always showed a mirror image. If you look in a mirror, of course, your left hand appears to be your right. And vice-versa."

The blue eyes Beulah fixed on her employer now were amazed. "Glory be! Then it really is J. Stafford Browne's picture!"

"Uh-huh. Making my client the main contender for the Browne millions," the detective affirmed. He grinned at every one.

Choked sounds emanated from Greenwich V. Huckland. "He's lying!" the blackmailer wailed. "It's just another of his doublecrossing, two-timing tricks!"

Highland Price chuckled. "You outsmarted yourself, Huckland. You were smart enough to drop your notebook so Miss Hale's claims would put the squeeze on your shakedown victim. You were clever enough to realize that a recluse like J. Stafford would hardly go off to Florida alone at his age. You were even smart enough to swipe his dog, figuring the dog would lead you to its master if it could. Your mistake lay in trying to swipe back the fake pic when you realized that a

paper print should have shown the other hand missing."

"I still say it's just a damn trick!" snarled Huckland.

"You say wrong. How wrong, you'd have seen if you'd examined the pic closely. That it was a mirror image was proved all along because the bride is wearing her wedding ring on the wrong hand—"

Monkeywrench's growl warned the detective. He spun around just in time to bump his ribs into the automatic clutched in Albert Browne's fist. The nephew strained through twisted lips: "Damn you, give me that tin-type, or—"

Price lunged violently against the gun. Albert Browne's fingers wrapped convulsively onto the weapon, his trigger knuckle showing white. Grinning horribly, the detective uppercuted.

The bald-headed man fishfopped backwards and lay with nothing moving but the blood running out of a corner of his mouth.

Price picked up the pistol. "Beulah, call Warren! Tell him to stop by and get a killer and a murder gat."

Gulpy's eyes were agitated under their snowy brows. "Albert is— My goodness, no!"

High Price said curtly: "Nobody is paying me for this package, so here it is without any fancy wrappings."

"One, Huckland started out to blackmail Uncle Stafford on account of his murderous, wife-deserting past."

"Two, Albert was afraid the old man might legally recognize that he had a daughter,

thereby doing a mere nephew out of the heavy gravy. He knocked off his uncle, probably with poison, and then paid Doc Leverett, the ex-human medico, twenty-five hundred bucks to sign a death certificate. No physician resorts to dog doctoring unless he's been driven out of his profession, and Leverett was a scared crook or he'd never have come to me.

"Three, when the corpse was prematurely uncovered, Albert was afraid Leverett would squawk under cop pressure. So he rushed and killed him, just as he tried to kill me here."

Beulah Randy turned from the office phone. "Warren is coming a-running, even though he couldn't believe his ears."

Lawyer Gulpy said hoarsely: "You're insane. Albert didn't try to shoot you."

"He tried, but he couldn't. Leaning up hard against the muzzle end of an automatic," Price imparted gun lore, "forces back the slide, so the gun won't discharge. He triggered on me, but nothing happened."

Sudden horror overspread Highland Park Price's lean-cheeked features. He yelped, jumped nearly a yard.

Beulah giggled. "It was only the dog licking your hand."

"Only— Good God!" Price exclaimed. "Get rid of him! Take him in the next room! What if Warren saw something like that? Dogs are supposed to know human nature. They only make up to the right guys."

He glared at the dog. The dog laughed out its tongue and wagged its tail ecstatically.

High Price shuddered. "You dumb mutt! You want to make me out a right guy? You want to ruin my business reputation entirely?"



If you'd married Edith, no one could blame you for sneaking out, like Wes, for a peaceful beer, even though it meant hell-a-mile when you sneaked back again.... But the kind of hell Wes found when he had—

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DETECTIVE TALES