



TWO-TIMING WILLIE

By JOE ARCHIBALD

Willie Klump, the Hawkeye Hawkshaw, follows the crime clue provided by a lowly mosquito—and then gets swamped in trouble!

SATCHELFOOT KELLY walked into Willie Klump's office one day and found the president of the Hawkeye Detective Agency making paper dolls out of newspapers.

"So I was right all the time, Willie," the flatfoot from Headquarters said. "I should report you to Bellevue and have them send a wagon."

"I have just finished my income tax report," Willie protested. "It can't be right, Satchelfoot. By my figures I owe Morgenthau sixteen thousan' dollars an' ninety an' a half cents. I made seventeen hun'ed an' eighty so I guess it must be inflation has got me. It says if you own stock you pay a bigger tax if you take dividends, so I writ Pa to sell all his cows

to save money. You know a good C.P.A. who is out of work, Kelly?"

"Well, well, if this ain't a coincident, Willie," Satchelfoot said. "Contributions to worthy causes can be inducted from your income so here is two tickets for the police ball at the old Gotham Opera House on East Fourteenth, Willie. Six bucks off your income will whittle your tax to nothin'. Shell out, as the Greeks an' Chinese get most of the take."

Willie paid the six bucks and thanked Satchelfoot and then began working on his tax again. After deducting the six dollars Willie found out he only owed the government eleven thousand and some odd change.

"It has to be wrong," Willie gulped. "Or I go to jail for life. I must ask Gertie . . . Huh? Why what am I sayin'? That little plump hunk of fluff I met in the automat las' night said she was a bookkeeper once. I am saved! Only thing I got to remember is to be careful as Gert come in while I was talkin' to Flossie that night. There was almost a fight."

Willie Klump phoned Gertie and broke his date and the only reason he got away with it was because he said he had two tickets to the police ball and she was going with him.

"Oh, Willie, I can wear my new evenin' gown of apricot an' peach color!" Gertie enthused. "I will stay home this evenin' an' mend it in a few places. What are you goin' to do?"

"Why—er—I think I'll stay in with a good book like 'Why Does a Tree Grow in Brooklyn?' honey."

"You can't never improve your mind too much, Willie."

"Huh? I don't like the way you. . . Well, I got to go to the liberry an' git the book. S'long."

WILLIE went to his rooming house, put on his best blue serge, trimmed the cuffs of a freshly laundered white shirt and slicked down his hair. He was at the automat fifteen minutes later and Flossie Torkle was cleaning the dishes from one of the tables.

"Oh, hello, you great big hunk of man," the girl said. "Take a tip, Willie, an' don't git your thumb all sore or waste nickels on the tuna fish salad. Sit down an' relax an' I'll talk to you later."

A few minutes later, before he was aware of it, he had a date to take Flossie to a movie. She quit work at nine. Willie met her outside.

"On the way I gotta stop at a drug-store an' git some aspirin," she said, "an' then we'll go into a tavern before the movies so's I can drink a slug of rye with the pills. I got a cold, Willie, so don't you dast git too close in the movies—hee-hee!"

Willie Klump tried not to get too close but when Flossie Torkle went to a movie with a guy he remembered it for quite some time afterward. Willie said good-by to Flossie at eleven-thirty and on his way home he brushed powder from his lapel and took a bobby pin out of his ear.

Well, he was lucky. Gertie had not sent out any scouts. He could still smell perfume even on his way to a leaky gas main and he decided to have his blue serge dry-cleaned before wearing it again. Willie sneezed as he entered his room. His eyes got watery and he felt a stuffiness in his bugle. He sneezed again.

Gertie Mudgett called Willie at noon the next day.

"Hello, Willie. I et breakfast in that automat an' that fat mama looked at me funny an' says I should better look out elst I will find a manpower shortage hittin' me. She is too fresh, Willie."

"Yeah," Willie said, shaking. "I thig I'll eat sub place else, Gertie."

"What you say? You have caught a cold, Willie Klump."

"I guess so, Gert. The draft dabbed be at last, ha ha! See you todite, huh?"

"You said it," Gertie told Willie and hung up.

"I dode like the way she said it," Willie choked out.

That night Gertie came right to the point.

"Funny, that Flossie has a cold at the same time, Willie. And you never hardly have one. What is that I smell?"

"Odiods," Willie said desperately. "Here they put theb id lilac water before servid' as—"

"Let's go outside," Gertie said. "Or I'll frisk you here!"

Willie Klump wished he had a memory. He had forgotten and worn the same blue serge. Gertie found two movie ticket stubs, in his coat pocket. She sniffed at his lapel and then let him have it.

"An' I hope you git double pneumonia from that fat squab, an' don't never speak to me ag'in, you philander! I am goin' to the ball with Aloysius Kelly."

"Dabes will be the death of be yet," Willie said and sauntered home, trying to get his left eye open. . . .

The police ball was quite a shindig and it had a very dramatic and violent ending. The take was estimated at close to ten grand and it seemed that the Greeks and the Chinese were going to have something to cheer about, only a rough citizen wearing a mask over his face held up the cashier single-handed, erased a policeman, and got into a cab with the moola and eluded all pursuit which went on until four A. M.

"Right in the midst of most of the cops in the city too!" Willie gulped as he looked down at the deceased in the lobby

of the old opera house.

The cashier was not feeling any too spry himself as the criminal character had put an extra parting in his toupee with the Betsy.

SATCHELFOOT KELLY, inserted too snugly in a rented tuxedo, came up.

"Somebody'll pay for this!" Satchelfoot yelped.

"Six bucks of that was mine, so I got somethin' to say about solvin' this case, Kelly!" Willie howled. "Anybody git a look at the guilty citizen?"

"Jus' as he got into the cab," a redhead hanging on the arm of "Hard Hat" Hafey gurgled, "his mask slipped down an' I happened to be out gittin' more gum outa the machine an' there he was. He had a blue chin an' a wide flat nose. I would know him anywheres if I saw him there."

"He won't never go there then," Willie quipped. "Waiter, I'll take the check now. . . . Oh, it's you, Kelly. If you sit down you won't have one button left, huh? Who told you tan shoes was worn with tucks?"

"Shut up before I ram Gert's ortschid corsige down your throat," Satchelfoot yelled. "The Chinese an' Greek have been robbed an' the cops will git a cut in ol' age benefits because of that crook an' murderer. Well, I am not lettin' no grass grow under my feet, boys!"

"You said it," Willie tossed out. "If you just run across the outfield at the stadium once there wouldn't be no grass. What'll we do first, Satchelfoot?"

"You dare foller us," Kelly howled, "an' you will find out you are dependable, Willie! Anyways you gotta take Gertie home."

"I'd go with a zombie first," Gertie said.

"After you been with Satchelfoot, I would catch more'n a cold," Willie retorted. "How's them for apples?"

Willie got his hat at the check room and tipped a nickel. "Sorry to have horned in, Kelly," he said, before he made his departure, "but you know I come stag so . . . Good luck findin' the robber. Don't do nothin' I would do, Gertie."

The police of the big metropolis hunted through the pics at Headquarters and after quite a confab agreed that the dishonest gee who had knocked off the police ball swag had to be a reform school and Sing Sing alumnus last known as "Soapy" Rintz. Soapy seemed to be the only badman in circulation sporting a flat and wide proboscis and a chin that defied anything in the way of razors from hand-powered ones to the electric fuzz removers.

The drag-net was spread, but when the big seine was hauled in none of the fish taken out of the stream of incorrigible humanity happened to be Soapy.

"Then he is guilty," Satchelfoot said to the D. A., "as he has taken it on the lam an' is hidin' out with the loot. We will broadcast a state-wide alarm and tell the announcer on Gang Blizers to have the public on the alert."

"Why not try and do somethin' ourselves?" Willie Klump wanted to know. "This is a terrible misdemeanor that concerns every red-blooded American, as think of all the starvin' women an' children in them countries."

"Red-blooded?" Kelly sniffed. "Then you are illegible, Willie. If a mosquito had to live on your blood, it would expire of vicious enemias in two days."

"I heard the blood they took out of you the last time was labeled for the Family Pet Hospital and Retreat up in the Bronx," Willie said. "You got any orders for me, D.A.?"

"Yes. You git out of here, Klump. Go and find yourself a faithless husband or wife to trail. Kelly, call Hard Hat Hafey in

here."

"Awright for you," Willie said in a huff. "Don't ast me for help the second time."

Now strange things began to happen just forty-eight hours later. Willie was about to close up his office at ten P. M., having worked overtime on a game of solitaire he had sworn to lick if it took him all night, when the phone rang. It scared him half to death.

"I fergot," Willie gulped. "I paid the bill. Hullo—hullo—hello! Klump speaking, president of the Hawkeye—"

"This is Mrs. Darby McFitt," a raspy voice said. "I live just off the Bronx River Road in Fleetwood on a dead-end street that starts at an apartment house named Sholder Arms. Somethin' funny goin' on here. Can you come up right away, huh?"

"The Hawkeye Agency never sleeps," Willie said. "You watch the clock an' see how quick I make it."

WILLIE walked up the dead-end street twenty-eight minutes later and it was amazing to see such a lonesome stretch of real estate so near the metropolis. He entered a frame house and saw a big beefy citizen haranguing a scrawny little spouse who was edging toward a baseball bat that stood in a corner.

"So you call a correspondent store dick, you flathead!" the coarse-looking male said. "Why didn't you call Police Headquarters like anybody with some brains? Of all the dumb hairpins—"

"I would like you to know," Willie said, his professional pride blitzed, "I am a bonafried—"

"Oh, shut up, while I call the cops."

"He ast fer a detective, Mr. Klump," the scrawny housewife sniffed. "So I s'pose I should of took the classified direct'ry an' looked under notary publics

or fish markets, huh?"

"Yeah," Willie said.

Mrs. McFitt took Willie out into the kitchen and fed him a big wedge of apple pie for his trouble and Mrs. McFitt was a character who liked to talk better than a cat liked to chase mice, and she gave Willie the lowdown.

"There's a deserted house at the dead-end, Klump, an' night 'fore last we could swear we heard voices comin' from it an' we was sure we saw a light. Then a while ago we was just startin' for bed when we hear an auto go by the house, towards the river road, an' why should it? Who would come from a dead-end?"

"Maybe it was two citizens pitchin' woo," Willie guessed.

"If they was they had a blowout as we heard somethin' sounded like a shot," Mrs. McFitt said. "They went by too soon after they could have fixed the flat tire."

The cops and a detective from the Bronx area entered the McFitt domicile and Willie was introduced to them.

"Klump, huh?" A cop grinned. "Him I always says I must see. Well, le's see what the trouble is."

The old house at the dead end was a spooky place. Old trees hemmed it in on three sides and the weeds and grass choked the doorway and reached to the window sills. A cop flashed a light and Willie could see where the grass has been tramped down and where some kind of a jalopy had been parked.

"I would not be surprised to see Karloff or Peter Lorry walk out any minute," Willie gulped. "Look, the door is swingin' open."

The Law entered the deserted house and in a room upstairs they discovered a citizen that would never be arrested for trespassing. The defunct character was sprawled out on an old blanket and some impulsive person had put a bullet in his

ear, too far. The seat of the hapless character's trousers were a shambles and Willie Klump picked up a blow-torch.

"They was torturin' him," he said. "Why, the corpse looks like . . . It is him! You boys send downtown for Satchelfoot Kelly as they are lookin' for this cadaver at the main office. It is Soapy Rintz who held up the police benefit ball an' liquidated a policeman!"

"You kiddin', Klump?"

"I am not!" Willie said. "An' git Hard Hat Hafey, too. Soapy Rintz come here for a hide-out an' some other rough criminals found out some way an' they come an' killed him after torturin' him to find out where the take from the ball was stashed."

Satchelfoot and his henchmen arrived in due time and Kelly became a psychoneurotic when he beheld Willie kneeling down beside the medical examiner.

"I wish I knew how you find these murders, you mental midget," Kelly raved. "If there's a leak in the Department, I'll see the D. A."

"Believe it or not, Satchelfoot," Willie said. "I was waitin' here for a street car an' . . . look, the corpse will not be very sanitary if you do not remove it soon." Willie slapped himself on the side of the jaw but hard. "The mosquitoes are awful around here, Kelly," he said.

"A blow-torch," Satchelfoot said. "This must mean somethin', Hard Hat."

"The murderer was a plumber," Willie grinned. "Oh, look at the seat of the late Soapy's nice plaid rompers, Kelly. It is like he sat down on a hamburger grill. He was forced to tell somethin' and not how he did a certain crossword puzzle neither."

SATCHELFOOT went through the crook's pockets and found seven dollars and eleven cents, a picture of a pin-up gal torn out of a magazine, some

powders you took when you wanted to dream you were in a harem of Oberons, and an address scribbled on the back of a paid-up hotel bill.

"I think I got somethin' here, boys," Kelly said. "This address is of a gee named Gus Gimmick and there is a string of numbers under it. Gimmick is either doin' a stretch in a can or it is a cab license. Soapy had a cab waitin' when he cleaned up the ball, Hard Hat! Gimmick figured to have all the cabbage to himself. It was a cross, pure an' simple."

"You are positively amazin'," Willie said. "I bet that powder ain't what you think."

"Oh, no?" Satchelfoot said, and picked up the little envelope and took a big sniff of the contents. "If that is talcum powder, I will be King of Hoboken in the mornin'."

"If it ain't you might be too," Willie said. "They say the cure for that snow is awful, Satchelfoot. I never saw such a dope."

"Ah—er—what is the antidote, Hard Hat?" Satchelfoot choked out. "I don't feel so good already. I will go out an' git some fresh air. Wait for me."

Satchelfoot came back into the old house ten minutes later and guessed he had not sniffed too much of the happy dust. Anyway the mosquitoes out there were worse than P-38's.

"Well, when are we goin' to arrest Gimmick?" Willie asked. "It looks like Soapy held out for quite some time before he give in. Lot of cigarette butts an' wax paper that must of come off san'wiches."

"Nobody ast you!" Satchelfoot yipped.

The corpse of Soapy Rintz was hustled to the Frigidaire and Satchelfoot and Hard Hat hurried downtown, with Willie tagging along. A few hours later, Gus Gimmick was locked up and readied for the grill room. Gimmick admitted he drove a swindle chariot for his coffee and crumb

buns but denied he was the citizen who chauffeured Soapy Rintz the night of the outrage.

"Awright!" Gus Gimmick yowled. "I knew Soapy slightly an' I drove a cab fer a livin'. So I know the porter of a bank on Fifth Avenya! When it is wrecked an' robbed, it'll be me, hah? Go soak your head, Kelly, an' stop readin' Rick Tracy so much. An' git me that mouthpiece!"

"You got to have an alibi whicht you ain't," Kelly reminded Gimmick.

"It is no business of your'n where I was at the time you said the police ball was knocked off. This is a democracy, ain't it?"

Now the machinery of the law worked very swiftly and startling developments resulted not many hours after Soapy Rintz departed this vale of tears. Soapy's likeness in the Center Street photograph studio interested more people than just those wearing badges, and it turned out that Soapy had been in the service of his country, even though reluctantly.

Under the name Roscoe Mullarkey he had been inducted into the Armed Forces and had spent much of his time in various guardhouses before being shipped to the South Pacific to practise his inimitable talents on Japs.

Private Roscoe Mullarkey had deserted the first chance that came his way and four months later some M. P.'s located Soapy on an atoll not far from New Guinea where he was conducting one of the most scandalous Black Markets ever known to man. Soapy and a medicine man who knew how to make the most beautiful spurious pearls had fleeced at least three companies of U. S. Marines before they were apprehended.

The native medicine man turned out to be an ex-sideshow barker from Brooklyn named "Hooty" Gilkey. Soapy Rintz, alias Roscoe Mullarkey, was court-martialed

dishonorably after pleading shell shock and was turned loose without a right to vote in the next election. Hooty Gilkey was tossed into a very hot klink and Soapy's three dusky molls went in quest of another beachcomber.

"It is like a story Swiss Fam'ly Robinson wrote," Satchelfoot said.

"Awright," Hard Hat Hafey said. "So le's see who was Soapy's pals of late, Kelly, We gotta git that dough back or I won't retire as quick as I want to. An' think of the starvin' people in Greece an' China. This is part of the war effort, Kelly. Even Willie Klump should be allowed to help."

"Why not?" Satchelfoot grinned. "We need a laff while we work, huh? Let's grill Gimmick once more just in case he is in the mood."

GUS GIMMICK remained aloof, adamant and downright insulting. Satchelfoot gave up and left the grill room, saying that he was sure Gimmick was the guilty character.

"We ransacked his joint," Hard Hat said. "Where is the sugar he squeezed out of Soapy?"

"If I knew everything, I wouldn't have to be a detective, would I?" Kelly snapped. "Sometimes I wonder if you ain't worst off for brains than Willie Klump, Hard Hat!"

"You don't have to git so personal, Kelly," Hafey complained.

Satchelfoot, twenty-four hours later, plodded wearily into the office of William J. Klump and slumped down on a chair.

"This is a tough one, Willie," Kelly said. "Soapy Rintz, as far as we can make out, hob-nobbed at various times with thirty-one unlawful citizens. Anyone of them or any three or four could have lifted the take off Soapy. I know Gimmick did it but can't never prove it an' they'll have to

spring him soon. Sometimes you have ideas, Willie. We just can't keep grillin' thirty or more crooks or tailin' every one of them day an' night. General McArthur will be in Tokio before we solve nothin' that way."

"I feel awful sorry for you, Satchelfoot," Willie said, smiling. "You seen Gertie of late?"

"Well, it was your own fault, Willie," Kelly gulped. "She tol' me of you two-timin' with that wren that works in the automat. Naturally Gert comes to me to help fergit she was give the old bum's rush. You should have more senst than to pick a doll who caught a cold. Them germs are awful catchin', Willie."

"I have the worst luck, Kelly," Willie said. "The next cupcake I ogle most likely will be a carrier of yeller jaundice or somethin'. You got a list, by the way, of the late Soapy's pals? Maybe I will run acrost one an' could watch him close. Anythin' to help, Satchelfoot."

Aloysius Kelly reeled off a list of recalcitrants from Al Abendola to Zero Ziltz and Willie had to write them down as his memory was ever on the *qui vive* like a two-toed sloth after feasting on a bottle of paregoric.

"Well, if I hear of anything," Willie Klump said. "I will buzz you, cousin. Sometimes, lookin' at you, old pal, I git tempted to lead a life of crime. You are the best reason for adult and juvenile delinquency I know."

Satchelfoot got up and headed for the door.

"That is all the thanks I git for tryin' to be pleasant an' cuttin' you in on somethin', Willie. Awright, you can go to blazes."

"Anything you would ever cut me in on, would be my throat, Satchelfoot," Willie said. "Anyways, I am very busy as I have been hired to look into an arson case

near the river. A citizen got burned up over somebody stomping down his victory garden and there should be some lettuce in it, huh?"

When Satchelfoot had departed, smoke coming out of his coat collar, Willie felt lonesome. He called Gertie Mudgett on the phone.

"How's about gettin' made up again, Gert? It was only a love tiff, huh? To think Flossie Torkle would ever cut you out with me. Tsk—tsk! There is a good pitcher at Looey's Fifty-ninth an'—"

"I'd love to, Willie," Gert said. "But I wouldn't want you should catch my ringworm. They are very contagious you know. It'll clear up in a day or two so gimme a rain check, huh?"

"Oke," Willie said.

He washed up and went out to eat and he was trying to think where he would put on the feed bag when he happened to find himself right in the automat. Flossie Torkle's cosmetics seemed a little washed up when she ankled over and greeted him.

"How's every little thing, Flossie? You look like you oncet had Gable hooked an' then lost him."

"I'm awful worried, Willie," Flossie gurgled. "My boy frien' is stubborn an' won't git himself a doctor. He looks awful sick an' looks like he would even pass out on me. After I git through here will you go an' see him with me, Sugar?"

"I—er—dunno," Willie gulped. "You got a cold? Ring-worm? Measles, mumps, earysipelas or anything?"

"Huh?"

"I just can't take no more chances, Flossie, as was you ever slugged by Gertie Mudgett? There is Commando blood in her. But if you will gimme your word you will not give me away, I will call on your torch with you. . . ."

FLOSSIE led Willie Klump up three flight of stairs in a brownstone on East Forty-sixth and knocked on a door.

"Come in," a very nettled voice said and Willie and Flossie did.

There was a character in bed and he was perspiring as freely as the winner of a fat man's race at a clambake in mid-August. The indisposed one snarled at Flossie and asked did she pick up everything she saw along the gutter.

"He is a friend of mine—strictly plutonic, Ozzie," Flossie said. "I had to git somebody to try an' talk some brains into you. Willie, this is my top woo pitcher, Ozzie Yarbo. He has caught somethin' an' it is not just hay fever."

Something buzzed inside Willie's head and there was a noise like a light bulb chain being pulled once—then a second time.

"You look awful, Ozzie," Willie said. "Your face is the color of the underside of an eel. You are shakin' worse than a pair of dice in the hands of a Harlem ivory cube expert. You have gotta see a doctor or a undertaker. Whicht will it be?"

Ozzie Yarbo had another violent case of the shakes and his teeth rattled like castanets. When it was over, he said Flossie could get him a croaker, but fast.

"—I been poisoned," Ozzie gulped. "Flossie, I bet that dirty rat, Blinky Skeen went an'—"

"Why, what would Blinky ever do to you, Sugar?" Flossie asked. "An' why, Ozzie?"

"Nothin' baby," Ozzie choked out. "I am just in the deliriums, is all."

Willie and Flossie watched the M. D. as he took a swift gander or two at Ozzie Yarbo.

"You have got a plain bad case of malaria, Mr. Yarbo," the doctor said. "You need some quinine which is scarcer than humming's bird's tongues in Greek

restaurants and we better take you to the hospital for a while.”

“I’ll pack him a bag,” Flossie said. “Where is it, Ozzie?”

“You won’t pack no bag,” Ozzie said between shakes. “I ain’t goin’ to be away long. You’d think we was married, you fat she-wolf. Git out of here!”

“He is in no mood for woo,” Willie said. “Better humor him, Flossie.”

“Yeah,” the automat employee snapped. “An’ I hope he shakes out of his shorts.”

“Where in creation would I git malaria?” Ozzie wanted to know. “Look, call Blinky on the phone, huh, Flossie? I was only kiddin’.”

Flossie did. When she came into the room, she said:

“What do you know, Ozzie? Blinky’s got it too!”

“Well, he musta caught it from me or vice versa,” Ozzie gulped. “Le’s go, Doc.”

Late the next afternoon, Willie called Gertie Mudgett and she said her ring-worm was much better and she guessed Willie would not be taking chances as long as he did not get too close to her. Her girl friend was on a date and Willie could come up to the flat any time that was convenient for him. When he got there he asked if she had seen Satchelfoot.

“Yeah, he’s gittin’ nowhere on that case, Willie,” Gertie said. “It looks like the Greeks an’ Chineese people will stay hungry. It’s a wonder Soapy Rintz was not shot by the Army for desertin’ before somebody else shot him, huh?”

“Yeah,” Willie said. “Funny he waited until he got to the Pacific before he run away, wa’n’t it? Le’s take a bus ride, Gertie. Maybe out to Jersey or somewheres an’ we can take a picnic lunch. These fall nights are awful warm for this time of year. How’s about it, gorgeous?” Willie moved in close.

“Oh, you!” Gertie giggled. “Look out for that ring-worm, Willie.”

Willie took Gertie over to Jersey and they walked three miles from the bus stop in Hohokus and had their late snack near Saddle River. Before they came to the apple turnovers, they admitted the Jersey mosquitoes had them licked. Willie nearly broke a collar-bone trying to get at a bite just three inches above his sacro-iliac and Gertie wished she had used red flannels instead of leg paint.

“Run,” Willie said. “They are gettin’ in formation ag’in like Mustangs, Gert. Head fer the neares’ bomb shelter which is that deserted hot dog stand across the field.”

“It is awful,” Gertie said, pulling some of the old canvas that was left on the old refreshment stand over their head. “What must it be over there in them islands where the Marines are at, Willie? No wonder Soapy deserted.”

“Huh?” Willie said, and jumped out of the shelter. “Le’s head for the bus, Gert, an’ not miss it like Hitler.”

ALL the way back in the public carrier, Willie scribbled words on the back of an old circular letter he took from his pocket. Gertie kept asking him why.

“Never mind,” Willie would say. “Look, how can I consecrate on what I am doin’?”

When they reached the terminal near Broadway, Willie said:

“You better go home alone, Gertie, as there is somethin’ I got on my mind which won’t keep long if I lose my notes. I will see you tomorrer, maybe.”

“See who cares, William Klump!” Gertie snapped. “That last doll you went out with behind my back must of had softenin’ of the brain an’ you caught it! You owe me eighty cents for your share in them san’ wiches, so cough up!”

"Why didn't you tell me you was a golddigger?" Willie grunted, and dug down.

Ten seconds later, Gertrude Mudgett was going into a kiosk, and Will was sure she gave a sailor the eye before she went underground. He hurried to his rooming house and started reading the notes he had scribbled on the way from Jersey.

"They sound silly, even fer me," the president of the Hawkeye Detective Agency said, shaking his noggin. "But could be!"

Early the next morning, William Klump was on the job. He consulted an M.D. and looked up things in a book in a library. After which he was content to count three days off the calendar.

Willie was outside the Good Shepherd Hospital late in the afternoon when Ozzie Yarbo, looking quite as washed out as a pair of Scotchman's overalls, emerged from the healing hacienda and shuffled eastward. Willie trailed his quarry to the house where Ozzie lived and when the front door had closed behind the convalescent, Willie walked up the steps. He rang a bell and a landlady appeared.

"Could I git a room here?" Willie asked.

"Does it look like a flower shop? Sure, I got one on the top floor. Five per week. You got five dollars?"

Willie handed five dollars to the female boniface and followed her upstairs. He entered a room on the floor above Ozzie Yarbo's and said it was all right.

"I will send for my trunk at the Waldorf tomorrer," he told the landlady.

"You kill me," the old doll said and departed.

William Klump waited. He sat near the window outside of which was a fire-escape and listened for sounds to come up from below. Sounds did come up to him and they reminded him of all the world of

a character preparing to change his residence. Bureau drawers slamming shut, the rattle of hangers in a closet.

Then Willie heard a fist bang against a door. It was followed by ten seconds of abject silence. Then Ozzie opened a door.

"Well, if it ain't movin' day, Ozzie!" a voice said. "I had a hunch you would. . . . Put down that gat, Ozzie. Ain't we pals?"

"Yeah? Look, Blinky, I would kind of like to spend all this moola myself, see? An' doctor's bills are goin' to be high from now on: That stuff I got—"

Willie made his way down the fire-escape while the talk went on. He looked in through the window of Ozzie's room and saw Ozzie pointing a Roscoe at another suspicious character. That would be "Blinky" Skeen, he told himself. Blinky did not look like an ad for vitamins himself.

Willie went in through the window and let go his bombshell.

"Don't move—an' drop that Betsy, Ozzie!" he yelled. "You are covered! You killed Soapy Rintz an' I'm takin' you!"

"It's a bluff, Ozzie!" Blinky yipped and went after his own bazooka.

The first shot missed Willie and bounced off an iron bedpost and ricocheted so close to Ozzie Yarbo's pate that it cut a groove in Ozzie's locks and made his head buzz.

"Git him, Blinky!" Ozzie gulped as he shook the cobwebs out of his brain. Somehow he knows about us!"

William Klump picked up Ozzie's cannon and pointed it right at Blinky and fired. It hit a picture on the wall. Willie got Blinky's next shot through the top of his hat and he fired his second time, aiming at the picture on the wall.

This time his bullet hit Blinky in the shin and the criminal howled his head off and dropped his gun.

Ozzie Yarbo, no longer non compos

mentis, snatched it up and pointed it straight at Willie. The private dick pressed the trigger of his roscoe and was rewarded by a very blood-curdling metallic click.

WILLIAM KLUMP knew he was at a dead-end. Ozzie grinned wide and got even closer so he could not miss even if Willie had been a human skeleton.

"Well, give Soapy my best when you see him, you dumb flatfoot! Here goes!"

Willie wished he could tidy up a little before he became a corpse. He had always had a horror of going out in his working clothes. Why, what ailed Ozzie? The rough person oozed sweat from his cadaverous pan that formed big beads that bounced when they hit the floor. A violent chill was shaking the gun loose from Ozzie's fingers and Ozzie's teeth rattled like an old roulette wheel.

"Saved!" Willie yipped. "It is a malaria relapse!"

And he rushed forward and got Ozzie's roscoe and beat Blinky over the scalp with it when that uncouth person tried to make a counter-attack. The beachhead on East Forty-sixth was in Willie's hands. When the landlady led the policemen in, Willie asked why didn't she phone instead of walking all the way to the precinct station.

"I coulda been killed three times if I hadn't been lucky an' if it wa'n't for muskeeters."

"What happened here?" asked a bluecoat.

"I have just captured the killers of Soapy Rintz," Willie said, flashing his badge. "Soapy held up the police ball, remember?"

"P-p-prove it," Ozzie Yarbo stuttered, the shakes still with him.

"The dough is somewhere in this room," Willie said. "Ozzie was about to scam with it an' must have packed it in

his bag. Look for yourselves, boys."

The cops found nine thousand dollars in a false bottom in Ozzie's suitcase. Then everyone concerned in the rhubarb went downtown and Willie Klump gave his case notes to the D.A.

Satchel foot Kelly and Hard Hat Hafey waited, biting their nails like two sprouts watching a horror flicker.

"Like it says on my notes there," Willie explained. "Ozzie and Blinky got cases of malaria when they had to be in that deserted house in Fleetwood makin' Soapy come clean where he hid the police ball lettuce. Why? Because I checked up with the Army once more and they told me Soapy must have got malaria in New Guinea.

"There was big musketeers up there around that old house and they bit Soapy an' then when the same ones bit Ozzie an' Blinky, them two crooks both got Soapy's malaria germs. When Ozzie an' Blinky both got attacks at the same time, I hurried to look at the list of crooked pals Soapy had had at one time or some other, that Satchelfoot give me. So sure enough, I tailed Ozzie when he left the clinic, an' soon Blinky come along."

"I don't see," the D.A. sighed, pawing at his face, "how you did it, Klump. It is so silly."

"It was because I was thinkin' all the time of germ carriers of late I guess." Willie grinned. "Ever since Gertie caught me two-timin' because the doll I stepped out with carried cold germs. No wonder I got germs of an idea, ha! I could say it was auto suggestion if this case had anything to do with hot cars."

"Why didn't Gimmick give us an alibi?" Kelly yelled, tearing his felt hat apart.

"Ask him ag'in, Satchelfoot," Willie suggested.

Gus Gimmick said there was no reason

why he should as he was in the clear, wasn't he?

"I'll give you a hint though, Kelly," he needed. "If you had a wife who won a weight-liftin' contest at Coney Island oncet and who can tear a phone book in half while she is in bed with the grippe, would you wish her to know you was keepin' a swell number from bein' lonesome whilst her husband was out sellin' hot nylons some place? If I wa'n't scairt of the publicity, I would sue fer false arrest. As it stands, I better fergit it all. Good afternoon."

"I imagine there should be quite a fee comin' to me from the Police Benevolents Association club or somethin', D.A.," Willie said. "I only mentioned it in case I fergot it, as I have an awful memory."

"Kelly," Hard Hat Hafey mumbled, "leave us go out and get stiff as codfishes, huh?"

Willie went up to see Gertie that night and Gertie was very proud of Willie after what she had read in the papers. She let Willie snuggle up close to her and after stealing a smack, Willie asked if she had anything more that was catching.

Gertie let her hair down and said she had been out for a while with Dimitrius Kilonis and should have owned up before. William Klump picked up his hat and started running.

"Willie, you dope!" Gertie yelled down the stairway after him. "That is not a disease but the Greek barber over acrost the street. Willie!"

But Willie kept on going. Whatever it was Gertie had had, there had to be a shot for it. He was taking no chances with so many kinds of germs flying around the home front.