

A Killer's Heel



Willie's caller tittered and waved a hand playfully

*Willie Klump, the Awful Sleuth, Puts Shoe and Shoe
Together to Find a Murder Flaw!*

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WILLIE KLUMP, president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency, folded up his cot and stored it in a closet of his midtown office. Willie's office was also his boudoir. Likewise, it was the place where he cooked his meals, and an old wooden filing cabinet with the drawers removed served as a wardrobe for his one blue serge suit that had more shine to it than a four-carat dornick.

That's how tough things were going for Willie. As he began preparing his breakfast

he looked like something the cat had refused to drag in. He did not look like a detective and he did not act like one, and therein lay the secret of Willie's success—if you could call it that. He did not wear a derby and although his airedales were housed in shoes size eleven and a half, they were not flat.

Willie had solved a pair of tough cases since going out for himself and had garnered a couple of grand, but he was a patsy for the gentry who know the easy

ways to buy a yacht and a summer home on Long Island. His legal tender had taken wings and scrambled.

Willie browned himself a couple of slabs of toast and made a pot of coffee. While he ate, he sadly contemplated that portion of the universe that was visible through his one window. The outlook was as drab as an Eskimo's living room, and Willie and a solitary buck were as far apart at the moment as himself and Alaska. Willie, however, had attended Sunday school in his day and he knew that the "Lord giveth" as well as "taketh away," so he figured that it was about time for him to be on the receiving end again.

No sooner had Willie Klump tidied up his quarters than a knock came on the door. He knew that it was not his landlord because the office did not quake. So he opened the door with alacrity to admit one of the distaff side. The lady stalked in and took a chair. (The day before a visitor had taken his desk.)

"So you're a detective!" the old madam shrilled at Willie. "You don't look as if you meant it."

"Ah—er—I never put on a front," Willie said. "The more the crooked gentry think you are dumb and a flop, the less attention they pay to hiding clues from you. I can give you two very good references as to my ability, Miss—er—"

Willie was something of a diplomat. His female caller tittered and waved a hand playfully at the president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency. "Oh, you—*hee-hee*—I am Mrs. Gabriel Hornblower."

"Uh—er—you looked so young," Willie gulped gallantly. "Now what can I do for you?"

"It is a very simple job," Mrs. Hornblower chirped. "You should be able to handle, Mister Klump. You just follow my husband around. As it comes out of my allowance, I can only pay ten dollars a

week and expenses to you. Of course, it isn't much—"

Willie's brain agreed, but his stomach told him it was a very generous fee.

"I will take the job, Ma'am," he said. "You—er—suspect your husband of being a phil—a philan—a two-timer?"

"Mis-ter K-lump! I didn't say—why, the very idea!"

"Sorry," Willie hastened to say. "I'm sure nobody would be unfaithful to a charming person like yourself. Why, it is preposterous. If I said anything—"

"Don't mention it," Mrs. Hornblower simpered and laid a sawbuck on the table in front of Willie. "I pay in advance, Mr. Klump. Your carfare and such. You itemize it, and I will call and pay. Understand now, no letters or phone calls to my house. Oh, I forgot to give you my address, didn't I? How could you follow Mr. Hornblower from his house without it? *Hee-hee!* One ninety-six East Ninety-first Street. Here's a picture of my husband, Mr. Klump. Handsome, isn't he?"

Willie took a gander at the photo and his eyes bulged. At first he thought that the old doll had handed him a picture of Dracula by mistake. "Uh huh—yeah! Extinguished looking, awright. I couldn't miss him. What time does he leave for his office?"

"Eight-thirty from the house."

"Well, here's to success, Mrs. Hornblower," Willie promised briskly. "The Hawk-Eye Agency wasn't named that because it was blind. Good day, Ma'am."

WILLIE KLUMP started on his trailing the next morning. He hung around outside the apartment house where the Hornblowers lived and waited until Gabriel came out. This citizen had beetling brows and bug eyes, a nose that could hold plenty of adenoids, and a chin sharp enough to open a can of soup. Willie

decided that if a frill had fallen for Gabriel, she must be a zombie.

He followed Hornblower to the subway, hopped the train right behind him and went downtown as far as Fulton Street. From that station Willie dogged his client's spouse to 120 Nassau, and there his job ended until twelve-thirty when Gabriel knocked off his grind to put on the feedbag.

Willie went back to his office so he would be there in case someone needed a detective, but he was down at Nassau Street again by lunch time. He shadowed Gabriel to a beanery, hung around outside until an ugly looking cop ambled up and asked the president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency if he thought he was needed there to hold up the building.

"Beat it, bum!" the cop finished.

"I am on business here," Willie bridled indignantly. "I am a detective. Look at my badge."

"My kid's got one, too," the bluecoat commented. "It's a G-Man's. If I catch you here when I come back, I'll book you for vagrancy."

Willie went across the street and waited. Then he dogged Gabriel back to the Nassau Street address, left him there and returned uptown. At five P. M. William was following his quarry into a subway and he got off the train with Gabriel uptown. He trailed Mr. Hornblower to the swanky east side pueblo and called it a day.

It went on like that for a week. Willie's arches were starting to sag, and he was getting very sick of Gabriel. But ten bucks were ten bucks to Detective Klump. Accordingly he made out a report to Mrs. Hornblower and handed it to her when she paid her second visit. To his surprise his female client kicked at his expense account.

"I don't know the citizens who own the subway," Willie explained, "so I do not have a pass. All that walking makes me

hungry and I have already worn out my shoes. I had to invest in an alarm clock and corn plasters. Mr. Hornblower is a character of very regular habits. A monk in a cloister is a playboy compared to him."

"Well, you keep on following him, Mr. Klump," the old girl snapped. "He's too good to be true, and that's why I am suspicious. If I ever catch him with a young snip, I'll knock his brains out!"

"Very well, Ma'am," Willie said, and added to himself, "I bet you would, too!"

JUST three days later, Willie Klump was in a ptomaine grill right across the street from the swell oasis where Gabriel got his scoff. A very torrid blonde came in and sat down at the next table to Willie. In a few moments a dark-haired member of the sex allergic to mice flounced in and plopped herself down next to the blonde.

"Hiya, Trixie?" the brunette warbled. "How was the Paradise las' night, huh? Gee, I wisht I had a boy friend like you got, even if he does look like a cross between Mischa Auer and Stan Laurel. Why dontcha ast that caviar dope why he don't get himself a haircut, Trixie? He looks like he was picketin' a barber shop for the las' five years. Honest."

"Now ya stopped to breathe, May," the blonde countered pertly, "I'll tell ya I didn't get to no Paradise las' night. That big greaseball showed up with forty cents in change. Can ya'magine? Why I bother with foreigners, I don' know. I burnt that baby up, though. I told him I could get lotsa guys with plenty of sugar. I said I had one I was workin' on an' did he broil, May? I'll say! If he'd wore a cellerloid shirt, he'd abeen cremated."

"He's a swell lookin' guy, though, Trixie, what with them spats and cane and all. When ya dump him, gimme first crack at pickin' him up on the bounce, will ya? What's good here?"

"Don't be sil'," the blonde sniffed. "You been eatin' this chow for over a year just like me. How's the job comin'?"

"You would ast," the brunette sighed. "Now I ain't got no appertite."

Just then Willie spotted Gabriel coming out of the beanery across the way, and he grabbed his check in a hurry. He trailed his client's meal ticket back to 120 Nassau and then went uptown. A block from his office Willie passed in front of a Greek fruit bazaar and took off his hat. He was scratching his head vigorously when a familiar voice peeled out:

"Well, well, if it ain't Nero Wolfrap! How many criminals have you nabbed today?"

"I thought somethin' had got in my hair again!" Willie retorted, turning to look into the grinning face of Satchelfoot Kelly who was also a detective but who received a monthly stipend from the city. Willie and Satchelfoot had always been friendly toward each other like Mussolini and Haile Selassie. "What's the idea puttin' them two travelin' bags right in the doorway where people will fall over them, Satchelfoot? Oh, they're your feet! Pardon me!"

"You are very funny like two cases of leprosy," Kelly said. "Why don't you throw away that tin badge and go to work? You look like something the Salvation Army forgot to save."

"At least I do not rob the city or take money under false—" Willie's rejoinder was drowned out by the lusty howl of the Athenian fruit vendor.

"Come back here, you! Sto-o-p thief! Stop—"

Satchelfoot Kelly started running. Then he got a grip on himself, turned around and came back. "Huh," he grunted, "for a minute I thought—"

"*Tsk, tsk,*" said Willie. "It's that little squirt over there the Greek's after. You're so used to snipin' bananas off fruitstands

that you got a guilty conscience, Kelly. Ha, ha, they trip up criminals many times. Well, I must be going along as I have a case I am working on. Don't let any pickpockets steal your suspenders!"

Satchelfoot called terrible things after Willie until the president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency was out of hearing.

TWO nights later Willie got a shock. Gabriel Hornblower did not emerge from 120 Nassau until six-thirty. And when he did come out he was wearing a blonde on his arm, and it was the same one Willie had seen with the Fourteenth Street brunette not so many days before. Gabriel went up to Fourteenth Street with the frill and ushered her into a very elegant pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut parlor. Willie had to hang around outside, and he could not see a thing as there were very thick draperies over the windows.

For an hour Willie Klump walked up and down. Finally Gabriel and his torch came out and tripped toward a kiosk. They parted, and Willie tagged the philanderer uptown. When Gabriel got off the subway he tossed something toward a trash can. The president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency overlooked no bets and he retrieved the discarded ball of paper before he dogged Gabriel to where he hived up.

Willie, all agog, hied him to his office. There he sat down and looked at his find. It was a folder from a travel agency ballyhooing southern cruises. Willie got out paper and a stub of a pencil and jotted down pertinent facts.

No. 1—Mrs. Hornblower is right. He is a wolf and is going to lam. Gabriel is that way about a blonde. She is the Trixie dame who is after a sugar papa.

No. 2—They were making plans in the restaurant. Two bucks to a nickel the blonde dish is Gabriel's shorthand slave. Compared to his ball and chain, she must look like an Aphrodit to him.

No.3—Shall I tell my client yet? No. It is only circumstantial evidence. I will let Gabriel hang himself before I spill the works. Funny business I am in.

Thereafter Willie Klump got more shocks than a telephone lineman. The next morning Gabriel got off at Grand Central instead of going downtown right away. Willie was hard in Hornblower's wake when the philanderer trekked to a very spiffy sparkler bazaar on Madison Avenue. He was not ten feet away from Gabriel when the faithless spouse tipped his black derby to a blonde. It was the same one.

"Well, well," Gabriel glowed, "you sure look nifty this morning, Trixie. Shall we go in and pick out the surprise, eh? Ha, ha, never put off to tomorrow what we can do today is my motto!"

"The cad!" Willie snorted and turned his eyes toward a girdle display in the shop next door to the jewelry emporium. He sidled over when Gabriel and the torch waltzed in through the door. Through the window he saw Gabriel Hornblower trying bracelets on Trixie, and they were certainly not being sold for hay. Willie guessed that for the price of just one of the baubles he could have taken an option on the Waldorf. After awhile he saw Gabriel and the doll nod to each other, and then Gabriel told the clerk something and wrote out a check.

Willie Klump was interested in the mechanism of girdles again when Gabriel and the blonde menace came out. He followed the two downtown and left the trail at 120 Nassau and returned to his office. The routine for the rest of the day was the same as it had been for almost two weeks. And all the succeeding day. But on the third day, in the beanery across the street from the place where Gabriel got his fodder, Willie saw the blonde again. Just as had happened before, the dark-haired spearmint punisher arrived a few minutes later. When she had snaked her way

between the table and chair, Trixie took off a long black glove from her left flipper and flashed a bracelet in front of May's lacquered face.

The brunette said "A w-w-wk!" and her jaw dropped down so far Willie feared for her soup bowl.

"Trixie, you've went and done it! Jeepers, that manacle musta cost as much as the city hall! Spill the works, Trixie. Has he got a wife, huh? Just lemme look at it!"

"Sure," Trixie said airily, "get a good eyeful now." The brunette seemed on the verge of swooning with envy. Then Willie saw Trixie lean over and say something to her sister typemill walloper and at the same time she drew the glove back on and covered the sparklers.

"Huh?" gulped May. "No kiddin'?"

Trixie nodded. "Yeah. I flashed it on the boy friend and he went nuts. I wore it last night in Luigi's spaghetti joint over on Third Avenue, and when he took a gander at it, May, his eyes rolled right out of sight. Maybe he'll go out and earn himself some dough now. Enough to take me around anyways. You shoulda been there, May, and seen his map!"

THINGS did not add up to Willie Klump, detective. A blonde wearing enough platinum and shining dornicks to keep her in mink coats for twenty years should have looked happier about the whole thing to say the least, what with a nice southern junket in the offing for good measure. But by the time Trixie had the glove back on she appeared about ready to bite the meat off a few shortribs belonging to the waiter.

Pretty soon May got up to go. "I almos' forgot, Trixie. That creep of yours said for me to give you these. I seen him just as I was duckin' into the subway this mornin'." She tossed a bunch of something that clinked to Trixie.

"What was that gigolo doin' on Fourteenth Street that early in the mornin'?" Trixie snapped. "Ya don't think he's really lookin' for work, do ya?"

"Don't be' sil'," May sniffed. "Princes don't work. I dunno what he was doin'. I was that surprised you coulda knocked me over with a tea leaf, Trix. What was he doin' with them?" Willie saw May stab her finger at Trixie's handbag.

"Aw, he thinks he's funny sometimes," the blonde replied. He hid my compact on me a coupla weeks ago. My nose got as shiny as the back of his coat, and he got a laugh. He's about as funny as a fire in an orphanage. I don' know why I stick to the tramp."

"Dolls can't never be trusted," Willie sighed. "That's the way Gertie Mudgett talks about me, I bet, when I turn my back. Well, it looks like Gabriel is flirting with a fractured skull. If I should tell—oh my, I should, too! It is what I'm gettin' paid for, and—but I would just be an excessory to a murder and—"

Willie sighed deeply and got up from the table. Gabriel was just emerging from his lunch emporium, and the President of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency had to go on duty again.

It was the very next morning that Willie Klump got a frantic call from Mrs. Gabriel Hornblower. "Listen," he interrupted her, "you shouldn't call me. Gabriel can't have left at this early hour. If he hears you—"

"Gabriel could not hear an elephant cough right in his ear, Mister Klump!" she wailed. "He is downtown waiting in his office for the undertaker."

"He's wha-a-a-t? Why, he come home last night! I trailed him all the way, Ma'am," Willie gulped, his Adam's apple rolling all over the front of his neck as he thought of his vanishing income. "Why—"

"He went back downtown. I tried to get you, but you did not answer," Daisy

Hornblower warbled shrilly. "Oh, why didn't I hire a real detective?"

"I was not hired to sleep with Gabriel," Willie said hotly. "My hours were from seven to seven, Missus Hornblower. You—"

"Here I am a w-widow," Gabriel's spouse sniffled, "and you insult me. You're fired!"

"Yes, Ma'am."

WILLIE hung up, brain full of hornets. Nothing made sense. He sat down and tried to figure it out on paper with a pencil, but soon gave it up. Taking his hat and coat out of the filing cabinet, he hurried out of his cubicle. Forty minutes later he was in the offices of the Hornblower Paper Doll and Novelty Company, Inc.

There were a lot of policemen present, also Satchelfoot Kelly. A corpse analyst was taking an inventory of the late Gabriel Hornblower. When Willie appeared, the M.E. was pointing out that some rough person had nudged Gabriel's cranium too earnestly with a paperweight. Pretty soon Exhibit A was found on top of a small safe in the deceased Hornblower's private office.

Satchelfoot Kelly was in charge, and he ordered Willie Klump thrown out the minute he caught sight of Willie's bucolic pan. On the way out, Willie thought very fast and produced from his pocket a paper which he waved at the harness bulls. "I was hired for this case," he yipped. "Here's a contract between me and Mrs. Hornblower. You just look at it."

Kelly snatched it and read, then fell into a chair. "The numbskull is right," he moaned. "How in hell?"

"Now step aside," Willie said importantly, "and let a private investigator work. Maybe I know more about this case than most anybody!"

"Oh, yeah?" Satchelfoot snorted.

"There ain't no motive at all. There wasn't nothing in that safe—ever, his secretary told us. Was there, Miss—"

Willie Klump swung around and there was Trixie. Her eyes bugged a little as she shook her head.

"No. Gab—er—Mr. Hornblower only kept his umbrella and galoshes in there. He was an accentrix. He didn't have no enemy in the world."

Satchelfoot Kelly looked the paperweight over and saw that it had prints on it.

"That'll tag the killer," he announced loftily. "Whoever handled this—"

Willie Klump almost passed out. He thought of what his client had said about mashing her spouse's pate if she ever caught him cheating.

"I—I picked it up when I found Mr. Hornblower," a watery-eyed little bookkeeper quavered. "I di-didn't think. I never knew Mr. Hornblower to come back to the office before. He always said at six o'clock that he didn't want to even look at the joint until morning."

"And you had the weight in your paws when I came in, Satchelfoot," Willie added. "I s'pose you'll go to the sizzle sofa, too, huh? That's no help to nobody! I—"

Detective Klump picked up something from the floor and stared at it. It was a shoe button. The blond stenographer said. "Eeek!" Willie whirled toward her.

"You reckernize it, huh?" he shot at her.

"It is Mrs. Hornblower's," Trixie said. "She wears them old-fashioned shoes. She must of—no, no!"

Willie then asked when Mrs. Hornblower had been in last, and the painted doll said about two days before.

"It could easily have been kickin' around somewhere since then," Willie said. "Then again—"

He wondered if the suspicious Daisy

Hornblower had been doing some snooping of her own and had nailed Gabriel dead to rights. Willie sat down to think while Satchelfoot took charge of things.

"It's a cinch," Kelly trumpeted. "Mrs. Hornblower bumped him. She was the only one who knew he was comin' down here. Unrequited love is the motive."

"Yeah," Trixie agreed. "Them dames who don't keep up with the times and let their figgers and clothes go think they can hold a guy like Gabriel. He—"

"Sure," Satchelfoot nodded, grinning at the blonde. "This baby has brains. I'll go and nab the old doll. What a hippercrit!"

"Do that," Willie advised him. "I think you are right, Satchelfoot."

"There!" Kelly boomed. "Even Weary Willie agrees with me, and that's news. Well, you can move the stiff now, Doc. Then somebody clean up. The place is a mess."

"Fast work, Satchelfoot," Willie said meekly as he sat down at a desk and fished for pencil and paper.

Detective Klump had a memory that was not in the class with that of a pachyderm so he had to jot his thoughts down lest they escape him forever. He wondered if the bracelet had had anything to do with the expiration of Gabriel. He was on the inside track, Willie was, but he was also glued to it.

"Now you do what Klump says," Satchelfoot said expansively before he went out to arrest Mrs. Hornblower. "All of you!"

"Thanks, Satchelfoot," Willie said. "Now all you people just sit down over there and don't move."

Thereupon Willie started jotting down the workings of his mental assembly.

No.1—Where is the bracelet? Does Trixie have it? Did Daisy Hornblower find out about it? How could she? Somebody followed Gabriel downtown. Why? He or she could not have gotten into

Gabriel's office without a key. The locks have not been tampered with. Tough case.

No.2—Daisy could have had a key, and she said she would bust Gabriel's noggin in if she caught him with a frill. But she could not have caught Gabriel that way as where is the corpse of the doll? Daisy would have clawed her into strips like spaghetti and Trixie is right here in the office, safe and sound. Maybe Gabriel has been ogling more than one fluff. No. Did Trixie bump off Gabriel? Why would she assassinate Santy Clause? No sense to that.

No.3—Looks like Daisy is going to the hot squat if she hasn't got an alibi. Maybe the doll with Gabriel got loose before Daisy could rub her out. Even Daisy could only kill one citizen at a time. It could be that way. I must think some more. Where is the bracelet? I'll ask Trixie right out. I—

WILLIE'S pencil stopped there when the phone rang. He grabbed it and said:

"He-lo. Yeah . . . yeah . . . yeah."

"Hello, Pilkins," said the voice. "I got a good one for the fourt' at Aqueduct. Take it down. Ol' Maid's Honeymoon at t'ree to one. It's hot and right from the feedbag. I'll put a sawbuck on, huh? That makes fifty ya owe me."

Willie said: "Scram! There's a murder here," and hung up. Very sternly he asked: "Who is Pilkins here?"

It was the bookkeeper. Willie asked him how he could play ponies on what Gabriel Hornblower had paid him.

"I—I didn't do it! Just because I got bangtails on the brain don't mean I—" protested Pilkins.

Willie kept looking at something and, while he looked, he thought of Satchelfoot Kelly running away from a fruitstand with his conscience chasing him. There was no evidence here in the room pointing to Hornblower's assassin. Willie knew the paperweight would have been cleaned dry after the unknown rough actor had bopped Gabriel.

The hitch was the bracelet. Where was it? If Trixie had it, she wouldn't own up

because she knew Gabriel's widow would peel her like an apple. On a letterhead at Willie's feet were four black marks, four letters that spelled *Ivan*. The president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency tingled all over.

Satchelfoot Kelly had been standing about on that spot but he had not seen it. Not that it would have meant anything to him. Whata hunch! Willie was not stumped any more. He picked the paper up and held it close to his bucolic peepers. Somebody's teeth clicked together, and Willie heard a quick intake of breath.

"Huh," he said so everybody could hear, "as plain as day. The murderer left his trademark. Well, well, well!"

He folded the paper up and carried it around with him as he walked in and out of the four connecting offices that comprised The Hornblower Paper Doll and Novelty Company, Inc. The telephone rang again, and Willie Klump got to it before one of Kelly's men could reach it.

"Hello—hello. Yeah, there's a murder here. Huh? What you say? Who's talking? Detective Klump of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency, retained by Mrs. Hornblower to—what? You say you think Mr. Hornblower was killed because he had a bracelet which he bought there the other day? Worth seven thousand dollars? Why—er—I should say it might be. Thanks."

WILLIE hung up and eyed the employees of the defunct Gabriel Hornblower.

"That was the motive! Seven thousand bucks he was toting in his pockets or had here in the office. Now if that little trinket was for Mrs. Hornblower, why—" Again Willie was puzzled. Trixie had been wearing it, he reminded himself. Maybe Daisy Hornblower had found out and erased Gabriel. But Willie remembered

how sad the blonde had looked after flashing the bracelet at the brunette.

Something hit him between the glimmers and rocked him on his number eleven-and-a-halves. Willie thought he had the solution, but how could he prove it? He could not come right out and accuse Trixie of wearing the bracelet and of knowing who killed Gabriel, because the stenog could say she had been wearing one of her own bracelets loaded with rhinestones. Again he thought of Satchelfoot running away from a fruitstand. Conscience—that was the angle. Willie decided to play his ace card.

Satchelfoot Kelly called up, and when Willie answered, he told the president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency that Mrs. Hornblower had been very testy about getting arrested.

“You better leave town if she gets bail, Willie. I told her you said she is guilty, too, and the dame went nuts. She says she’s got an alibi, but I can go t’hell as it ain’t none of my business where she was last night. Both my blinkers are black and she almost tore off my nose.”

Willie shivered a little, but he was sure he had everything figured out. He took the folded letterhead out of his pocket and partially slid it under the big blotter on Gabriel’s desk before he went back into an outer office. There was a crack in the partition, and Willie casually pressed his pan against it.

He watched everybody in the room and saw Trixie sidle toward a water cooler. The other office slaves remained huddled together talking excitedly. The blonde quickly snapped the painted nails of her thumb and forefinger together and trapped the paper Willie had slipped under the blotter. Willie saw her open it and look at the print on the paper. Then Trixie fainted and the paper flew out of her clutch and headed for an open window.

“Grab it, somebody!” Willie yelled, and he tore into the room, knocking a plump little filing clerk off her pins and under the water cooler. “It’s what will clinch the case. Get it!”

Willie Klump took a dive and almost went out into Nassau Street head first. Two of Kelly’s men managed to catch him by the legs just as he was about to do a Brodie to the pavement. They dragged Willie in, and the president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency clutched the piece of writing paper in his hand.

“All right,” he said, straightening out his blue serge. “Pour some water on Trixie, as I must grill her.”

The blonde sat up without a baptism, but her eyes were slow in uncrossing. Willie picked her up and stood her firmly on her pins. Then he said in a very stern voice:

“Ah ha-a-a-a! Just as I thought. Who is Ivan?”

“I don’t know what you’re beefin’ about,” she snapped. “I never heard of no Ivan! Take your meat-hooks offa me, you Keystone cop. I was just curious to see—”

Willie motioned to one of the flatfeet from Headquarters, then opened up the paper and went to work.

“You was out to vamp Gabriel, Trixie,” he chided the blonde. “You thought you had him carryin’ the torch, and you were sure of it when he took you out to eat the other night. Then when he had you help him pick out a bracelet you thought it was for you. You found out later, though, that it really was for his ball and chain, and it was a kick in the—er—pride for you, wasn’t it, Trixie? But you wore the bracelet out to lunch to show May.

“Gabriel was keeping the sparkling handcuff in his office until his spouse’s anniversary or whatever date it was for. You must have let Ivan, the boy friend, in on that and told where it was hid. Oh, no,

Blondie, you didn't take the bracelet and you didn't assassinate Mr. Hornblower, but you're sure you know who did. When I saw you do a flop after readin' a Russian's name on that paper, I tumbled to the answer. I heard you and May talkin' about your torch, and May called him a caviar dope."

"You're screwy," Trixie said inelegantly, but her ivories were making dents in her lipstick film. "I—I don't know nobody—"

"*Tsk, tsk,*" Willie sighed. "I saw you in the beanery with May the other day like I said, and she tossed you something Ivan told her to give you. Now would it be a bunch of keys? That's what it sounded like, and you would have a key to the office, wouldn't you, Trixie? Ivan probably kept one out and came over to this office last night and glommed the sparklers."

"But Gabriel had thought they maybe weren't safe enough here and came down to get them himself. When he walked in, here was Ivan. Ivan smacked Gabriel and stilled his hornblowing forever. He swiped the bracelet and I'm sure if you tell us where Ivan holes up, we will have everything settled before lunchtime. Come on, Trixie. Open up!"

The blonde broke like the stock market in '29.

"His name's Ivan Norvalitch. Yeah, I was burned up when I found out that joolery wasn't for me. I told Ivan it wasn't after he threatened to cut himself a piece of my throat for wearin' it. This mornin' I found out I didn't have my key when I got here and I says to myself I bet that crazy Russian swiped it. Then when I found out the boss got bumped off, I started in addin' two and two. I was sure the cluck got into the office to get Gabriel's present to his old battleax, but I was overboard for Ivan and I didn't figure on lettin' him burn in the state rotisserie on my testimony."

WILLIE called Satchelfoot and told him to stop holding Mrs. Hornblower and to go after Ivan. "Where does he live, Trixie?" he asked, turning to the disconsolate blonde.

"The Mills Hotel," she sobbed, turning on the weeps. "And to think he was a Georgian p-prince, oh-h-h!"

"Don't kid yourself, Trixie," Willie grunted. "There ain't no princes in Georgia."

Willie Klump met Satchelfoot Kelly and two other slewfeet in front of the aforementioned humble inn, and they all went inside.

"You see I was in a quandary until I counted Trixie's torch in on the suspects," he rambled in explanation to Satchelfoot. "I am sure the foreigner never even saw Gabriel until he rubbed him out. I was not positive that the deceased did not give Trixie the dazzlers. I only judged he didn't from the look on her pan when I saw her with May."

"So you see, Ivan could have erased Gabriel out of jealousy and not had his mitts on the sparklers at all. And it could have been Missus Hornblower, as she told me she would squash Gabriel's dome if she ever caught him making whoopee. But I said to myself, no! Because Missus Hornblower would have left the hussy for the undertaker, too. So I deduced that Trixie wasn't in the office last night. That left both dolls out. Then I tumbled that it was in the bag—the keys May tossed at Trixie in the beanery."

"Stop him, somebody," Kelly moaned weakly. "Somebody had oughta confess!"

"Trixie did," Willie said triumphantly. "My clue factory is slow addin' up sometimes," he added, "but when I saw that print—"

HE STOPPED when he saw Satchelfoot had his fingers in his ears. "What is

the number of the packing case occupied by Prince Ivan Norvalitch?" he asked the desk clerk.

Having got it, the president of the Hawk-Eye Detective Agency led the pack upstairs and knocked on a door marked 13. Ivan opened it and immediately wished he had not.

"Come with us, Ivan," Willie said gently. "Don't resist arrest. Where is the bracelet you snatched from Gabriel Hornblower whom you killed in very cold blood? Look, here is the evidence I found on the floor near the corpse. You left your footmark, you heel!"

Ivan showed fight. He ducked back into the room, but the law poured in before he could get the door shut. It was like five elephants playing tag in a telephone booth. Willie Klump hit Satchelfoot Kelly three times before he saw that it was not Ivan. The two flatfeet knocked the Russian down and sat on him.

"Get the handcuffs on him, Klump," they hollered. "We got him."

Down at Headquarters, after Ivan had been thoroughly subdued, found in possession of the missing key, and had confessed, Satchelfoot Kelly remarked upon a strange fact to Willie Klump. He pointed at Ivan's heels.

"There, smart guy," he rasped, "he didn't make that print on that letterhead. His heels ain't rubber!"

"Wha-a-a-t?" Willie said, quite amazed. "Why—er—then it must have been you! You wear rubber heels, Satchelfoot. Look and see if you made that print yourself. Look at your heels. Pick one of them suitcases up and look at it. There—see? It says O'Gullivan. You got part of your heel on that paper and it printed *Ivan*."

"When I saw it, I started thinkin' and I figgered maybe somebody in the office had

a guilty conscience like you had when the Greek yelled 'Stop thief!' the other day. Trixie, the stenog, was not very bright now I come to think of it as she thought the murderer had left evidence right on the floor where he did his foul deed. Thanks, Satchelfoot. Even a heel comes in handy when—"

Kelly slumped down onto a hard bench and groaned.

"O'Gullivan. *O'Gullivan*," he mumbled over and over. "Well, I'm a—of all the Sherlock Holmes!"

RIGHT in the midst of his misery Mrs. Gabriel Hornblower arrived, and she started attacking Satchelfoot Kelly lustily.

"I'm a murderess, am I, you dumb flatfoot?" she screeched. Well, when I get through with you, I will be."

"Look, Mrs. Hornblower," Willie said quickly, "here's the present Gabriel purchased for you at the cost of his life. He loved just you all the time, and he was keeping it a secret. Look, it cost seven thousand—"

"Mister Klump!" the widow gurgled, taking her hands off Kelly's throat and gazing at the baubles. "Isn't it simply stunning? Poor Gabriel, I'll never doubt him again!"

"I'll say," Willie Klump commented. "How about my fee, Missus Hornblower? Would five hundred—"

"Not at all, Mister Klump! That is very reasonable. Let us go to—"

"Not before you finish strangling me and puttin' me out of my misery," Satchelfoot yelped.

"Good day, everybody," Willie Klump said blithely, handing out business cards to the boys at Headquarters. "Just in case you need a detective!" he explained.