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LESLEY SHANE *and the*

HOUSE of MYSTERY



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LESLEY SHANE *and the* **HOUSE** *of* **MYSTERY**

LESLEY SHANE, THE FAMOUS GIRL DETECTIVE, HAS HAD CASES WHICH HAVE TAKEN HER TO ALMOST EVERY STRANGE CORNER OF THE WORLD..... BUT THE SETTING OF THIS MYSTERY WAS AN ORDINARY SECOND CLASS BOARDING HOUSE.



SOMEWHERE IN THIS DRAB SETTING WAS A MURDERER — A MURDERER WHO SLEW THE FRIENDLESS, LONELY FOLK WHO LIVED THERE..... A MURDERER WHO ARRANGED "ACCIDENTS" — UNTIL ONE ACCIDENT BECAME OBVIOUS MURDER AND BROUGHT LESLEY SHANE INTO THE "HOUSE OF MYSTERY."

THE CASE OF MISS WILSON REALLY CAME TO LESLEY'S NOTICE WHEN SHE AND SUE — HER FAITHFUL SECRETARY — WERE BUSY WITH THE ROUTINE OF FILING AND CLASSIFYING CRIME REPORTS FROM THE NEWSPAPERS..... THIS WAS A JOB THEY DID REGULARLY, AND WHICH SUPPLIED LESLEY WITH AN INVALUABLE 'REFERENCE LIBRARY'.

MISS WILSON, AN ELDERLY SPINSTER, HAD BEEN STRANGLED IN HER ROOM AT A CHELSEA BOARDING HOUSE, APPARENTLY FOR NO REASON THAT ANYONE COULD DISCOVER.



ON THE
FACE OF IT,
IT SEEMS TO BE
A COMPLETELY
POINTLESS MURDER.

YES — HER LIFE
SOUNDS DRAB ENOUGH.
WHAT POSSIBLE REASON
COULD ANYONE HAVE FOR
WANTING TO KILL HER?

L. SHANE
THE PICTURE
BY

NOTHING FURTHER CAME TO LIGHT
AT THE INQUEST.

...ACCORDINGLY I RETURN A
VERDICT OF MURDER BY SOME
PERSON OR PERSONS
UNKNOWN.



DESPITE THE ADVERSE PUZZICITY GIVEN
TO THE BOARDING HOUSE, THE VACANCY
LEFT THERE BY MISS WILSON'S DEATH
WAS SOON FILLED.

SHE DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO
GET ANOTHER ONE.
DID SHE ?



SOME PEOPLE
NEVER READ
THE PAPERS.

AND LESLEY SHANE,
BUSY WITH HER WORK,
GAVE LITTLE FURTHER
THOUGHT TO THE CRIME.
THEN, ONE MORNING,
SUE ANNOUNCED
A VISITOR....

THERE'S A MR. BARTERELLI
TO SEE YOU, MISS SHANE.



I'LL BE OUT
IN A MINUTE,
SUE.

A MOMENT LATER LESLEY ENTERED HER OUTER OFFICE AND SMILED INQUIRINGLY AT THE ITALIAN.

NOW, MR. BARTERELLI, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

LADY, I DON'T KNOW! WHEN A MAN HAS A CURSE, WHAT CAN ANYONE DO?

BUT, MY WIFE, BELLA, SHE INSISTS THAT I SEE SOMEONE ABOUT THE BOARDING HOUSE MURDERS.

MURDERS, MR. BARTERELLI? THAT SOUNDS MORE LIKE A JOB FOR THE POLICE THAN FOR A PRIVATE DETECTIVE.

AT THE MENTION OF THE POLICE MR. BARTERELLI BECAME ANGRY.

THE POLICE, HUH! SUICIDA, THEY SAY. ACCIDENTALA DEATH, THEY SAY. 'EART FAILURE, THEY SAY! MURDER BY SOMEONE'S NOT KNOWN, THEY SAY! BUT I SAY MURDERS - ALL MURDERS

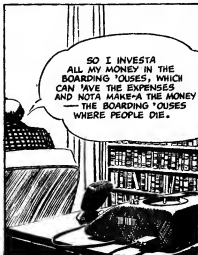
HE SPRANG TO HIS FEET IN A FRENZY OF EXCITEMENT.



HEAVILY, MR. BARTERELLI SETTLED HIMSELF BACK IN HIS CHAIR, AND BEGAN TO EXPLAIN....



BUT LESLEY WANTED TO HEAR THE PLAIN FACTS OF THE CASE,



THEN BARTERELLI PROCEEDED TO GIVE LESLEY THE ADDRESSES OF ALL THE BOARDING HOUSES HE HAD BOUGHT, AND DETAILS OF THE UNFORTUNATE LODGERS WHO HAD DIED IN THEM.

...IN 'AMPSTEAD'EATH
THERE IS NUMBER 23,
REYTON CRESCENT. MISS
SLEED SHE DIED THERE.
SUICIDE, THEY SAY.



CAMDEN TOWN
I 'AVE 18, TUDOR
ROAD—WHERE MISS
JONES 'AS THE
FATAL ACCIDENT.



BRIXTON, THERE ISA
JUDD STREET, WHERE
MRS. ALISS DIED OF
'EART FAILURE,
SO THEY SAY.



AT THIS POINT MR. BARTERELLI
PAUSED FOR A MOMENT. THEN
HE CONTINUED DRAMATICALLY...

AT 12, LEYTON GARDENS,
IN CHELSEA, THEY CAN
'ARDLY SAY IT WASN'T
MURDER. WHAT MISS
WILSON DIED OF, BECAUSE
SHE 'AVE A SCARF
'TOO TIGHT ROUND
HER NECK.



AS HE CAME TO THE END OF THE
FORMIDABLE LIST, MR. BARTERELLI'S
VOICE ROSE TO A DESPAIRING WAIL.

THEN IN BLOOMSBURY
IS 43, EXETER STREET,
WHERE MISS DREED
FELL FROM THE WINDOW
—OR IS PUSHED. AND
NOW, MY BELLA, SHE
WILL NOT LET ME BUY
THE NEW 'OUSE,

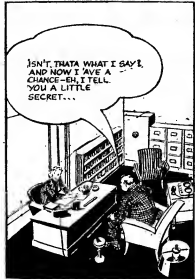


THE MENTION OF MISS WILSON AS ONE OF THE VICTIMS IN MR. BARTERELLI'S CHAIN OF BOARDING HOUSES INTERESTED LESLEY CONSIDERABLY, FOR THAT HAD BEEN AN INEXPLICABLE CASE OF MURDER.

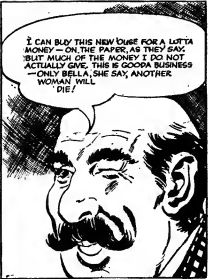
BUT AS FOR THE OTHER DEATHS — COULD THERE BE ANY TRUTH IN MR. BARTERELLI'S FANTASTIC THEORY?



YOU HAVE FIVE BOARDING HOUSES, MR. BARTERELLI, AND IN EACH A WOMAN HAS DIED. DESPITE OTHER FINDINGS BY DOCTORS, CORONERS AND POLICE, YOU BELIEVE ALL WERE CASES OF MURDER.



ISN'T THAT WHAT I SAY? AND NOW I'VE A CHANCE—EH, I TELL YOU A LITTLE SECRET...



I CAN BUY THIS NEW DICE FOR A LOTTA MONEY — ON THE PAPER, AS THEY SAY. BUT MUCH OF THE MONEY I DO NOT ACTUALLY GIVE. THIS IS GOODA BUSINESS — ONLY BELLA, SHE SAY, ANOTHER WOMAN WILL DIE!

LESLEY WOULD HAVE LIKED MR. BARTERELLI BETTER HAD HE BEEN MORE CONCERNED WITH THE FATE OF THE VICTIMS — AND LESS WITH THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT THEIR DEATHS WERE HAVING ON HIS SOMEWHAT SHADY BUSINESS DEALS.

AND WHY WAS HE SO CONVINCED THAT THEY WERE ALL MURDERED ?

MR. BARTERELLI, DON'T YOU THINK IT MAY BE JUST COINCIDENCE THAT THESE DEATHS HAPPENED IN HOUSES YOU OWN? EVERYONE HAS TO DIE SOMEWHERE, YOU KNOW.



ANGELO BARTERELLI WAS ALMOST FIERCE IN HIS REPLY.

BUT SOMEONE DOES NOT HAVE TO DIE IN EVERY HOUSE I BUY, ONLY ONE MONTH AFTER I BUY HIM!



SUDDENLY LESLEY HAD A STRONG FEELING THAT SOMEONE'S LIFE MIGHT WELL BE IN DANGER. DESPITE HER GROWING DISLIKE OF MR. BARTERELLI, LESLEY DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE CASE.

THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO ?

YOU PROMISE NOT TO LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN, THEN BELLA AGREE THAT I BUY THE HOUSE.





SUE EVIDENTLY SHARED LESLEY'S DISTRUST OF MR. BARTERELLI.

BARTERELLI IS ANTICIPATING ANOTHER DEATH IN ONE OF HIS BOARDING HOUSES. IS HE SUPPLYING EVIDENCE IN ADVANCE THAT IT WILL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM?

THAT IDEA HIT ME, TOO. IF SO HE MUST BE VERY CONFIDENT OF GETTING AWAY WITH IT UNDER MY EYES. I'LL CHECK ON HIM.

AND THAT AFTERNOON LESLEY PAID A VISIT TO HER FIANCÉ, DETECTIVE INSPECTOR DICK BLAIR, AT SCOTLAND YARD.

BARTERELLI WASN'T EVEN UNDER SUSPICION IN THE WILSON MURDER CASE, LESLEY. AND IT NEVER CAME TO LIGHT THAT HE HAD OWNED HOUSES WHERE FOUR OTHER DEATHS TOOK PLACE.

THIS ISN'T A CASE FOR US YET, BUT I'LL CHECK BACK ON THE OTHER DEATHS, AND HAVE BARTERELLI INVESTIGATED. KEEP IN TOUCH.

NEXT MORNING, LESLEY WENT ALONG TO SEE MR. BARTERELLI AND HAVE A FURTHER TALK WITH HIM.

SHE WANTED TO FIND OUT HOW SOON SHE COULD MOVE INTO THE NEW BOARDING HOUSE.

HOWEVER, IT WAS WITH RATHER MIXED FEELINGS THAT SHE APPROACHED BARTERELLI'S PREMISES.



MR. BARTERELLI GREETED HER WITH OPEN ARMS.



LESLEY WAS A LITTLE STARTLED BY MRS. BARTERELLI'S FAITH IN HER ABILITY.

I CAN'T PROMISE TO PREVENT A MURDER, MRS. BARTERELLI— ONLY TRY TO PREVENT ONE.

BUT— 'E BUY THE 'OUSE. 'E SAY NO MURDER DEATHS AND I SAY "THEN BUY."

IMPATIENTLY, BARTERELLI BRUSHED ASIDE HIS WIFE'S PROTESTS.

WILL BE ALL RIGHT, BELLA. NOW, YOU COME AND SEE MY OTHER BUSINESS, MISS SHANE.

HE LED THE WAY DOWN TO A SPACIOUS CELLAR, STACKED WITH CHEESES.

CHEESES— LOVELY, EH. SMELL! IS NOTTA BEAUTIFUL? WITH SO MUCH TO LOSE, WHY DO I GETTA MYSELF MIXED UP WITH THESE MURDERS, EH? STILL YOU STOP IT ALL, NOW!

LESLEY NOTICED THAT A CORNER OF THE CELLAR HAD BEEN PARTITIONED OFF TO FORM A TINY OFFICE. NO DOUBT TO HOUSE THE MANY "EXPENSE ACCOUNTS", SHE THOUGHT. BUT FOR THE MOMENT BARTERELLI WAS OCCUPIED WITH HIS OTHER ENTHUSIASM — CHEESE.

YOU TASTE, EH? WE PLUNGE THIS IN.

AS LESLEY WAS SAMPLING THE CHEESE, THE BOOK-KEEPER LEFT HIS DESK, AND CAME FORWARD TO SPEAK TO MR. BARTERELLI.

GOOD, EH? WONDERFUL CHEESE, AND AS GOOD AS NEW WHEN I REPLACE THE CRUST. WELL, ALFRED?



EXCUSE ME, MR. BARTERELLI, THE BANK PAY-IN BOOK IS ALL READY FOR YOUR SIGNATURE.



MR. BARTERELLI SIGNED WITH EXASPERATION.

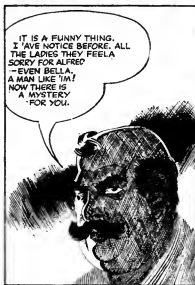
'E IS MY CLERK, SO STUPID 'E DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO BE DISHONEST FOR 'IMSELF. BEEN WITH ME TEN YEARS NOW.



THEN HE BEGAN TO RAGE AT HIS CLERK.

FOOL! IDIOT, IMBECILE! I TOLD YOU, WE DO NOT TAKE A CHÈQUE FOR THIS SALE. IT DOES NOT GO IN THE BOOKS.





LESLEY MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO MOVE INTO THE NEW BOARDING HOUSE ON THE FOLLOWING MONDAY. WHEN THE DAY ARRIVED, SUE WENT ALONG WITH HER TO HELP WITH THE LUGGAGE, AND LESLEY WAS GLAD OF HER COMPANY. FOR SHE WAS NOT RELISHING THE PROSPECT OF BEING A BOARDER IN ONE OF BARTERELLI'S HOUSES.



A GRIM-FACED WOMAN OPENED THE DOOR IN ANSWER TO LESLEY'S KNOCK.



WE'VE GOT FIVE ROOMS TO LET. AND BETWEEN YOU AND ME, MISS, THEY'RE LIKELY TO STAY THAT WAY.

REALLY? WELL, THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE AT THE DOOR.



SIGHING HEAVILY, THE WOMAN WENT BACK DOWN THE HALL AND OPENED THE DOOR AGAIN.

A ROOM? YES. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT IN THE HALL WHILST I SHOW ANOTHER YOUNG LADY ROUND.



OH...OH...I DO HOPE SHE DOESN'T TAKE IT.





HAVING SETTLED HERSELF IN, LESLEY MADE A 'PHONE CALL TO DETECTIVE INSPECTOR BLAIR.



DICK BLAIR HAD SOME IMPORTANT NEWS...



JUST BEFORE SHE DIED, MRS. ALISS DREW ALL HER SAVINGS - £500 - OUT OF THE BANK.



AS LESLEY EAGERLY QUESTIONED DICK FOR FURTHER DETAILS, SHE BECAME AWARE THAT SOMEONE WAS OPENING THE STREET DOOR FROM OUTSIDE.

MRS. ALISS DREW'ESOC FROM THE BANK AND DIED A FEW DAYS LATER? I SUPPOSE THE MONEY VANISHED?

YES. SHE DIED OWING HER RENT. BUT THE BANK CLERK REMEMBERS THAT A TAXI WAS WAITING FOR HER. A MAN HE DIDN'T SEE WAS IN THAT TAXI. NONE OF THIS CAME OUT AT THE INQUEST.

LESLEY FELT A SUDDEN CURRENT OF AIR AS THE FRONT DOOR WAS QUIETLY CLOSED AGAIN.

CALL ME BACK, DICK. SOMEONE STARTED TO COME IN FROM THE STREET, HEARD ME TALKING ABOUT MRS. ALISS, AND DIDN'T COME IN.

SHE MADE A DIVE FOR THE DOOR...

COULD BE THE KEY TO THE WHOLE BUSINESS. SOMEONE SCARED OFF BY TALK OF A WOMAN WHO DIED IN ONE BOARDING HOUSE, AND WHO HAS A KEY TO THIS ONE.

BUT WHEN SHE REACHED THE PORCH A TAXI WAS ALREADY PULLING AWAY FROM THE KERB, AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HER TO CATCH EVEN A GLIMPSE OF ITS OCCUPANT.

BUT WHEN I WANT A TAXI IN A HURRY, I NEVER GET ONE THAT FAST!

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS THE DINNER GONG CLANGED, AND LESLEY REALISED THAT SHE WOULD NOW HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY OF MEETING SOME OF THE BOARDERS. SO FAR SHE HAD ONLY MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF MISS VANTON, THE RATHER TIMID WOMAN WHO HAD ARRIVED JUST AFTER LESLEY. THOUGHTFULLY, LESLEY MADE HER WAY DOWN TO THE DREARY DINING ROOM.

HUM! TYPICAL BOARDING HOUSE DINNER TIME - WITH ONE DIFFERENCE, MAYBE. AMONGST THE VICTIMS IS ONE VICTIM FOR MURDER.



ANNIE, THE WAITRESS, SHOWED LESLEY TO HER TABLE.

WILL YOU SIT AT THIS TABLE, MISS, WITH MAJOR WILLSSEN AND MISS HANNETT AND THE OTHER NEW GUEST?



MAJOR WILLSSEN WAS EVIDENTLY A LADIES' MAN.

WELCOME TO GOVER STREET, DEAR LADY. TWO NEWCOMERS IN A DAY! QUITE AN EVENT! DO YOU PLAY BRIDGE?



MISS HANNETT LEANED FORWARD CONFIDENTIALLY, AND WAGGED HER FINGER AT LESLEY.

I MUST WARN YOU, MISS SHANE — THE MAJOR'S AN AWFULLY GOOD PLAYER, WINS A LOT OF MONEY.



ANNIE ALSO GAVE LESLEY A WORD OF WARNING.

DON'T BE TAKEN IN BY THAT OLD LADY KILLER, MISS. HE HAD TO LEAVE ONE BOARDING HOUSE — IN EXETER STREET, THAT WAS — AFTER A ROW WHEN HE CHEATED AT CARDS.

... EXETER STREET! WHERE MISS DEBBD FELL OR WAS PUSHED FROM A WINDOW.



LESLEY WANTED TO HEAR MORE.

TELL ME ABOUT THE MAJOR
AND THE EXETER STREET
BOARDING HOUSE, ANNIE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW
ALL THIS?

WORKED THERE,
MISS. QUITE A
SHOCK TO COME
UP AGAINST THE
MAJOR AGAIN,
HERE.



ANNIE CLEARLY HELD A VERY LOW-
OPINION OF MAJOR WILLSSEN.

HE GOES
HIS ROUNDS
OF THE
BOARDING
HOUSES, HE
DOES, THE
OLD DON JUNE.
PICKING UP
WHAT HE CAN
AT CARDS —
FLATTERING
AND FLEEING
SILLY OLD
MAIDS.



APPARENTLY MISS DREED HAD
ALSO RECEIVED THE ATTENTIONS
OF THE MAJOR.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MISS DREED'S
LOVELY BITS OF JEWELLERY, THAT'S
WHAT I WANT TO KNOW. SHE'S THE ONE
THAT DIED — PENNILESS, YOU MIGHT
SAY, I BET THE MAJOR HAD THOSE
RINGS AND BROOCHES I USED TO.
SEE IN HER ROOM WHEN
SHE FIRST CAME.



THE NEXT MORNING LESLEY LOOKED IN
AT HER OFFICE.

I'VE GOT YOU THE PHOTOGRAPHS
OF THE FIVE WOMEN YOU WANTED,
MISS SHANE.

GOOD
LET'S SUMMARISE,
SUE.



LESLEY CAREFULLY STUDIED THE FIVE PHOTOGRAPHS.

MISS WILSON —
MURDER ESTABLISHED,
BUT MOTIVE AND
MURDERER UNKNOWN.

MRS ALISS — MURDER MOTIVE,
HER LIFE SAVINGS. MURDERER?
MAN WHO WENT WITH HER TO THE
BANK AND HAS A KEY TO BAR-
TERRELL'S NEW HOUSE.

MISS DREED —
MURDER, MOTIVE,
HER JEWELLERY.
SUSPECT, MAJOR
WILSEN.

MISS JONES AND MISS
SLEEP — STILL TO BE IN-
VESTIGATED BUT THEY'RE ALL
THE SAME TYPE OF WOMAN.

IF ALL THE WOMEN ARE
THE SAME TYPE, SURELY
THAT MAKES THE NEXT
VICTIM EASY TO
IDENTIFY?

DOES IT?

MAY BE EASIER TO FIND THE
MURDERER THAN HIS NEXT VICTIM,
SUE. THERE ARE AT LEAST FOUR
WOMEN AT THE BOARDING HOUSE
WHO FIT THE PATTERN — LONELY
WOMEN, TYPICAL
SPINSTERS OR
WIDOWS.

ASSUMING THAT THE FIVE WOMEN HAD ALL BEEN MURDERED, LESLEY NOW KNEW A MOTIVE IN THE CASES OF MISS DREED AND MRS. ALISS. BUT SHE HAD YET TO ACCOUNT FOR MISS WILSON, MISS JONES AND MISS SLEED.

I AM GOING TO FIND OUT WHY THOSE OTHER THREE WOMEN DIED.

AND I'LL TAKE THE CASE OF MISS WILSON FIRST. WE KNOW THAT ONE WAS MURDER.

PRIVATE
INVESTIGATION

AND SO LESLEY MADE HER WAY TO LEYTON GARDENS, CHELSEA.

MY CARD. I'M MAKING FURTHER ENQUIRIES INTO THE DEATH OF MISS WILSON AT THIS ADDRESS.

MRS. SMITH, THE MANAGERESS, REGARDED LESLEY DALEFULLY.

WELL, AS YOU AREN'T THE NEWSPAPERS, I SUPPOSE YOU'D BETTER COME IN. DID US AN AWFUL LOT OF HARM, THAT BUSINESS DID.

APPARENTLY MRS. SMITH HAD VERY DEFINITE VIEWS OF HER OWN ABOUT THE MURDER OF MISS WILSON.



MRS. SMITH WENT ON TO DESCRIBE HOW SHE HAD HEARD MISS WILSON AND HER VISITOR QUARRELLING...





HERE'S THE REGISTER. MISS WILSON CAME TO US IN THE FEBRUARY AND SHE WAS MURDERED IN THE SECOND WEEK IN MARCH

BUT IT WAS MISS WILSON'S PREVIOUS ADDRESS THAT LESLEY FOUND INTERESTING.

18, TUDOR ROAD! THAT'S WHERE MISS JONES DIED. THIS GETS REALLY INTERESTING, AND DO YOU NOTICE SOMETHING odd ABOUT HER SIGNATURE?

CAN'T SAY I DO!



SHE STARTED TO SPELL HER NAME W-I-L-L-

WELL, IT'S LIKE I TOLD YOU, IT WASN'T HER NAME.

I THINK THAT THE REAL ANSWER IS THAT SHE BEGAN TO WRITE WILLIAMS, NOT WILSON.



DON'T YOU MEAN THAT THE MURDERED MISS WILSON WAS SECRETLY MAJOR WILLIAMS'S WIFE, OR BELIEVED HERSELF TO BE SO?

MRS SMITH— DO YOU HEAR THIS MAN'S VOICE?

MRS. SMITH THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT BEFORE SHE REPLIED.

YES - I'D SAY IT WAS A MILITARY MAN'S VOICE, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



A MILITARY MAN'S VOICE, THAT CERTAINLY TIED UP WITH MAJOR WILLSEN. LESLEY THANKED MRS. SMITH FOR HER HELP, AND LEFT, TO THINK IT ALL OUT.

A SECOND LINK WITH ANNIE'S "DON JUNE" - LOOKS BLACK FOR HIM. MOTIVE COULD HAVE BEEN INSURANCE IF "MISS WILSON" WAS HIS WIFE. GET GUE TO CHECK.



MAJOR WILLSEN COULD HAVE MURDERED MISS DREED FOR HER JEWELLERY. HE STAYED AT THE SAME HOUSE, AND LEFT AFTER HER DEATH.



OBVIOUSLY HE COULD HAVE MURDERED MRS. ALISS FOR HER MISSING MONEY - HE COULD HAVE BEEN THE MAN WHO *DIDN'T* COME IN WHEN I WAS TALKING ABOUT HER ON THE 'PHONE. CERTAINLY HE WAS MISS WILSON'S SECRET VISITOR WHO QUARRELLED WITH HER JUST BEFORE SHE DIED.



LESLEY HAILED A PASSING TAXI
TO TAKE HER TO CAMDEN TOWN.

IF I CAN LINK
HIM WITH MISS JONES
AND MISS SLEED,
THEN I'VE GOT A
CASE FOR THE POLICE.
TRY MISS JONES,
FIRST, BECAUSE
MISS WILSON STAYED
AT THE SAME
BOARDING HOUSE
FOR A TIME.

THE LANDLADY AT 18, TUDOR ROAD
NEEDED NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO TALK
WHEN SHE LEARNED THE PURPOSE OF
LESLEY'S VISIT.

A LADY DETECTIVE — NOW
ISN'T THAT EXCITING. YES, INDEED,
I REMEMBER POOR MISS JONES' DEATH.
MR. BARTERELLI — HE'S THE OWNER
OF THE HOUSE, I'M ONLY THE MANAGERESS
— WAS MOST UPSET.

TELL ME
ABOUT IT,
MISS CHEESRITE.

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S
ALL RIGHT TO TELL YOU. YOU SEE,
AT THE INQUEST I SAID I FOUND
HER, BUT WHAT REALLY
HAPPENED WAS...

"WELL, EARLIER IN THE EVENING
I ACCIDENTALLY OVERHEARD
WHAT MISS JONES WAS SAYING
TO SOMEONE ON THE
TELEPHONE...."

YES, I'VE GOT TO SEE
YOU. I CAN'T TALK ABOUT
IT OVER THE 'PHONE.
AT 18, TUDOR ROAD —
THAT'S WHAT I SAID....

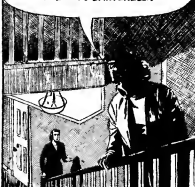
HAPPILY SELF-RIGHTEOUS,
MISS CHEESRITE RATTLED ON...

I WOULDN'T HAVE
KNOWN THAT MISS JONES
WAS TALKING ON THE 'PHONE
TO MR. BARTERELLI, BUT
SHE TOLD ME.



"SHE WAS JUST ON HER WAY
UPSTAIRS WHEN SHE CALLED
DOWN TO ME."

BY THE WAY,
I'M EXPECTING A GENTLEMAN
VISITOR. BUT IT'S ALL-RIGHT,
IT'S MR. BARTERELLI.



"I WAS RATHER SURPRISED."

MR. BARTERELLI,
BUT HE OWNS
THIS HOUSE.
I DIDN'T KNOW
YOU KNEW HIM,
MISS JONES.

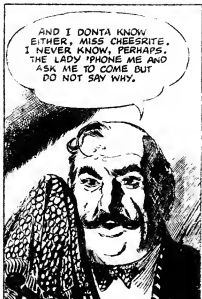
THERE ARE
LOTS OF THINGS
SOME PEOPLE
DON'T KNOW —
AS MR. ANGELO
BARTERELLI IS
ABOUT TO FIND
OUT."



I DIDN'T SEE
MR. BARTERELLI
ARRIVE.

YOU MEAN
HE HAS HIS
OWN KEY?





MR. BARTERELLI ASSURED ME HE HAD NEVER MET MISS JONES IN ALL HIS LIFE.



"I WAS HORRIFIED..."

SUCH A TERRIBLE THING — AND BAD FOR THE HOUSE.

THIS IS A GOODA BOARDING 'OUSE — NICE, CLEAN, WELL KEPT. FOR A LONG TIME I 'AVE BEEN THINKING...



... THAT MISS CHEESRITE, I THINK, SHE IS WHAT YOU CALL A TREASURE. I SHOULD PAY 'ER MORE MONEY. SHE IS RELIABLE. A WOMAN I CAN TRUST.



AND THEN, MISS SHANE, HE SAID IT WOULD BE BAD FOR HIS BUSINESSES IF HE BECAME INVOLVED IN MISS JONES' DEATH IN ANY WAY. AFTER ALL, I COULD AS EASILY HAVE FOUND HER DEAD MYSELF.



SO BARTERELLI PAID YOU MONEY TO CONCEAL THE FACT THAT HE WAS PRESENT WHEN MISS JONES DIED?

WHEN SHE WAS FOUND DEAD, MISS SHANE.



“HMMM — THERE *WOULD*
BE A DIFFERENCE! HAVE
YOU SEEN THIS MAN BEFORE?”

“NO. WHO
IS HE?”



“A MAJOR WILLSEN. DOES
THE NAME EVEN MEAN ANYTHING
TO YOU? PERHAPS HE CAME HERE
AS THE BROTHER OF A MISS
WILSON WHO STAYED HERE?”

“THE NAME
MEANS NOTHING
— NO
MISS WILSON
EVER STAYED
AT THIS
HOUSE!”



“AT HER OFFICE THE NEXT
MORNING LESLEY TOLD SUE
ABOUT HER DISCOVERIES.”

“SUE, IN THREE OF THE
SUSPICIOUS DEATHS, I HAVE
EVIDENCE THAT INCRIMINATES
MAJOR WILLSEN. BUT IN THE
FOURTH CASE THERE IS NO
CONNECTION WITH HIM.”

“EXCEPT MISS
WILSON'S 'PREVIOUS
ADDRESS'?”



“YES—THAT'S
THE MOST PUZZLING
CLUE IN THE WHOLE
MYSTERY. WHY
DID SHE GIVE A
FALSE ADDRESS?
—WHY *THAT*
ADDRESS?”



TRY AS SHE MIGHT, LESLEY COULD THINK OF NO CONNECTION BETWEEN MAJOR WILSEN AND THE MURDER AT 18, TUDOR ROAD. OR ANY REASON WHY MISS WILSON HAD PUT THAT ADDRESS IN THE REGISTER. SUE MADE A SUGGESTION...

PERHAPS MISS WILSON STAYED AT 18 TUDOR ROAD UNDER ANOTHER NAME.

NO, I SHOWED HER PHOTOGRAPH TO THE LANDLADY AND SHE DIDN'T RECOGNISE HER.

FINALLY LESLEY ABANDONED THAT TRAIN OF THOUGHT, AND STARTED ON ANOTHER.

MAYBE I'M LOOKING FOR TWO MURDERERS, NOT ONE.

YOU MEAN MAJOR WILSEN FOR MISS DREED, MRS. ALISS AND MISS WILSON, AND BARTERELLI FOR MISS JONES.

EXACTLY. BUT IN THAT CASE WHO KILLED MISS SLEED? - GET THAT PHONE CALL, WILL YOU, SUE.

SUE HANDED THE RECEIVER OVER TO LESLEY.

"TALK OF THE DEVIL —"
IT'S DETECTIVE INSPECTOR
BLAIR. HE'S GOT SOME
THING ON THE
SLEED CASE.

WE'RE STILL FERRETING
RECORDS IN YOUR FIVE
BOARDING HOUSE
DEATHS, LESLEY. SOME-
THINGS ESTABLISHED
ON THE FIRST ONE.
MISS SLEED WAS
SUICIDE.

WHEN SHE HEARD THE NEWS
SUE WENT ACROSS TO THE
FILING CABINET.

SO THAT'S THAT.
WE CAN CLOSE THE
SLEED FILE.

NO, SUE. DICK HAS
CONVINCED ME
THAT MISS SLEED
WAS MURDERED.

SHE LEFT THE CONVENTIONAL
NOTE. A BIT ABRUPT, MAYBE.
IT READS: *TO WHOM IT MAY
CONCERN. I HAVE
DECIDED TO TAKE MY
OWN LIFE.*

*To whom it may
concern —
I have decided to
take my own life.*

LESLEY'S REACTION TO THE DISCOVERY THAT MISS SLEED HAD LEFT A SUICIDE NOTE BAFFLED SUE. AS THEY LEFT THE OFFICE AT LUNCH-TIME, LESLEY STARTED TO EXPLAIN HER REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT IT WAS ANOTHER CASE OF MURDER.

EVEN PEOPLE WHO NEVER WRITE ANYTHING LONGER THAN A POSTCARD SUDDENLY FIND PLENTY TO SAY IN EXPLANATION OF THEMSELVES WHEN IT COMES TO WRITING A SUICIDE NOTE.



LESLEY FELT SURE THAT MISS SLEED HAD ONLY JUST BEGUN TO WRITE HER NOTE WHEN SHE WAS INTERRUPTED.

I BELIEVE MISS SLEED INTENDED TO TAKE HER OWN LIFE BUT THE MURDERER WALKED IN AND KILLED HER - AND THEN DISCOVERED THAT HIS CRIME HAD BEEN POINTLESS.



SUE WAS BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND.

THE REASON FOR THE SUICIDE AND THE REASON FOR THE MURDER WOULD BOTH BE THE SAME?

OF COURSE! WE'LL SEE WHAT CAN BE UNEARTHED AT THE HAMPTHEAD HEATH BOARDING HOUSE.



EARLY THAT AFTERNOON
SUE AND LESLEY DROVE
OUT TO HAMPSTEAD
HEATH.

THIS TIME THEY FOUND
A MANAGER IN CHARGE
OF THE BOARDING HOUSE
— A QUIET-VOICED MAN
BY THE NAME OF HARRIS.



LESLEY NOTICED THAT MR. HARRIS SEEMED RELIEVED TO HAVE A FURTHER OPPORTUNITY OF DISCUSSING MISS SLEED'S DEATH — AS IF SOME ASPECT OF IT HAD BEEN BOTHERING HIM.

MISS SLEED
WAS AN ODD
LITTLE CREATURE
— NOT THE KIND
OF WOMAN YOU'D
EXPECT TO DO A
THING LIKE THAT.
I'M PRETTY SURE
IT WAS A SUDDEN
IMPULSE.

WHY DO YOU
SAY THAT?

WELL, SHE'D NOTHING OF THE
KIND IN HER MIND TWENTY
MINUTES BEFORE IT HAPPENED!
— I'M REASONABLY CERTAIN
OF THAT.





LESLEY WAS GRATEFUL TO MR. HARRIS FOR TELLING HER ABOUT THE LETTER.

SHE FELT THAT AT LAST SHE WAS REALLY ON THE TRACK OF EVIDENCE WHICH COULD REVEAL THE IDENTITY OF THE MURDERER.

THANK YOU, MR. HARRIS. I'LL GO AND SEE THE OTHER MISS SLEED.

THE VICARAGE, GILLINGTON — I'M SURE THAT WAS THE ADDRESS.



LESLEY JUST MANAGED TO CATCH THE AFTERNOON TRAIN INTO GILLINGTON.

MISS SLEED'S TAKING CHOIR PRACTISE. WILL YOU WAIT, MISS.



SHE WAITED PATIENTLY UNTIL MISS SLEED HAD DISPATCHED HER NOISY BROOD OF CHORISTERS.

MISS SHANE? I DON'T THINK I KNOW YOU, DO I...?



LESLEY EXPLAINED WHY SHE HAD COME. BUT MISS SLEED WAS RETICENT.

THE LAST LETTER I HAD FROM MY SISTER? I THINK I PREFER NOT TO DISCUSS IT. IT WAS A PERSONAL MATTER.



IT WAS A DIFFICULT SITUATION. BUT LESLEY JUST HAD TO IMPRESS UPON MISS SLEED THE URGENT NEED FOR HER CO-OPERATION.

MISS SLEED, YOUR SISTER WAS ONE OF FIVE WOMEN WHO DIED MYSTERIOUSLY. I BELIEVE SHE WAS MURDERED, AND THAT ONE MAN WAS BEHIND ALL THESE DEATHS.



AS SHE LISTENED TO LESLEY'S WORDS MISS SLEED TURNED PALE, AND BEGAN TO SHOW SIGNS OF DISTRESS.

BUT LESLEY KNEW THAT SHE MUST GET AT THE TRUTH, AND RELENTLESSLY SHE PURSUED HER OBJECTIVE.

I BELIEVE THAT A MAN WAS PREYING ON YOUR SISTER, AND THAT, FEARING EXPOSURE HE KILLED HER.

POOR EDITH TOOK HER OWN LIFE.



NO. SHE INTENDED TO. SHE WAS KILLED AFTER SHE HAD WRITTEN OF HER TROUBLES TO YOU AND BEFORE SHE COMPLETED HER PUBLIC SUICIDE NOTE. WHY DID YOU KEEP QUIET ABOUT HER LETTER?



BECAUSE THE MANNER OF HER DEATH WAS DISGRACE ENOUGH TO OUR POOR FATHER. IT WOULD ONLY HAVE MADE MATTERS MORE PAINFUL IF EDITH'S FRAILTY AND FOOLISHNESS HAD BEEN MADE PUBLIC.



AS SHE STOOD IN THE TRANQUIL AND COOL ATMOSPHERE OF THE VICARAGE, LESLEY SUDDENLY REALISED THAT SHE HAD BEEN WASTING HER TIME. MISS SLEED'S BITTERNESS COULD NEVER BE DIRECTED TOWARDS HER SISTER'S MURDERER. BUT LESLEY FELT THAT SHE WOULD NOT WILLINGLY ALLOW ANOTHER WOMAN TO SUFFER AS HER SISTER HAD SUFFERED.



YOU MUST SHOW ME THAT LETTER. MAYBE ANOTHER WOMAN'S LIFE IS ALREADY AT STAKE.

DESTROYED IT, BUT EVERY WORD IS ENGRAVED IN MY MEMORY. THERE WAS A MAN. POOR DELUDED EDITH BELIEVED HERSELF TO HAVE FOUND A SOULMATE AS LONELY AS SHE. HE TOOK EVERY PENNY SHE HAD



AT LAST LESLEY HAD FOUND OUT WHAT SHE WANTED TO KNOW. BUT SHE ASKED A FINAL QUESTION.

WHAT WAS HIS NAME?
DID SHE DESCRIBE
HIM?

NO, SHE JUST
SAID "A MAN," EVEN
IN DISILLUSION, POOR
EDITH WAS LOYAL.
PLEASE... HERE IS
MY FATHER. SAY NO
MORE.



BY EARLY EVENING LESLEY WAS BACK IN HER OFFICE.

... AND THAT'S IT, SUE.
THE END OF THE TRAIL.
THE FIVE WOMEN WERE ALL
MURDERED, BY A MAN WHO
HAD FLATTERED THEN
PREYED ON THEM.



OBVIOUSLY THE SAME
MAN KILLED THEM ALL. IN
THREE CASES MAJOR WILLSEN
IS SUSPECT, IN ONE CASE
ANGELO BARTERELLI.
EITHER COULD HAVE BEEN
MISS SLEED'S "SOULMATE."
LIKE THE FLOWERS?



THEY'RE LOVELY.
FROM INSPECTOR
BLAIR?

NO. A NEW
AND MUCH MORE
FLATTERING
ADMIRER...
MAJOR WILLSEN!



SUE WAS APPALLED...

THEN MAJOR WILSEN
IS THE MURDERER... AND
YOU'RE HIS NEXT VICTIM?
UGH... HOW CAN YOU
TOUCH HIS FLOWERS?



HASTILY LESLEY CLUTCHED THE
VASE.

HOLD YOUR
HORSES, SUE. EVEN
FLOWERS IN A WREATH
ARE LOVELY. BESIDES
YOU MAY BE DOING
THE GALLANT MAJOR
AN INJUSTICE.



THEN LESLEY GREW
SERIOUS AGAIN.
FOR IT WAS NO MERE
PHILANDERER THAT
SHE HAD BEEN TRACKING
DOWN — BUT A RUTHLESS
AND COLD-BLOODED
KILLER.
AND, AS LESLEY HAD
SAID, IT WAS THE END
OF THE TRAIL....

I'VE A HUNCH I ALREADY
HAVE ALL THE CLUES TO THE IDENTITY
OF THE MURDERER. NOW I'VE GOT TO
BAIT THE TRAP TO CATCH HIM...
AND I THINK I KNOW
THE RIGHT BAIT.



LESLEY RETURNED TO THE BOARDING HOUSE AND CAREFULLY CONSIDERED HER PLAN TO TRAP THE MURDERER. SHE FELT CERTAIN, NOW, THAT SHE KNEW THE IDENTITY OF HIS NEXT VICTIM.... ON THE FOLLOWING DAY SHE SOUGHT OUT MISS VANTON, AND FOUND HER ALONE IN THE DINING-ROOM, PLAYING CARDS.



MURDER!
IN HERE, IN THIS
BOARDING HOUSE!



YES, SO FAR, FIVE WOMEN
HAVE BEEN MURDERED IN
BOARDING HOUSES BY A MAN
WHO IMPOSES UPON THEIR
LONELINESS AND PERSUADES
THEM TO LEND HIM MONEY,
OR TRUST HIM WITH
INVESTMENTS.



MAJOR WILLSEN
HAD BEEN ABOUT
TO ENTER THE
DINING-ROOM,
BUT SUDDENLY
CHANGED HIS MIND.
HE FLED ACROSS
THE HALLWAY AND
UP THE STAIRS.
THE VOICES FROM
THE DINING-ROOM
WERE STILL CLEARLY
AUDIBLE THROUGH
THE DOOR HE HAD
LEFT AJAR.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT—
IT CAN'T BE TRUE!

IT IS TRUE...
AND I THINK
THE NEXT
VICTIM IS
LIVING IN
THIS HOUSE!



THEN LESLEY HAD A QUESTION
TO ASK MISS VANTON...

MISS VANTON,
YOU HAVE SAVINGS,
HAVEN'T YOU? HAS
ANYONE TRIED
TO PERSUADE YOU
TO MAKE THEM
A LOAN, OR RE-
INVEST YOUR
MONEY?



INDIGNANTLY, MISS VANTON
ROSE TO HER FEET.

NO... NO, OF COURSE
NOT. AND YOU'VE
NO RIGHT TO ASK
SUCH PERSONAL
QUESTIONS.



ANNIE WAS ACROSS TO LESLEY
IN A FLASH.

MISS VANTON
TOLD YOU A LIE.
A MAN ~~HAS~~ BEEN
BORROWING MONEY
FROM HER.



I HEARD
MAJOR WILLSEN
TELLING HER A
HARD LUCK STORY.
AND BORROWING
A FIVER FROM HER
UNTIL THE END OF
THE WEEK WHEN
HIS ALLOWANCE
COMES, HE SAID.
~~THEN~~ HE STARTED
GIVING HER
ADVICE ON HER
INVESTMENTS.



AT THAT MOMENT MAJOR WILLSEN WAS FRANTICALLY COLLECTING HIS BELONGINGS TOGETHER AND THROWING THEM INTO A SUITCASE.



SHORTLY AFTERWARDS ANNIE SAW HIM LEAVE BY THE FRONT DOOR.



THERE! YOU SEE! OWES A WEEK'S MONEY AND GOODNESS KNOWS HOW MUCH TO MISS VANTON. I'LL BET HE TRIES TO DO A MOONLIGHT FLIT WHEN WE'RE ALL AT DINNER. THAT'S THE FAVOURITE TIME.



I DON'T THINK HE'LL GO BEFORE TONIGHT.

WHY NOT?



LESLEY WAS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THE MAJOR INTENDED TO COME BACK LATER THAT EVENING TO DO A LITTLE MORE "BORROWING" FROM THE RATHER PATHETIC MISS VANTON. BUT ANNIE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THAT.

I ONLY KNOW TWO THINGS. MAJOR WILLSEN PLANS TO WALK OUT TO-NIGHT WITHOUT PAYING, AND I'M NOT GOING TO LET HIM.



ANNIE PULLED OPEN THE DOOR OF THE CUPBOARD IN THE HALL AND PLACED A CHAIR INSIDE.

IT CAN BE QUITE COMFY IN THE BROOM CUPBOARD TO-NIGHT, KEEPING AN EYE ON THE STAIRS AND THE FRONT DOOR.



TELL ME SOMETHING. HOW MUCH DOES MAJOR WILLSEN OWE?

LESLEY HAD DECIDED THAT SHE WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THE BROOM CUPBOARD AS AN OBSERVATION POST. NO DOUBT ANNIE WOULD RENT IT TO HER FOR THE PRICE OF THE MAJOR'S DEBT....

£4-15-0, MISS.

HERE'S £5. NOW - LEAVE HIM AND THIS MATTER AND THE BROOM CUPBOARD TO ME, WILL YOU? YOU KEEP OUT OF WHATEVER HAPPENS TO-NIGHT.



ANNIE GAZED AT LESLEY IN
ASTONISHMENT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON
BUT IF YOU WANT TO SPEND THE
NIGHT IN A BROOM CUPBOARD
THAT'S YOUR LOOK-OUT.

BUT LESLEY STEPPED INSIDE
THE CUPBOARD AND BEGAN
CLOSING THE DOOR AS SHE
REPLIED....

MORE THAN
THE NIGHT. I'M
GOING TO GROUND
NOW FOR A BIT

'WELL OF ALL
THE QUEER...

OH,
ANNIE!

YES, MISS
VANTON?

ANNIE, HAVE
YOU SEEN MAJOR
WILSEN?

HE WENT
OUT, MISS.

MISS VANTON SOUNDED AGITATED.

OH DEAR. WHAT SHALL I DO. DO YOU SUPPOSE HE WENT TO HIS CLUB, ANNIE?

HMPH!
WHAT CLUR
WOULD THAT BE,
MISS? THE COFFEE
STALL IN
RUSSELL SQUARE
ISN'T OPEN AT
THIS TIME OF
DAY.

IMPUDENT CREATURE!
I SUPPOSE I'D BETTER
PHONE. YES...YES,
I WILL.

LESLEY HELD HER BREATH AS SHE HEARD MISS VANTON PICK UP THE TELEPHONE RECEIVER....

DIALLING A NUMBER!
IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT IT
WAS, THEN I COULD BE SURE
IT'S HIM SHE'S CALLING.
MAYBE SHE'LL USE HIS
NAME.

HALLO,
IS THAT YOU?
IT'S ME.

THEN, UNAWARE
THAT LESLEY WAS
CONCEALED IN
THE CUPBOARD
JUST BEHIND HER,
MISS VANTON
SPOKE URGENTLY
INTO THE 'PHONE.

THERE WAS A
NOTE OF PANIC
IN HER VOICE...

I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU.
NO, NOT, *NOT* TO-NIGHT.
THIS AFTERNOON — NO, NOT
HERE, EITHER. — WHAT? —
WELL, IF YOU MUST KNOW,
IT'S ABOUT THE MONEY
I LENT YOU. SOMEONE'S
BEEN MAKING
SUGGESTIONS.



CERTAIN THAT MISS VANTON WAS
SPEAKING TO THE MURDERER,
LESLEY STRAINED HER EARS TO
CATCH EVERY WORD THAT WAS SAID.

MY LUCK'S
DEAD OUT.
SHE'S BEING TOO
CAUTIOUS EVEN
TO USE HIS
NAME. IF ONLY
I COULD HEAR
WHAT HE'S
SAYING.



BUT THE HONEYED TONES AT THE
OTHER END OF THE LINE WERE
HEARD ONLY BY MISS VANTON.

AND WHAT HAVE
PEOPLE BEEN SUGGESTING
TO MY LITTLE ANGEL
OF MERCY?

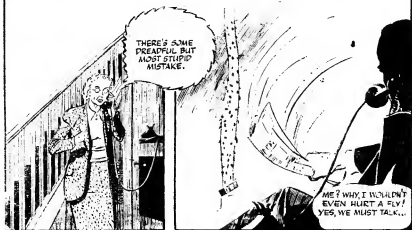




LESLEY, LISTENING, WAS AGHAST. DESPERATELY MISS VANTON IMPLORER THE KILLER TO DENY THOSE ACCUSATIONS....



AND MISS VANTON OBTAINED THE WORTHLESS ASSURANCE FOR WHICH SHE HAD SO EARNESTLY PLEADED.....



AS SOON AS MISS VANTON HAD LEFT THE HALL, LESLEY HASTILY EMERGED FROM HER HIDING-PLACE. WHEN SHE RETURNED A SHORT TIME LATER, SHE FOUND ANNIE THERE, LOOKING FOR HER.



LESLEY GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED THE CUP OF TEA.

THANKS, ANNIE. I'LL TAKE IT WITH ME. I DIDN'T DESERT MY POST, BUT YOUR BROOM CLIPBOARD ISN'T ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED, ANNIE!



IF ANNIE HAD SEEN THE REVOLVER WHICH LESLEY REGARDED AS "ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT" SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE BEWILDERED. BUT LESLEY KNEW THAT WHEN THINGS START TO HAPPEN THEY USUALLY HAPPEN QUICKLY, AND SHE WANTED TO BE PREPARED.

WELL NOW! I WONDER WHAT SHE MEANT BY THAT?



AS THE HOURS WORE ON, LESLEY COULD HEAR THE SOUNDS OF THE BOARDING HOUSE SETTLING DOWN FOR THE NIGHT. AND SHE, TOO, SETTLED DOWN TO WAIT FOR THE MURDERER TO COME FOR HIS SIXTH VICTIM.



LEAVE A TRAY WITH SOME BISCUITS AND CHEESE FOR THE MAJOR, ANNIE. HE'S NOT BACK YET.



AFTER A WHILE LESLEY STRUCK A MATCH AND LOOKED AT HER WATCH.

TWENTY PAST TWELVE. IF HE'S COMING, IT SHOULD BE SOON.



THEN, AT LAST, THERE CAME THE SOUND OF A KEY BEING GENTLY INSERTED INTO THE LOCK....



STEALTHILY, LESLEY SLID THE CUPBOARD DOOR OPEN A FEW INCHES.... SHE HAD JUST A GLIMPSE OF THE SHADOWY FIGURE ON THE STAIRS - BUT IT WAS ENOUGH....

THAT'S HIM, ALL RIGHT. BUT I'VE GOT TO BE SURE HE MEANS MURDER.



MISS VANTON SAT UP IN ALARM AT THE MUFFLED TAPPING ON HER BEDROOM DOOR.

WHO IS IT?
WHAT DO YOU
WANT?

IT'S ME.
LET ME IN. I
MUST SEE YOU.

SHE UNLOCKED THE DOOR, AND OPENED IT WIDE.

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE
COME. NOT AT THIS TIME.
I SHALL LEAVE THE
DOOR OPEN.

NO.
WE'LL SHUT
THE DOOR.

LESLEY SHANE CROPT NOISELESSLY UP THE STAIRS. AS SHE REACHED THE DOOR SHE HEARD THE KEY TURN, AND THEN MISS VANTON'S FRIGHTENED WORDS....

THE WAY YOU LOOK AT
ME SCARES ME! YOU *DID*
KILL THOSE OTHER WOMEN,
DIDN'T YOU?

SHALL I
TELL YOU? THEY
DIED BECAUSE
THEY ASKED
TOO MANY
QUESTIONS

THE KILLER BEGAN TO CHANT IN COLD, DERISIVE VOICE...

WHERE'S THE
MONEY? WHEN CAN I
HAVE IT BACK? WHAT
HAVE YOU DONE WITH
IT, BUT *YOU* WON'T
ASK SUCH STUPID
QUESTIONS.

BUT LESLEY HAD HEARD ENOUGH. SHE HURLED HERSELF AT THE DOOR....

YOU HAVE ASKED A DIFFERENT QUESTION
AND THE ANSWER IS — "YES". YES, I KILLED THEM
AS I SHALL KILL YOU.



THE DOOR BURST OPEN WITH A CRASH...



AS LESLEY STRUGGLED TO REGAIN HER BALANCE
THE KILLER SNATCHED UP A CHAIR.



EVEN AS THE CHAIR HURTTLED TOWARDS HER, LESLEY SAW THE MURDERER'S HANDS REACHING OUT AGAIN FOR MISS VANTON'S THROAT — AND SHE FIRED



INSTANTLY THE MAN RELEASED HIS HOLD ON MISS VANTON
AND PLUNGED THROUGH THE WINDOW.



FOR A MOMENT
LESLEY FELT STUNNED
BY THE CRASHING
IMPACT OF THE CHAIR.
MISS VANTON PEERED
AT HER, ANXIOUSLY.

MISS SHANE, YOU'RE ALL
RIGHT? THANK YOU FOR
COMING! YOU... YOU KNOW WHO
HE IS NOW, HE... HE GOT AWAY.



THEN LESLEY
SCRAMBLED TO HER
FEET AND DASHED
ACROSS TO THE
WINDOW.
THERE WAS NO-ONE
ON THE BALCONY
OUTSIDE.
THE KILLER HAD GONE.

NOT FAR, I THINK. A
BULLET TRAVELS FASTER
THAN A CHAIR. I HIT
HIM BEFORE HE HIT
ME!



IN A MATTER OF SECONDS LESLEY WAS RACING DOWN THE STAIRS TOWARDS THE STREET DOOR.

ANNIE WAS ALREADY POUNDING ALONG THE HALL, BUTTONING HER COAT AS SHE RAN.

BEHIND THEM A TUMULT BROKE OUT — DOORS WERE FLUNG OPEN, VOICES WERE SHOUTING...



WITH ANNIE AT HER HEELS, LESLEY DASHED OUT INTO THE NIGHT. THERE WAS A FIGURE SPRAWLED ON THE PAVEMENT AT THE FOOT OF THE STEPS. ANNIE GAVE A CRY..

TOGETHER THEY TURNED HIM OVER, AND AS ANNIE RAISED HIS SHOULDERS THERE WAS LIGHT ENOUGH TO SEE HIS FACE....



JUST AS THE MAJOR WAS BEGINNING TO COME ROUND THEY WERE JOINED BY TWO OTHER BOARDERS.



SHAKILY THE MAJOR CLIMBED TO HIS FEET, CLINGING TO THE RAILINGS FOR SUPPORT. HE BEGAN TO REMEMBER WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM.



SUDDENLY THE MAJOR GAVE A HOARSE SHOUT.

HE HAD DETECTED A SLIGHT MOVEMENT AT THE FOOT OF THE BASEMENT STEPS, AND THE OUTLINE OF A MAN WAS DIMLY VISIBLE.



WITH CONSIDERABLE
PUFFING AND BLOWING
A BULKY FIGURE
STRUGGLED UP THE
STEPS AND EMERGED
INTO THE LIGHT.

MAJOR WILLSEN
GAVE A HORRIFIED
GASP OF RECOGNITION.



MR. BARTERELLI THREW UP HIS HANDS
PLACATINGLY...

PLEASE, I EXPLAIN:
IS NO WRONG IN ME
BEING 'ERE IN MY
OWN DUSE. I COME
'BECAUSE I SUSPECT
MISS VANTON...

BUT AT THE MENTION OF
MISS VANTON AN ANGRY VOICE
CUT IN, FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER.

SOMEONE TRIED TO
MURDER HER

IT WAS
YOU!

WAIT!
IT WASN'T
MR. BARTERELLI
I FIRED AT,
EITHER.

LESLEY GUESSED THAT MR. BARTERELLI HAD SOMEHOW STUMBLERD ON THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MURDERS, AND HAD COME TO THE HOUSE TO INTERCEPT THE KILLER. BUT HE HAD ARRIVED TOO LATE, AFTER THE INTRUDER HAD LEAPT FROM THE BALCONY AND CRASHED INTO MAJOR WILSEN IN HIS FLIGHT. SO THE FACT THAT LESLEY HAD FIRED AT THE KILLER WAS NEWS TO BARTERELLI.

THEN YOU KNOW WHO COMMITS THE MURDERS?

YES, AND I THINK YOU SUSPECT NOW, TOO, DON'T YOU? YOU CAME TO-NIGHT TO SAVE MISS VANTON, NOT TO KILL HER.



THE MAJOR WAS THOROUGHLY BEWILDERED. HE WAS STILL CONVINCED THAT MR. BARTERELLI HAD JUMPED ON HIM.

MURDERS? I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I THOUGHT I WAS SUSPECTED OF... OF FLEEING ONE OR TWO LADIES WHO HAD TAKEN PITY ON ME WHEN I NEEDED MONEY.



MAJOR WILSEN HAD NO IDEA THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY MURDERS OTHER THAN THAT OF MISS WILSON, WHO WAS, AFTER ALL, HIS SISTER. LESLEY HAD TO ENLIGHTEN HIM.

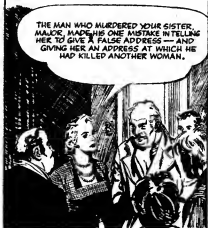
I DID SUSPECT YOU FOR A TIME, YOUR SISTER, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THE SPELLING OF HER NAME.



OURS IS—OR WAS—A DISTINGUISHED NAME, MISS SHANE. SHE HAD DISGRACED IT, AND PROMISED ME NOT TO USE IT. BUT THESE MURDERS—I DIDN'T KILL MY SISTER!

LESLEY WENT ON TO EXPLAIN HOW HER INVESTIGATION INTO MISS WILSON'S DEATH HAD LED HER TO DISCOVER A CLUE TO THE IDENTITY OF THE KILLER.

THE MAN WHO MURDERED YOUR SISTER, MAJOR, MADE HIS ONE MISTAKE IN TELLING HER TO GIVE A FALSE ADDRESS—AND GIVING HER AN ADDRESS AT WHICH HE HAD KILLED ANOTHER WOMAN.



MR. BARTERELLI SUDDENLY BROKE IN...

WAS THAT WHAT MADE
YOU SUSPECT...

ALFRED GATES,
YOUR CLERK? APART
FROM YOURSELF, HE WAS
THE ONLY PERSON WITH
KEYS TO ALL THE
BOARDING HOUSES.

AND YOU SAID YOURSELF
THAT HE WAS A MAN WHO
APPEALED TO THE LADIES. HE
DID, TO LONELY
WOMEN WHOSE
LITTLE WEALTH
HE STOLE BEFORE
MURDERING
THEM. WHEN
THEY DIS-
COVERED THE
TRUTH ABOUT
HIM.

AT THIS POINT MISS VANTON BEGAN
TO SOB.

I'VE BEEN SO FOOLISH!
BUT HE WAS SO KIND, AND
SEEMED SO TRUSTWORTHY.
OH, WHAT WILL HAPPEN
TO HIM?

BY NOW HE
WILL HAVE
FALLEN INTO
THE HANDS OF
THE POLICE,
MISS VANTON.

HE WOULD HAVE BEEN PICKED UP
BY DETECTIVE INSPECTOR BLAIR'S
MEN BEFORE HE HAD GOT VERY FAR.
YOU SEE, WHEN YOU RANG HIM
AND SAID THAT YOU'D BEEN GIVEN
A HINT THAT HE WAS ROBBING YOU,
I KNEW HE WOULD STRIKE QUICKLY.
SO I PHONED INSPECTOR BLAIR AND
TOLD HIM THAT I BELIEVED ALFRED
GATES WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR
THESE MURDERS, AND THAT HE
WAS LIKELY TO MAKE AN ATTEMPT
ON YOUR LIFE TONIGHT...



"BUT I STILL HADN'T PROOF THAT HE WAS A MURDERER. THAT'S WHY I WAITED UNTIL HE ATTACKED YOU. BUT I ALSO TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF ASKING THE POLICE TO CORDON THE AREA."



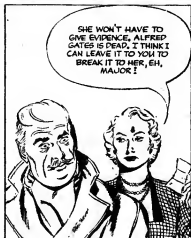
"MISS SHANE? DETECTIVE INSPECTOR BLAIR SENT ME WITH THIS NOTE FOR YOU. HE'LL BE CALLING LATER."

A NEW THOUGHT HAD STRUCK MISS VANTON...



"AND TO THINK THAT I'LL HAVE TO GIVE EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM IN COURT. WHAT A STUPID OLD WOMAN I'LL SEEM!"

PLEASE, MISS VANTON—DORIS—IF I MAY CALL YOU THAT... NOBODY COULD ACCUSE YOU OF BEING OLD, AND YOUR ERROR WAS ONLY LONELINESS. MANY OF US SUFFER FROM THAT.



"SHE WON'T HAVE TO GIVE EVIDENCE. ALFRED GATES IS DEAD. I THINK I CAN LEAVE IT TO YOU TO BREAK IT TO HER, EH, MAJOR?"

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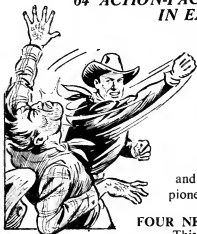
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King of the West

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and **DAVY CROCKETT**
pioneer trapper and Indian fighter.



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