

THE CASE
OF THE MURDERED
MUCKRAKER

A DAISY DALRYMPLE MYSTERY

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St. Martin's Minotaur
New York



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*To all the readers in Eugene who have asked me over the years, “When are you going to set a book
here?”*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1

Voices raised in anger: in the quiet when the clacking of the typewriter keys ceased, as Daisy reached the bottom of a page, the muffled sound came through the wall from the room next door.

It was not the first time. Apparently her neighbour was not of a conciliatory nature. This time there were two men and a woman, Daisy was pretty sure, but try as she might, she could not make out their words. None of her business, she told herself firmly, and turned her attention back to her work.

Squealing, the Remington reluctantly released the two sheets of paper and the carbon between them. Daisy used them to fan herself. Not yet accustomed to the indoor temperature preferred by New Yorkers, and bred as she was to an age-old tradition of roaring fires tempered by icy draughts, she found the hotel room stifling. Her battle with the balky radiator had been less successful than that with the typewriter provided by the management.

She looked longingly at the French windows, surrounded by elaborate rosewood carvings, then she scowled at the typewriter. The Hotel Chelsea was a noted haven for writers and catered to their needs, but the Remington was on its last legs. Daisy suspected it had stood on this very desk for forty years, ever since the place was built in 1883, pounded daily by fingers expert and inexpert. It creaked and groaned at every touch and strongly objected to demands for capital letters. The prospect of resuming her battle with the beastly machine made her feel hotter than ever.

Beside the typewriter, the piles of paper were growing. Mr. Thorwald had requested few changes to her article about the transatlantic voyage. It was all typed, ready to be delivered tomorrow. The article on her first impressions of America was coming along nicely. She had time to spare.

Stepping out onto the balcony, she shivered in the biting chill of a wintry breeze. The yellow-green sky threatened rain, or even snow, though it was not quite November yet. Petrol—gasoline—fumes drifted up from West Twenty-third Street, mingled with dust, but the tang of sooty coal-smoke was not as predominant as in faraway London.

Daisy leant on the flowery wrought-iron rail to watch a tram rattle and clang past seven stories below. Not a tram, a streetcar. She wondered why Americans insisted that they spoke English, when they might just as well call their language American. The oddest thing was that people kept telling her, an Englishwoman speaking the King's English, that she had a quaint accent!

An unmistakably American voice interrupted Daisy's musing. The window of the next room was open a few inches. The woman whom Daisy had heard indistinctly before was now clear as a bell—not a mellow church bell, no tinkling harness bell, but the shrillest of shrill electric bells.

"You bastard!" she cried venomously. "I wouldn't come back to you for a million dollars."

"If I had a million dollars," retorted a biting male voice, more sarcastic than irate, "you still wouldn't squeeze one red cent out of me."

A different man said something indistinguishable in a soothing, rather nervous tone. A moment later a door slammed.

Guiltily aware that curiosity as much as overheating had driven her outside, Daisy ducked back into her room. She hoped she had not been spotted eavesdropping on the balcony. Rather than sit there awaiting an indignant knock on her door, she decided to go in search of a cup of tea.

It was, after all, past four o'clock. Prohibition had led some Americans to rethink the Boston Tea Party and agree that the British custom of afternoon tea was worth adopting. True, other Americans appeared to obtain alcoholic drinks without the least difficulty. Despite its bohemian clientele

however, the Chelsea was a respectable hostelry, not to be compared to a speakeasy. With any luck, pot of tea and perhaps even a few biscuits—cookies—might be available below.

Why on earth *speakeasy*? Daisy wondered, making for the lifts. No one she had asked had the foggiest.

As she approached the nearer lift, the outer gate of the farther one clanked shut. She hurried, but when she arrived, the inner gate had also closed and the lift was already moving down the shaft with a rattle and whine of aged machinery. It left behind a whiff of mingled bay rum, expensive cigars, and still more expensive perfume. Daisy caught a glimpse of the top of the lift boy's livery cap, and beyond him a man's head, thin on top, and a scarlet cloche hat with a spray of white egret feathers.

"Missed it!" she exclaimed. "Blast!" On the other hand, if that was the couple who had been quarrelling in the room next door to hers, she was quite glad not to be boxed in with them.

She walked back to the other lift and pushed the button to summon it.

A young chambermaid popped out of a linen room just down the passage, her arms full of towels. "'Tis a long wait ye'll be having of it, I'm thinkin', miss," she remarked in an Irish brogue thick enough to spread on soda-bread. Her carrotty hair and freckled face reminded Daisy of her stepdaughter, Belinda. A pang of homesickness struck, unexpectedly strong.

She smiled at the girl, who was probably just as homesick, with far more reason. "Is this one out of order?" she asked.

"The elevator boy's a bold young limb o' Satan, ma'am. This time o' day he'll likely be off creatin' 'stead o' minding his duties."

"I dare say this is a slack time and it must be frightfully boring going up and down in a cage all day."

The girl beamed at her. "'Tis me little brother, ma'am. He's been on since six this morning. Sure 'tis hard on a lively lad, but he's his bread to earn and lucky to have a job."

"I shan't tell tales," Daisy promised. "I'm in no hurry. I suppose I could always take the stairs, if that's all right."

"Oh no, ma'am, 'tis a desp'rate long way down. The other elevator'll be back in a minute, if only Kevin don't come."

In fact, the groan and clatter of cables and ratchets announced the imminent arrival of the malignant Kevin. Daisy had only to wait while his lift made its laborious way aloft, but during that interval a man came along the passage to join her.

At the sight of him, the chambermaid turned pink and ducked hurriedly back into her linen room.

He didn't look at all bohemian—in his forties at a guess, dressed in a medium grey tweed suit, with a black homburg and tan leather gloves in one hand, an attaché case in the other. Stocky, slight, bowlegged, he walked with a swagger. His jaw had an aggressive thrust, and his nose was long and inquisitive above a narrow moustache. His glance at Daisy was bold, impertinent even, with a sort of cynical dismissiveness which at once raised her hackles.

At the same time, she wondered if he was the man next door, if he had seen her on the balcony, and whether she was blushing like the Irish girl. She hoped not. She despised blushing as too, too Victorian. She gave him a haughty, withering look worthy of her mother, the Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple, but the bounder had already turned away.

He punched the call button, quite unnecessarily as the cage's rickety approach was obvious. Impatiently he opened the gate onto the empty shaft, where loops of cable performed their mysterious trigonometrical functions. Unless it was calculus Daisy was thinking of—her girls' school had never plumbed such mathematical depths, but she remembered looking over Gervaise's shoulder while he groaned over holiday cramming.

All that cramming for nothing, she thought mournfully. Her brother had gone off to the War instead of to university, and all his maths had not saved him from death in the Flanders trenches.

Maths would not save her impatient fellow-resident, either, if he plumbed the depths of the lift shaft, as he seemed in imminent danger of doing. However, he pulled his head back safely. The lift arrived, piloted by a youth of fourteen or so, whose carroty hair and freckles proclaimed him to be Kevin, while his watering eyes and scarlet ear suggested misconduct chastised.

Nonetheless, he gave Daisy a cocky, snaggletoothed grin and enquired, "Going down, ma'am?"

Perhaps his words recalled the impatient man to a sense of common courtesy. He was already stepping forward, but he drew back and, with an ironical half bow, allowed Daisy to go first.

"Where can I get a pot of tea?" she asked the boy as the lift started down.

"In the lobby, m'lady." He tipped his cap, the gesture of respect cheekily exaggerated. His native Irish was overlaid with nasal New York. "Stanley—that's the bellhop, m'lady—'ll take your order to the dining room and a waiter'll deliver, m'lady."

His cheek was good-natured. Daisy laughed. "I'm English," she admitted, "but not 'my lady.'"

"We can't all be bishops," he commiserated. "It's the real tay you want? You tell Stanley Kevin said to tell 'em make it good and strong, not the dishwater the yankees call tay."

The man behind Daisy snorted. From the corner of her eye, she saw him take a flask from his pocket, uncap it, and swallow a hefty pull. She assumed it was neither tea nor dishwater he had swigged, as his face turned an unbecoming purple.

Not that she was looking. She wouldn't give him the satisfaction. "I'll remember your advice," she said to Kevin with a smile.

He winked. "I can get you the other stuff, too," he whispered. "Not moonshine, gen-u-wine Irish whisky straight from the Emerald Isle."

"No, thank you."

"It's safe enough. All the right people been paid off."

"Paid off?" The man was suddenly sticking his long nose between Daisy and Kevin.

The lift boy gave him a wide-eyed, would-be innocent stare. "Musta misheard, mister. I was telling the lady how me brother was laid off. Worked down on the waterfront, he did."

It was obvious the man did not believe him. Daisy thought he might have pressed the issue if she had not been there. She did her best to look thoroughly respectable, and they reached the bottom with no further exchange. He strode off without a backward glance.

Stepping out, Daisy passed the untenanted reception desk and went on through to the lobby. The floor was patterned in white, grey, black, and dried-blood-coloured marble, and grey marble lined the walls to waist height. In every corner potted palms lurked unhappily, as *de rigueur* here as in London. In this unlikely oasis, a fire flickered beneath a dark, ornately carved mantelpiece. Against the wall on either side stood a stiff, uninviting bench of the same dark carved wood, with red and ivory striped upholstery.

The stripes reappeared on two armchairs and a small sofa arranged in front of the fireplace around a low glasstopped table. Matching stripes adorned the seats of the rather spindly wrought-iron chairs scattered out around several small, equally spindly tables. Two of these pushed together were surrounded by a group of earnest-looking women and rather long-haired men. Their clothes tended toward the flamboyant, the men with floppy, kaleidoscopic cravats in place of neckties, several of the women wearing corduroy trousers. Daisy felt positively staid in her powder blue costume.

She had seen virtually identical gatherings in Chelsea—the London suburb, not the hotel—where she had lived before she married. They were discussing either the future course of serious literature or the malevolence of editors.

In Chelsea, such a group would have scorned afternoon tea as too bourgeois for words (the

preferred drinks were beer or cheap sherry, depending on their pretensions), but here they all held teacups. In fact Daisy saw teapots on the tables, all occupied, on both sides of the lobby.

One young man sat on his own, on one of the stiff benches against the wall. His teapot was perched on a side table, at an awkward height and distance, his cup and saucer balanced equally awkwardly on one hand, as if he wasn't quite sure what to do with them. He was soberly dressed in a dark businesslike suit, his fair hair cropped short above studious horn-rimmed spectacles. Three or four years younger than Daisy's twenty-six, he appeared to be deliberately avoiding her eye.

Of course she would not have joined him even if invited, but she did wish she had someone to sit with.

She was a modern independent woman, she reminded herself. For years now she had looked after herself, having concluded that absolutely anything was preferable to living with her mother in the Dower House, after her father died in the '19 influenza pandemic. Just because she was married now had been married for a *whole month*, and her darling Alec was hundreds of miles away, it didn't mean she could no longer take care of herself.

The only free place was the other bench, but as she resigned herself to it, a couple stood up to leave a table on the other side of the lobby, by the door to the little-used Ladies' Sitting Room. Daisy was moving to take possession when a short, plump woman with untidy grey hair bustled up to her.

"Oh dear," she said, "I do hope you don't mind?" She looked up appealingly at Daisy over half-spectacles.

"Mind?" Daisy asked, bewildered.

The little lady waved the knitting she was carrying, a beautifully patterned baby's jacket in pale yellow and white. The yellow and white yarn trailed behind her, Daisy noticed, back to the low table by the fire, on the far side of the lobby, where she had left her knitting bag.

"It's my sister," she confided. "Oh dear, so *awkward*, but she does like to know."

"Know what?" Daisy asked cautiously.

"Oh dear, I'm muddling it as usual. My sister, Genevieve, insists on meeting everyone who comes to stay at the hotel. Do say you will?"

She looked a little reproachful when Daisy laughed, but brightened when Daisy said, "I'd be glad to. May I know your name?"

"Oh dear, I ought to have introduced myself first thing! I am Miss Cabot, Ernestine Cabot—Boston you know—only a *very* junior branch."

Why this obscure announcement should make Daisy think of fish she had no leisure to contemplate. Miss Cabot turned about, tangling her feet in her own yarn. She would have come to grief had not Kevin, playing truant from his lift, dashed over to prop her up.

"Happens reg'lar, once a week, like clockwork," he murmured to Daisy.

Though no one else seemed to notice the minor imbroglio, the solitary young man must have been watching, for he also hurried to help. He stooped to unwind the wool, but Miss Cabot turned skittish.

"Oh dear ... no, please ... so kind, Mr. er-hm ..."

"Lambert."

"Mr ... I'm afraid ... rather *indelicate* ..."

Daisy gathered that female assistance would be appreciated. She disentangled the black lisle stocking-clad ankles while Miss Cabot twittered a series of *oh dears* above her.

Mr. Lambert offered a hand to help Daisy up, with an oddly assessing look as though he were comparing her face with some inner ideal. Wondering whether she passed muster, Daisy thanked him with a nod and a smile.

"You're welcome, ma'am." The words arrived with a whiff of Irish whiskey. Kevin's business was apparently a going concern, and not all teapots contained tea.

Daisy collected the yarn where it hung down from Miss Cabot's needles, intending to gather up the excess as she accompanied the old lady to meet her sister. The length of yarn rose a foot or two from the floor just as the impatient man from the lift strode past in his purposeful way. It caught him across the shins.

He barged on, oblivious. The knitting flew from Miss Cabot's grasp and the knitting bag attached to the far end of the yarn flopped to the floor.

Lambert caught the man's sleeve. "Say, look here, wait a minute!"

"You know something about it?" He turned eagerly. Daisy could have sworn his long nose twitched. "You're willing to talk?"

His face bemused, Lambert blinked. "Talk? I can't see there's anything to talk about, buddy, except you might watch where you're going."

"Watch ... ?" It was his turn to look blank; then he followed Lambert's gesture to the yellow and white strands adorning his legs. Turning to Miss Cabot, he said sarcastically, "Ah, Madame Defarge strikes again." His glance moved on to Daisy. "Another victim for Madame Guillotine, I see."

His French pronunciation was rotten, Daisy noted, even as she wondered if the hackneyed reference to Dickens had any significance beyond its evident malice.

Miss Cabot bridled. "I'm sure I don't know what you can mean."

"I don't suppose you do." In an effort to disembarrass himself of the yarn, he stepped backward. The wool clung to his tweeds. He bent down and snapped both strands. "Beware of entanglements with women, sonny," he advised Lambert. "The only way out is a clean break." And he strode on.

Lambert picked up the knitting, which had miraculously stayed on the needles. "Sorry, ma'am," he said sheepishly, handing it to Miss Cabot. "Gee whiz, I guess there's not much you can do about a guy like that."

"Oh dear, I'm afraid manners are not what they were," agreed Miss Cabot.

Stooping again, Lambert retrieved the two loose ends of yarn. Since he obviously had not the least notion what to do with them, Daisy relieved him of them and proceeded at Miss Cabot's side, winding up the wool as they went.

Lambert moved ahead to pick up the knitting bag and replace it on the table. Any disposition to linger was firmly quashed by Miss Genevieve Cabot.

"Thank you, young man," she said with a nod of unmistakable dismissal, and as he turned away, a trifle disconsolate, she added, "Not an interesting person."

Mr. Lambert's ears reddened.

"Guillotined," thought Daisy, hoping she was not to meet the same fate.

2

The armchair occupied by Miss Genevieve Cabot commanded a view of both the main entrance and the inner lobby leading to the lifts. *Commanded* was the appropriate word. Stout where Miss Cabot was softly plump, Miss Genevieve had a decisive air utterly at odds with her elder sister's dithers. At Daisy's approach, she remained seated, but she bowed and indicated the cane leaning against her chair as her excuse for not rising. Reason, perhaps, rather than excuse: she didn't look as if she was accustomed to make her excuses to anyone. Though her face had an invalidish pallor, there was nothing invalidish about her tone.

"Well, sister?"

"Oh dear, sister, I'm afraid I quite forgot to ask the young lady's name!"

"Mrs. Fletcher," said Daisy, taking a seat on the sofa without waiting to be invited. She had been summoned, after all. "How do you do."

"British," observed Miss Genevieve, not with unalloyed approval.

Before Daisy could respond, a small boy in hotel livery scurried up to them—Stanley, the bellhop familiarly known in England as a "button." Miss Genevieve ordered fresh tea, and more sandwiches, cookies, and cake. Whatever her opinion of the British, she did not let it abate her enthusiasm for proper afternoon tea, Daisy was happy to see.

While Stanley took Miss Genevieve's order, Daisy studied her hostesses. They both wore knitted frocks with tatted collars and cuffs, beautifully made (by Miss Cabot?) but unflattering to their portly figures. Miss Cabot's dress was rose pink, Miss Genevieve's navy blue. Miss Cabot's hair, drawn back into a bun, escaped vigorously in all directions from its pins and nets. Miss Genevieve's, equally grey, was trimmed in a short, severe bob.

Daisy wondered whether they were chance residents or had some connection with literature or the arts. Then she caught sight of a ruled notebook in Miss Genevieve's ample lap, with a pencil tucked into the spiral binding. The top page was half filled with what appeared to be shorthand.

"You are a writer, Miss Genevieve?" Daisy enquired.

"Why, yes!" The old lady's surprise, and evident displeasure, suggested that she was more accustomed to interrogating than to being interrogated.

Daisy pressed her advantage. "May one ask what you write?"

Miss Genevieve frowned, but Miss Cabot put in eagerly, "Such nice knitting columns. For the women's magazines, you know. I expect you have them in England, too? I invent new patterns and Genevieve writes them down. Then she adds a bit of friendly chat, you know the sort of thing, I'm sure, so clever, I could never do it."

"Tripe!" said Miss Genevieve.

"Oh dear! The patterns are really quite nice, sister. We do get such a lot of letters, such nice letters from all over the country. But I'm afraid Genevieve doesn't consider it real writing," she confided to Daisy. "Even the gossip columns are preferable."

"Gossip columns?" Daisy could not quite see the sisters mingling with the sort of high society which provides grist for the gossip columnist's mill.

"Literary gossip," Miss Genevieve growled grudgingly.

"For *Writers' World*," explained Miss Cabot.

"This is the perfect place to collect information," Daisy said.

“Many writers visiting New York do stay at the Hotel Chelsea. I manage to speak to most. I find most writers are eager to talk about themselves, even that obnoxious specimen who marched through Ernestine’s knitting.”

“Oh dear, no serious damage, no stitches dropped, and I can sew the ends in so that they won’t show, sister.”

“I dare say.”

“Who is he?” asked Daisy, who considered “obnoxious specimen” an excellent description.

“His name is Otis Carmody and he is a muckraking reporter. A necessary breed, no doubt, with necessary brashness, but I’d have thought a more conciliating manner might serve him better.”

“I dare say he moderates his manner when necessary.”

“Possibly. I do write about more literary figures, too.” Miss Genevieve sounded defensive. “I drop in at the Algonquin when I can, but I don’t get about much these days and anyhow, Franklin Adams writes about the Round Table crowd in the *World*. Besides, Dorothy Parker and Benchley and friends are poseurs, witty, perhaps, but not half as clever as they like to think. Not one of them could tackle the job I used to do.”

Daisy judged that a question about the Algonquin and the Round Table crowd would not be well received. “What job was that?” she asked.

“I was a crime reporter.” Miss Genevieve warmed to Daisy’s interest—or succumbed to what Alton persisted in describing as her “guileless blue eyes.” “The first woman crime reporter in New York, and the only one yet, as far as I know. Eugene Cannon was my byline. Of course, in those days there was no question of using my own name. They wouldn’t even let me use a female name, as Lizzie Seaman did a bit later.”

“Lizzie Seaman?”

“Nellie Bly, she called herself. Now, there was a girl with a talent for self-advertisement. Around the world in eighty days, my foot! Not that I wanted the limelight, mind you. All I asked was the opportunity to do a good job of work.”

Miss Cabot sighed, her needles continuing to click busily. “At least you succeeded in escaping from home, sister.”

“Yes,” said Miss Genevieve, her tone grim, “but the life would not have suited you, sister.”

At that moment a waiter arrived. As he unloaded his tray and reloaded with the Cabots’ empty teapot and becrum-bed plates, Daisy glanced around and caught Mr. Lambert watching her. He immediately averted his gaze. There was something odd about that young man, she decided.

The interruption gave Miss Genevieve the chance to turn the conversation from herself. “And you, Mrs. Fletcher,” she said as her sister poured tea, “your husband is a writer?”

Surprised that “Eugene Cannon” should regard her as a mere adjunct of her husband, Daisy said “No, a policeman.” She regretted the words as soon as uttered. A month had sufficed to teach her that almost as many people looked askance at a policeman’s wife as at the policeman himself.

However, Miss Genevieve was all agog. “An English policeman? I have never met one, but I’ve heard they are very different from our New York ‘bulls.’ He is here with you?”

“He’s in Washington, advising a department of your government.”

“Aha, a man of importance, then. Not ... not by any chance *Scotland Yard*?”

“Yes, actually, he’s a Detective Chief Inspector at the Yard.” Daisy decided it was her turn. “I’m a writer.”

Miss Genevieve had the grace to look a little abashed. She picked up her notepad with a show of attentiveness. “What do you write, Mrs. Fletcher?”

“Magazine articles. I’ve written several for an American magazine called *Abroad*.”

“I *always* read *Abroad*,” said Miss Cabot eagerly. “It is the next best thing to travelling. I should

have liked to travel, but Papa ...”

“I do not recall a Fletcher among the contributors,” Miss Genevieve interrupted with a frown.

“I use my maiden name, Dalrymple.”

“Oh!” Miss Cabot dropped her knitting—fortunately she was not holding a teacup—to clasp her hands. “Oh, my dear, not *the Honourable* Daisy Dalrymple?”

Less easily impressed by an honorary title, Miss Genevieve was nonetheless moderately flattering about Daisy’s articles on the museums of London, two of which had already appeared. She wanted to know what had brought Daisy to New York. Daisy explained that her editor had paid her fare to America so that she could write about the voyage.

Miss Genevieve took copious notes in her neat shorthand. “What are your plans now that you are here?” she asked.

“Mr. Thorwald wants my first impressions of America. We stayed with friends in Connecticut for a few days, and now I have a couple of days here.”

That led to a discussion of what she had seen in New York, what she planned to see, and what the Misses Cabot thought she ought to see.

“Will Detective Chief Inspector Fletcher join you here?” asked Miss Genevieve at last, almost shyly. “I should greatly like to meet him.”

Daisy shook her head. “No, I’m afraid not. I’m going to see Mr. Thorwald tomorrow, and the next day I shall take the train to Washington.”

“Perhaps it is just as well,” sighed Miss Genevieve. “I guess British cops don’t like crime reporters any better than ours do. Sister, pass Mrs. Fletcher the fruitcake.”

The leaden fruitcake was all that was left of the spread. Daisy declined a slice, hoping she had not been unheedingly responsible for the disappearance of too large a proportion of the rest. The round bosom, no bottom figure, emphasized by the hip-level “waist,” was as fashionable here as at home. Though it was not a look Daisy would ever attain, she did not want to find herself with the silhouette of a blimp.

“Thank you so much for my tea,” she said. “I’ve enjoyed talking to you. I think I’ll go for a bit of a walk now, before it gets dark.”

“Yes, better get back before dark,” said Miss Genevieve. “It’s Halloween. There will be all sorts of mischief tonight.”

“I’ll just go and look at the General Post Office and Pennsylvania Station, as you suggested.”

This she did. The station was modelled on the Baths of Caracalla, she had been told, though she had not been told precisely what the Baths of Caracalla were. They sounded vaguely Roman. The station was certainly impressive, more so than the post office building on the other side of Eighth Avenue, though both boasted vast numbers of classical pillars. Daisy made a dutiful circuit of the post office to read the motto carved on the architrave: *Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stay these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.*

Then she strolled back by a roundabout route towards the hotel. On Twenty-eighth Street she came across a small park. Most of the trees were leafless, but it was still refreshing after the dusty streets. Children were playing there in the twilight, and she lingered to watch. Though the voices were American, the games seemed much the same as in England—hopscotch, marbles, and tag.

The tag players swirled around her. As she turned to watch, she caught a glimpse of a man dodging behind a tree, as if he were trying not to be spotted.

He looked remarkably like young Mr. Lambert, but she must be mistaken. Why on earth should Lambert follow her?

Next morning she set off for her appointment. The offices of *Abroad* magazine and several associates

publications were in the Flatiron Building. On her first visit, Daisy had been too anxious to appreciate the merits of the unusual structure.

This morning she had a few minutes to spare. She strolled through Madison Square Park, noting the ashes of a Halloween bonfire and the corpses of firecrackers. Pausing on the corner of Twenty-third Street and Fifth Avenue, she gazed across at her destination. The Fuller Building, as it was originally named, had been designed to fit on an awkward triangular plot where Broadway crossed the other two streets. To Daisy, its shape made it look less like a flatiron than the prow of a great ship forging its way north across Manhattan.

The chilly wind whistling around it increased the resemblance. As she crossed the wide, busy intersection beneath the gaze of a harried policeman on point duty, Daisy, along with many another passer-by, held onto her hat.

Walking south towards the entrance, she gazed up at the ornate stone and terra cotta details of the façade. And up and up. She had thought she was accustomed to New York's "skyscrapers," but now she felt quite dizzy. The building seemed to sway, then to lean over her, threatening.

Quickly she returned her gaze to mundane street level, only to see a man step hurriedly backward out of sight around the far corner of the building—a man who looked remarkably like young Lambert.

An illusion, of course, like the toppling building. She must have squished the blood vessels in the back of her neck, as revoltingly described by her friend Madge, a VAD nurse in the hospital where Daisy had volunteered in the office during the War. (Naturally anatomy had not been considered a suitable subject for the young ladies at Daisy's school.)

She blinked, and shook her head to clear it. As she stepped into the lobby, no further illusions met her eyes, just a brass-buttoned doorman.

He recognized her from the previous day's visit. "The English lady, Mrs. Fletcher, right?" He greeted her with a smile. "For Thorwald, *Abroad*? Eighteenth floor, ma'am. You go ahead up. I'll phone through and tell Mr. Thorwald you're on your way so's he can meet you at the elevator."

"Thank you. You must have heard how I got lost yesterday trying to find his office."

"Lots of folks do, you betcha. It's the shape of the building, confuses people, see. Elevators to you right, ma'am."

Whether at the doorman's behest or off his own bat, Thorwald was waiting for Daisy when the elevator reached the eighteenth floor. He was a pear-shaped gentleman, with a Vandyke beard above which his clean-shaven upper lip looked oddly naked. So did his pale blue eyes when he took off his gold-rimmed pince-nez and gestured with it or rubbed his eyes, as he did frequently.

He led the way through an outer room to his tiny office, crammed with heaps of manuscripts and galley proofs. Dumping a pile of copies of *Abroad* from a chair to the floor, he invited Daisy to sit down and carefully inserted himself behind his desk.

"I trust your accommodations are proving satisfactory, Mrs. Fletcher?" he said.

Rotund and orotund, Daisy thought, assuring him, "Eminently so." As usual when talking to Mr. Thorwald, she found herself succumbing to his polysyllabicism, like an exotic disease. Fortunately it did not infect her articles, or no one would have read them.

"I've made the acquaintance of a number of uncommonly intriguing people," she went on. She told him about Miss Genevieve Cabot, and the various hotel guests Miss Genevieve had introduced to her the previous evening. "Incidentally," she said, "are you able to elucidate the curious connection my mind persists in forming between the name Cabot and fish?"

"Ah yes." Mr. Thorwald tittered. "I believe the piscatorial association must be in reference to

good old Boston,

*‘The home of the bean and the cod,
‘Where the Lowells talk to the Cabots,
‘And the Cabots talk only to God.’*

A feeble versification at best, but since it was, I understand, pronounced as a toast after, one must presume, considerable pre-Volstead jollification, not utterly without merit.”

Volstead had something to do with Prohibition, Daisy thought. “I must have heard the rhyme somewhere,” she said. “Mention was made of Boston, I recollect. Ought I to see Boston for the second article?”

“While I hesitate to declare Boston unworthy of a visit, such a peregrination is unnecessary, my dear Mrs. Fletcher. There is so much to be admired in this magnificent nation that you cannot conceivably encompass its entirety. Your sojourns in Connecticut, New York, and Washington will suffice. It is not universality I desire but freshness of vision. And now, as our own visionary Benjamin Franklin observed, ‘Remember that Time is Money.’ Permit me to peruse the fruits of your exertions.”

While he read the completed article and the beginnings of the next, Daisy gazed out through the narrow window. What she saw was not the treetops of Madison Square, far below, not the visible sliver of the great city and the East River, but the greater continent beyond. South to the Caribbean and Mexico, north to Canada, three thousand miles to the Pacific Ocean—she sighed, envying the shipboard friends who had plans to see as much as was humanly possible.

“Excellent.” Mr. Thorwald approved Daisy’s work. He made a few suggestions about the rest of the unfinished article; then they discussed her ideas for articles to be written when she returned to England. “And now, dear lady,” he said, taking out his watch, “it is long past noon, I perceive. Will you permit me to take you to lunch at the Algonquin?”

As well as being curious to see the Algonquin, Daisy was more than ready for lunch, having missed eleven meals. Everyone else appeared to have preceded them. The publisher’s offices were all but deserted as they passed through.

As they approached the elevators, Daisy immediately recognized the man waiting there, if waiting was the right word. She knew him as much by his actions as his looks—Otis Carmody had opened one of the gates and was peering impatiently down the elevator shaft.

Presumably he had long since worked out how to tell by the esoteric movements of cables which elevator was on its way. Though the Flatiron’s lifts were twenty years younger than the Hotel Chelsea’s, the machinery proceeded with almost as much creaking, groaning, clanking, and rattling.

Daisy assumed the loud report was just part of the general cacophony until it was followed by an unmistakably human sound, a yelp of pain. A firecracker? She had heard plenty last night. Perhaps an office boy had unwisely kept one in his pocket.

But not ten paces ahead, Carmody teetered on the brink for a moment, then toppled over.

3

“Jumping jiminy!” cried Mr. Thorwald.

“He didn’t jump,” Daisy said grimly. A pace ahead of the editor, she saw a man dart across the passage beyond the elevators, heading for the stairs. “Stop!” she shouted.

He turned a white, wild-eyed face to her, then ducked his head and dashed on. His boot nails rang on the marble steps as he started down. Daisy ran after him.

“Hey, stop!” yelled someone behind her.

“Stop!” Mr. Thorwald squawked.

Hesitating, Daisy looked back. To her astonishment, she saw Lambert chasing her, brandishing a gun. She hadn’t time to be afraid before Mr. Thorwald launched himself at Lambert’s ankles in a very creditable Rugby tackle and brought the young man down. Lambert’s gun flew towards Daisy, which his horn-rims and Thorwald’s pince-nez slithered across the floor.

To Daisy’s even greater astonishment, she caught the gun. So the dreaded cricket practice at school hadn’t been wasted, after all!

But what on earth was going on? Had *Lambert* shot Carmody? And if so, was he aiming at *Daisy*?

She had assumed the fugitive to be the villain. Was he a conspirator or, more likely, just a terrified witness? In any case, while she dithered he was making his escape, and even if he was only a witness he ought to be stopped and made to return to give evidence.

Daisy sped on, holding Lambert’s revolver by the barrel so that she could not possibly fire it by accident. She hoped.

“Come back!” shouted Lambert.

“Ugh!” uttered Thorwald breathlessly.

From the head of the stairs, peering over the rail, Daisy saw the fugitive leaping downwards like a chamois, already two floors below.

“Come back!” she called, trotting down the first flight.

“Stop!” Lambert, dishevelled and looking younger than ever without his glasses, appeared at the top. “I’ll get him, Mrs. Fletcher. You stay out of this. *Please!*”

Daisy froze as he bounded down the stairs towards her. At the last moment she remembered the gun in her hand. She swung it behind her to prevent his grabbing it. It slipped from her fingers and fell between two of the barley-sugar-twist banisters. A moment later a distant clang arrived from the bottom of the stairwell.

By then Lambert had passed Daisy and she, deciding discretion was definitely the better part of valour, had scurried back to the top of the stairs.

Mr. Thorwald was tottering to his feet, bleating plaintively, “My pince-nez, my pince-nez! Would someone be so kind as to find my pince-nez?”

Two persons of clerkly appearance and a probable typist had emerged from surrounding offices to gather about him, clucking and tutting in no very helpful fashion. Daisy spotted the pince-nez and returned it to him. As he clipped it to his nose, the top of the lift cage reached their floor at last.

Sprawled across its flat roof lay Otis Carmody, his neck all too obviously broken.

At Daisy’s gasp, the others all swung round to gape. The typist shrieked and fell into the arms of one of the clerks. Meanwhile, Carmody continued to rise at a stately pace until he disappeared from sight. The elevator stopped.

“Hey, wha’z goin’ on here?” the aged lift man demanded querulously, peering with suspicion through the inner gate, making no move to open it. “See here, one of you lot throw something down the shaft? Against reggerlations, that is.”

Everyone, even Mr. Thorwald, turned to Daisy.

“A man fell down the shaft,” she said.

“Izzat so? Against reg ... Huh? Wha’zat you said?”

“There is a dead body on the roof of your lift.”

“Lift? Wha’z ... ?”

“Elevator. A man fell down the shaft and landed on your elevator.”

“Wuz a almighty whump,” the old man admitted, at last opening the gate. “Didn’t sound like n garbage hitting. Lessee.”

“You can’t see anything as long as the lift ...” Daisy stopped as feet pounded towards them from the direction of the stairs.

“What’s going on?” panted Lambert. “I lost him. He just kept going down. I couldn’t keep up, I alone catch up.”

“You saw him running on down?” Daisy asked, surprised. She recalled clearly the time she had gone up the Monument in Fish Street Hill. Built to commemorate the Great Fire of London, it had 31 steps. Going up was bad enough, but going down, her knees had been wobbling uncontrollably long before she reached the bottom. Only a mountain goat could have run down.

“I heard him. Never caught sight of him, actually. I can’t see much without my glasses. Where are they?” He peered around myopically. “And where’s my automatic?”

“Automatic?” The two clerks looked at each other and backed away. The typist, who had recovered enough to listen to Daisy’s exchange with the lift man, squealed again and hid behind them.

Knowing the gun was safely out of reach for the moment, Daisy looked around for the horn-rimmed specs. They were dangling by one earpiece through the gate of the next lift. Gingerly she retrieved them and, holding them, turned to Lambert. He blinked at her. At the moment he didn’t look very dangerous.

“What were you doing, waving a gun around?” she asked severely.

“Waving a gun around?” squeaked the typist.

“I can explain. But not here,” Lambert added, waving at the spectators, three of whom melted away while the fourth, the lift man, was spectating his lift in a puzzled way. “What’s going on? Gee whizz please give me my glasses,” Lambert pleaded. “Where’s my automatic?”

Daisy handed over the glasses. “Eighteen stories down, at the bottom of the stairwell.”

This news perked Mr. Thorwald up no end. “Who are you?” he demanded belligerently. “What were you doing pursuing Mrs. Fletcher with an automatic pistol? Did you shoot that unfortunate person?”

“I don’t see no body,” interrupted the lift man.

“You’ll have to take the lift—elevator—down a bit,” said Daisy.

“There really is a body?” Lambert asked. “A man was shot? And fell down the shaft?”

Daisy exchanged a look with Thorwald. They both nodded solemnly. “Yes,” she said, “and if you didn’t shoot him, that other man did, and he’s getting away! We must telephone the police at once.”

Lambert started towards the nearest office suite. “I’ll find a phone.”

Thorwald grabbed his arm. “Oh no you don’t, my fine fellow. I shall not allow you also to elude the authorities! We’ll go to my office.”

“I’m a federal agent,” Lambert snapped, reaching for his inside breast pocket, “and you, sir, had better stop interfering with me in the course of my duty! I must call Washington.”

Daisy and Thorwald gaped at him in shared disbelief. Whether he was going to pull a identification card or a second gun from his pocket remained to be seen, for the double clang of two

lift gates made them all swing round.

The lift started down.

A moment later, Carmody hove once more into view. He still looked very dead. When he reached floor level, the lift stopped.

“Gawd!” gulped the federal agent.

Daisy was not much happier with the sight. Nor, apparently, was Thorwald. As one they all three turned away, only to turn back as the lift again clanked into motion.

It rose until the upper half of the inner gate was visible, then came to a halt. The inner gate opened.

“Hey,” said the lift man irritably, “don’ jist stand there starin’. Open up and help me outta here. Gotta see me that stiff.”

Daisy had prevailed—ringing up the New York police had taken precedence over calling Washington and in fact Lambert seemed to have lost his enthusiasm for reporting to his superiors. The local beat patrolman was standing guard over the elevator and the body. Detectives were on their way, and the D.A. had been notified.

“D.A.?” queried Daisy, as Mr. Thorwald abstracted a bottle, soda water siphon, and two glasses from a desk drawer.

“District Attorney,” Lambert explained. “He’s in charge of prosecution, so his office oversees the collection of evidence in major cases, such as homicide.”

Mr. Thorwald pushed two glasses of gently fizzling pale amber liquid across the desk. Then he upended the bottle and swigged directly from the neck. Recent events seemed to have deprived him both speech and his usual courtly manners.

Mindful of a recent occasion when imbibing spirits on an empty stomach had knocked her for six, Daisy sipped cautiously. She had never much liked whisky, but this was a step below any Scotch she had ever tasted. Setting the glass down, she turned back to Lambert.

“So you’re a federal agent, you say! I suppose it must be true as the bobby accepted your credentials and gave you back your gun. But what exactly does that mean?”

“It ... er ...” Lambert hastily put down his already half-emptied glass as far away on the desktop as he could reach. “It means I’m an agent of the Investigation Bureau of the U.S. Department of Justice. We’re ... er ... responsible for enforcing federal law.”

“Such as Prohibition?” Daisy enquired with a touch of malice. “You don’t seem mad keen on enforcing that one.”

“That’s the Treasury Department does that,” he said defensively. “I’m Justice.”

“Well, I haven’t, to my knowledge, broken any other laws. So why have you been following me?”

“F-following you?” stammered Lambert, blushing.

Daisy gave him an old-fashioned look. It proved as effective in American as in English.

“I ... er.” He swallowed. “That is, my boss, Mr. Hoover, sent me to keep an eye on you.”

“Indeed!” said Daisy, hearing echoes of her mother in her tone. “And does Mr. Hoover—am I correct in assuming you refer to J. Edgar Hoover, whom my husband is at present advising, in Washington?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Does Mr. Hoover make a practice of spying on his colleagues’ wives?”

“I don’t think you could exactly say that Mr. Hoover makes a practice of anything,” Lambert said dubiously. “He’s not actually officially in charge yet. He’s assistant director. Only we don’t have a director at present.”

“Well, if he suffers from persecution mania, or delusions of grandeur, or whatever ails him, I don’t expect he’ll remain in charge very long,” Daisy predicted with asperity. “Kindly tell him I strongly

object to being treated as a prospective criminal.”

“Gee whiz, it’s not that. The surveillance is to stop you getting into ... er ... for your own safety,” Mrs. Fletcher.”

“Then tell him I’m no babe in arms and I can take care of myself.”

“I can’t do that!” Lambert looked horrified at the thought. “This is my first assignment, see. If I fail, I’m out on my ear. But I guess I’ve already failed,” he concluded miserably. “You’ve gotten me mixed up in this horrible business. I suppose I better call Washington now and confess ... report. Is there a telephone somewhere I can use privately, sir?”

Mr. Thorwald started. “Eh? Tephelone?” He waved his bottle—nearly empty—at the apparatus on his desk. “Be my guesht.”

Daisy stood up. “Mr. Lambert wants to talk privately,” she said. “I think it would be a good idea if we went to find something to eat, Mr. Thorwald.”

“Lunch,” he agreed, and followed her docilely from his office.

The outer office was long and narrow, lined with shelves of magazines, interrupted by several doors. Against one wall stood a table piled with manuscripts and unopened manila envelopes, with several chairs around it. In one corner of the room was a round table and more chairs. As Daisy entered, the murmur of which she had been distantly aware resolved itself into the voices of five or six men and one smart, rigidly marcelled and carefully made-up woman. They looked round as the door of Thorwald’s office clicked shut. Silence fell.

“Howdy, ma’am.” One of the men pushed forward. His sack suit looked as if it might once have actually held potatoes, and his tie was that bilious green potatoes turn when exposed to light. He looked, in fact, like a well-dressed tramp, except for the eye shade and ink-blotched cuff protector. Daisy guessed he was an editor. “Hey, Thorwald,” he continued, “is it true Otis Carmody’s dead?”

“Shtiff,” Thorwald said succinctly, and sat down rather suddenly on a nearby chair.

“Not actually stiff,” said Daisy. Everyone turned to her. “He hasn’t been dead long enough for *rigor mortis* to set in. And I’m not absolutely certain it was Otis Carmody.” She had not seen his face, having avoided a close examination of the corpse. “Though if you know him, and he was here this morning, I’m about ninety-nine percent sure.”

“He was here, all right,” said the man in the sack. “He brought me an article. Pascoli, editor of *Town Talk*.”

He stuck out his hand, so Daisy shook it. “How do you do. I’m Mrs. Fletcher.”

“Pleased to meetcha, Mrs. Fletcher. *Town Talk*’s a weekly news magazine, anti-administration.”

“Anti-administration?”

“The New York administration, that is. We got nothing against Coolidge—yet—but our publishers would sure like to get the goods on Tammany. Carmody looked like the guy who was going to do it. He brought me an article, hot stuff, but it wanted a few loose ends tying up. I left him to finish up when I went to lunch.”

“Lunsh!” said Mr. Thorwald loudly, and hiccuped.

“Oh, you poor things!” said the marcelled woman. “Haven’t you had lunch yet? I’ll send out to the corner drugstore. Thorwald usually has bratwurst on rye. Will that do for you, Mrs. Fletcher?”

“Uh, yes, thank you.” Daisy wondered just what she was saying yes to, but she decided she was hungry she could eat practically anything. “It’s very kind of you, Miss ... ?”

“Louella Shurkowski, Mrs., *Ladies’ Gazette*, and you’re welcome.”

“Lunsh,” repeated Mr. Thorwald, plaintively this time.

“Better order in plenty of coffee,” suggested one of the other men. “I never saw Thorwald pie-eyed before. He’s had the same bottle of rye in his desk for months. He’s really a Scotch man, but honest-to-goodness Scotch is rare as an honest politician these days. He doesn’t even like rye. Must be re-

shook up.”

“So Carmody’s dead?” mused Pascoli. “What happened, Mrs. Fletcher?”

Daisy thought about what had happened. She had had too little time and too many questions before to take it in properly. Now the horror struck.

“Hey, this little lady’s real shook up, too,” said someone, and hands guided her to a chair by the round table.

Trying to avoid a vision of the grotesque figure sprawled puppetlike on top of the lift, with his head at a crazy angle, Daisy thought instead of what Alec was going to say. He was bound to be furious that she had got herself involved in yet another murder, even though she was thousands of miles from home. Could she keep it from him? He was hundreds of miles away, after all.

But Lambert was telling J. Edgar Hoover, and Hoover would doubtless report Daisy’s misdeeds to Alec.

And she was going to have to report to the New York detectives at any moment. “I don’t think I’d better talk about it till the police come,” she said. “I’ll just tell you that Mr. Thorwald was magnificent, a hero. He believed I was in danger—I did too—and he went right ahead and tackled the man he thought was after me, a man with a gun.”

“It wazh nothing,” said Mr. Thorwald. This modest disclaimer was followed by a huge yawn whereupon he fell asleep and started to slide gently off his seat.

His colleagues rushed to rescue the hero. While they gathered him up and laid him flat on top of the manuscripts on the long table, for want of anywhere better, Daisy had a few moments of peace.

Then the police arrived.

The first detective to enter was a stringy, dried-up man with a horrid little toothbrush moustache and an unlit cigar protruding from the corner of his mouth. As he came in, he looked back to say something in a high-pitched voice to the plainclothesman behind him, a blond giant who gaped at him and squawked, “Geez, Sergeant, another stiff!”

The sergeant turned back and stared. “O’Rourke,” he barked from the cigarless corner of his mouth, “run and catch the doc before he leaves, and tell the guys there’s two for the wagon.”

The second man behind him pounded off in the startled hush before several people simultaneously began to explain.

“He’s not ...”

“He is ...”

“He’s just ...”

“Overcome by *horror*,” Pascoli overrode them, thus saving Thorwald from divulgence of his overindulgence in forbidden alcohol.

“Witness, izzy?”

“Yes, Sigurd Thorwald.”

“Name?”

“Yes, that’s his name.”

“Your name, wise guy.”

“Oh, James Pascoli. And yours?”

The little man flipped his lapel, momentarily revealing a badge. “Gilligan, Detective Sergeant, Homicide Bureau. Witness?”

“Me? Not exactly ...”

“Didja,” said Sergeant Gilligan with exaggerated patience, “or didja not see anything pertaining to the demise of the deceased?”

“No,” Pascoli admitted, “but ...”

“Who here’s the witnesses, then, besides the guy on the desk?”

"I am," said Daisy. "My name is Dalrym ... Fletcher, that is. Daisy Fletcher. Mrs. Alec Fletcher."

"That's a lot of aliases, lady."

"I was married quite recently. I still get muddled sometimes."

"British, are you?"

"Yes."

Gilligan rolled his eyes. He looked as if he didn't have much trust in her as a witness, if an

"Anyone else see what happened?" he asked hopefully.

"Just Mr. Lambert," said Daisy. "He's an agent of the Department of Justice."

"Don't that beat the Dutch!" Gilligan groaned. "A reliable, trained witness, every 'tec's dream, but he'll want to make a federal case of it, you betcha sweet life, and the election's next week. So where's this Lambert?"

Daisy pointed. "In there, telephoning Washington."

"Rats!"

"If I might be permitted to speak," said Pascoli with a touch of sarcasm, "there's a federal angle to this business anyway. The victim ..."

"Right, where is he?" The man who bustled in was small, like Gilligan, but otherwise the detective's antithesis, being chubby with a round, pink, cheerful face.

"Where's who?" asked Pascoli.

"Smart-ass," Gilligan muttered, swinging round as the newcomer replied, "The victim, the second victim."

"Hi, doc," said Gilligan a trifle sheepishly. "Sorry, looks like there's only one been croaked. But maybe you oughta take a look at this guy anyway. He's a witness, passed out cold from the shock, the way he say."

The doctor went across to Thorwald, bent over him, and straightened immediately with a grimace. "First time I've heard it called 'the shock,' but there's a new euphemism coined every day. Let him sleep it off. Oh, there you are, Rosenblatt. I thought you'd be along, with the election coming up."

"What do you have for me, doctor?" asked the fair, dapper man standing in the doorway, surveying the scene.

"Gunshot to the upper left thigh, superficial wound. It's the broken neck that killed him. I'll try to do the post mortem for you this afternoon, but I make no promises."

"Good enough. Thank you." Rosenblatt stood aside to let the doctor depart. "O.K., Sergeant, what's going on?"

"Dangfino, sir," sighed Gilligan.

4

So far, Daisy was not impressed with the American police. If Rosenblatt and Gilligan were typical, no wonder J. Edgar was prepared to listen to advice from Scotland Yard on reforming his department.

Daisy wondered whether Rosenblatt, whom she assumed to be the district attorney, was more competent. Failing that, she could only hope that they would somehow muddle through to a solution without involving her more than absolutely necessary. Since she had once more—by absolutely no fault of her own—landed in the middle of a murder investigation, she wished Alec were in charge. However angry, he would at least start with a presumption of her innocence.

On the other hand, this was her chance to prove to him that she was quite capable of coping without him. Maybe she could even work out who was the murderer and help the local police collar him. What a coup that would be! Alec would never again be able to claim she impeded his investigations.

Rosenblatt and Gilligan, conferring, kept glancing at her. Of course, she was the only witness both present and compos mentis, as long as she didn't faint from starvation. Mrs. Shurkowski had returned long since from her errand, but so far the promised "bratwurst on rye" had not materialized.

Right now, Daisy would be happy to devour any old brat, best or worst, on barley, or millet, or any other grain available. She had to assume the "rye" in the order was not yet more whisky.

The editors had remained in an uneasy, whispering huddle around the recumbent Thorwald. Daisy saw several of them nod, as if they had come to an agreement. High heels clicking, Mrs. Shurkowski moved towards her while the rest drifted unobtrusively away.

Rosenblatt looked round. "Mr. Pascoli?" he queried; and when the *Town Talk* editor stopped, "Stick around, if you wouldn't mind, sir."

"I have work to do," Pascoli complained, "and Sergeant Gilligan didn't seem too interested in what I had to say."

"But I am. I'll be with you in just a moment."

Pascoli pulled a face and came to join Daisy as Mrs. Shurkowski said to her, "Honey, us girls have to stick together. You want me to stay and hold your hand?"

"Thank you, it's very kind of you, but I wouldn't want to keep you from your work. I'm sure I shall be all right."

"Don't you just love the way she talks?" Mrs. Shurkowski said to Pascoli. "Now, you mind what you say to them, honey, and call a lawyer pronto if they try anything on you. Your sandwiches'll be here any minute."

"Thank you so much," Daisy said sincerely.

Mrs. Shurkowski went off to edit the *Ladies' Gazette*. Pascoli sat down in a chair beside Daisy. "Cigarette?" He offered a gunmetal case.

"No, thanks."

"Whoops, pardon me, don't English gals smoke?"

"Some do. Not awfully many."

"O.K. if I light up?"

"I don't mind," Daisy lied. She disliked cigarette smoke almost as much as cigar smoke, but she felt guilty about her continued presence here and the disruption of work, as though her propensity for falling over bodies was actually responsible for the latest crime. What she longed for was the comforting smell of Alec's pipe. "Is there really a federal dimension to the case besides M

Lambert's being a witness?" she asked.

"Sure thing!" Pascoli became earnest. "Carmody spent the last several years in Washington, D.C. digging up the dirt on the Harding administration, and he didn't have to dig far, trust me."

Daisy recalled a comment about Augean stables. "So I've heard."

"His articles tweaked a whole lotta noses. President Coolidge is already cleaning house and lot of people are getting the can because of what Otis Carmody wrote. It wouldn't surprise me one little bit if one of them came to town looking for revenge."

"It does seem possible."

"It's a dead cert."

"What about the article he wrote for you?" Daisy suggested. "Wouldn't that upset people?"

Pascoli grinned. "Sure would. He's written three so far, every one calculated to get up someone's nose. But none of 'em has been published yet."

"Still, he must have talked to lots of people to get his information. It couldn't be kept secret. Perhaps someone wanted to stop him before he dug any deeper."

"Or scare me into not publishing," Pascoli said soberly. "You got a point there, ma'am." He cast a nervous glance over his shoulder at Gilligan and Rosenblatt.

"The articles are about Tammany? Who is Tammany?"

Pascoli lowered his voice. "It's a what, not a who. Leastways, Tammany was an Indian chief way back, but he hasn't anything to do with today's politics. Tammany Hall's the building that's come to stand for the Democratic machine that runs this burg. Crooked as anything President Harding's Republican pals were mixed up in, but much harder to oust. Heck, half the population owes their jobs to them, including Rosenblatt over there, looking like butter wouldn't melt in his mouth."

"He is the District Attorney, is he?"

"Deputy D.A."

"That's a political appointment?"

"Got it in one. So are garbage collectors, and a whole lotta folks in between."

"Garbage collectors? Dustbin men? Heavens, it sounds to me as if it will be just as well if the federal investigators take an interest in the case."

"You've said a mouthful, sister! Where's this guy Lambert? No kidding, I wanna stand behind him."

Daisy rather doubted Lambert would be much protection, but she didn't have time to say so. Rosenblatt and Gilligan came over to them. Gilligan, chewing on his dead cigar, looked truculent. Rosenblatt worried.

"Mrs. Fletcher? Rosenblatt, Deputy District Attorney. Say, who's this guy Lambert? What's his connection with this business?"

"You'll have to ask him, Mr. Rosenblatt." Daisy wasn't going to let herself be drawn into any complications. "I only know that he told Mr. Thorwald and me that he is a federal agent. All I can tell you is what I saw."

"Yes, we'll get to that in a minute, ma'am. Mr. Pascoli, you know something about the federal connection, sir?"

"Not exactly," Pascoli hedged. "Nothing to do with the Justice Department specifically, more of a general Washington connection. Otis Carmody ruffled plenty of feathers in the capital. He was an investigative journalist, see, and a good one."

"A muckraker," said Rosenblatt, depressed. "Probably had half of the last administration out for his blood."

"Got what was coming to him," Gilligan grunted.

"Maybe," Rosenblatt snapped, "but we still have to pin it on someone. What was he doing in Ne-

York?”

“He, uh, wanted to write for the magazine I edit,” Pascoli said evasively.

“Which magazine is that?”

“*Town Talk*,” admitted Pascoli with obvious reluctance.

Rosenblatt gave him a hard stare. “I know *Town Talk*. That’s an opposition paper.”

Pascoli shrugged. “Hey, I don’t set policy. You don’t like it, you talk to my publisher.”

“Had Carmody written anything for you yet? Leopards don’t change their spots. What’s he been writing?”

“Ever heard of the First Amendment, buddy?”

“Say, listen,” interpolated Sergeant Gilligan, “maybe we don’t wanna know ...”

“Samwidges!” A boy in a cloth cap and a jacket several sizes too large ducked under the arm of the plainclothesman on duty at the doorway to the hall. He bore a white cardboard box in his hands.

“Samwidges and coffee for Thorwald.”

“At last,” sighed Daisy, reaching for her bag.

“I’ll get it,” said Pascoli. “It’ll come out of petty cash, don’t worry.” He went over to the boy.

“Say, listen,” Gilligan repeated, “maybe we don’t wanna know who the stiff was digging up the dirt on here in Noo York.”

“We gotta find out,” Rosenblatt said gloomily. “The Feds are sure to. And we gotta clean this up quick, with the election next week, or the Hearst papers will wipe the floor with us again.”

“You think that’s what this guy Lambert’s after, sir? Maybe he ain’t got nuttin to do with what Carmody was up to in Washington. Maybe he’s here to make trouble for us.”

“No doubt we’ll soon know,” said the D.A. as the door of Thorwald’s office opened and Lambert came out.

He and the sandwiches reached the round table at the same moment. “Food!” he exclaimed, sniffing the air. “And coffee. Gee whiz, I could kill for a cup of coffee.”

Pascoli glanced at Thorwald, now whuffling gently in his sleep. With a sigh, he pushed one of the sandwiches and a large mug of coffee across the table towards Lambert.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Gilligan was staring suspiciously at Lambert. “Kill?” he growled, his right hand sliding inside his jacket. “You talk mighty easy about killing. Is that maybe what you was sent from Washington for? To croak the guy that blew the gaff on your boss?”

Lambert’s mouth, open to take a bite of sandwich, stayed open though the sandwich came to a halt in midair. After a horrified moment, he squeaked, “Who, me?”

Daisy recalled that Lambert had been given back his automatic, and she knew all New York policemen were armed. Was it time to dive under the table before a gun battle erupted? She hastily swallowed the bite of sandwich in her mouth, just in case (rye had turned out to be a darkish, sourish bread and a bratwurst a sort of German sausage, the consumption of which made her feel vaguely unpatriotic).

“Yes, you, mister.” Gilligan drew his gun from his shoulder holster.

Lambert dropped his sandwich and put his hands up. “I didn’t! Mrs. Fletcher, tell him I didn’t.”

“I can’t,” Daisy said regretfully. She did not honestly think the inept agent had shot Carmody, but he had, after all, rushed on stage brandishing a pistol immediately after the murder.

“Lemme pinch him, sir?” begged Gilligan.

“Holy mackerel!” Rosenblatt exclaimed. “You can’t go arresting a federal agent without evidence, Sergeant, just like he was anyone. Not without landing us all in deep ... er,”—he glanced at Daisy and amended whatever he had been going to say—“in big trouble. It’s no go.”

“Rats! But how do we know he’s really a Fed?”

“My papers are in my pocket,” said Lambert eagerly. He lowered one hand, but it shot up again when the Sergeant waved his gun.

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