

# OUT OF THE DARKNESS

(Continued from Last Week)

almost touched him, and Miss Potter about a foot away on my right. Doctor King took his station behind the desk, which was directly in front of me and about eight feet away. The chair of the district attorney was at his side. Black and Webster stood near Bartley, who had seated himself on the desk.

For several moments he glanced around the room, trying to recreate for himself the way the row of chairs had looked when the lights had been extinguished. As his keen eyes studied us, a frown came to his face, lingered a second, then faded away.

"You people in the front row," he commented, "were the nearest to the chauffeur. If anything was heard, you would have been the ones to hear it. Of course, the rattle of the thunder would have drowned almost any other sound. The crowd was a bit uneasy, too, because of the sharp lighting, and made a little rustling noise of its own; yet it seems almost incredible that anyone could have crept up to Briffeur and struck him down without either Miss Potter or Roche having heard them."

Miss Potter flushed, and without waiting for him to say more she interrupted, "I never heard a thing; not a thing."

Bartley studied her carefully as he asked, "Are you sure?"

Her face paled, then the color returned, but again she replied, "I heard nothing until that horrible cry rang out."

I saw her shudder as if the memory of it were almost too much for her, but she continued bravely, "I knew it was beside me, and I wondered what had happened. It frightened me—so much—that I can't tell just what happened after that."

She seemed to be telling the truth; yet I could not understand how anyone had gotten near enough to Briffeur to kill him without the person next to him hearing his approach.

Bartley toyed with a piece of paper a second, then smiled as he said, "Of course, the cry startled you, Miss Potter. But before or after it came, can you think of no little occurrence that might help us? Nothing at all?"

She was silent for a long time, then slowly, as if apologetic, she answered, "That is, I heard nothing, but—I did think I felt something brush my dress—on the side next to Briffeur. I am not sure, however. I only thought something did. The next moment I heard him slip to the floor and knew something was wrong."

Bartley's eyes brightened at her remark, and he asked eagerly, "Can you show us just where your dress was brushed?"

She hesitated as if trying to collect her thoughts, and glanced down at her dark brown dress. Then she placed her hand on a spot a little



"Can You Show Us Just Where Your Dress Was Brushed?"

above her waistline. Bartley came to her side and looked closely at the place she indicated, then suddenly, his eyes close to the cloth. Straightening up, he pointed out to her a small spot, a little darker than the goods of which the dress was made. With a significant glance he said one word, "Blood!"

"At the word, a look of horror came to Miss Potter's face and she shrank away."

"Was that stain on your dress when you put it on?" he asked as he rose to his feet.

"No! The dress was worn this afternoon for the first time since it was returned from the cleaner's."

He said nothing more, but went back to the desk. I presume that we were all wondering what the blood-stain indicated. The wild thought flashed over me that she might, after all, have killed Briffeur; but I dismissed it at once as impossible.

"Now, Roche," asked Bartley, "did you hear anything?"

Roche, of course, understood the importance of his answer; and his red face became cautious and his hands clenched. Then, very slowly, as if counting his words, he answered, "I don't know, Mr. Bartley, that I heard anything—that is, anything except the little sound the people behind me made when the lights went out. If

you mean, did I hear any one creep up on that poor fellow, I did not. If anyone came near him, I should have at least heard something; but I did not hear anything like that."

"What did you hear?" asked Bartley, a shrewd smile on his face.

The chief actually blushed, in an apologetic tone he said, "Now—Mr. Bartley, I don't know if I heard anything. But I thought—"

"What did you think?"

Roche shrugged his shoulders, hesitated, then answered, "Why, I thought that, a second or so before he gave that cry, I heard—"

He paused like a man who is afraid that what he is going to say will sound absurd. "I don't know just what to call it. It was very slight, more like a little thud. I could scarcely hear it. It sounded as if a small object had struck something."

The keen face of Bartley was eager, and he leaned forward, his eyes on Roche's face. "And that was just before he cried out?" he asked.

"Yes, only a second before. It was just after I thought I heard something else."

Bartley demanded, "What?"

The chief hesitated again, pausing as if to think out carefully what he wished to say.

"Why—Mr. Bartley, when that last clap of thunder came, I thought the house had been struck, and was so upset that I don't know if I really heard anything at all. What I thought I heard sounded like a hog's moving in the wind, or the whir of a violin string."

His description was so vague that we looked at each other, puzzled. Bartley tried to make the chief more definite, but to all his questions he received the same reply. Roche was not sure if he had heard anything, but if he had, it had sounded like a bough in the wind. What it was, or what had caused it, he had not the faintest idea.

That was all he could tell us. That Briffeur could have been killed with Roche within a few inches of him—killed by some one who did not make a sound—seemed impossible. Yet it had been done. I concluded that the thud he had heard was the sound of the knife being driven into the body, but I could not account for the sound of the bough. The chief might have imagined that he heard it, or have been confused by the movements of the alarmed crowd behind him.

Bartley questioned the others. Ruth, her face pale, trembled a little as she answered that she had heard nothing but the cry. The district attorney replied that he had heard nothing else, either, and had not dreamed that a crime had been committed until he saw the figure on the floor. Doctor King's answer was similar. The impossible had happened. Briffeur had been murdered, not only without anyone near him hearing the murderer, but without his leaving any traces behind him.

As person after person denied having heard a sound, Bartley's face became grave. Later, he told me he agreed with my belief that the murderer could not have crept up on the chauffeur without making at least some slight noise. When all had finished, he gave a little shrug, and a faint smile came to his lips. I would have given a good deal to know what had caused it.

"Whoever struck that blow," Doctor Webster commented, "knew where to place it. The slightest fraction of an inch nearer, and the chauffeur would have died instantly. The darkness probably caused the murderer to miss the exact spot he was aiming for—the center of the heart."

Bartley agreed, and for a moment nothing was said. Then the district attorney broke the silence with, "Mr. Bartley, I think that Briffeur knew who killed him. At least, he had an idea who it was. He was trying to tell us when he died."

"Yes," Bartley replied, with a curious smile, "he was not only trying to tell us, but to point him out. You will remember that just before he died, in a last burst of strength, he half raised himself and said, 'Slyke murdered—I—killed—' and fell back dead. There is no doubt he thought he knew who killed him. He had not, of course, seen who it was. But he suspected some one, and was trying to point him out."

"Trying to point him out?" echoed the district attorney in astonishment.

"Yes, point him out. He pointed straight at Doctor Webster's chest."

The doctor started and his face reddened in surprise and anger. He glanced quickly at Bartley to discover if he were in earnest, and blurted out, "Me! My G—d, I never was anywhere near him!"

"I know that, Doctor," Bartley said, with a reassuring smile. "What I meant was that he was trying to point out some one; I doubt if he could distinguish one person from another. You happened to be unlucky enough to be in front of him, that is all."

"I am pretty sure he had no idea that he was pointing at me; and I doubt, for that matter, if he even knew what he was saying," Doctor Webster insisted.

"I agree with you in part, Doctor," was Bartley's answer. "I don't believe he had any idea whom he was pointing at; but I think he knew who killed him, nevertheless."

"But, Mr. Bartley," Ruth cried, wondering, "why should any one wish to kill our chauffeur?"

His answer came in a short sentence. "Because he knew who killed Mr. Slyke."

His reply, not unexpected by me, seemed to surprise the others. The girl looked bewildered and Doctor King's eyes opened wide. Miss Potter alone remained unmoved. Even the district attorney, lawyer that he was, demanded, "Why do you say that?"

Bartley glanced at him as if he had

expected a man with legal training to have better understanding, and in a weary voice explained: "You all recognize that Briffeur was killed as he was about to testify. Whoever did the deed was afraid of what he knew. He could not, of course, have foreseen that the lights would go out; but when they did he seized the opportunity. He feared that the chauffeur would tell who killed Slyke. And while he might not have been able to prove his statement, he knew enough to be dangerous. For myself, I believe the chauffeur could have told us, and that he was killed to shut his mouth."

The district attorney made a little gesture of dissent. "I see that; but, on the other hand, how do we know that Briffeur himself did not kill Slyke?" He said, you remember, 'Slyke murdered—I—killed—' Maybe he killed him himself."

Black nodded an emphatic agreement. This accorded with the theory he had advanced the night before. I could see that Bartley, however, was not convinced. As he made no comment, the attorney continued, "He said nothing more; but may we not say that, if he had finished the sentence, what he would have said would have been, 'Slyke murdered. I KILLED HIM.'"

"Then why was the chauffeur killed?" Bartley asked with a sarcastic smile.

The lawyer shook his head slowly, and answered that he advanced his argument as a theory only.

"I have an idea," Bartley said, "that if the chauffeur had finished the sentence it would have been 'Slyke murdered. I know who did it.'"

As I listened to both of their theories, one seemed to me just as likely to be correct as the other.

### CHAPTER XI

In Which We Begin to Find a Motive.

Bartley had some work for me to do, and I did not dine until the others had finished. While I was eating, Currie wandered into the dining room and sat down beside me. The murder had taken all the life out of him. It was the first time that he had come so close to a crime. He seemed unable to forget the cry and those awful moments in the darkened room. We discussed the affair for a while; then I excused myself and went in search of Bartley.

I had been thinking for hours of the latest crime, and no solution had come to me. I could not understand how, in those few moments of darkness, the murderer had been able to approach the chauffeur near enough to kill him, nor why the people next to him had heard nothing.

When I told Bartley of my bewildered, he answered with a little grin: "I agree with you, Pelt, it's very mysterious. It's the first time I ever heard of murder taking place at an inquest and in a room filled with people. There are no clues, apparently. To my mind, however, the real reason for the murder was to prevent Briffeur from testifying. Whoever killed him knew about what he would say, and feared that he would tell who had killed Slyke."

Breaking in on him, I said, "But he could not have foreseen that the lights would go out and give him a chance? I thought that it was the storm that extinguished them."

He nodded. "That's true enough. It was that last flash of lightning. Darkness was just what he needed, and he took advantage of it. He had several moments in which to act. There were not many people near enough to the chauffeur to have killed him in that short time."

He rose, went over to his bag and brought back the knife with which the murder had been committed. For several moments he examined it, then he asked as he passed it over to me, "What do you think of it?"

It was a rather odd knife. It resembled a hunting knife, and the edge showed it had had a good deal of use. The blade was very dull except at the point. It was too large to be carried in a man's pocket, but a woman could have hidden it somewhere in the folds of her clothing.

As Bartley seemed to expect some comment from me as I handed it back to him, I said, "Save for the fact it's not very sharp and seems to have been used a great deal, I can learn nothing from it."

He smiled as he turned the knife over and over in his hand. "Oh, there's more than that. It tells a great deal. The knife is unusual in shape and length. There was a time when it was used a great deal, and the owner kept it very sharp and clean. But for some time now he has neglected it. There is one very important thing that you have overlooked. You remember those little drawings I found on the magazine in Slyke's room, the row of connected circles? I find the same thing here."

I gasped, and, reaching for the knife, looked at the wooden handle. There, faintly scratched on the wood, were a number of circles running one into the other.

"Do you think," I asked in excitement, "that it is the sign of some secret society?"

"No. It's simply this—that most of us, if we have a pen or pencil in our fingers, draw figures on whatever happens to be at hand. We do it without thinking, because it is a subconscious act; and, as a rule, we draw the same set of figures each time. Some one, having nothing to do, idly scratched these figures on this knife handle, hardly conscious of what he was doing. I believe the same person made the figures on the magazine and on the knife."

"Why do you think that?" I asked.

"It had been scientifically proved

that, when a person plays with a pencil and idly draws figures, he always draws the same ones; and that they are symbols of something deep in his subconscious mind. These circles are so much alike that I think they were drawn by the same person."

(To be continued)

## Professional Directory

**Foley & Mueller**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
Offices at Lomita and Redondo  
Practice in all the State and Federal Courts  
Lomita Phone 171-J-3 Redondo Phone 1091

**Dr. N. A. Leake**  
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON  
Torrance Office Hours 2:30 to 5:30 P. M.  
Phone—Office—Residence—13-M


**Dr. J. S. Lancaster**  
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON  
Phones:  
Office 14 House 15  
Office First National Bank Bldg.  
Res. Cor. Post and Arlington  
Torrance California

**Dr. Maude R. Lathrop**  
CHIROPRACTOR  
Hours: 9:30 to 12, 1 to 5, 6 to 8  
Universal Graduate Rooms 194-5-6  
First Natl. Bank Bldg., Torrance  
Phone 121-J Consultation Free  
Dr. McPeck will assist Dr. Lathrop  
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

**Dr. M. E. McPeck**  
Chiropractor  
Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
1400 Narbonne Ave. Lomita, Cal.  
HOURS 10-12 A. M.; 2-4:30 P. M.  
6:30-7:30 P. M.

**DR. F. H. RACER**  
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON  
Phone 179-R-11  
Office in Barnes Building  
Lomita California

EXAMINATION FREE  
All Work Guaranteed  
**Dr. R. A. Hoag**  
DENTIST  
Suite 2, Erwin Building  
(Opp. Chamber of Commerce)  
Complete X-Ray Service  
1212 EL PRADO  
TORRANCE  
Open Tues. and Thurs. Eves.

High-Class Dentistry at Reasonable Prices  
  
EXAMINATION FREE  
**Dr. Sylvester**  
Successor to Dr. I. F. Baldwin  
100 1/2 E. Sixth St. Phone 970  
SAN PEDRO

**OSTEOPATHY**  
and the  
**ELECTRONIC REACTIONS OF ABRAMS**  
Doctors  
**Bruce & Lynd**  
Suite 14, Castle Apts.  
Phone 128

**John U. Hemmi**  
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW  
Office, Room 2, new Rappaport Bldg.  
Practice in all Courts.  
Wills and Probate Cases a Specialty.

**PERRY G. BRINEY**  
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW  
110 First National Bank Bldg.  
Phone 159 Torrance

Residence 1531 Eshelman St., Lomita  
**S. C. Schaefer**  
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW  
Proctor in Admiralty  
519 Beacon St. San Pedro  
Phone San Pedro 1334

**Lee R. Taylor**  
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW  
1020 Cota Phone 134-W  
TORRANCE, CALIF.  
May be consulted in Torrance evenings by appointment.  
L. A. Office, Suite 306 Calif. Bldg.  
Phone Main 3903

Phone Broadway 7550  
**TOM C. THORNTON**  
**GAINES E. TURNER**  
**Thornton & Turner**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
520-22 Mason Bldg., 4th & Broadway  
Los Angeles, Cal.

**ENOLA MAC INTYRE**  
DANCING  
Toe, Ballet, Character, Interpretive and Grecian, Russian and Italian Technique.  
**CHILDREN A SPECIALTY**  
American Legion Hall, Thursday afternoon from 2 to 4 o'clock.  
Beginning July 5, 1923.

Get your **KODAK** and Supplies from us



Have you a KODAK? If not, come in and let us show them to you. They are priced from a small sum up, but you can take excellent pictures with any of them. Our films and other supplies are fresh and ready for instant use. Come in—we shall be pleased to show you our Kodaks how easy they work and how to "load" them. Kodaks, how easy they work and how to "load" them.

**TORRANCE PHARMACY**  
Malone Bros.  
Phone 3-J Torrance, California

Let us see how



What's the thing to do when you need new tires? Go from store to store looking at price tags and signs? No—because guessing at tire quality is courting future grief on the road. Buy where there is no guesswork about quality and service. Buy here!

"BEST IN THE LONG RUN"  
**Palmer Service Station**  
Fred Palmer, Mgr.  
Torrance

**Goodrich**  
Silvertown CORD TIRE

Don't Make This Mistake

The biggest mistake a radio fan can make is to think that it doesn't matter much what kind of batteries he uses.

**Willard** STORAGE BATTERY  
TRADE MARK REGISTERED

**TORRANCE AUTO-ELECTRIC**  
AT PALMER'S SERVICE STATION TORRANCE

**PACIFIC ELECTRIC RESORT BUREAU**

IN THE LITTLE LOG CABIN  
MAIN LOBBY PACIFIC ELECTRIC STATION  
SIXTH AND MAIN STREETS, LOS ANGELES

**FREE INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS**

FOR ALL MOUNTAIN RESORTS ON THE "RIM OF THE WORLD"

IN THE SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS AS WELL AS FOR RESORTS IN THE SIERRA MADRE AND SAN JACINTO RANGES

ASK FOR BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED FOLDER. No Charge or Fee of Any Kind.

Let Us Help You Plan Your Vacation.

**PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY**  
O. A. SMITH, Passenger Traffic Manager, Los Angeles  
Phone 20, Torrance