



## OVERNIGHT GUEST

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

### CHAPTER I

Adam Bruce decided it was time for lunch, sought the hotel. He gave his order, and while he waited, two people came into the dining room and stood just inside the door. A gray-haired man, round without being fat, apple-cheeked, with a mild blue eye and a curious suggestion of physical readiness in his walk. Beside him a woman, not so old as he, with a certain formidable sobriety in her countenance that was belied by the warmth in her eyes.

Adam rose, stepped toward them, said in quick pleasure: "Hello, Tope!"

The old man turned, smiled broadly and clasped him by the hand. "Why, hullo, Adam!—Mrs. Tope, this is Adam Bruce, an old friend of mine."

"Sit down with me," Adam urged. They obeyed, and Bruce looked inquiringly at Mrs. Tope. "I didn't know you were married, Inspector."

"Oh, yes, over a year ago." And the old man told Mrs. Tope: "Adam here was a youngster on the force while I was on the Homicide squad. He spoiled a first-rate policeman to become a second-rate lawyer."

Bruce grinned. "You're behind the times, Inspector! I'm a policeman again." Tope looked surprised; and the younger man explained: "I passed the bar exams, but no one seemed to need a lawyer. So I went to work in the bank commissioner's office for a while, and now I've hooked up with Washington—Department of Justice."

"Your outfit has done some good jobs lately," Tope said approvingly. "Anything happening up here?" Adam said casually: "No, I'm on vacation." And under Tope's inquiring eye he added: "I used to live up this way, when I was a boy. Been home on a visit. I'm leaving on the midnight train. I often wish we had you with us, Inspector. We need a man who can see the hole in a doughnut . . . Which way are you heading?"

"North, I think. We're just gyping. I plan to do some fishing as we go. We may hit Canada by and by."

Bruce nodded. "Every little brook up this way had trout in it when I was a boy," he said. "I haven't tried them lately." And he asked: "Where do you expect to stay tonight?"

"We may camp out. Or we may try a hotel, if one attracts us. Or a roadside camp."

"There's a good camp about forty miles from here, between Ridgcomb and Maddison village. I was there only last night," Adam said eagerly. "A place called Dewain's Mill. You'd like it!"

"We might take a look at it," Tope agreed. "A girl named Bee Dewain runs it." Adam explained. "She's a cantankerous, stubborn young woman; but if you're careful not to mention my name, she may take you in!"

He felt Mrs. Tope's eye upon him, and was conscious that his ears were red; but after lunch, when he came out to see them continue on their way, he suggested again: "If you do stop at Dewain's Mill, tell that young hussy I sent her my love!"

When they were gone, Adam paid calls here and there, at police headquarters, the post office, the drug-store. There was a wealth of time upon his hands. A little past six o'clock, he returned to the hotel to dine; and while he was at table, a bell-boy came calling his name. Adam shut himself into the telephone booth and heard a familiar voice.

"Adam?"

"Yes," Adam replied, wondering faintly at this call.

"This is Tope."

"Yes. Sure. What's up?"

"I'm phoning from that place you recommended, Dewain's Mill. Adam, you'd better come up here."

"What's the matter?"

"Rather not talk over the phone. But you—"

"Miss Dewain all right?"

"Yes, of course. Do you know the police up here?"

"Sure. Ned Quill—he's a state trooper—is an old friend of mine."

"On your way here," Tope directed, "get word to your friend the trooper to meet you—without anyone seeing him—at the cabin called Faraway. You hire that cabin for the night. I'll see you there."

"But Tope, I'm due in New York tomorrow."

"You've a job to do here," Tope insisted. "Good-by!"

And Adam heard the receiver click as Tope hung up. The young man stared at the instrument for a moment in a perplexed and indecisive fashion; but—here was at least a pretext for seeing Bee again, and Tope had not used to be one to cry "Wolf" without cause.

Adam sent a wire to his chief. "Possible trouble here. Staying to investigate. Will report. Bruce."

Then he retrieved his bag from the check-room, hired a car and driver, and started north along the moonlit road.

When they left Middleford after

that chance encounter with young Adam Bruce, Mrs. Tope saw that her husband was silent, and she asked:

"What are you thinking?"

"I was wondering why we happened to run into Adam."

"Just an accident?"

"Call it that. But—accidents have a trick of fitting into a pattern by and by. As if some one had planned them." And he added: "It struck me that Adam had something besides a vacation on his mind."

"I wondered whether Miss Dewain is as cantankerous and stubborn as he pretends?"

He chuckled. "You're looking for romance! But I'm wondering what fetched a Department of Justice man into these hills?"

It was obviously impossible, as yet, to answer this question. As they went on, the hills were bolder; the valleys deep, the streams swift and silver. They passed big estates, and great houses.

The little car required gas, and when they came to Ridgcomb, Chet's Place invited their patronage. A lean, dry man as old as Tope, with shrewd twinkling eyes, came out to serve them. Mrs. Tope

grinned. "You're behind the times, Inspector! I'm a policeman again." Tope looked surprised; and the younger man explained: "I passed the bar exams, but no one seemed to need a lawyer. So I went to work in the bank commissioner's office for a while, and now I've hooked up with Washington—Department of Justice."

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stayed in the car, but Tope, mild and beaming and inquisitive, alighted.

"Handsome stretch of country through here!" he remarked.

"All right in the summer-time," the man—this was doubtless Chet himself—assented. His hand was on the hose, his eye on the clicking pump gauge. "But in winter, it's cold as a banker's heart!"

Tope chuckled. "A lot of big places around."

"Summer folks, mostly! Not so many now as there used to be. There can't be many people afford to hire a hundred men just to cut lawns, these days!"

"I noticed one place that looked like a castle, back on the mountain," Tope suggested.

"That's where Ledford lives, when he ain't in New York." Chet spat, as though the name left a bad taste in his mouth. "He owns half the water power in New England. He sold a pile of his stocks and bonds to the folks around here. Stuck 'em, mostly."

"Didn't stick you," Tope flatteringly surmised.

"Not me! Me, I keep my money where I can handle it any time I'm a mind." And Chet volunteered: "You don't see Ledford around here much, now. I dunno as it'd be safe for him to walk through the village."

"Married?"

"Sister keeps house for him. She's all right; but they don't mix with nobody only the Holdoms."

"What Holdom is that?"

Chet shook his head. "I dunno. 'H.H.' they call him. In the stock market I guess. Good feller. He'll stop and talk, when he fills up at my pump here." He hung up the hose. "Check your oil?" Mrs. Tope nodded. "You c'n stand a quart," Chet decided. And he said: "I sell H.H. all his gas. Cars and airplanes too."

"Planes?"

"He's got him a landing-field down by the river. I dunno but he'll give it up now, though. I would, in his place!"

"Why?" Tope was always curious. "Don't you like flying?"

"Guess I don't! Never done any of it my own self; but my nephew, Bob Flint, he got killed here Sat'-day in one of the dummed things. Holdom and Ledford, they used to ride back and forth from New York in Holdom's airplane about half the time, and Bob worked for Holdom

and he'd fly 'em up and back. But he took a dive into Long Island Sound, long about daylight Sat'-day morning." He added resentfully: "I'll have Bob's ma to support, I guess. It ain't likely he'd saved anything." He shut the hood.

Mrs. Tope said quietly: "Shall we go on?" So the inspector climbed in beside her, but as they moved away he protested:

"Don't you hurry me all the time, ma'am! I like to get the flavor of the country as I go along. I like to talk to folks." And he said inquiringly: "You acted kind of mad!"

"I was," she admitted. "When he spoke of Mr. Holdom."

"Know him, do you?"

"I know who he is," Mrs. Tope, before her marriage, had been the effective head of the Jervis Trust, with an active interest in business and finance; and she explained: "He's the floor specialist in the Ledford stocks, and he's a crook!"

Slowly they drove on, stopping now and then to look across the hills and down the deep bright valleys. They ascended a steep grade, and at the top she checked the car. Tope looked to see why she slowed down, and discovered beside the road a large white-painted sign, on which black letters cried invitingly:

COME IN AND MILL AROUND!

He chuckled, and a moment later saw by the brook the gray weathered structure of an old mill, neat and in repair. An arched entrance and a gravel drive offered admission.

Mrs. Tope said: "This must be the place your young friend Adam Bruce told us about. It looks clean. Shall we try it?"

"I'd like to try that brook below the road," he admitted, so she turned in and stopped by the Mill door.

Tope surveyed the surroundings with that quick interest any new scene always provoked in him. The Mill was on their left. Beyond it by the stream side there was a turfed terrace, an open hearth, picnic tables. A gray-haired man sat on one of these tables and played a violin; and a girl stood near by, her shoulders against the trunk of a tree, watching him and listening. A State Trooper in uniform bestrode his silent motorcycle to which a side car was attached—in the drive near them, and his eyes were on the girl.

Beyond, the millpond was visible, and a spring-board; and two small boys so much alike that they were clearly twins were diving, swimming ashore, climbing on the board and diving again, chasing each other like squirrels in a cage. A bald-headed little man in a bathing suit sat with his feet in the water; and an ampie, comely woman with knitting in her hands, seated on a boulder near by, turned an interested eye on the car and the newcomers. Small cabins were scattered among the trees.

The scene was peaceful, but abruptly its peace was shattered. The trooper kicked his motorcycle into life with a series of explosions of entirely unnecessary violence, and he wheeled his machine, darted past the little car, turned into the highroad and raced away. The girl looked after him with amused eyes, and so saw these old people in their car, and came toward them.

"Have you room for two lodgers?" Mrs. Tope asked.

"Oh, yes, plenty," she assured them. "There's hardly anyone here. Not many people travel these days."

Tope remarked: "That policeman don't really enjoy the violin!"

The girl laughed softly. "Ned's not very musical," she agreed. "But it was rotten of him to start his motorcycle right in the middle of Mr. Vade's fiddling. I shall tell him so!"

"Be back, will he?"

"Oh, he always comes back!"

Mrs. Tope looked around with an appreciative glance. "You run this place?"

The girl said readily: "Oh, yes. I'm Bee Dewain. Mrs. Priddy cooks for us, and she's been famous for her biscuits and waffles ever since I was a child. Earl—he's Mrs. Priddy's husband—does the chores, and rakes the drives, and cleans the cabins. But I keep the books and generally run things."

"How's the fishing?" Tope inquired.

"Earl Priddy brings in a good mess, now and then."

Mrs. Tope asked: "May we—choose our cabin?"

"They're all just alike, inside, only those up there on the knoll are nearer the road of course, with cars going by—"

"I shouldn't like that," Mrs. Tope decided.

"Then why don't you take Faraway?" Bee advised. "It's new this year, and it's clear out of sight up in the woods, so if you want to be really quiet . . . No one has ever spent even one night in Faraway. It was only finished about two weeks ago. You'll be the very first ones."

She stepped up on the running board. "Just go straight ahead," she directed.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D.  
Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.  
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### Lesson for December 2

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### THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

LESSON TEXT: Deut. 8:17, 18; Luke 12:13-21.  
GOLDEN TEXT: A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Luke 12:15.

Peace and the postwar period find America, and in fact the entire world, plunged into tremendous economic problems far too deep for any man or group of men to solve. We honor those who are laboring day and night to meet the threat of unemployment, the question of reconversion and readjustment to civilian production, of feeding a hungry world, etc. But we say again, they cannot find the answers in the wisdom of men; they must have the wisdom of God.

We need to turn anew to the economic principles taught in God's Word. If men will only recognize them, and deal with their fellow-men in the light of their teaching, the many knotty problems will surely find solution.

There is need, first of all, of a fundamental philosophy concerning possessions which will make man deal properly with them. The first section of our lesson says to us:

I. Think Right About Wealth (Deut. 8:17, 18).

How trenchant and altogether fitting are the words of Scripture! Nothing could describe our times more succinctly and accurately than verse 17. Men are glorying in their ability to do things.

Man has even gone so far as to develop a weapon of warfare, the atomic bomb, so powerful that he fears it might be used to wipe out all civilization. Even secular leaders are now saying that we must have a spiritual rebirth if we are to use such things for good and not for evil. Man needs God now more than ever.

We honor those who by skillful hand and brilliant brain produce excellent and thrilling results. But our question is, How many are there who say, God has done this thing; He gave the strength and the skill; His is the honor? Some there are who truly recognize Him, but they are few indeed. Their name is legion who say in their heart, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (v. 17).

Joseph Parker points out that a deep conviction of the fact stated in verse 18 "would turn human history into a sacrament." He says, "What a blow this text strikes at one of the most popular and mischievous fallacies in common life; namely, that man is the maker of his own money!"

II. Act Right About Wealth (Luke 12:13-21).

Most of us think of money as something we want to get hold of and use for ourselves, but if it belongs to God, and we are only his stewards, we must put away that impulse. "Take heed," said Jesus, "and beware of covetousness" (v. 15). It is a deadly and deadening sin, all too common even among Christian people.

The teaching of this whole passage of Scripture is so directly opposite to all ideas regarding such matters accepted by the world at large, that it may be a total surprise to some readers and attendants at Bible school.

The yardstick of success in the world for an individual, an organization, or a nation, yes, even for many a church, is the possession of wealth, or property, or other "things." Write it in large letters on the hearts and minds of our boys and girls, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (v. 15).

The one who was known to his friends (and to himself) as "a rich man" (v. 16), but whom God knew as a "fool" (v. 20), had more than he could use for himself. He had to build new and bigger barns, and could not see the "barns" that were already prepared, for, as Ambrose says, "Thou hast barns—the bosoms of the needy, the houses of widows, the mouths of orphans and infants."

He was a fool who loved money for itself and for himself. One wonders what he had to say for himself when that very night he was called into the presence of God to give an account of his stewardship (v. 20). If you are similarly situated and have the same attitude, what will you say in that day?

There is an important point which we must note. Jesus expressly repudiated the connecting of His name with the so-called "social gospel" in His reply (v. 14) to the question of the covetous fellow who regarded his inheritance as of more importance than brotherly love.

Those who are ignoring the gospel of redemption and claiming Jesus as a social reformer, or the "judge and divider" of some new economic solution for the world's ills, need to read and ponder this verse.

Every Christian is interested deeply in social problems, but knows that the first concern of Christ and His followers is the souls of men.



### Truman's Worries Weighing Heavily

A LITTLE over six months ago, Harry S. Truman took over the biggest job in the world. He became President of the United States under highly dramatic circumstances, and in the shadow of the nation's bereavement over the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Your Home Town Reporter was privileged to attend that first press conference in the oval room of the White House. That meeting won Truman the respect of all newspaper men present, and stamped the new President as a man of quick decisions, forceful and aggressive, and with a wide knowledge of government. When the conference ended, the correspondents broke into spontaneous applause . . . it had been so different from those to which they had become accustomed for more than 12 years.

But now, six months later, there is a change . . . a hardly perceptible difference, and yet it is there nevertheless. For instance, at a recent conference, announced beforehand, as is the new custom . . . the President seemed tired. He still had that quick almost ingratiating smile . . . he still stood behind his desk as the reporters fired their questions at him and he still answered them readily and decisively . . . but it seemed to this reporter that he was inclined more to weigh his words . . . that he was more ready to pass along the responsibility for his answers. For instance, he would say, "The state department is considering that question" or, "I may have something on that within a few days," or "Washington wouldn't be Washington without all kinds of rumors."

He was still forthright, but he appeared to have learned to be more careful in his answers, and to measure the effect of his words. When the conference was ended, the reporters scattered hastily to their telephones or to their offices.

### 'Co-Operation' Ends

President Truman, it is apparent, definitely realizes that the honeymoon is over, and that politics, as usual, has taken the place of the back-slapping and hearty well-wishes and promises of "co-operation."

He knows that all is not going well . . . neither on Capitol Hill where he has met reverses at the hands of a conservative and reactionary congress . . . nor on the domestic front, where reconversion is being held back because of many causes . . . nor on the international diplomatic front.

This reporter believes the President feels he has been let-down by some of those to whom he looked for closest support. In an off-the-record statement at a recent Washington dinner he indicated as much. For business, labor, his former colleagues on the hill, agricultural leaders . . . all came to him in those first weeks of his tenure and offered and promised their co-operation to bring about an early end of the war and quick reconversion from a war to a peacetime economy.

### Selfishness and Confusion

Washington today is packed and jammed with lobbyists for one cause or another, pressure groups, each seeking their own selfish ends. One group tries to pull congress one way, urging this for one section, another group works in direct opposition, for the benefit of another section. There is confusion in the minds of many people here, many subjects. There is confusion in the minds of the people in the home towns.

If your reporter has judged the President rightly, he will not long permit indecision and lack of leadership or a governmental policy to slow up and confuse the issues now before the American people and the world.

During his terms in the senate, Mr. Truman gave ample proof that when he once made up his mind he would forge ahead and let the chips fall where they may. That he has this courage was demonstrated in his stand on universal military training. Again he showed it when in the face of a hostile congress he declared his determination to carry through on the entire Roosevelt program. And this reporter predicts that very soon the President will take his case direct to the people over the heads of congress.

It is obvious that the heavy responsibilities and duties involved in his job are already weighing on President Truman. He realizes that our economic security rests largely upon him. Upon his shoulders hangs the success or failure of the United Nations organization for world peace and co-operation. What this nation does, both at home and abroad, will affect, for good or ill, the fate of many other nations and the lives of many millions of people, as well as settle our own destiny, for richer or poorer, here at home, perhaps for many generations to come.

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