

# OVERNIGHT GUEST

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

THE STORY THUS FAR: Adam Bruce, FBI operator, Inspector Tope and Mrs. Tope met in the Maine woods. Tope found a man murdered, who was at first identified as Ledforge, head of New England utilities. Mrs. Kell was found murdered in Ledforge's car, and Kell committed suicide. Joe Dane, assistant D.A., accused Tope of bungling the case, so took charge. Tope arranged for Eberly to keep a fishing date with the man who was said to be Ledforge. While they were in the canoe, Ledforge upset the canoe. Tope and Bruce, in a motor boat, went out and brought the men to shore. Ledforge told about his twin brother and how he thought Hoidom had done the murders.

## CHAPTER XV

He spoke so simply that his accusation lacked reality. Ledforge cried: "I can't believe you're serious?"

"Why, yes," Tope assured him, "I'm serious."

The door from the hall opened, and they all looked that way; saw Bee Dewain. For a moment no one spoke; and Bee said: "Go on, please. May I listen?"

Tope answered her. "We're just trying to make Mr. Ledforge admit that he was the man in Little Bear last Friday night," he explained, and turned to Ledforge again. "If you weren't," he challenged, "how did you know it was a dog blanket that they wrapped him up in? I said 'blanket,' but I never mentioned a dog."

"Why, I've been in Hoidom's garage many times. When you said 'blanket,' I thought of the police dog sleeping on his blanket in the corner there."

"Well, maybe," Tope agreed; but before he could speak again, Joe Dane took a hand. Here was, it seemed to him, not only his cue, but Bee Dewain for an audience to witness his triumph over Tope. He strode a little forward, and spoke briskly.

"Come, Tope," he said with a mocking kindness, "I guess you've gone as far as you can, haven't you? Maybe you've got at the truth, all right; but Tope, it isn't enough for me to know the truth. I have to be able to prove it. I have to get something that will pass as evidence in court."

Tope looked at him thoughtfully. "That's so, son," he agreed. "You do have to try the case, don't you?"

Joe nodded. "So while you've been reading dream-books, and telling fortunes by the cards," he derisively explained, "I've been collecting a few facts—just plain facts. And, of course, one particular fact! One good fact that can't be shaken is all we need, isn't it?"

Adam Bruce demanded: "Joe, do you have to be a fool twice in one day?"

But Tope touched Adam's arm, hushed him. "Now, Adam," he protested, "you let Joe set off his fireworks! It wouldn't surprise me a bit if he had something. Joe's a smart young man."

"Then he ought to know better—" Joe said resentfully. "Now, wait a minute, Bruce! After all, this case is my job. This old man hasn't an ounce of evidence, but I have. I can prove that Rufus Ledforge, here, was in Little Bear that night, Friday night," he said exultantly.

"Rufus was, all right," Tope assented. "I know that too."

"But you can't prove it!"

"Why, that depends! Maybe not!" "Well, I can," said Joe proudly. "While you've been chasing will-o'-the-wisps, I've found a witness. I've got a man who heard Mrs. Kell, in the cottage that night, call Ledforge here by name."

Tope exclaimed: "Well, if you have, that's something, sure!"

Dane laughed exultantly. "You bet it is!" he cried. "It's worth all your guess work."

"Called him by name, did she?" Tope reflected.

Joe cried in a hot triumph: "Yes, she did!" And he explained carefully: "I think she was begging him not to leave poor Christopher there to die. But at any rate, she said: 'Oh, no, please don't, Rufus! Don't, Rufus, please!'"

"Rufus, eh?" Tope echoed.

"Sure. Rufus. Rufus Ledforge! And that's proof enough to convince any jury—with the rest of what we've got—that Rufus Ledforge was in Little Bear that night."

Tope rubbed his mouth with his hand; he wagged his head. "Why, Joe," he said, "Rufus Ledforge was in Little Bear that night, all right. Or right handy. But the woman, Mrs. Kell, she wasn't talking to him; and if she had been, he wouldn't have heard her. Rufus was out in the car, under the rumble seat, sick and unconscious, with the drugs in him. No, Rufus couldn't hear her."

Joe stammered: "What are you talking about?"

"This man here isn't Rufus Ledforge, son," said Tope. "This—what was his brother's name?—this here is Christopher."

And while they were all for a moment silent, Bee Dewain—as though she had heard what she came to hear—quietly slipped away.

Bee had departed; but no other moved. Only Ledforge laughed, appealing to young Joe Dane, to big Mat Cumberland.

"Who is this—aged jackass?" he protested. "Our best friends couldn't distinguish between us, so you may have to take my word for it; yet I assure you I am Rufus, not poor Christopher."

"Who was your dentist?" Tope inquired. "Doctor Loud?"

Ledforge smiled. "No, Doctor Loud was Christopher's. I went to a New York man. There was a mocking triumph in him. 'Oh, I assure you we covered all points, Inspector.'"

"Just the same," Tope insisted, "you're bound to be Christopher. Rufus wouldn't have any good reason to kill Christopher; but Christopher—figuring he could step into his brother's shoes, take over the money and the power that his brother had accumulated—he'd have plenty of reason to kill Rufus. Yes, you're Christopher. It don't make sense any other way."

Ledforge started to speak; but Tope said implacably: "That's why you tried to drown Mr. Eberly. Because he told you that you didn't look like Rufus. I figured you'd try to kill him, if he did suspect; and when you invited him to go fishing, and I found out he couldn't swim, I guessed how you'd do it. You had tried to find out, two weeks ago, whether he'd notice anything—tried to see him, but he was away. You were checking up ahead of time, with him and Mrs. Kell, to see if they'd realize you weren't Rufus. Must have had this idea in mind before Rufus got sick and gave you the chance to pull it off. You fooled her, then; so you took a chance on being able to fool Eberly."

And he explained: "So I told him to pretend to see a difference in you today; and he did; and you tried to drown him!"

"Ridiculous! He imagined that!" "And Mrs. Kell," Tope added relentlessly, "in Little Bear the other night, finally realized you weren't Rufus. That was why you killed her."

Ledforge said harshly: "Man, you're—"

Tope cut in: "Well, if you weren't there, how did you happen to think of Kell's shoes with the heel-prints on them? I mentioned footprints, but not Kell nor his heel-plates."

Ledforge licked dry lips. "Just a guess! It would be natural for Hoidom to put on some one else's shoes; and Kell's were available."

"Mr. Ledforge," he confessed, "I laid some traps for you awhile ago, when I was telling you the story. I didn't tell you that the sweater was gray. You stepped into that one. I didn't say the wires were ignition wires, or that it was electricians' tape, or that it was the dog's blanket. You dodged the wires and the tape, but you stepped right into the dog one. I didn't mention that your brother was drugged, but you did. I didn't say anything about Kell's shoes, but you did. I didn't say your brother's body was in the rumble, but you did."

He added calmly: "And there was one more, the worst of all. You put your neck right into that one, Ledforge. You knew it the minute you did it!"

"You're crazy!" Ledforge cried hoarsely.

"I mean," Tope explained, "that I didn't tell you Mrs. Kell was strangled. Oh, she was, all right! But how did you know?"

Tope as he spoke turned toward the door. Now, before Ledforge, terribly shaken, could reply, the old man said:

"Oh, hello, ma'am!"

They all swung that way. Here were Mrs. Tope and Bee, and between them they supported Miss Ledforge. The little old woman, white as a wraith, came uncertainly into the room. She looked from one to another till her eyes fastened on her brother's face; and then she spoke.

"You're crazy!" Ledforge cried hoarsely.

"I mean," Tope explained, "that I didn't tell you Mrs. Kell was strangled. Oh, she was, all right! But how did you know?"

Tope as he spoke turned toward the door. Now, before Ledforge, terribly shaken, could reply, the old man said:

"Oh, hello, ma'am!"

They all swung that way. Here were Mrs. Tope and Bee, and between them they supported Miss Ledforge. The little old woman, white as a wraith, came uncertainly into the room. She looked from one to another till her eyes fastened on her brother's face; and then she spoke.

"You're crazy!" Ledforge cried hoarsely.

"I mean," Tope explained, "that I didn't tell you Mrs. Kell was strangled. Oh, she was, all right! But how did you know?"

Tope as he spoke turned toward the door. Now, before Ledforge, terribly shaken, could reply, the old man said:

"Oh, hello, ma'am!"

They all swung that way. Here were Mrs. Tope and Bee, and between them they supported Miss Ledforge. The little old woman, white as a wraith, came uncertainly into the room. She looked from one to another till her eyes fastened on her brother's face; and then she spoke.

"You're crazy!" Ledforge cried hoarsely.

"I mean," Tope explained, "that I didn't tell you Mrs. Kell was strangled. Oh, she was, all right! But how did you know?"

Tope as he spoke turned toward the door. Now, before Ledforge, terribly shaken, could reply, the old man said:

"Oh, hello, ma'am!"

They all swung that way. Here were Mrs. Tope and Bee, and between them they supported Miss Ledforge. The little old woman, white as a wraith, came uncertainly into the room. She looked from one to another till her eyes fastened on her brother's face; and then she spoke.

"Christopher!" she whispered. "Christopher!"

She tottered weakly. Ledforge took one step toward her; and she seemed to collapse upon a great divan there beside her. Mrs. Tope eased her as she fell; the old woman lay with eyes closed, breathing heavily.

Ledforge strode briskly toward her. "Careful, gentlemen," he said warningly. "My sister's heart cannot withstand a heavy shock!" He came to where she lay, and his hand caught up her wrist, his fingers pressed the pulse; he stood intent and listening.

Then without a word he took from his vest pocket a small vial, poured half a dozen pellets into his hand, selected one, replaced the others. "Some one get water," he whispered. "Here, Alice, swallow this."

His hand touched her cheek. Her lips opened, received the small pellet. She seemed to swallow. And Tope said softly, behind Ledforge: "Doctor, will she die?"

"Oh, no," Ledforge assured him; and then he whirled to face the other man, and his cheek was ashen. "I'm not a doctor!" he cried desperately.

"You took her pulse like one," said Tope. He added: "And you answered to the name of one. And your sister is like me. She thinks you're Christopher. And Christopher's a doctor!"

Ledforge said rapidly: "No, listen! I must explain, gentlemen, my sister has hallucinations. Has been for years a little dim-witted; and she's frightfully upset now. She always worshiped Rufus!"

Tope looked past Ledforge at the woman on the couch. "So it's Rufus that's dead, not Christopher?"

Ledforge stammered: "No, no! I meant Christopher—"

But Miss Ledforge spoke, behind him. Her voice was faint, yet strong: "If Rufus is dead, you killed him, Christopher."

Ledforge whirled on her in incredulous surprise; he appealed to them all. "How can she hear? Without her ear-phones? She is deaf as a post!"

"I can read your lips, Christopher," said Miss Ledforge. "I have done so for years, have thus known many secret ugly things about you."

"You mustn't talk, Alice!" Ledforge cried. "You—"

But Tope said calmly: "Oh, she won't die, Doctor Christopher. She didn't swallow the pill you gave her. If you could have killed Eberly and your sister, you might have taken your brother's place with no one to prove you weren't Rufus. But Eberly's alive, and so is she."

And he spoke to Mrs. Tope. "Give Mr. Cumberland that pill Miss Ledforge didn't swallow, my dear. He'll want to have it analyzed, to see if it's the right medicine to give a weak old woman when she has a heart attack."

Mrs. Tope obediently dropped the white pellet into Mat Cumberland's great hand. But Ledforge laughed; he said briskly:

"Of course it is." He lifted that small bottle from his pocket again, poured the pills out into his palm. "I kept a supply always ready," he said. "They've helped her before. They're all the same. Like this one—"

And he selected one, and suddenly lifted it toward his mouth. But Adam Bruce, long since forewarned, was ready. His smashing blow stretched Ledforge prone and senseless. The pills went flying all across the floor.

(THE END)



## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### Lesson for March 10

Lesson subjects and Scripture texts selected and copyrighted by International Council of Religious Education used by permission.

#### A PEOPLE IN CONFUSION

LESSON TEXT: Judges 2:7, 11, 15-23. MEMORY SELECTION: The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear.—Hebrews 13:6.

Confusion is a word well suited to describe the world today. With the end of the war we had hoped for peace and goodwill, and what have we? We may learn from the experience of Israel the reasons for such confusion. They, too, had come into their land and should have had only peace and prosperity. Instead there were turmoil and disorder. Why?

The success or failure of both nations and individuals is ultimately determined by their attitude toward the law of God. He is always right and true. The constant factor in a world order that swings wildly from one extreme to another is his law, which is perfect and eternal.

God is no respecter of persons. Even Israel, his own chosen nation, found that observing God's law meant blessing, and failure to do so brought judgment and sorrow. No man is great and powerful enough to ignore this rule, and none is exempt from its operation.

I. The Cause—Forgetting God (vv. 7, 11).

The Lord had promised the land to them as they went in and possessed it by faith in him. He fully kept that promise in the measure that they believed him. They never did take the whole land, but that was because of their failure, not God's.

As the people of Israel took possession of the land, they went forward in the way of blessing as long as Joshua, and the elders who remembered God, kept them steady and true. We have here an excellent illustration of the power of a godly example. It is far stronger than we think.

The fact that a nation has been highly privileged and has been exalted to a place of power and honor will not save it in the day when God is forgotten. Israel no longer had God-fearing men to bring it back to the Lord, and so began its awful drifting.

We Americans are rightly proud of our great land, its mighty resources, its fine past and promising future. But what is the future to be? Oh, we say, the most glorious days are ahead! They may be, but only if we, like our forefathers who established this nation, recognize God. If we do not, America will go the way of the forgotten empires of centuries past, and that in spite of all its past achievements and its present promise.

It is a significant thing that our business and national leaders often come from Christian homes, but it is sad that they themselves are so frequently not Christians. Their lives are shaped by the teaching and influence of godly parents, but what will their children do if they are not brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord?

II. The Condition—National and Spiritual Confusion (vv. 15-19).

The history of the period of the judges in Israel is incomplete, but what we have shows the awful condition of the nation. Not only were they in separate tribes, but the people as a whole were divided into three groups—north and south of Jerusalem, and east of the Jordan. The moral and spiritual decay were evident in their turning to the immoral practices of Baal-worship.

One would have thought that God would give up a people so set on sinning, but he did not. He provided deliverance for Israel. That gives us courage, for we know that he has not given us up, but has provided in Christ a sure deliverance, if America will turn to him.

It is interesting to note that God works through men. Some of these judges were great men; others were just ordinary men. But each in his appointed place, at the appointed time, was God's man.

Confusion, sin and disobedience cannot be tolerated indefinitely. So Israel stubbornly went on to

III. The Conclusion—Judgment from God (vv. 20-23).

God not only will not hold a back-sliding nation guiltless, but will bring judgment even if he has to turn over his people to a despoiling nation. He has instruments of individual and national chastisement, and he is ready to use them.

Notice that wherever they went the Lord's hand was against them. There is no place to flee from the presence of God. Anyone who thinks he can do it should read Psalm 139:7-12. It can't be done. That is a comfort to the believer, but it is very disquieting to the unbeliever.

They compromised with evil, and lost not only their testimony but their very spiritual life. They forsok God and took into their friendship the enemies of God, only to find that they were their own enemies.

We are in danger now of compromise with evil, both in our personal and in our national lives. As we do—and if we do—we may expect only disaster and judgment.

## NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

By PAUL MALLON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### THREATENED VETO POWER ON LABOR LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, D. C.—WNU.—Confidential canvassers have found congress in almost total disagreement as to what will be done about strikes and the unions.

Twenty of the men, best placed to know, gave 20 differing private predictions. Many said from the first that the steel strike would be settled, then autos, then the big others; whereupon interest would die, while congress argued without a decision until after their election next November.

Others did not believe congress could longer duck the problem and expected various union-curbing enactments. But Mr. Truman had told his leaders privately he would veto anything which might be called an anti-union law.

Surely nothing opposed by the unions could get two-thirds majority necessary to pass over such a veto. The confused and confusing predictions, in the last analysis, therefore, appeared to add up to just about the same total—nothing, or little-or-nothing.

A nice neat hole in the wall is quite evidently being dug, through which all may escape. A commentator or two started it with toothpicks, but behind them some congressmen are ready with drills.

### FACT-FINDING WITHOUT POWER OR TEETH

This is a proposal to cut the Truman fact-finding bill down to fact-finding alone. It would be stripped of its power of subpoena, to which General Motors objects, and the cooling-off period of 30 days before strikes, to which the union objects. Just pass a law letting the President appoint commissions to find facts.

The only trouble about this escape is too many people can see the hole. It might be better to go brazenly out the window, or keep arguing interminably in hopes everyone will forget about the whole matter.

Such legislation simply proposes what already has been done. Mr. Truman has established precisely that kind of fact-finding. General Motors walked out on it.

The question raised by such a permanent fact-finding law is: Would anyone ever show up for the hearings? To handle the problem that way would be like waving back a windstorm with a feather.

If congressional leaders try to push their boys through this hole, there will of course be trouble. The labor committees of both houses are closely controlled by the unions. Nothing can escape them which is opposed by the unions, or nothing ever has.

On the open senate and house floors, however, their bill would be open to amendment by the attachment of every possible solution every congressman has proposed. The problem of Mr. Truman's leaders will then be to prevent any important action, and they are likely to wind up with conflicting bills from the two houses.

Certainly anyone looking for solutions from congress must wear long range glasses, and anyone looking toward consideration of the fundamentals of the problem will have to look hard. The plain fundamentals are these:

ENTIRE NATION CAN BE STRIKE BOUND

The unions have developed their strike technique to the point where they can tie up the nation any night. A simultaneous strike in telephones, telegraph and radio alone would nearly do it.

Add electrical power—house workers, and you can see what four unions could do to the country. Add not the big railroads but the teamsters who merely handle all freight in the cities, the elevator operators and bus drivers, and you have the obliterative possibilities of a general strike from only a few unions.

I have mentioned only a few of the strikes which have already been called.

In this campaign the unions, by rather clever timing of local strikes to keep pressure on the White House (first buses, then telephones without real issue in either), and by preliminary and bolstering strikes in other cities, have used their new power to get an unprecedented wage increase which will average above 18 per cent, a figure representing just about what they expected to get from their demand for 30 per cent.

## SEWING CIRCLE NEEDLECRAFT

### Gay Cross-Stitched Kitchen Towels



7320

AFTER dinner, dishes are fun to do when you've towels embroidered with these gay sunbonnet girls and colorful balloons! Simple stitchery.

Sunbonnet girls look like applique—are easy cross-stitch! Pattern 7320 has transfer of 6 motifs averaging 6 by 8 1/2 inches. Due to an unusually large demand and current conditions, slightly more time is required in filling orders for a few of the most popular pattern numbers.

Send your order to:

Sewing Circle Needlecraft Dept.  
82 Eighth Ave. New York  
Enclose 16 cents for Pattern.  
No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Amos Let the Doc in on His Secret of Longevity

Upon examining old Amos, who was 87, the doctor was surprised at his excellent health.

"Amazing!" exclaimed the medic. "To what do you attribute such good health at your age?"

"Well," answered Amos, "when we married, my wife and I agreed not to argue. If she got angry, she promised to go out to the kitchen without saying anything till she calmed down. And I was to go out into the backyard if I got angry."

"But," interrupted the doc, "what has that got to do with it?"

"Well," drawled the old man, "I've lived a good part of my life outdoors."

## AROUND THE HOUSE

Put spices, seasonings, baking powder, cream of tartar and the like on a cookie sheet and keep on a shelf in the kitchen cabinet. When cooking or baking, take out the cookie sheet and make your choice.

Wrap gold and silver evening bags and slippers in dark-colored cloth to prevent tarnish.

Grease glass baking dishes before putting food in them to bake and they will be much easier to wash.

If you have a favorite piece of jewelry which cannot be worn because it discolors the skin, try this: After cleaning it, give the back a coat of colorless nail polish.

An old tennis racket makes a mighty good carpet beater.

To make a good wire splice, lay the ends side by side, pointing in opposite directions until the doubled portion is about two inches long. Grasp firmly right in the middle with the jaws of a pair of pliers. Wrap one free end firmly about the splice at the left, and the other in reverse about the splice at the right. The result is neat, easily taped, and won't pull apart. Such joints should be soldered, particularly if the wire is part of an electrical unit.

### New York City Buries Its Paupers in Big Trenches

New York City buries weekly an average of 200 bodies of paupers, unknowns and still-born babies in its potter's field on Hart's island, says Collier's. As about 65 of them a year are later sought by relatives or friends for reburial in a private cemetery, the city maintains a descriptive record of all bodies and a numbering system so they can be readily located and exhumed.

They are buried in large trenches, each of which contains the coffins of 200 adults or 6,000 infants.

### EXTRA TASTY BREAD!



BECAUSE IT'S FULL-STRENGTH—this active fresh yeast goes right to work. No waiting—no extra steps! And Fleischmann's fresh Yeast helps make bread that tastes sweeter, is lighter, finer-textured every time.

IF YOU BAKE AT HOME—be sure to get Fleischmann's active fresh Yeast with the familiar yellow label. Dependable—America's time-tested favorite for more than 70 years.

Always fresh—at your grocer's