

and be my Love

By PEGGY DERN

WNUN RELEASE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Reynolds questions Meg at her home. There is a knock at the door, and Martha Evans, Tom Fallon's sister-in-law, enters. She wanted to tell them about the knife. Martha's story is that Alicia was not murdered with the knife that was found. That knife, she declared, was one she and Tom had taken away from Tom's wife, Letty, the invalid and mental patient. Martha declared that Tom did not know his wife's true condition, believing her to be getting better. "But she is violent at times," Martha insisted, as she told how Letty had attacked her with the knife one night. "That night you said you fell and hurt your ankle?" Meg asked. Martha denied it.

CHAPTER XV

Miss Martha said huskily, "Only I didn't fall—she pushed me down the steps."

Bob waited, and after a little, she went on huskily, "Tom and I saw it that there was never any—instrument around that she could use to hurt herself—or anybody else. Tom thought she was bedridden; I hadn't told him that she was growing stronger, that she could walk—not very far, but at least she was no longer helpless. I knew, of course, the danger that was growing around her—danger that she might slip away from me and—do some horrible thing—"

Bob said swiftly, "Then you mean that she managed to get away and kill Mrs. Stevenson?"

Miss Martha flung up her head. Her eyes blazed.

"She did nothing of the sort! Use your head, young man. It's a mile from our house to Mrs. Stevenson's place—she couldn't travel that far. And she hasn't been out of my sight one single minute since the night she attacked me," she blazed at him hotly.

Bob said gently, "We have only your word for that, Miss Evans."

Miss Martha's stocky body slumped a little and she said wearily, "Yes, of course—you have only my word for it—"

"And the knife, Miss Evans?" asked Bob very quietly.

She seemed to wince as though he had struck her. She drew a deep breath and lifted her head a little, though her shoulders sagged.

"Yes, the knife," she repeated.

"That was—night before last. As I said, Tom didn't know that Letty could get out of bed, or walk; he thought it was a little foolish of me to keep every sharp-pointed instrument in the house under lock and key. He thought as long as we kept them out of her room, out of her reach—"

She shrugged tiredly and then she went on in that heavy, exhausted voice, "so he left a knife out on the kitchen sink night before last. I'd—had a good deal of trouble with Letty and I was very tired. I slept in her room and I thought that she was sleeping soundly, and so I let myself go to sleep. When I woke up—I don't know what woke me, but—suddenly I was wide-awake, and—there was Letty standing beside my bed, bending over me, the moonlight on—that knife in her hand—"

She set her teeth hard in her lower lip, and her hands crushed each other, and in spite of her efforts at self-control, two swollen tears slipped from her eyes and down her white cheeks, leaving little marks in the thick powder spread so inexpertly there.

Megan went to her and put an arm about her, and for a moment, Miss Martha resisted; then she turned and hid her face against Megan, while the two men waited.

"You didn't see Amos?" asked Bob quickly.

"No," answered Miss Martha, and hesitated so oddly that Bob's attention was caught and it grew stronger.

"Whom did you see then?" demanded Bob.

"No one," answered Miss Martha firmly. Too firmly. Too emphatically. "I saw no one at all—no one."

Bob said sternly, "You're not telling me the truth, Miss Evans. Up to now, I believe you. But if you start telling me lies now, don't you see you're likely to make me believe that all you've told me is a lie!"

Miss Martha said grimly, "You can believe anything you want to, young man. I've told you all I'm going to tell you. And I'd never have told you what I did if I had not felt so sure that you'd jump to the conclusion that the knife Amos helped you find was the one that killed Mrs. Stevenson—and once you were convinced of that, you'd not stop until you'd hauled in some poor devil that was as innocent of that crime as my poor Letty."

She got up and Bob said sternly, "I've not finished yet—"

Miss Martha eyed him as though he had been an importunate beggar, and said coolly, "Haven't you? Well, I have. Good day to you all."

She looked at Megan and said tonelessly, "Tom and I are—taking Letty home. We're leaving today, so this will be good-by—and—thanks for all you've done."

"Miss Martha, whom did you see that night?" Bob demanded sharply. "I can forbid you to leave, you know—I can hold you as a material witness—"

"A witness to what? I wasn't within a mile of the Stevenson place," Miss Martha pointed out. "Amos is my alibi, just as I am his. I'd say that he and I are the two people

knew I had to come and tell you about it, since telling you couldn't cause my poor Letty any trouble—now."

Bob nodded, sitting on the edge of the desk, his eyes fastened on Miss Martha's face.

"Amos, who saw the knife being hidden, spoke of a 'thing in white, about eight feet tall'—" he mentioned.

There was the faintest possible trace of a smile in Miss Martha's tired eyes.

"I know," she told him quietly. "It was a bright moonlight night and you never know who may be roaming around late at night in these parts," and for just the barest instant her glance flickered towards Megan and away. "I didn't want anyone to see me—you can understand that, of course. And it occurred to me that that old place would be an ideal place to hide something you didn't ever want found. But if somebody saw me—and recognized me, you see?"

Bob nodded. "Of course," he answered quickly.

"Well, Tom was with Letty," Miss Martha went on. "I slipped out into



Then she turned and hid her face against Megan, while the men waited.

the kitchen, got the knife, and a sheet out of the linen closet. I also took a good stout walking stick that I sometimes use when I go to the grocery—there are so many half-savage dogs around—and I put one of Tom's hats on the end of the stick, and held the stick above my head, under the sheet. I imagine I must have looked pretty fearsome. But, you see, I wanted anybody who saw me to think he was seeing a ghost—and if such things as ghosts exist, surely their favorite place would be something like that old overgrown garden. I never dreamed that anybody seeing me would stop long enough to see what I was doing—or, if he did, that he would report it to anybody."

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"A witness to what? I wasn't within a mile of the Stevenson place," Miss Martha pointed out. "Amos is my alibi, just as I am his. I'd say that he and I are the two people

who couldn't possibly have had anything to do with the murder."

"But you did see someone that night—" began Bob.

She met his eyes straightly and said coolly, "Did I?"

Megan drew a deep breath and said levelly, "You saw me, didn't you, Miss Martha?"

Bob flung her a startled glance, but Laurence's mouth only tightened a little.

Miss Martha looked straight at Megan and then she sighed and nodded. "Yes, I saw you," she admitted.

Bob said quickly, "Look here, Miss MacTavish, you haven't told me anything about being up there that night—"

"You didn't ask me!" Megan reminded him.

"I said that if you were in bed and asleep, you couldn't have heard a scream—"

Megan nodded. "And I said, no, I couldn't—but you didn't ask me if I had been in my bed asleep," she reminded him again.

"Who was with you?" he asked sternly. "Don't tell me you went out alone at that time of night."

Megan said quietly, "No, I wasn't alone. I was when I left the house. But when I reached the Ridge—Mr. Fallon was there and we talked a little while."

Bob asked abruptly, "Your father was involved with Mrs. Stevenson, wasn't he?"

Megan gasped as though he had struck her, and Laurence said sharply, "Hi, lay off, Bob. You have no right to ask her such a question."

Bob met his eyes squarely and said coolly, "Haven't I?"

"As her counsel—" began Laurence heatedly, but Bob's grin was cool, amused, and it silenced him.

Bob lit a cigarette, first securing permission from Megan.

And then he looked at Miss Martha and said very gently, "Miss Evans, just why did you kill Mrs. Stevenson?"

It was so unexpected, and the tone of his quiet, even voice was in such contrast to the thing he said that for a moment everybody in the room went rigid; and outside the door, in the shadowy hall, there was a smothered gasp from the unseen, but listening, Annie.

Miss Martha sat very quiet for a moment, her body held upright by her grip on the arms of her chair. Without raising her face she lifted her eyes and looked straight at Bob.

He was watching her quietly, steadily, and in complete silence.

After a moment, Miss Martha sagged back in her chair, limp and beaten, all her defenses down.

"All right," she said, her voice a mere thread of sound. "I did it."

Megan caught her breath on a strangled sob and swayed a little. And Laurence, without taking his eyes off Miss Martha's white, ravaged face, put his arm about Megan and drew her close.

"Why, Miss Martha?" asked Bob, very gently, with pity in his voice.

Miss Martha drew a hard breath and lifted her hands in a little gesture of helplessness before she gripped them once more about the arms of her chair. "I—hated her. She was a wicked woman. She made so much trouble for everybody. She had started spreading lies and slander about Tom. I was afraid that Letty might hear—in one of her periods of lucidity. Tom told me about the things she was saying. He had been foolish enough to go to her house one evening and face her with a story she was spreading about him and—Miss MacTavish—"

The tired voice died and she opened her eyes and looked at Megan and said faintly, "I'm—sorry, but I might as well tell you the whole story."

"So Mrs. Stevenson was broadcasting the fact that Miss MacTavish and Mr. Fallon were friends, and hinting that there was more to it than that, and you decided to have a talk with her—was that it?" Bob's gentle voice asked Miss Martha.

She rubbed her hands together as though the palms were damp and her voice steadied a little. "Yes, that was it," she said evenly. "And Mrs. Stevenson was curious about Letty's illness and she came prying and snooping. Tom and I knew that if the people here in Pleasant Grove knew that Letty was—of unsound mind, they might be afraid of her, for all that she was completely helpless, and that Tom might lose his job, or worse still, that he might be forced to—put Letty away in an institution. We couldn't bear the thought of that." Once more the voice died away, and without a sound Annie materialized beside Miss Martha's chair, offering her a glass in which there was some pungent-smelling, milky colored fluid.

Bob waited patiently until Annie had performed her act of kindness and had once more vanished, as silently as she had come.

"So you went to have a talk with Mrs. Stevenson," Bob prompted Miss Martha, his tone gentle and friendly.

"Yes," said Miss Martha, and now she was pleading the crisp percale of her housedress over her knee with twitching fingers, her eyes on the task.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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 October 20

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PAUL TRAINS FOR HIS LIFE WORK

LESSON TEXT—Acts 9:19b-22; 11:23, 26; Galatians 1:17-24
MEMORY SELECTION—And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.—Acts 9:20.

The regenerating grace of God had made Paul into a new man, one who now had no greater delight than telling others of the redeeming grace of God.

In preparation for that fuller ministry which was to follow, Paul first gave witness in the place where he had been persecuting the Christians, in fact, in the city to which he was bound when the Lord met him. But now instead of breathing out threats and violence he met these former associates and friends with the new message of the gospel.

He had to meet them sooner or later, and it was well that he met them now. A clean break with his past makes a man ready for future service.

I. Paul Faces His Past (Acts 9:19b-22).

What a surprise it must have been for those persecutors of the Christians at Damascus to find that the one to whom they had looked for leadership was now a Christian. What a testimony that was—right to the point!

"Straightway"—what a good word to apply to the servant of the Lord. Paul did not hesitate to declare his faith in Christ, to proclaim that the One who had redeemed him was able to save others.

It is the normal and proper expression of Christian faith to give testimony to others. That should be true of every believer. With Paul there was the added element of his call to preach, for God had ordained that he should be his chosen vessel for that purpose (Acts 9:15).

Paul's message was Christ. He proved to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ (v. 22), the One of whom their Old Testament Scriptures spoke and for whom they professed to be looking. He declared him to be the Son of God (v. 20).

They were unwilling to accept the message. They were "amazed" at Paul and "confounded" by the truth he proclaimed, but they rejected both it and him, and he had to escape for his life.

Although our lesson only indirectly refers to it (see Gal. 1:17, 18), it should also be noted that Paul went up to Jerusalem before he went to Antioch, as indicated in our next portion of Scripture.

There he faced suspicion on the part of the believers, who knew him as their enemy.

Having faced his past we now see that

II. Paul Faces His Future (Acts 11:23, 26).

He was God's chosen instrument to bear his name to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:15), and at the invitation of Barnabas he came up from his home city of Tarsus to minister at Antioch, the place which now became his real spiritual home, and the center from which his great missionary enterprise was carried out.

It is interesting to note how this came about in the providence of God. Persecution spread the believers abroad (Acts 11:19), and like the scattered brands of a beaten fire they carried the flame of Christianity far and wide. Thus the gospel came to Antioch, the third greatest city in the world of that day. A revival broke out and Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem to be of help.

Good and spiritual man that he was (Acts 19:23, 24), Barnabas did nothing to hinder this work of God, but admonished the people to "cleave unto the Lord"; that is, to follow him closely. Would that all spiritual advisers had such a spirit and such sound judgment.

He was also wise in sensing his need of help. So he went after Paul, the very man to teach these young Christians and to lead them out into a radiant and abundant life for the Lord. Here it was that the beautiful name of "Christian" was first used.

All this was possible because

III. Paul Faces His Lord (Gal. 1:17-24).

Many years after he had been called to Antioch, Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians to warn them against Judaizing teachers and to urge them to hold fast to salvation by faith. He declared this to be a message which he received from God and not from men.

Before Paul went out to preach and teach he went up into Arabia to be alone with the Lord, as he took what we might call his postgraduate course in theology. He learned—alone with God.

His life had been transformed. His attitudes had been completely changed. His thinking about Christ was diametrically opposite to his former beliefs. He needed time alone with God to prepare himself for the stormy but triumphant years ahead.

The Home Town Reporter in WASHINGTON

By Walter Shead
WNUN Correspondent

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Unpaved Feeder Roads Retard Farm Progress

PUBLIC Roads administration tentatively has considered approximately 200,000 miles of secondary farm-to-market roads to be taken into the nation's secondary highway system under provisions of the 1944 federal aid highway act. There is now available some \$600 million dollars in the second postwar fiscal year for this type of road.

Two hundred thousand miles seems like a lot of mileage. . . a stretch which would reach from New York to San Francisco some 66 times. Yet, viewed in the light of total mileage of these secondary or feeder roads, of which there are 2,400,000 miles and of which 1,400,000 miles are unsurfaced, it is only a step toward taking rural America out of the mud and dust.

This fact was pointed out graphically in a recent highway meeting by Charles M. Upham, engineer-director of American Road Builders association, who emphasized the fact that despite federal aid for farm-to-market roads, local and county road improvement is not keeping pace with mechanization of American farms.

"Improved year-round all-weather farm-to-market roads are as necessary to the people of the nation as the primary trunk lines," Upham said, and to back up his assertion he pointed to the fact that of the \$12,000,000,000 worth of farm production annually hauled to market, nearly the entire amount is shipped over secondary or farm-to-market roads to reach consumers of the nation.

As an example, he declared that in 1944 approximately 3,620,000 truck loads of livestock alone—some 56,000,000 cattle, sheep and hogs—were shipped to market over these secondary roads, good and bad.

Carry a Third of Traffic

Under the 1944 act a billion dollars a year in matched funds is made available to the nation's highway system, of which 30 per cent was apportioned to these secondary roads, 45 per cent to the federal-aid system or primary roads and 25 per cent to urban roads and streets. States reporting and asking for these matched funds indicate that 29 per cent of all needed construction work on highways is on the secondary and feeder road system. This is due largely to the fact that 34.5 per cent of the nation's vehicular traffic, measured in vehicle miles, is carried over these county roads serving 68,953,000 people or 52.3 per cent of the population of continental U. S. A. who live in the areas fed by these secondary highways.

Farmers of the nation are among the greatest road users, since agriculture uses 34 per cent of all trucks built, adding up to 1,600,000 trucks now on the farms of the nation, of which 1,100,000 are farm-owned and 500,000 are for-hire units handling farm products and supplies. So the food distribution system, so vital in these days of food shortages, relies almost entirely upon the secondary road system.

That congress has at last taken cognizance of the need for improvement of these roads is evidenced by inclusion of them in the highway-aid law. Lack of funds, which heretofore has kept many thousands of farmers in the mud, is no longer a valid excuse. Statistics show that only 45,000 miles of feeder roads have high-type paved surfaces; 99,000 miles have low-type bituminous surface; 788,000 miles have non-treated surfaces; 613,000 miles are merely graded and drained, and 861,000 miles are classed as "primitive." Despite the fact that 200,000 miles are tentatively considered for improvement, the rural highway picture is not too bright, and immediate action in bringing more mileage into the system for improvement is considered essential.

Highway Taxes Diverted

One of the disturbing factors in the farm-to-market highway picture and indeed in the entire field of highway construction, is the continued diversion of highway-user taxes to other purposes by the several states. Improvement is being made, however, since during the past 17 years 18 states have passed constitutional amendments to prevent diversion of these funds.

How these taxes have grown is indicated by the fact that under a registration of 29,485,880 motor vehicles in 1938, total receipts from all highway-user sources was \$388,625,000. In 1944, with a registration of 29,900,000 vehicles, only slightly greater than seven years earlier, receipts had grown to \$1,126,570,000, more than three times the amount collected in 1938. The average auto owner pays \$53.64 a year.

With federal aid added to state funds there should be plenty to take rural America out of the mud.

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On the way home he was taken to task for his failings by another member.

"Look here, Jones," the other said decidedly, "you're an ass! Why couldn't you keep quiet, instead of making assine remarks? I'm speaking to you as a brother—"

Loud laughter greeted him at this point, and for a moment he wondered why.

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How to help your child fight

FEAR OF DARKNESS



...as recommended in the interest of child welfare by Ross G. Anderson, Ph. D., Director of the Psychological Service Center of N. Y.

1 Fear of the dark is founded on a dread of the unknown. Many a grown man feels his courage ebb with the daylight. And to a child, whose limited experience makes him even more fearful, the dark can be filled with horrors which may affect his emotional adjustment.

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3 Encourage him to perform small tasks after dark, when he may use his "Eveready" flashlight, such as putting his toys away or getting something for you from a dark closet. Above all, never frighten him with "Boogymen"; appeal to his pride. Then he will accept darkness as just another part of the day.



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