

FOURTH INSTALMENT

SYNOPSIS

them, Mrs. Dane, who is hostess, varies the your am by unexpectedly arranging a spirit-yalistic seases with Miss Jeremy, a friend of by. Sperry and not a profusional, as the

At the first sitting the medium tells the details of a murder as it is occurring. Later that night Sperry learns that a neighbor. Atbur Wells, has been shot mysteriously. With Johnson he goes to the Wells residence and they find confirmation of the medium's account. Mrs. Wells tells them her husband that himself in a fit of depression.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

P-lieving then that something might possibly be hidden there, I made an savestigation, and could see some small objects lying there. Sperry brought ne a stick from the dressing-room, and with its aid succeeded in bringing out the two articles which were in strumental in starting us on our brief er adventurous careers as private investigators. One was a leather razor strop, old and stiff from disuse, and the other a wet bath sponge, now stained with blood to a yellowish

She is lying, Sperry." I said. "He iell somewhere else, and she dragged nin: to where he was found."

"But-wby?" don't know," I said impatiently "From some place where a man would be unlikely to kill himself, I daresay. No one ever killed himself, for inmance, in an op n hallway. Or stopped maving to do it.

We have only Miss Jeremy's word for that," he said, sullenly, "Confound it, Horace, don't let's bring in that

staff it we can help it." We wared at each other, with the strop and the springe between us. Suddeals he turned on his heel and went back into the room, and a moment later he called me, quietly.

"You're right," he said. "The poor devil was shaving. He had it half done. Come and look."

Ba: I did not go. There was a carale of water in the bathroom, and you picked it up?" took a drink from it. My hands

I haven't found anything.'

to the third floor, watching us.

She came down the stairs, a lean young Frenchwoman in a dark dress- "She knows something gown, and Sperry suggested that "She is frightened." she should have an opiate. She seized at the idea, but Sperry did not go down at once for his professional

You were not here when it occured, Mademoiselle?" he inquired.

dressing-room when you came in?" She could not lift him.

revolver on the floor also?"

To Sperry she showed, I observed, a slight deference, but when she in the ceiling."

"I won't do it. Miss Jeremy has

"A safety razor always. At least I on the souch, his thin face working. have never seen any others around."

"I met the detectives outside, doctor," he said. "It's a terrible thing. sir, "She's done it several times," he

up afterwards."

"You who washed up the stains?" admit them, and get them up quietly. "Stains? Oh, no, monsieur. Noth-goof the sort has yet been done." Sleeping," Sperry said briefly, and ing of the sort has yet been done." lielt that she was telling the truth, Hawkins went out. se far as she knew it, and I then

asked about the revoiver. kerd his revolver?"

traver of that table I suggested that the placed beyond the children's and he quite missed something down-

mean, was it locked?"

mit me. I left it unfastened."

so, for she added: "I am afraid to ever in his face. use the servants' entrance. It is dark

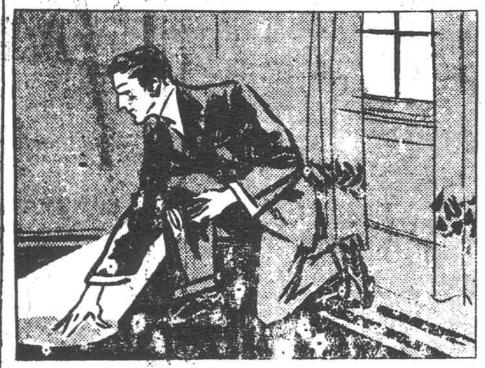
"The key is always hung on the nail sively. when they are out?"

The family is out a great deal, and it own, and with its personal problems, saves bringing some one down from "She's got to quit this sort of the servants' rooms at the top of the thing," he said savagely and apropos

'Do you recall how you left the was when we were going out, and front door when you went out? I after Hawkins had opened the front door for us. It had been freezing "No. The servants were out, and hard, and Sperry, who has a bad I knew there would be no one to ad- ankle, looked about for a walking stick. He found one, and I saw Haw-But it was evident that she had kins take a swift step forward, and broken a rule of the house by doing then stop, with no expression what-

"This will answer, Hawkins." "Yes, sir," said Hawkins impas-

And if I realize that Sperry was "Yes. If any one of them is out nervous that night, I also realize that t is left there. There is only one key, he was fighting a battle quite his



Sperry was on the floor, examining the carpet with his flashing it.

But I think my knowledge of the nard in her, and besideskey bothered her, for some reason. And as I read over my questions, certainly they indicated a suspicion that the situation was less simple than it of though. "My car brought her from appeared. She shot a quick glance at her home to the house-door. She was

"I. monsieur? Non!" Then her were shaking. When I turned around fears, whatever they were, got the but take Her'vert. I found Sperry in the hall, examining best of her "I know nothing but what you suppose he'll believe she had no the carpet with his flash light, and I tell you. I was out I can prove outside information?" now and then stooping to run his hand that that is so I went to a pharmacy; "But it was happening while we over the floor."

I told her that it would not be nec-How much of Sperry's proceeding essary for her to go to the pnarmacy, see how Herbert would jump on with the carpet the governess had and she muttered something about the that. seen I do not know. I glanced children and went up the stairs. When, I said irritably to him. "I intend to up and she was there, on the staircase Sperry came back with the opiate she go home, it is 1:30 in the morning." was nowhere in sight, and he was considerably annoyed.

"She knows something," I told him.

Sperry eyed me with a half frown. Now see here, Horace," he said. "suppose we had come in here, without the thought of that seance behind us? We'd have accepted the thing as it No, doctor. I had been out for a may be a dozen explanations for that way to the pharmacy to which the appears to be, wouldn't we? There walk." She clasged her hands. "When sponge, and for the razor strop. What in heaven's name has a razor strop Was he still on the floor of the to do with it anyhow? One bullet was "No, I daresay she couldn't. Was the revolver on the floor also?"

"Yes, dector. I myself picked it door key isn't hung outside on a nail sometimes?"

"We might look again for that hole

reply, I thought her expression slightly altered. At the time this puzzled
me, but it was emplained when Sperry
started down the stairs.

"Month do M. mins jeterny has
read of something of that sort, or
heard of it, and stored it in her subconscious mind."

But he glanced up at the ceiling

"Monsieur is of the police?" she nevertheless, and a moment later had asked, with a Frenchwoman's timid drawn up a chair and stepped onto it, and I did the same thing. We pre-I hesitated before I answered. I sented, I imagine, rather a strange sented, I imagine, rather a strange section of the circumstances.

In a marking a few indications.

I am making a few indications.

tion of the circumstances.

"I am making a few investigations,"
I told her. "You say Mrs. Wells was alone in the house, except for her husalone in the house, except for her huslier. Our search gradually centered lier. Our search gradually centered ethics." too, that we heard some one in the was a trust that they kept. "Every There was no doubt as to her sur
lower hall, and we had only a moment to put our chairs in place before the butler came in. He showed no sur
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butler came in. He showed no sur
was dead his jaw of the strip face working. on the souch, his thin face working.

terrible thing."
"I'd keep the other servants out of

Taxors in the bathroom."

The glanced toward the room and the glanced toward the room and shrugged her shoulders. "Possibly he shrugged her shoulders. I have not seen any,"

used others. I have not seen any,"

sheet, lifted the edge slowly, and then sheet, lifted the edge slowly, and then sheet, lifted the edge slowly. I'll The others are not back yet. I'll

I realize now that Sperry was-I am sure he will forgive this-in a "Do you know where Mr. Wells state of nerves that night. For ex"It his revolver?"

When I first came it was in the bilence to my doubt as to whether

awer of that table I suggested that Hawking had really a large and the state of nerves that night. For ex"And "That important bearing on the case. This

of nothing, as we walked all ig. "It's

"160 "She couldn't have learned about it," he sild, following his own trail brought in to us at once. But don't "Did you examine the revolver when you see that if there are other deelipments, to prove her statements see -well, she's as innocent as a child,

"Nothing here," he said in a low | I know, monsieur, he will tell you tone, when I had joined him. "At least that I used the teachhone there." anything to hide, it would have taken tune. An hour or so, perhaps. You can

But as it happened, I did not go into my house when I reached in. I was wide awake, and I perceived, on looking up at my wife's windows, that the lights were out. As it is her custom to wait up for me on those rare occasions when I spend an evering away from home, I surmised that she was comfortably asleep, and made

The night-clerk was in the prescrip-tion-room behind the shop. He had fired, and the revolver has one empty fixed himself comfortably on two "But yes. Of course. She was alone. chamber. It may not be the custom to stop shaving in order to commit his knee and a half-empty bottle of him. He did not waken until I spoke

"Sorry to rouse you, Jim," I said. He flung off the cover and jumped up, upsetting the bottle, which trickled stale stream to the floor. "Oh, that's all right, Mr. Johnson, I wasn't asleep, anyhow."

I let that go, and went at once to the object of our visit. Yes, he remembered the governess, knew her, as a matter of fact. The Wellses bought a good many things there. Asked as to her telephoning, he thought it was about nine o'clock, maybe earl-

"Oh,, see here," he said. "I can't very well tell you that, can I? This business has got ethics, all sorts of

He enlarged on that. The secrets "Mr. Wells was shaving, I believe, low and our long-distance examination when the - er - impulse overtook him?"

on this ornament, but the chairs were of the city, he maintained loftily, were in the hands of the pharmacies. It was at that time, him?"

When I told him that Arthur Wells was dead his jaw dropped, but there was no more argument in him. He

said. "I'll be frank with you. I got curious after the third evening, and called it myself. You know the trick. I found out it was the Ellingham house, up State Street."

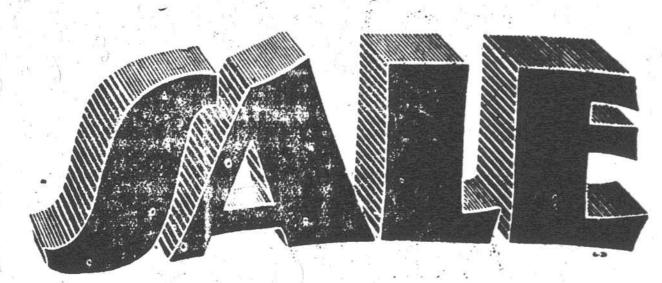
"What was the nature of the con-

"Oh, she was very careful. It's an open phone and any one could hear her. Once she said somebody was not to come. Another time she just said, 'This is Suzanne Gautier. 9:30,

"And tonight?" "That the family was going outnot to call."

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