

The HOLLOW

by Agatha Christie

Copyright, 1946, by Agatha Christie Mallowan Distributed by King Features Syndicate

Twenty-four Midge woke up abruptly on Monday morning.

For a moment she lay there, confused, her eyes going wildly toward the door, for she half expected Lady Angkatell to appear. What was it Lucy had said when she came drifting in that first morning?

A difficult week-end? She had been worried... had thought that something unpleasant might happen.

Yes, and something unpleasant was lying now upon Midge's heart and spirits like a thick black cloud. Something that she didn't want to think about—didn't want to remember. Something, surely, that frightened her... Something to do with Edward.

Memory came with a rush. One ugly stark word—murder!

Oh, no, thought Midge, it can't be true. It's a dream I've been having. John Christow, murdered, shot, lying there by the pool. Blood and blue water—like the fiasco of a detective story. . . . Fantastic, unreal. . . . The sort of thing that doesn't happen to oneself. . . . If we were at Ainswick, now, it couldn't have happened at Ainswick.

The black weight moved from her forehead. It settled instead in the pit of her stomach, making her feel slightly sick.

It was not a dream. It was a real happening— a News of the World happening—and she and Edward and Lucy and Henry and Henrietta were all mixed up with it.

Unfair—surely unfair—since it was nothing to do with them. Gerda had shot her husband.

Midge stirred uneasily.

Quiet, stupid, slightly pathetic Gerda— you couldn't associate Gerda with melodrama—with violence.

Gerda, surely, couldn't shoot anybody.

Again that inward uneasiness rose. No, no, one mustn't think like that. . . . Because who else could have shot John? And Gerda had been standing there by his

side with the revolver in her hand. The revolver she had taken from Henry's study.

Gerda had said that she had found John dead and picked up the revolver. . . . Well, what else could she say? She'd have to say something, poor thing.

All very well for Henrietta to defend her—say that Gerda's story was perfectly possible. Henrietta hadn't considered the impossible alternatives.

Henrietta had been very odd last night.

But that, of course, had been the shock of John Christow's death.

Poor Henrietta—who had cared so terribly for John!

But she would get over it in time—one got over everything. And then she would marry Edward and live at Ainswick—and Edward would be happy at last.

Henrietta had always loved Edward very dearly. It was only the aggressive, dominant personality of John Christow that had come in the way. He had made Edward look so—so pale by comparison.

It struck Midge, when she came down to breakfast that morning, that already Edward's personality, freed from John Christow's dominance, had begun to assert itself. He seemed more sure of himself, less hesitant and retiring. He was talking pleasantly to the glowering and unresponsive David.

"You must come more often to Ainswick, David. I'd like you to feel at home there and to get to know all about the place."

Helping himself to marmalade, David said coldly:

"These big estates are completely farcial. They should be split up."

"That won't happen in my time, I hope," said Edward, smiling. "My tenants are a contented lot."

"They shouldn't be," said David. "No body should be contented."

"If you had been content with tails—" murmured Lady Angkatell from where she was standing by the sideboard, looking vaguely at a dish of kidneys. "That's a poem I learned in the nursery, but I simply can't remember how it goes on. I must have a talk with you, David, and learn all the new ideas. As far as I can see,

one must hate everybody, but at the same time give them free medical attention and a lot of extra education, poor things—All those helpless little children herded into schoolhouses every day—and cod liver oil forced down babies' throats whether they like it or not—such nasty-smelling stuff."

"Lucy, Midge thought, was behaving very much as usual.

And Gudgeon, when she passed him in the hall, also looked just as usual. Life at The Hollow seemed to have resumed its normal course. With the departure of Gerda, the whole business seemed like a dream.

Then there, was a scrum of wheels on the gravel outside and Sir Henry drew up in his car. He had stayed the night at his club and driven down early.

"Well, dear," said Lucy. "was everything all right?"

"Yes, the secretary was there—competent sort of girl. She took charge of things. There's a sister, it seems. The secretary telegraphed to her."

"I knew there would be," said Lady Angkatell. "At Tunbridge Wells?"

"Hexhill, I think," said Sir Henry, looking puzzled.

"I dare say—" Lucy considered Hexhill. "Yes—quite probably."

Gudgeon approached.

"Inspector Grange telephoned, Sir Henry. The request will be at eleven o'clock on Wednesday."

Sir Henry nodded. Lady Angkatell said:

"Midge, you'd better ring up your shop."

Midge went slowly to the telephone.

Her life had always been so entirely normal and commonplace that she felt she lacked the phraseology to explain to her employer that after four days' holiday she was unable to return to work owing to the fact that she was mixed up in a murder case.

It did not sound credible. It did not even feel credible.

And Madame Alfregge was not a very easy person to explain things to at any time.

Midge set her chin resolutely and picked up the receiver.

It was all just as unpleasant as she had imagined it would be. The curious voice of her vitriolic employer came angrily over the wires.

"What lth that, Mith Hard-cathle? A death? A funeral? Do you not know very well I am short-handed. Do you think I am going to stand for these excu-teth? Oh, yes, you are having a good time, I darethay!"

Midge interrupted, speaking sharply and distinctly.

"The poleth? The poleth, you thay?" It was almost a scream. "You are mixed up with the poleth?"

Setting her teeth, Midge continued to explain. Strange how sordid that woman at the other end made the whole thing seem. A vulgar police case. What alchemy there was in human beings!

Edward opened the door and came in, then seeing that Midge was telephoning, he was about to go out. She stopped him.

"Do stay, Edward. Please. Oh, I want you to."

The presence of Edward in the

AIRPORT TRANSFER IS BEING SOUGHT

Commissioners To Ask Bluethenthal Formal Transfer

An effort to expedite formal transfer of Bluethenthal airport from the federal government to the New Hanover board of commissioners' meeting when members agreed to request R. B. Page, Wilmington publisher, to intervene.

Page, it was reported, will receive instructions from the commissioners to confer with Senators Umstead and Hoey in Washington, D. C. on the transfer.

Page, who earlier consented to the request provided written instructions were given him by the commissioners, was also expected to take action on the VHF (very high frequency) radio range at the field.

Commissioner Harry Gardner made the request to the board to have Page act as representative for the county while in Washington and to push for speedy enactment of the measure which will name the county owners of Bluethenthal.

ONE DIVORCE DECREE GRANTED IN COURT AT OPENING SESSION

Testifying that her husband was addicted to narcotics, Maggie Williamson, smartly dressed brunette, was granted a divorce yesterday by a jury in Judge Leo Carr's court in New Hanover county.

It was the only civil matter to come before the opening session of the July criminal term.

The woman, who said she was a beautiful and the mother of a 19-year-old son, was granted the decree from Preston Williamson, a World War I veteran. She said that upon occasions during their 27 years of married life, spent mostly in South Carolina, he had threatened to kill her if she divorced him.

"I don't know where my husband is," she related. "I heard last March that he was in California."

DIAL SYSTEM SWITCH

Wrightsville Beach telephone subscribers will have new numbers for their telephones at 12:01 a. m. Thursday, as part of the switchover to the dial system at the resort, it was reported yesterday.

Wilmington subscribers calling Wrightsville Beach will dial 8 as before and then dial the number listed in the new directories rather than give the operator a number.

The new directory has been delivered but all customers have been cautioned against using them for calling Wrightsville until after the time the exchange will go on the dial system.

room gave her strength—counteracted the poison.

She took her hand from where she had laid it over the receiver.

"What? Yes, I am sorry, Madam. . . . But, after all, it is hardly my fault."

The ugly raucous voice was screaming angrily:

"Who are thethe friendth of youth? What thort of people are they to have the poleeth there and a man shot? I've a good mind not to have you back at all! I can't have the tone of my establishments lowered."

Midge made a few submissive noncommittal replies. She replaced the receiver at last, with a sign of relief. She felt sick and shaken.

"It's the place I work," she explained. "I had to let them know that I wouldn't be back until Thursday because of the inquest and the—the police."

"I hope they were decent about it? What is it like, this dress shop of yours? Is the woman who runs it pleasant and sympathetic to work for?"

"I should hardly describe her as that! She's a Whitechapel virago with dyed hair and a voice like a corn-crake."

"But, my dear Midge—"

Edward's face of consternation almost made Midge laugh. He was so concerned.

"But, my dear child—you can't put up with that sort of thing. If you must have a job, you must like one when the surroundings are harmonious and where you like the people you are working with."

Midge looked at him for a moment without answering.

How explain, she thought, to a person like Edward? What did Edward know of the labor market, of jobs?

And suddenly a tide of bitterness rose in her. Lucy, Henry, Edward—yes, even Henrietta—they were all divided from her by an impassable gulf—the gulf that separates the leisured from the working.

They had no conception of the difficulties of getting a job and once you had got it, of keeping it! One might say, perhaps, that there was no need, actually, for her to earn her living. Lucy and Henry would gladly give her a home—they would with equal gladness have made her an allowance. Edward would also willingly have done the latter.

But something in Midge rebelled against the acceptance of ease offered her by her well-to-do relations. To come on rare occasions and sink into the well-ordered luxury of Lucy's life was delightful. She could revel in that. But some sturdy independence of spirit held her back from accepting that life as a gift. The same feeling had prevented her from starting a business on her own with money borrowed from relations and friends. She had been too much of that.

She would borrow no money—use no influence. She had found a job for herself at four pounds a week and if she had actually been given the job because Madame Alfregge hoped that Midge would bring her "smart" friends to buy, Madame Alfregge was disappointed. Midge sternly discouraged any such notion on the part of her friends.

(To Be Continued)

Matter Of Fact

By Joseph And Stewart Alsop

MEMO FOR MR. TABER

WASHINGTON, July 21—The Congressional session is closing with bad auguries for the future. All Secretary Marshall's immense prestige had to be employed, like a majestic trip hammer, to drive into the head of Representative John Taber the urgency of Greece's need for aid. Representative Clarence Brown and others of the extreme right have simultaneously unveiled a sordid little scheme to mix tax politics and foreign policy. And Secretary Marshall had hardly left the Capitol before members of Congress were hopefully hinting that Marge shall had exaggerated his grave warnings to paint a picture clear enough even for the myopic eyes of the great economist.

The contrast between these evidences of fatty complacency on Capitol Hill and the true state of affairs abroad is what makes Washington an uncomfortable place nowadays. While large numbers of members of Congress have hanker to return to their native square of court-house gang politics, the Soviet Union has now embarked on completely open political and economic warfare, and on a world scale. The Greek crisis is only one aspect of this much broader situation, of which the novel feature is the absolute lack of concealment of Soviet purposes.

Furthermore, the grand target of the Soviet attack is the United States, the land of the Browns and the home of the Tabers. This country's vital interest in the distant Greek crisis may at first seem difficult to grasp, but the reports from abroad of the Soviet methods of dealing with the Marshall plan should be sufficient to make Soviet purposes completely clear to all. The Soviet press, the Communist press in Europe, and the Soviet diplomats seeking to dissuade other nations from participation in the Paris meeting on the Marshall plan, have all frankly dealt with this country as the rival that must be pulled down. Three main points have been made.

First, in flowing tribute to the influence of the Browns and Tabers, they have warned all those interested in Secretary Marshall's offer that our Congress will never provide funds for European reconstruction. The disregardfulness of Congress with foreign aid and its extreme conservatism, are both being used as bogies to convince Europe that the Marshall plan will be dealt with this country as the Soviet representatives and journalists, who need western Europe's manufactured goods and can pay in food and raw materials.

Second, they have also said that if the Marshall plan works at all, it will become an engine of American economic imperialism in Europe.

And third, they have hinted with amazing frankness, in more than one European capital, that America may be militarily strong today, but that in ten years Soviet research will have mastered all the new weapons. At that time, it is suggested, non-cooperators will have dire reasons to regret their error.

At the same time, Secretary Marshall's bold initiative has forced the Soviets to make certain concessions, both in their own zone of Europe and elsewhere. One such was the last-minute promise to the British trade-negotiators, personally dictated by Stalin, to supply Britain with a million tons of wheat in exchange for manufactured goods next year.

Without this, the anti-American pro-Soviet element of the British press would have had to shut up shop for good. Almost more significant were the earlier promises to deliver 40,000 tons of grain to Finland and 80,000 to relieve the dreadful starvation of Romania. These deliveries are to be immediate, despite the low level of rations in Russia.

And besides making concessions, the Soviets have also been forced to move into new and much more aggressive positions. This is the true meaning of the extraordinary Czechoslovak episode. The Communists now control the Czech government as the largest parliamentary party, but they have been losing ground for months with the electorate. The average Czech wishes to maintain relations with the West. Thus even the Communists in the cabinet of Premier Klement Gottwald at first did not object to sending an observer to the Paris meeting.

Then Gottwald was summoned by the Kremlin, and told off with ruthless brutality, probably at the very moment while his hapless foreign minister, the non-Communist Jan Masaryk, was informing an American journalist by telephone from Moscow that a Czech would still go to Paris. Gottwald relayed the orders to Prague by telephone, and the cabinet bowed before the necessity of a command from on high. But throughout Czechoslovakia as a whole, according to reliable dispatches, this evidence of absolute subservience has left a feeling of bitterness and humiliation unparalleled since the tragic time of Munich.

This can have only one meaning. If the Communists are to retain control of the government at the elections next year, they must use in Czechoslovakia the same tactics that put Hungary in their hands. An open attack on the relatively free Czech government will be aggression with a vengeance. But these are developments which must be expected, when all out political and economic warfare is being waged. In the long run, they will only be serious if complacency and ignorance prevent recognition of the political and economic warfare, and abort the obviously necessary counter-measures.

Copyright, 1947, New York Tribune, Inc.

NEGRO GETS 10 - 12 YEAR PRISON TERM

Stiffest Sentence Of Day Went To Charlie Kelly Yesterday In Court

Ten to 12 years in state's prison, by far the stiffest sentence of the day, yesterday went to Charlie Kelly, 21-year-old Negro, on charges of high-way robbery and assault with intent to kill.

Judge Leo Carr passed out the sentence after the pint-sized youth pleaded guilty and after two witnesses had testified that the defendant held them up at the point of a pistol the night of May 30 following a gambling game in a Wilmington shoe shine parlor.

Declaring that he still carried a bullet in his side as the result of the stickup, Josh Jackson, 33, Negro, told of handing over \$1.50 to Kelly.

Willie Robinson, 24, Negro, said that the defendant took about \$11 from him but overlooked \$40 that he had concealed in his wallet.

Verdell Kee, 18, Negro, drew 12 months in state's prison. She pleaded guilty to taking about \$2,000 in jewelry from the home of Mrs. Beverly Moore at Wrightsville where the girl was employed as a domestic for four days July 7.

Jo Hicks, the girl's mother, and Carrie Howard, her step-mother, testified in behalf of the defendant.

Lee Tart, Negro, broke into a marine sergeant's room at Carolina Beach and carried away all the man's clothes and money leaving his room with only his bathing trunks, Police Officer Floyd Whitman testified.

Tart drew two years on the county road after police testified he had been convicted twice previously in county court. Clothes and cash valued at more than \$50 were taken, Whitman said. The sergeant did not appear in court, Solicitor Moore explained, as he had been instructed the case would not be tried until today.

John Davis, 17, Negro, was turned over to the probation officer for investigation on a charge of larceny and receiving and breaking and entering. Elizabeth Frank, Negro, operator of a store near Wrightsville, said the youth broke into her establishment and took one package of cigarettes and a half dozen bottles of beer.

JUDGE CARR SEES NEED FOR CLOSER COUNTY INSPECTION

More time on the inspection of institutions, operations of department and the general conduct of county government was advanced by Judge Leo Carr yesterday in his instructions to the New Hanover county grand jury as the July term got under way.

At the same time, he said that violation of gambling laws should be carefully considered. When time should be spent on indictments, he declared that he "sometimes thought that more time should be spent on making recommendations."

The court pointed out that it is the duty of jurors to determine "if officers are performing their duty well."

He pointed out that schools and school buses of the county should be inspected as well as a survey and inspection of the county farms and courthouse offices.

Those serving on the Grand Jury are J. D. Bordeaux, L. L. Dock, foreman, John Tingo, R. W. Butler, F. H. Parker, Abram Simeon, Elmore T. Hinnant, James Clemmons, H. E. Canady, James Moskowitz, J. L. White, Stone Pulliam, B. J. Morris, R. S. McKeithan and Walter Goodwin.

Russell Pyle was sworn in as special officer to the jury.

Millions of trees are raised yearly for local markets and for export at nurseries in Casanov Valley, N. Y., famed as a center for fruit and ornamental tree culture.

Backache Whipped By Man and Wife

Advertisement for Cystex medicine.

If you suffer from Backache, Leg or Rheumatism pains, Nervousness, Swollen Ankles, Burning Passages, Bladder Weakness, or Getting Up Nights, due to non-organic and non-systemic Kidney and Bladder troubles, you may easily enjoy the delightful benefits experienced by thousands who have depended on Cystex for such troubles. The following letter from a well-known Massachusetts housewife is typical of those received from Cystex users all over the world: "I was so laid up with pains in my back, legs and arms that I was miserable. Finally I decided to try your Cystex. In a couple of weeks I was like a new person, the pains had left and I could walk anywhere. My husband had pains in his arms, took Cystex and the pains left." Trial Offer: To prove what Cystex may do to bring you joyous help from the life-sustaining due to above mentioned Kidney and Bladder troubles, get Cystex from your druggist and give it a fair trial exactly according to the simple directions. Unless completely satisfied and delighted with the improvement, your money back is guaranteed. So don't suffer another day without trying Cystex.

This trip fly NATIONAL

4-engined Buccaners

NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA NORFOLK

Direct Flights to Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville, Miami and New Orleans with connections to all Florida and Havana. You get everything when you fly National—speed, comfort, convenience, courteous service. All recognized air travel cards accepted. See your travel agent or call 22821

NATIONAL AIRLINES

THE ONLY DOMESTIC AIRLINE OPERATING EVERY FLIGHT FROM NEW YORK WITH 4-ENGINE EQUIPMENT.

RATS

Let Orkin keep your building free of destructive Rats by scientific

RAT CONTROL and RAT PROOFING

418 N. FRONT ST. DIAL 9542

Since 1901

ORKIN

COMPLETE PEST CONTROL

AN ELECTRIC PUMP IS TOPS FOR BETTER LIVING

When you think of service... Think of Us!

OUR BUSINESS is making friends, through the best possible service for Lincoln and Mercury owners. That's why we've invested heavily in providing efficient and modern service facilities—to give you the kind of service you have every right to expect.

Plan to stop in soon... see the newest Lincoln and Mercury models in their new styling, new colors, new interiors. And when the time comes for a service check-up for your Lincoln or Mercury motor car, remember—when you think of service, think of us!

It's Our Way Of Making Friends!

OCEAN MOTOR SALES, INC.

David S. Harriss, General Manager

114 N. Second St. Phone 2-0569

TIDE WATER POWER COMPANY

Serving South Eastern North Carolina

With an automatic electric water pump you can install an automatic hot water heater—and automatic washing machine and many other appliances that make for Better Living—and think of the added convenience!

See your dealer for the electric water pump to suit your needs.