

# WOLF IN MAN'S CLOTHING by MIGNON G. EBERHART

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The fleeting glimpse I had of the cat reminded me of a very trivial thing I had forgotten up to then. "Why, yes," I said. "As a matter of fact there was something."

Alexia stopped yawning so suddenly her jaws snapped together and Maud's scorn changed to alert interest. I went on. "There was a kind of bump against the closed door to my patient's room."

"Bump?" exclaimed District Attorney Soper.

"Yes. Something in the hall struck against the door."

"Something? What?" cried the D. A. "What was it? Didn't you go to the door and open it and look?"

"Yes, I did open the door and I saw..."

I stopped again on the verge of saying I had seen Nicky coming from a room down the hall. But that was wrong. I had seen Nicky, but that was before something—whatever it was—had struck against the door and struck so sharply it roused me and the cat.

"No, that was wrong, too; the cat had already aroused, as if he heard someone in the hall. The bump against the door had come later. And when I had got to the door and opened it no one was in the hall."

"The District Attorney said, 'Well, who did you see?' Who did you see?"

"I didn't see anyone. I don't know who it was. I saw nothing."

"But you..." began Soper explosively, and Nugent said, "All right, Miss Keate. We believe you." His eyes looked very narrow and green. He went on quickly, "You were in the library when you heard the sound of something falling. What did you do?"

"I ran upstairs," I told him of it again, briefly, and brought forward what seemed to be, up to then, a bit of new evidence, or at least a new fact. That was the matter of Craig's being found in the linen closet, unconscious and bleeding from a bruise on his temple.

"He says somebody was in the hall and struck him," I explained.

The District Attorney interrupted. "Who?"

"He said he doesn't know. But if someone did that it proves there was an intruder, a—a thief..."

"But he said he was in the hall when he was struck," said Soper, looking a little impressed with his own astuteness, and very pompous. "You say you found him in the linen room?"

"I did. Or rather Miss Cable found him there first." Again I glanced toward Drue, again no one questioned her. "Someone must have dragged him into the linen closet and left him there. A man, I mean."

"A woman could have done it," began Soper, and Nugent cut in rather quickly. "I'll question Craig Brent later," Soper frowned, tapped his stomach and began again briskly. "Now then, about Conrad Brent's business affairs..."

That did not take a very long time; everyone I think has concluded that Conrad's business affairs were in good order and in any case it would be an easy matter for them to find out through his bank-

ers and his lawyer. There seemed to be, however, little question on that point. He had been a rich man, living well within an income which was, certainly, on the more or less lavish side. Only later inquiry could confirm it, but just then there seemed to be no reasonable doubt but that his affairs were perfectly sound.

Nothing however was said of his will—which seemed to me another omission. After that they went into the matter of alibis—very cautiously, very suavely, so one didn't at first realize the exact trend of all their detailed questions of time. In the end, however, so far as I could see, no one really had an alibi except Craig.

Nicky, at least, had admitted his presence in the morning room when Conrad returned. Had he seen Drue? Was he going to tell of her interview with Conrad? There was no way to know and no way to read Nicky's enigmatic face.

At length the District Attorney observed, rather pettishly, that there was no alibi, really, for murder by poison, looked impudently at Nugent and looked at Maud, who looked back at him and shook his head, only a little, almost imperceptibly, but as if he'd said, "Wait—not yet."

I saw that. And I thought I prepared myself for it. I didn't really; no one does against catastrophe. But I knew that it was coming; they had asked about a hypodermic, so they had seen that tiny red mark on Conrad Brent's arm. They had searched Drue's room and mine and had taken away the little bag in which she carried instruments and the few drugs she had, so they knew she had a supply of digitals and knew she didn't have a hypodermic—as I had and as any nurse normally would have. They had established the fact that Conrad's medicine was gone, box and all, so he couldn't have taken it himself.

They wouldn't have far to look for a motive, or a witness of sorts, either, for Nicky must have seen Drue going to the library even if, for any purpose of his own, he did not then admit it. Above all, the look Soper and Nugent exchanged admitted a previously agreed-upon purpose.

So they had not yet questioned Drue. My feeling about that was right. Obviously they thought that it would weaken her to have to sit there before them and hear the case built up—possibilities eliminated, circumstances set forth so they were indisputable. They had questioned her, as if all my muscles had tightened hard. I felt that I had to look at Drue and I wouldn't.

It came sooner than I expected and it was worse. Maud at last brought the thing to its ugly climax. She said, interrupting a question as to any possibility of the medicine box having been empty and thrown away by Conrad himself, previous to his attack, "None-sense!"

Everyone looked at her. She said again, "That's utter nonsense! Conrad never would have done that. He always kept a supply of digitals on hand. Besides, as Claud has already told you, his prescription had

been refilled only three days ago. He hadn't had an attack since, so it was a full, new supply. And I don't see why you don't get to the point. He was given a hypodermic, you know that; Claud saw what he felt sure was the mark and told me. Nobody but a nurse would have given him a hypodermic—a nurse or a doctor, and Claud wasn't here. And you know who had a motive."

I asked quickly, "A hypodermic mark?"

Nugent glanced at me and Maud stopped, shooting a black look at me. Nugent said, "Do you want to say something, Nurse Keate?"

"Yes, I don't see how anyone, even a doctor, can make a positive statement about the mark made by a hypodermic needle. It is very small; frequently so small that it can't be seen at all. The skin is elastic and instantly closes after the needle is withdrawn."

Maud's eyes snapped. "It frequently shows, too."

I shrugged. "I don't question Dr. Chivory's statement to the effect that he found some sort of small mark that might have been made by a hypodermic needle. I do question anyone being able to say with any degree of certainty that a well-defined pinpoint is the mark of a needle."

"Miss Keate," frowned Maud. "You are not here to question the veracity of the doctor you are working for!"

"It's the plain truth. Ask anyone."

Maud whirled around toward Nugent. "Dr. Chivory's word has never been questioned. As I was about to say, it is obvious that only one person in the house had a motive. That was Drue Cable."

"Mrs. Chivory..." began Nugent, but he went on so vehemently that her right little body jerked; her black eyes glared in little bursts from one to the other of us.

"She must have come down to the library to see him; to try to persuade him not to make her go. He had told her she must leave today. She threatened him, yesterday afternoon. I heard her and so did you, Nicky. You heard her say, 'I could kill you for this.' I know exactly what happened. She came to the library and she accused him of breaking up her marriage. Conrad had an attack and asked her for medicine; she went to the desk and—and took the medicine away, pretended it was gone. So Conrad, dying, begged her to help him. She was a nurse. How could he know what she would do..."

"Stop! We'll get a lawyer. You can't accuse..." I rose and Nugent was at my side, his hand tight on my arm. Drue looked like a ghost, with great dark eyes fastened on Maud. There was a shadow of a smile on Alexia's lips. Maud swept on vigorously, black eyes snapping. "So she gave him a hypodermic of digitals and she gave him too much. It killed him. She thought it would never be traced. That's how it happened..."

(To be continued)

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## The Child Nail Biter

By LOGAN CLENDENING, M.D.

IT IS VERY flattering to have people ask you how to stop a child from biting its nails, as if you had the answers to such questions in your vest pocket and could cure Johnnie, or Susie, of this habit when Father, Mother, Uncle Jim, Dr. Clendening will answer questions of general interest only, and then only through his column.

Grandma and the neighbor lady had nearly driven themselves crazy for years trying by threats, tears, persuasion, appeals and everything that has ever been suggested to stop it. It seems a very little insignificant thing to balk the medical profession, but they are just about as helpless as anyone else in the presence of this habit.

In fact the only scientific inquiry into the subject known to me was made by a school teacher. He noticed early in his career when he was assigned to a grade school situated in the melting pot section of a large city that while in general the cleanliness of the hands of most of his pupils left something to be desired a few had beautiful clean fingertips. He soon found why. They were accustomed to put them in their mouths, either for sucking or nail biting purposes. Making a count of them he found that the number who did this was about 40 per cent of the class. The girls were slightly more numerous than the boys.

**No Improvement**

Being, as he says, as naive as the next person he first asked them politely to refrain from doing so. Needless to say this made no improvement at all. He had conversations with them. None of them knew why they did it. Most of them admitted it was a bad habit, and they all wished they could stop. But they didn't.

As years went on he got a new class every year, but in spite of the fact that the pupils changed,

the habit was found to be present just the same in the same proportions of new pupils.

In short, it is a habit. And "a habit is not a trifle," according to Plato Montaigne said, and the Duke of Wellington saw him and raised him and said, habit is ten times nature. Since the habit is ingrained in 40 per cent of children of primary school age the responsibility for stopping it rests on parents who can get it in its very incipiency. It probably becomes established almost in the cradle. Psychiatrists may tell you that it is an imitation of the sucking reflex, but that doesn't help much. The fact remains it is a habit and must be broken up early if it is to be broken up at all.

**Use of Quinine**

An old well-established remedy was to put quinine, or something bitter on the ends of the fingers. The school teacher to whom I have referred got the consent of most of the parents to try this and he put a saturated aqueous solution of quinine on the ends of the fingers. The children were given this treatment until they had stopped biting the nails for one week. After this period had gone by most of the pupils had been conditioned to give up the habit. But if after the third day's application was made no improvement was noted, it was found best not to persist as continuation only made the habit more stable.

The teacher was afterwards advanced to a high school and continued his studies. He found that about 30 per cent of his pupils were active nail biters, and about 35 per cent reported that they had once been but gave it up. In the higher grades the percentage still further decreased, so it may be assumed that with the social pressures of adult life the habit does decline almost to the vanishing point. Most of the high school pupils said they did it only under excitement. An exciting movie would start them.

SCOTT'S SCRAP BOOK

By R. J. SCOTT

SCRAPS

2,000,000 SOMERSAULTS

TAKKENBERG, A DUTCHMAN TRAVELED FROM AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND, TO MARSEILLES, FRANCE BY TURNING SOMERSAULTS

CAN YOU NAME THE SEVEN SEAS?

THE ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC OCEANS, THE INDIAN OCEAN, THE NO. AND SO. ATLANTIC AND THE NO. AND SO. PACIFIC

THE FIRST HONEY BEES BROUGHT TO AMERICA CAME FROM GERMANY AND ITALY

THE OLD HOME TOWN

By STANLEY

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE COUNTED HANK'S VOTES WE COULDN'T MAKE HIS NAME COME OUT A WINNER...

GUESS WHO'LL BE THE FIRST SHOOTER!!

BACK ROAD FOLKS... —THE POST MORTEM—

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Those Boys Need You

YOU NEED HIM! HE NEEDS YOU!

BUY WAR BONDS!

THIMBLE THEATRE—Starring Popeye

"THE ENEMY LOSES FACE!"

AN ENEMY BATTLESHIP BEARING—ZERO ZERO ZERO BATTLESHIP? (HM?)

SHE'S OF THE SKUNKO CLASS (YES THE SKUNKO CLASS)

WE WASTED OUR TORPEDOES THEY WILL NOT PENETRATE HER ARMOR

HM?

WELL I'LL HAVE A LOOK

BLONDIE—(Registered U. S. Patent Office) "A SATISFIED CUSTOMER."

By Chic Young

I BOUGHT A SET OF ENCYCLOPEDIAS TODAY SO I CAN ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS THE CHILDREN ASK ME INTELLIGENTLY

HISTORY, SCIENCE, ASTRONOMY, BIRDS, BEES AND BUTTERFLIES—EVERYTHING! THEY CAN'T STOP ME NOW!

DADDY WHO WAS MY FATHER, WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE BOY?

LET'S SEE—NOW WHAT WOULD THAT BE LISTED UNDER?

ETTA KETT

By PAUL ROBINSON

I'M SORRY WE TIFFED

ME, TOO! LET'S KISS AND MAKE UP

WELL, AT LEAST LET'S MAKE UP. LISTEN, YOU'LL SHOOT ME FOR STICKING IN—

IF IT'S ABOUT THE CAROL PETTWEEL CASE, I'M FED UP!

WHEN YOU ASK HER ANY QUESTIONS SHE SHUTS UP LIKE A CLAM WITH LOCK-JAW!

THE BEST WAY TO CLUSE HER WOULD BE TO TURN HER OVER YOUR KNEE AND GIVE HER A GOOD WHAMMING!

HANG ON TO YOUR TEETH—I'VE GOT NEWS

THE GUMPS—GROUNDED!

FLIGHT'S CANCELED! SEE, BABY? EVEN THE ELEMENTS ARE TRYING TO WARN YOU OF THE MISTAKE YOU'RE MAKING—

THEY'RE NOT WARNING ME—THEY'RE SIMPLY PUTTING STUMBLING BLOCKS IN MY PATH TO HAPPINESS—

OK! YOU INCURABLE DARLING! IF YOU'RE SO SET ON GIVING UP YOUR CAREER JUST TO BECOME MRS. JON STARDUST I'LL TURN THOSE STUMBLING BLOCKS INTO STEPPING STONES!

HELLO, GRANTE 2-1234? LET ME SPEAK TO THE FLY PLEASE!

## Marine Nursemaid



MARINE Pfc. Mike Hartley, Mobile, Ala., lives up to the tradition of the Corps that it can readily have the situation well in hand. Here he cares for a native baby on Guam while the child's parents are being treated at a medical post. Marine Corps photo. (International)

## THESE ARE HITLER'S BABY SNIPERS



WHEN SNIPERS OPENED on Yank troops just outside of Aachen, a round-up of suspects resulted in the capture of this quite extraordinary quartet—four youngsters, ranging in age from 8 to 14, who were being groomed as Hitler's future "supermen." The lads had an American M-1 and a German rifle which they had placed on wooden platforms, because the weapons were too heavy to lift. The boys and their pistols are being held by the authorities. Signal Corps photo. (International)

## SUPPLIES AND MEN POUR ASHORE ON LEYTE



THE HISTORIC DEFEAT of the Jap Fleet in the waters about the Philippines has opened the way for the landing of great numbers of men and vast amounts of military equipment on the island of Leyte. Pictured here are some of the supplies and troops on a tree-lined beach. U. S. Coast Guard photo. (International)