

MURDER IS FORGETFUL

CHAPTER III
 Synopsis:—John Saxon, private investigator, and his partner, Moe Martin, were hired by the wealthy "Hardware" Smith, to watch their daughter, Irene Smith. Irene's husband has been murdered and Irene suffered from amnesia. When they arrived at the estate they were met by Kay Smith, daughter of Irene. She explained that her father was killed and her mother wrecked and injured. Irene, when she saw Johnny, called him Bart and chided him for being away so long. Apparently he was believed to be someone in her past.

Johnny stood up, walked over to the Great Dane, bent down and rubbed his ears. He looked at the girl. "What about that book or something she was supposed to be writing?"
 "None of us ever knew anything about the book mother was writing," said Kay. "We haven't been able even to find it."
 Johnny's eyes were thoughtful. "People with a real story, they want to get down on paper, are like that," he explained. "It's sort of a personal thing they don't want people prying into."
 Johnny said, "Who was that young fellow who was on the beach with you?"
 "Oh, him?" She smiled. "That's Ralph. Ralph Dunkirk. He lives over in Northport. I've known him a long time," she said. "He works in his father's garage over

in town," and the brief smile swept from her face.
 "Anything wrong in that?" asked Johnny. Her change in manner puzzled him.
 Kay said stiffly, "That's where they took father's car after the accident. It's there now."
 "Of course." He held a lighter for her cigarette. "Is Northport far?"
 "It's quicker going right across the harbor. We have a speedboat. Use it anytime you like." She inhaled deeply, and reached down to pat Michael's head as the dog stood up and nuzzled against her slim figure. "I'd better change."
 "Kay . . ." Johnny delayed a moment, and the girl turned, looking at him, "Kay, there's one thing. . . Your mother and father . . . they got along all right together?"
 He thought her unusual green eyes flickered. "Mother loved father intensely. It was always that way."
 She met his eyes and there was something taut about her manner.
 "You've noticed it, haven't you? You've noticed the way I act when I speak about father. Don't say you haven't. I can tell!" The pitch of her voice raised slightly. "Well, I'm not afraid to tell you. He's dead now and I have . . . no regrets! Mother never knew. She loved him the way few women ever love a man. She trusted him. And yet he was deceiving her all the time. Now

do you understand, Mr. Saxon?" Kay's eyes were dark green with sudden fury. "I despised him!"
 He was still thinking about it when he located the room.
 It was at the rear of the left wing of the mansion. The hallway ended at a screened doorway that led out to a balcony. Glancing out, Johnny could see numerous bedrooms facing on this balcony.
 Johnny closed the hall door behind him and went into the bathroom. Moe was beneath the shower, his round, cherubic body red from the cold needle spray. Eyes closed, he had his face pushed up into the cold blast and was slapping his chest like a baboon. Each slap was accompanied with a yip.
 "A deaf mute could find this room," called out Johnny.
 Grinning, Moe stepped out of the tub and yanked a heavy turkish towel from a rack. "This sure is a swell place to work," he said with pleasure. He rubbed himself vigorously. Though round and pudgy looking, he was solidly built. He nodded beyond Johnny. "Have a drink."
 On a bench in the large, tiled room was a round silver tray containing bottles and glasses. There was a tall square bottle and several bottles of beer.
 "Homer brought it up," explained Moe as Johnny poured himself a glass of beer. "You sure get service around here."
 Moe wrapped the large towel around his midriff and led the way back into the bedroom. "They've got everything in this house," he told Johnny. "All you have to do is flick the right switch." He pointed to a boxlike affair built into the front of a table between twin beds.
 The gadget was like the inter-office speaker systems used in business houses. "Handy, huh?" said Moe. "Some day we'll install one at the office. It must be nice to have money."
 Wooden handles rattled within a booth clothes closet somewhere in the big room. Then Moe's voice, somewhat muffled within the closet, said "Do you think it's an act?"
 Johnny stirred himself, shaking off drowsiness. "What do you mean — act?"
 "I mean . . . with Irene?"
 "Of course not," said Johnny. "Then she's really got amnesia?" asked his partner, coming out of the closet. He was wearing pale blue shorts and an undershirt now.
 "There's no question," said Johnny. "She's been examined by one of the best doctors in New York."
 "What did Irene tell you?"
 "Nothing. She doesn't know what it's all about. It's almost like a person walking in their sleep . . . but talking at the same time."
 "Then she doesn't remember a thing about her husband being shot?" Moe carried some more clothes into the closet and hung them up. He came back, noted the whisky which filled the bottom of the tumbler in Johnny's hand, and helped himself to a similar drink from the tray. "Doesn't she know that her husband was murdered that night?"

"She doesn't even know she had a husband," he said.
 Moe stared.
 "In fact"—a smile flickered across Johnny's face—"she thinks I'm someone named Bart."
 "I'll be darned!" said Moe. Then seized with a thought, "Now, if we can only find who Bart is —"
 Johnny nodded. He got up and walked over to the windows again and stood there looking out toward the balcony. "But I don't think there's anyone named Bart. Otherwise, somebody around here would have heard the name in the past."
 Then there was a sharp, impatient knock at the hall door. Before Johnny Saxon could even start toward the door, it burst open and the wiry little man popped into the room.
 The fellow spying Johnny moved toward him quickly. "Got any pennies?" He demanded in his shrill voice.
 Reaching into his pocket, a smile flickering across the corners of his mouth, Johnny pulled out some change. Several pennies were in the palm of his hand.
 The old man's hand darted out, picked up the coins. Examining them swiftly, he returned two and kept two. These he put into the pocket of his baggy jacket.
 "Thanks," he said hurriedly, and went out of the room.
 Moe Martin stood looking thoughtfully at the door. Then he turned to Johnny. "That," he announced "was Grandpoppa Smith! Worth probably several million dollars. Yet he bums pennies, imagine!"
 Johnny said, "He collects things—including keys." His eyes questioned. "How'd you know about him?"
 Moe Martin said, "Hannah—she's the cook—was telling me about Grandpoppa. Hannah's a good source of information."
 Turning back to the window, Johnny saw that Karen, the tall dark-haired nurse, had come from the bedroom doorway directly across the courtlike space formed by the two rear wings of the house.
 At first he thought Karen might be fixing the chair for Irene Smith, but immediately she reappeared with a magazine in her hand. She sat down in the reclining chair and started flicking the pages.
 Behind him, as he finished dressing, Moe asked, "What's so interesting out there?"
 Johnny said, "Moe, there's something I want you to do."

"Yeah?"
 "That nurse — Karen—who is taking care of Irene . . . see what you can find out from her. Where she's from. How long she's been here. Things like that."
 He turned. "There's another thing . . . you'll recall there was a guard at the main gate when we entered the estate. Find out if they have any other watchmen or guards around. I mean, anyone who is supposed to see that strangers don't enter the Smith grounds."
 Moe said, "I thought we were hired to guard Irene Smith?"
 "Dammit," Johnny said. "I'm not going to stay up night and day on this case. Besides, I'm not a twenty-five-dollar-a-week nursemaid. We're being paid to find out exactly what happened the night her husband was murdered. For that, they're paying plenty."
 "I guess we'd better get to work then," Moe said, disturbed.
 "I'm working right now," snapped Johnny. "I'm watching that nurse."
 "OK," said Moe, heading for the door, and it was obvious that he was slightly mixed up by Johnny's remarks.
 Johnny stood near the screened doors. He decided, finally, that the nurse, Karen, was not reading the magazine at all. Instead, she was sitting there in the chair and watching this bedroom. She still held the magazine in her hands, but he knew from the angle at which she held it, she could not possibly read the type.
 A moment later there was a soft chime-like sound in the bedroom.
 Johnny moved across the room. There was a small, hand-carved writing desk near one of the twin beds. The telephone handset rested atop the desk and was the same light tan color of the walls.
 "Yes?" said Johnny quietly, picking up the receiver.
 "This is Kay, Mr. Saxon," the girl said.
 "Yes, Kay?"
 "Uncle Thomas phoned. He was delayed on the way out from New York, so now he's continued right into Northport. He wants to know if you could meet him over there for a few moments?"
 "All right," said Johnny.
 "I'll meet you down at the boathouse in ten minutes." She hung up.
 He reminded himself that "Uncle Thomas," as the girl called him, was footing the bills on this case. The least Johnny could do

Scottville News
 Jack Frost made his first appearance at Scottville, Saturday night.
 The farmers of this section are very busy cutting and pulling cane fodder.
 Miss Freida Atwood, of Glade Valley high school, spent the week end at home.
 Mr. Hazel Atwood, of Cherry Point, has been visiting relatives in this community the past few days.
 Mrs. E. B. Shepherd visited Mrs. W. L. McMillan, Sunday.
 The home demonstration club met this month with Mrs. W. L. McMillan. Miss Crosby discussed and demonstrated how to make gloves. Next meeting is to be with Mrs. H. L. Austin.
 Rev. Grace Jones has been holding a series of meetings on was ride across the lake and keep the appointment.
 Before he left the room he glanced through the screened doors again. Karen, the nurse, was still seated outside the bedroom across the balcony. From this distance, Johnny could not tell whether her eyes were open or not. His guess was that they were.
 After Kay had called Johnny, asking him to meet her at the boathouse, he found Moe firmly entrenched in conversation with Hannah, the cook. Johnny pulled him away from a thick peanut butter sandwich long enough to tell him what was going on. "And keep your eyes open, pal," he admonished.
 (To be continued)

VISIT IN VIRGINIA
 Among those visiting at Grant, Va., last Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. Gilmer Jones and family, Mr. and Mrs. James E. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Weaver, all of Elon College; Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Jones, Loyd Dean Jones, of Warrentonville; Mrs. Denton Jones, of Warrentonville and her brother, W. T. Young, of Madison, Nebraska. They visited at the home of C. M. Young. This was the first time Mrs. Jones had seen her brother, W. T. Young in thirty-three years. A reunion is planned for him at Greenwood church.
 Cranberry this past week.
 Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Atwood, Jr., have returned home after visiting Mrs. Atwood's father, Mr. Baker, at Crumpler for several weeks.
 Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Koontz, of Warrentonville, visited at the home of E. B. Shepherd, Sunday.
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