



The MAY DAY MYSTERY

By Octavus Roy Cohen

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SYNOPSIS

Antoinette Peyton, senior at the University of Michigan, sends Pat Thayer, her brother, to investigate the mysterious disappearance of a young man, Tony Peyton, who is believed to be in the vicinity of the University of Michigan. Tony Peyton is a young man who is believed to be in the vicinity of the University of Michigan. Tony Peyton is a young man who is believed to be in the vicinity of the University of Michigan.

CHAPTER III—Continued

"There's something funny. . . . And I think the more we say nothing the less well we get mixed up in a scandal."

There was a sound of feet on the stairway inside the fraternity house. The boys looked toward the door in time to see Max Vernon come out.

His manner still puzzled them. The housewife face was sternly set, giving it a somewhat grotesque appearance of feline anger. He was moving with short, quick strides across the veranda.

He was wearing a different suit from the one which had adorned his figure a half hour since and he seemed even more engrossed with thoughts of no highly pleasant nature.

He descended to the walk without so much as a glance at Farnum and Gleason. They noticed that under his arm he carried a sizable bundle. They saw him reach his car and pitch the bundle into the tonneau. Then, with more speed than gear, Vernon jumped behind the wheel, kicked the starter, and his gears savagely and jerked into the road.

"Something's puzzling me," remarked Rubie slowly.

"What?"

"Which is the most remarkable phenomenon: Tony Peyton's visit to Pat Thayer's room, or Max Vernon's wild-eyed fury. I ask you, Phil—which?"

Gleason gave a prompt and exact answer.

"Both," he said tersely.

CHAPTER IV

LY WELCH emerged from the woman's dormitory and confronted her brother, Larry, gazing at her with big-brotherly affection, found it difficult to reconcile himself to the idea that any affair of the heart in which he was concerned was to be taken seriously. But her first words sounded the alarm.

"I know exactly who I've come, Larry. It's to tell me I've got to quit Pat Thayer. The answer is that I won't do it."

The tolerant smile died on his lips, and he frowned slightly.

"Why, Ivy?"

"Because I love him. And I guess I'm old enough to know my own mind."

"Not about a man like Thayer, Ivy."

She stamped her tiny foot. "Tony Peyton has been talking to you, hasn't she? She's been telling you full of poison. She's jealous, that's all."

"No-o," he answered soberly. "How do you know?"

"I know it!"

"Humph!" Ivy spoke with the superiority of womanly intuition. "I guess she's got the whole pulled over your eyes. Look, I guess I know that she was jealous when she caught us in the tower. I mean I could tell by every single word she said."

"She isn't jealous, Ivy. I feel confident of that."

"Yes; because you're crazy about her—that's why. You take my advice, Bud, and lay off her. She's playing you off against Pat. I guess I understand this better than you do."

"No. You've got to quit Thayer."

Her lips pressed tightly together. "Since when did you start telling me I must do?"

"It's for your own good."

"Oh, yes; because a jealous woman wants the man who's crazy about her to quit. And because she's got you fooled. Honest, I never would have thought Tony Peyton could be so small and mean."

"She isn't that, Sis; believe me. I know what I'm talking about. She told me a good deal."

"—About this afternoon?"

"About other things."

fraternity house and turned in at Pat Thayer's.

"Pat Thayer?" he asked.

"Yes. . . . upstairs."

"Then, when he had entered the house, they looked at one another bewildered. The affair was too puzzling for mere conversation. Occasionally one would shake his head, but speech was not necessary. Each knew that the other was thinking in riddles.

"I'll say this much," commented Gleason after a five-minute silence: "Pat Thayer has sure gotten popular with a mixed crowd."

"Yes," agreed Rubie. "Or unpopular?"

For five minutes more nothing happened. Then, at ten minutes past two o'clock, Larry Welch appeared in the doorway.

He crossed the veranda with quick strides and descended to the walk in a single jump. The two boys stared after him, then directed their glances toward each other.

"Happy lad!" commented Gleason.

"He looked almost scared."

"Ain't it the truth? You reckon—"

"I don't reckon anything. All I know is I'd hate to have Larry Welch as sore at me as he seems to be at somebody right now. I never knew that bird could get real angry."

At fifteen minutes after two o'clock, . . . almost before the mellow chiming of the quarter hour had died out from the tower, Old Main . . . something terrible, something eerily terrible, something which jarred the two students to their feet and caused cold sweat to break out on their foreheads.

From upstairs in the fraternity house there came a wild shriek; an inhuman howl. There was an instant's pause and then the howl was repeated and there was a sound of feet running heavily down the stairway on the summer air certain words came to the startled ears of the two boys.

"Oh! G—d . . . oh, my G—d!"

"Even I ask you not to!"

"Even then. Now listen!"

She stepped close and put her hand on his sleeve. "I know you mean well, Bud, but you're all wet on this. Pat is a swell fellow. And he's crazy about me."

"Not that bird?"

"Stop!" Unconsciously, she became quite melodramatic. "I'm not going to let even you talk about 'Pat' that way."

"Now? I guess if I know he's rotten, I'll guess if I know he's rotten."

"Oh. That isn't fair, Larry. It isn't. You're being nasty about Pat and you don't know anything. Well, I guess he's told me all the bad things about himself that anyone else knows, and I love him. I'm going to keep on going with him, and I won't have you interfering. He's said positively stick with Pat. Now—

are you going to leave us alone?"

"I mean this," she said slowly. "If you try to keep Pat Thayer and me apart, I'll marry him."

"You'll what?"

"I'll marry him."

"But—but you can't."

"Because you say so?"

He cursed himself. He wished he hadn't told Tony that he'd keep her secret.

"You—You just can't, that's all," he said lamely.

"No-o," she was afeared with indignation. "I'm going to ask him myself if he'll marry me! And don't think I don't mean that, Bud—because I do it!"

He stared at her for a minute. She was his sister—and he knew that she was serious. He sensed the futility of further argument and turned away abruptly. She jumped in front of him, her eyes blazing.

"Where are you going, Larry?"

"His face was more grim and forbidding than she had ever seen it."

"I can't hammer any sense into your head, Ivy—so I'm going to see Pat Thayer."

"Oh . . . you wouldn't dare! You'll be starting something!" She was trembling violently and her face was pale with anger. "I warn you, Larry—you'll be starting something."

He moved away. "You're darn right I will," he said sharply.

She stood like a little statue as he strode off down the path which led through the glen and so to the hill opposite. He tried to think clearly; tried to rid himself of the prejudice which must necessarily arise because Tony Peyton was the only woman in the case. One thing was clear to him in that moment of sobriety: he must see Thayer immediately. There must be a stern downward. He couldn't handle Ivy, but his teeth clenched as he reflected upon the fact that he could mighty well handle Pat Thayer.

Actually, Larry experienced an exultation at the prospect that Thayer might not be easy to handle. Ivy had roused more than he knew. He was boiling internally, and he wanted a vent for his overwrought feelings.

Rubie Farnum and Phil Gleason were still lounging on the veranda of the Psi Tau Theta house. It was Rubie who saw Larry first.

"Here comes Larry Welch looking like someone had socked him below the belt. If precedent means anything, he's coming straight here. Then I see he is dead and something grab me right here—"

He touched his throat with a dramatic gesture. "I cannot breathe. I cannot more. I am scared."

"You—You mean somebody really grabbed you?"

"No!" Mike's eyes rolled with terror at the very thought. "I mean I feel as bad like somebody does that I am scared. I am frightened. And I run downstairs."

Gleason looked up. "We'd better phone the police, Rubie. If we don't call the cops we'll get ourselves mixed up in this. And I guess we'd better 'phone the dean, too."

Gleason walked unsteadily into the fraternity house and called the Marland police station. Then he telephoned to the dean and returned to the porch.

It was a ghastly thing—made even more grisly by the perfect day; the sensuous, flower-scented breezes of first summer; the carefree, strolling groups of students; laughter and jollity and careless youth. And amidst the body of a young man lying dead. Murdered. It was unbelievable. The two young men were appalled by their own knowledge of surrounding circumstances. There was so much they knew which might prove damning.

A small car jerked to a halt in front of the fraternity house and two men alighted. One of them was tall and broad and wore the uniform of the Marland police force. The other, wearing civilian clothes, was short and stout.

Students strolling on the flow or lounging on the verandas of fraternity houses, started with sudden interest at Psi Tau Theta. There was a general movement in the direction of the house. A young man from Lambda Beta Pi addressed the uniformed policeman who stood on the lawn of Psi Tau Theta.

"What's wrong, officer?"

"The cop answered tersely. "Murder."

"Good G—d. . . . You don't mean . . ."

"I don't mean nothing, young fellow. Somebody's been murdered in yonder and nobody's to go in or get out. That's all."

The startled young man told his companion. The news spread from lip to lip. Who was it? No, not Rubie Farnum; he had been seen on the porch. Then somebody mentioned Pat Thayer. Many persons mentioned Pat Thayer. No one knew where the rumor started, but Thayer's name was on every lip. The policeman on the lawn allowed the body to approach within hearing distance of the group on the veranda; the militant, positive fact of John Reagan, chief of the Marland plainclothes force; Mike Carmichael, the janitor, petrified with fear and trembling violently; Rubie Farnum, tall and lisp and frightened; Phil Gleason, reduced from his customary alertness to the shriveled miniature of his usual positive self.

Reagan was questioning Farnum. Rubie was struggling to be fair and honest; to remember things and yet to avoid injustice to anyone. He was absolutely and abysmally miserable.

Then there emerged from the Main building a tall and dignified man before whom a group gathered in the throng of students. Whitman Boyd, dean of Marland, turned in before the tragic fraternity house and was promptly stopped by the policeman on duty.

"No further for you," snapped the officer.

Dean Boyd spoke quietly. "Are you in charge, officer?"

"No. That'll be John Reagan, yonder. And he gestured toward the veranda.

"Will you ask him if I may speak to him? I'm dean of the college and I'd like to find out what has happened."

The policeman called out to Reagan. "This guy is the big boss. Chief. Can he come up?"

Reagan's keen eyes surveyed the dean. He jerked his head affirmatively.

"Let him through."

The dean mounted the veranda steps, his arrival sending a glow of thanksgiving through the breasts of Phil Farnum and Phil Gleason. He spoke directly to Reagan.

"My name is Whitman Boyd," he said quietly. "I understand that someone has been killed."

"Murdered. Young fellow named Thayer."

"Good G—d! Then it's true—I heard the students gossiping."

"You're heard nothing else?"

"No. That's why I came. To find out."

"Well—he's dead all right enough. Stabbed in the throat. That's plain as in that room."

The dean shook his head. "What do you wish dear, Mr. Reagan?"

"I'd exactly nothing," said the detective crisply. "Right now I'm gonna 'phone headquarters for a couple more harness bulls to police the grounds. Nobody's to come in here and no one's to leave. These three fellows ain't to move from where they are."

"You mean," gasped Gleason, "that we're under arrest?"

John Reagan grinned broadly. "Not yet you ain't, young fellow. But don't get impatient. I'll be right back."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Greenleaf's Name

Greenland was discovered by Norsemen about 900 A. D. It is a tradition that the name Greenland was given to it by Eric the Red in 985, for the purpose of attracting immigrants from Ireland by the attractiveness of the name.

"I stand there for a minute. Two minutes. I do not understand that Meister Thayer what is so kind to come here to me to a sad ending. Then I see he is dead and something grab me right here—"

He touched his throat with a dramatic

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SALADA
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1/2 lb. . . . 37c
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PLUMS
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can

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ROAST
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Veal Loin Chops . . . lb. 32c

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TOMATOES . . . lb. 15c

LARGE SIZE—FLORIDA VALENCIA
ORANGES
DOZ. 29c

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