

# THE MAY ALL STERY

by OCTAVUS ROY COHEN

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CHAPTER X—Continued

—14—

She did not indulge in dramatics. She merely sat very still and her body seemed to get cold as ice. She stared at the huge figure opposite.

Harvey met look for look. And she, searching the moonlike face for a vestige of reassurance, saw nothing but grim honesty.

"Then," she gasped, "you think Larry killed him?"

"I can't say that, Miss Peyton," he amended gently. "I do believe that he lied when he said Thayer was alive when he left. And now I know why."

"Why, then?"

"To shield you. He had just learned your secret. He knew probably that you had been to see Thayer. And if he didn't kill Thayer, then he found the body when he got there and thought you had done it. It's a situation as old as romance. But at any rate, it was a pretty fine thing for him to do, because by his own admission Thayer was alive while he was there, which makes it certain that he must have done the killing."

"He couldn't do a thing like that—even in a fight."

"It wasn't you."

"Is that—that a question, Mr. Harvey?"

The big man smiled slightly. "I don't know. Do you?"

"I didn't kill him."

Harvey rose and shook his head. "This ain't your clerk, Miss Peyton. If I'm to believe what I hear, you didn't kill him and neither did Larry Welch. It almost looks like if I carry the investigation far enough I'll find out he ain't dead."

Suddenly he started forward: "I'm sorry, Miss Peyton, I didn't mean to crack any jokes. Honest, I didn't. I'm just a d-d blundering jackass."

Out in the courtyard of the jail, John Reagan turned admiringly to his companion.

"I'll hand it to you, Jim; you're a marvel. But how in h—do you do it?"

"Oh! I dunno, John. Shooting square with 'em, maybe. And maybe it's because they look me over and decide I'm no d—sucker. I couldn't understand a— if I heard one."

"Hm. . . And now?"

"What do you think, John: Welch or Miss Peyton?"

"Neither," snapped Reagan. "It was Max Vernon, just like I said at first. It happened this way, and I'll bet a nickel that it was. Peyton went there just like she said. Then Vernon went to Thayer's room and killed him—not meaning to kill him when he was in, maybe. He was doing it in a fight. Larry Welch gets there a little later and finds the body. Thinks Tony did it. Pulls the trigger. What do you think of that?"

"Sounds reasonable," commented Jim guardedly. "Anyhow, I reckon there ain't any objection to letting Welch and Miss Peyton out on bond, is there?"

"None, whatever," agreed Reagan. He rubbed the palms of his hands together. "I feel like we're getting somewhere at last."

"So do I," grinned Jim Harvey. "I think I'm puzzled about this: Where?"

## CHAPTER XI

HARVEY gazed at the gray walls of the jail and nodded as though having reached a startling conclusion.

"I believe our next move, John, is to have a talky-talk with Mister Maxwell Vernon."

"Good Lord! Has it taken you all this time to think of that?"

"Uh-huh. My brain was never string on speed."

Reagan was earnest. "Quit kidding, Jim. Why did you leave this palooka for the last?"

"Because I wanted to hear what everybody else had to say. From what you tell me, Vernon is lying high, wide and handsome, and I wanted to form some idea about what was truth and what wasn't."

"Sensible enough. Let's go."

Vernon was seated on his cot. He had doffed coat and tie, and his shirt was open at the throat. His long black hair was somewhat tousled and his chubby face wore an expression of benevolence. His whole manner—even before a word was spoken—was combative.

Jim seated himself and smiled lazily at the prisoner. He felt rather sorry for the boy, fat, good-natured, easy-going. . . and now suddenly enmeshed in a tragedy which he couldn't quite understand. Jim's voice came soothingly.

"Things been happening pretty fast, ain't they, Son?"

Vernon looked up sharply. "What things?"

"Oh, plenty."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Shhh! Sure you do."

"I haven't anything to say, Mr. Harvey."

"Well, what do you know about that? I haven't asked you anything, have I?"

"No, but—"

"Listen to me, Son: answer me one question."

"What is it?"

"Did you kill Pat Thayer?"

Vernon's eyes closed. He pulled himself together with a visible effort.

"No."

"Then I think you better talk to me plain and honest. Of course, if you did kill him, the best thing you can do is keep your mouth shut. Now—what say you?"

"Nothing. I'm not going to talk."

"A right, I ain't gonna argue with you. It's reached inevitably for the golden toothpick. "Swell new car got you, Son?"

Vernon was stonily silent.

"Swell car," repeated Harvey. "Sure wish I could own one like that. But I wouldn't go buy one like that. I'd have a row with another man."

"I don't know with anybody."

"No? Not even Pat Thayer?"

"No, not even Pat. Boyishly, he was struggling to keep actual tears from his eyes. "You're trying to trap me, I know! And I'm not going to let you. Not anything at all!"

"That's up to you, Son. But suppose you tell me this: What happened between you and Thayer in the fraternity house day before yesterday somewhere about one o'clock in the afternoon?"

"In the fraternity house? Nothing happened."

"You went to his room, didn't you?"

"No."

"Aw, Son! You know dog gone good and well you went to Pat Thayer's room. Now why don't you tell us what happened?"

"I didn't go near his room," cried Vernon harshly. "I went to my own room and changed my clothes and then I left the house. I never saw Thayer for a moment all the time I was in there."

Jim shook his big head. "I hate to see you fighting me, Son, when I'm trying to help."

"Like I—I you are! You're trying to—"

"Hm. . . And now?"

"What do you think, John: Welch or Miss Peyton?"

"Neither," snapped Reagan. "It was Max Vernon, just like I said at first. It happened this way, and I'll bet a nickel that it was. Peyton went there just like she said. Then Vernon went to Thayer's room and killed him—not meaning to kill him when he was in, maybe. He was doing it in a fight. Larry Welch gets there a little later and finds the body. Thinks Tony did it. Pulls the trigger. What do you think of that?"

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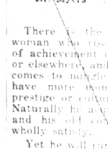
## Old Friends Are Best When Fame Comes, Myers Asserts

By GARRY C. MYERS, PH. D.  
Head Department Parent Education Cleveland College, Western Reserve University.

It always has seemed to me a of your old friends with of course, mark of genuine character in a person having won distinction, to remember those who were the playmates of his childhood. I have known one man, however, who seems to like this, who seems to prize these old friends, however, I think the advice all others. Often times, I have seen the fondly remembered comrades are forgotten or at least are not remembered.

There is a young man, or woman, who has had a record of achievement in his community or elsewhere, and on that account has come to meet with those who have more money, more social prestige or cultural opportunities. Naturally he attracts new friends, and his old companions are wholly forgotten.

Yet he will run across them occasionally. He will come back to the old home place, or he will have the chivalry and refinement of the old friends to make him feel that he is not alone. He will find that the old friends are still there, and that they are still the same. He will find that they are still the same, and that they are still the same.



Dr. Myers

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