

"The dirty, lying, double-crossing skunk!" exploded Warren Demster. "Wait here a moment while I go down to my safe for something that will explain everything—"

He hustled away, biting his lip with fury, and Paul Terhune could hear him slamming doors as he passed through the house.

Victim Number Two

THE detective sat back in his chair and gazed thoughtfully out of the window. What did that outburst mean? What did that reference to Max Hargreaves mean?

Sitting there, inhaling the fresh breeze that came through the partially-opened window, Paul Terhune fancied he heard low, sweet music somewhere in the vicinity.

He looked round to see if there were any chiming clocks in the room, then realised it was not so much a chiming as a whistling that he heard.

It was faint and eerie, low and melodious, with long, repeated notes. It was impossible to tell how far away it was.

Then it stopped, and Terhune shrugged his shoulders. He had more important things than music to think about.

Time passed, and the detective frowned. He had gathered that Demster was only going to be a few minutes. He had been a quarter of an hour already.

Terhune waited for another ten minutes, then rose and paced the room. It was strange that Demster should keep him like this. If he could not find what he wanted, surely he could send a message to say he would be delayed.

The detective could hear the servants moving about the house. Everything seemed to be going on as usual.

In all Terhune waited forty-five minutes, then pressed a bell beside the fireplace. A maid arrived a few moments later.

"Do you know what has happened to your master?" asked Paul Terhune. "He left me three-quarters of an hour ago and said he would be back in a few minutes. Do you know where he is now?"

The girl looked wonderingly round the room.

"N-no, sir. We thought he was in here with you. We've seen nothing of him. Where did he say he was going, sir?"

"He said he was going down to his safe," snapped the detective. He was wondering if for some reason Demster had slipped out of the house and bolted. "He was getting something to show me."

The maid's face brightened. "Then I'll go and see if anything has delayed him, sir. Those stairs down are very steep. Maybe he's slipped—"

She went out, and Terhune sat down. As he did so a scream rang through the house, and

examination showed him Demster was quite dead, and many of the bones in the neck had been crushed by terrific pressure.

Furthermore, printed in the flesh round the throat, slowly fading out, was a diamond-shaped design.

He had been killed in exactly the same way as Sir Andrew.

Warren Demster had left the detective in one room and had walked to meet his death in the basement. Whatever he had

Paul Terhune returned to the cellar.

It was difficult to see how the murderer could have hidden down there without being seen by Demster as he came down the stairs, for the light was bright. There were no hidden corners.

Furthermore, how had the killer got away again? There was only one door to the cellar, and to get there he would have needed to pass either the kitchen door, which had been open, or come across the hall, where the maid had been dusting nearby.

The only other opening to the underground strongroom was a ventilator from the garden and this had a metal grid with no opening more than two inches square. Paul Terhune climbed up and pulled it. It was cemented in strongly.

Suddenly he sniffed at his fingers which had tugged at the ventilator and sniffed. There was the same slightly musty smell which he had detected in the bedroom of Sir Andrew Fothergill.

"Strange! Queer!" he muttered, and crossed over to the body, stooped down, and sniffed carefully.

Again there was the same faint odour attached to the upper portion of the man's clothes.

"I wish I could place that smell," grunted Paul Terhune. "It's something I've smelled before—but where?"

Five minutes later the local police arrived, and twenty minutes afterwards Detective-Sergeant Woods was on the scene.

The Cutter In The Creek

IT was not until the early evening that Paul Terhune was able to get back to the little Golden Trout Hotel, where he had left Max Hargreaves.

He felt rather guilty about having left Hargreaves unaware of what was going on but he had been so busy he had not had a moment's time to get in touch with him.

Having had no sleep all the previous night, Terhune managed to snatch a few hours during the afternoon after going over the house thoroughly with Woods. Now he felt comparatively fresh.

He and the Scotland Yard man had discovered no clues.

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HARRY THE HORNET SAYS:

THE RALEIGH "EXPLORER"

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when he rushed from the room he saw the maid tearing towards him, face as white as chalk.

"Sir! Oh, sir, he—he's lying at the bottom of the steps near the safe, and he looks awful!" she screeched.

The detective gripped her by the arm. Doors were opening elsewhere, and more servants came out.

"Show me where!" he ordered, and after passing along two passages the girl pointed to stairs leading to what might have been wine cellars.

An electric light blazed at the bottom. Evidently Warren Demster kept things of great value at his home, for in the cellar a huge safe was built into the wall.

The safe door was still closed. Outside it, twisted in a frightful attitude, lay Warren Demster.

Only one swift glance was needed to tell Paul Terhune he had been strangled.

He had been stooping to open the safe when he had been attacked, for the combination lock had not yet been operated, though the flap which protected it from dust had been turned back.

Knowing the importance of not moving a body until every possible clue had been obtained from its position, Terhune did not disturb it, but a closer

been going to tell Terhune was now lost—unless there was something in the safe which could give a clue.

The terrified servants were all women. Terhune asked sharply for Larry, the manservant he had heard about, and learned he had been given three days' leave of absence to go and visit a sick brother in Lancashire.

Terhune phoned the local police, then put through a second call to Detective-Sergeant Woods, who had just come in with his report about the Fothergill affair.

Knowing that would bring the Yard man at top speed, Terhune proceeded to question the four maids and the cook.

All, with the exception of the one maid who had answered Terhune's bell, had been together in the kitchen for the past hour. Each could confirm the others' statements.

As for the one young maid, she had been dusting in the breakfast room, which opened off the hall, and she swore that nobody had crossed the hall while she was there.

There were no other folk in the house. Demster was a bachelor, and lived alone.

Telling them on no account to leave until the police arrived,