

## Painted Lips

By A. M. F., H.S. '31

MRS. Glench descended from her limousine. She was a tall, slim woman who took great pains in her toilette—she was the last word in elegance and perfumes. Now in her prime of life, she had become loquacious as most of her sex are, and remarkably careful of her purse-strings. The day before, her husband gave her a box for the opera and she lost no time in inviting Mrs. Irving, an old classmate and very close friend, and Mrs. Jackson, her neighbor. On their way to the opera, sophisticated Mrs. Glench found out she had left her purse at home and as the tickets were in it, they had to drive back.

Turning to her friends she said: "I won't be long, my dears. I will be back with my purse in a few minutes." With this, she mounted the low, marble steps, opened the portal of her stately mansion and vanished from their sight.

Five minutes elapsed—ten minutes—but Mrs. Glench had not returned. Mrs. Irving began to show signs of impatience, and advised the chauffeur to blow the horn. Another five minutes passed and still no Mrs. Glench.

"Come," said Mrs. Irving; "Something is the matter; let us see what detains her."

The two entered the mansion. In the corridor, they met Jane, Mrs. Glench's maid.

"Mrs. Glench?" the latter queried in surprise, as they inquired for her. "I did not know she is here. Will you follow me, please?"

She led them upstairs, and asked them to wait as she approached her mistress's room. Jane knocked at the door. No answer. She opened it and stepped in. The room was lighted. She swept the whole chamber with a searching glance, when all of a sudden, her attention was arrested by something on the floor. In the moment that followed, she started with horror, and let out a most unearthly scream, and her hands clutched at her throat. She was on the point of collapsing, when the

others, in amazement and with a vague sense of what had happened, rushed into the room in what seemed to be less than a second, and paled and shuddered at the sight on the floor. It was ghastly. Beside the bed of that elaborate room, lay Mrs. Glench agape and lifeless, her face livid and distorted, and her gray hair in a tangle.

Mr. Glench, awakened from his sleep, hied from his room to his wife's door.

"What is all this?" he glared questioningly at Jane, and then at the two ladies.

"Mr. Walter Glench was a well-known business man, who had advanced far beyond the stage of romance. He was an irascible person, of average height, and thin, although his stomach bulged somewhat. His hair lay soft and crumpled against his head, and had grayed considerably. His eyes blinked against the glare of the light, manifesting his sudden awakening from sleep. His person was covered with a vivid dressing gown.

Each of the questioned attempted to speak, but remained silent—the words stuck in their throats. Mrs. Irving managed to point nervously at the crumpled figure.

Mr. Glench's behavior was suddenly transformed.

"Mary!" he uttered, and fell sobbing upon his knees by her side; he would have hugged her head to his bosom, but refrained by a masterful effort, stood up with his head cast down, and muttered half-audibly:

"This is a matter for the police."

Making his way to the opposite side of the bed, he called up headquarters, after which he nervously led the guests to the library downstairs, carefully locking the room.

There was suspense in the library. The guests sat uneasy and embarrassed. Their host paced uneasily over the Feraghan rug before the fireplace.

Knocks at the door, reported the arrival of the police. Jane opened it, and led Inspector Cortland and his young assistant into the library. The former had ordered three policemen to inspect the exterior of the mansion. With an abrupt nod, he approached Mr. Glench, whom he knew facially, and introduced himself.

Inspector Henry Cortland was a slovenly man, destitute of good manners, and with ponderous features. Perhaps it was his abhorrence of criminals more than anything else that made him an unmannered bigot. His very lips constantly showed a vague but sardonic sneer. As a detective, he merited an inestimable reputation for the incredible amount of intelligence and acumen he possessed.

The library was a big room; its walls were trimmed with hand-carved hickory. Cortland glanced appreciatively at the rows of well-bound books; and when he returned his glance he found Mr. Glench impatient and irritated. The latter directly opened the case by stammering out that his wife was murdered.

"Humph!" the Inspector grunted. Then, "I would like the members of your household in this room."

"Jane!" Mr. Glench called; and when the maid appeared, he ordered: "Have the rest of the house here."

This complied with, the Inspector posted one of the policemen in the library without as much as looking at the members. "See that no one leaves the room," he directed, and turned to Glench.

"Do you lock your doors and windows at night?"

"That is my order," the other said.

"How do you know they are closed to-night?"

"I am sure, Inspector, unless my butler has neglected his duty. Abner," Mr. Glench turned to his butler. "Did you lock up every door and window?"

"Save the main entrance, sir. It is always left unlocked when Mrs. Glench is out."

Cortland pressed his thick lips meditatively, after which he called another policeman in.

"Brant, you had better inspect every opening you find. Take the usual precautions. Report when I come down."

With this, he wheeled slowly to Glench. "Show me where the crime was committed."

Both left the room with Assistant Craig following. Arrived at the room, Mr. Glench unlocked and opened the door. Only the Inspector entered. In disgust, he sniffed the air and scowled. There was a strong scent of costly perfume. He examined the position of the deceased, approached her, and in a few seconds, guessed how she was murdered.

"Call the coroner, Craig," he ordered. "— and you, Mr. Glench, will please keep company with the others."

In a few minutes, an old, benign gentleman presented himself in Craig's company. There was no greeting between him and the Inspector save the former's gracious smile and nod.

"There's your job, coroner," the Inspector said, simultaneously pointing at the deceased.

The unfortunate Mrs. Glench was lifted to the bed. Not long after, the doctor straightened up and stated briefly: "Strangled to death."

"Just as I figured," agreed the Inspector who was by his side.

Cortland drew a big lens from his pocket and meticulously examined the neck. Marks were found. They were evidently from a man's big hand. There were no prints of the left. Furthermore, the hand was gloved. Coroner and Inspector whispered to each other, one concurring with the other's theory. They turned their attention toward the head. The gaping-and-staring expression remained. On the flabby flesh between the lower lip and chin, a little rouge was spread. The coroner keenly regarded both arms and hands. Careful inspection of the left hand revealed two or three minute black fibers beneath the somewhat finely manicured nail of the index finger. These the Inspector took and carefully encased. Further examination of the body, they found to be fruitless.

"Well, how do you find the case?" asked the doctor—he had finished his job.

In reply, Cortland shrugged his shoulders, after which he said: "I suppose you'll report tomorrow?"

The coroner nodded.

"Well, I shall leave," he said, and wishing the Inspector an early success, he left.

Alone the Inspector reconnoitered the room. It was large, the furniture of the same quality and design as the walls, and all in the proper place. He came to the phone and looked at the scratch pad. Its sheets were blank. Beside the telephone was a three-mirrored dresser. He scanned the surface—a morocco a few valuable jewels, as well as Mrs. Glench's lay there. The first he held. It was opened. He viewed its contents and grunted. There were Mrs. Glench's vanity case and three opera tickets. The first drawer was also opened, a bunch of keys hanging from the key-hole. He found a flat box which contained a few valuable jewels, as well as Mrs. Glench's diary. This done, he pocketed the book, and concluded his investigation.

All eyes were fixed at Inspector Henry Cortland as he appeared in the library. His search was apparently successful. There was that domineering smile.

Brant, the policeman, advanced to meet him.

"Every opening locked sir, save the main door."

Cortland nodded and gave him the encased fibers, muttered a few, almost indistinct words. The other bowed curtly and left.

"Now," he said, "I shall interview every one of you. We'll begin with you—Mrs. Irving. You are acquainted with the —er— Mrs. Glench?"

"Mrs. Glench was my best friend," the lady replied matter-of-factly. "She invited me to this night's opera."

"When did she invite you?"

"Yesterday afternoon, at tea. She said the opera manager gave Mr. Glench a complimentary box for tonight."

"What time did you meet Mrs. Glench tonight?"

"She passed for me at about twenty past eight."

"Was she alone?"

"Mrs. Jackson and her own chauffeur were with her," Mrs. Irving replied.

"Was the deceased herself tonight?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, that is," explained Cortland, "did she not act queerly or uneasily?"

"Not that I know of. She was quite herself, sir."

"Why did you return so early?" the Inspector innocently inquired.

"We have not seen the program," she rejoined. "Mrs. Glench forgot her purse; the opera tickets were in it."

"What time did you arrive here?" was his next question.

"At 8:26; I remember quite clearly, I looked at my watch to see if we would be in time for the beginning."

"That'll do Mrs. Jackson."

This "female orator" needed no suggestion; she knew her turn. Her garrulity seemed endless, and to make matters worse it carried the Inspector nowhere—she stated everything but the right thing. When the disgusted detective perforce motioned her to sit down, she clapper-clawed indignantly and culminated with, "This is an outrage!"

Jane followed. The Inspector eyed her suspiciously but found her quiet, but certainly nervous.

"How long have you worked here?" he asked.

"Three years, sir."

"What occupation do you hold?"

"Chambermaid for Mrs. Glench," she replied and added, "I also assist in cleaning and arranging the house, sir."

"Did you help Mrs. Glench in her toilette this evening?" asked Cortland coming to the point.

"Yes, sir."

"What time did Mrs. Glench leave?"

"About 8:10," was the curt reply.

"Where were you then?" he inquired.

"I followed her to the car and went back to the room to prepare her night gown and other things. Then I closed both light and door and headed for the library."

"Did you hear or see anything peculiar this evening?"

The Inspector did not look at the girl as he snapped out this question, but eyed the rest. He did not fail to note the intentness of two pairs of eyes. The owners of these breathed as they heard the reply.

"No sir," she answered.

"How long were you in the room?"

"About five minutes."

"Therefore, you left the room about 8:15," the Inspector queried.

There was a pause.

"Yes sir, I am sure of it," Jane replied.

"Did it occur to you that Mrs. Glench forgot her bag?"

Jane hesitated but she confessed boldly enough if nervously.

"No sir," she said. "Not till I was informed by Mrs. Irving."

"You afterwards went to the library, you said?"

"Yes sir," the girl responded.

"What did you do in the library?"

"I read 'The Woman's Journal', sir. Mrs. Glench permitted me to read in the library during my spare moments at night."

"That's all."

The Inspector's eyes now fell on the cook. So this was the fellow! He decided to give the cook a surprise and presently called him.

"You are Francois, the cook, are you not?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," answered the questioned, a stubby Frenchman with thick, upcurved moustache and bulging arms and legs.

"You broke the big punch bowl, eh?" the Inspector said scrutinizing the other's countenance.

All in the library were surprised. Evidently Cortland knew more than they thought; but how did he?

The unexpected statement rendered the cook speechless. Finally, he managed to stammer. "Y-yes sir."

"What did Mrs. Glench do to you?"

"She wanted to fire me, sir."

"You don't seem to have been fired," declared the Inspector.

"No, sir," replied the cook, apparently recovering from his shock. "Mr. Glench, would not hear of it. You see, sir, I have served Mr. Glench for thirty years."

The Inspector paused, and motioned his dismissal to the cook as he saw Brant appear. He advanced.

"Well?" he softly inquired.

"Black serge, sir," the policeman whispered.

Cortland's face twisted into a terrible smile. He looked at the butler and Mr. Glench, who still remained.

Turning to Brant, he whispered something. The other nodded and vanished mechanically. Evidently, there was something in the wind.

"Mr. Glench," Cortland stated, "in a few minutes, if I am not mistaken, I shall have found the murderer. He is in this room."

The three men—Francois, the butler and Mr. Glench—suspiciously eyed one another. The cook, with quivering lips and unsteady footing; the butler silent, with marked anxiety and maintained decorum of his office; the master, badly shaken and glaring distrustfully at his two domestics—chiefly at the first.

The speaker continued: "It is a matter of waiting, but since I wish to be sure, I shall finish my examination."

There was a short pause—the Inspector did not know whom to question first. At last, he said, "What is your name?"

"Abner Philipps, sir," replied the butler, a tall, bald-headed man. His suit was perfectly clean, save for a faint white scratch below the knee.

"What is your occupation and how long have you been serving here?"

"I have been butler here for almost a year."

"Where were you when the murder occurred?"

"In my room, sir."

"What were you doing?"

"Reading the night papers."

"Did you not ascend the stairs when Mrs. Glench left for the opera?"

"Indeed, no, sir. I closed the main door directly Mrs. Glench left. Jane, who escorted her to the car ascended the stairs, but I went straight to my room."

"Humph! How can you prove you went to your room?"

"I believe the cook saw me when I passed the pantry, sir. I even bade him goodnight."

"Is this true?" Cortland demanded of the cook.

"Yes, sir."

That was all. The Inspector turned his back to the butler and looked at the door. Brant had not arrived. Cortland therefore turned to Walter Glench. The eyes of all present were fixed on the two.

"When did you see your wife last?" This, from the Inspector.

"This afternoon shortly after tea."

"Did your wife not sup with you this evening?"

"No sir."

"Where was she?"

"In her room. We had a little quarrel over Francois," Glench said glaring at the mentioned in his smouldering mistrust, and added: "After that, my wife would not take anything Francois cooked."

"You supped alone therefore?"

"No, sir; I went up to her room, but found it locked. When I called her, she said she did not want to have anything to do with me. After that I lost what little appetite I had, and went straight to my room to sleep.

"What time did you sleep?"

"About half-past seven."

"You did not leave your room after that?"

"I do not think I did; at least not till—I was awakened from sleep by a scream," Glench slowly said, lowering his head. "When I came out she—she was dead—murdered."

"You love your wife, Mr. Glench?"

"Yes, Inspector," the questioned sighed.

"But did she love you?"

"I am quite sure she did."

"And yet—" Cortland stated leaning against the end of the sofa with his legs crossed, "and yet, she filed a petition for divorce against you this very afternoon?"

Glench started. It was long before he recovered his voice. When he did, he frankly said:

"I did not know you knew that, and I thought it was futile to disclose anything about it."

Cortland grunted contemptuously.

"Yes, Mary is like that—that's just Mary," Glench continued. "You know, Inspector, my wife has a sort of haughty disposition, and when she was angry this afternoon, she would stop at nothing. If our quarrel had held out a little longer, I am afraid, I should have had to fire the cook."

"And still she was gay enough to go to the opera?" queried Cortland.

"My wife always kept her engagements."

Brant entered the room with a small parcel in his hand.

"Found them?" Cortland quickly asked, unable to suppress his anxiety.

"Yes, sir," the policeman acquiesced, as he came forward and murmured in the other's ear: "Pocketed in one of his trousers in the trunk."

In bewilderment, those present stared blankly at the two exchanging these words.

In the meanwhile, Cortland's characteristic smile gradually appeared. He was relieved.

"May I see your hands, Mr. Glench," he said.

"What for?" inquired Walter, his face whitening. Nevertheless he complied.

The Inspector glanced at them and turned to the butler.

"Yours," he asked.

Philipps showed his reluctantly. Quick as a flash, the Inspector moved, his deft fingers closing tightly about the other's wrists. The latter was handcuffed.

"What does this mean?" he asked infuriated.

"It means that you are wanted for the murder of Mrs. Waltern Glench," Cortland said complacently. "Consider yourself arrested."

The rat eyed the cat brazenly, his whole aspect blackening sourly. The nut was cracked, and so far the law had its way. Rats when cornered generally grow desperate. Vis-a-vis, each maintaining his stare—the one defiant and furious, the other cool and triumphant.

With a snarl, Philipps crushed his handcuffed hands upon Cortland who was just in time to move his head, receiving the blow upon his shoulder. Down he went, his heavy frame thudding on the carpet, but with the resiliency of a ball was on his feet the next moment. Brant toppled down unconscious as he attempted to bar the butler. Like a madman, the latter made his way to the door with a sprint that was vigorous, decisive, bodily stumbling against the policeman formerly left to guard the members of the house. Both rolled to the floor. A struggle ensued.

Craig did not remain idle; in an instant, he came to the policeman's assistance, followed by Cortland. The criminal was brought to bay.

"You will swing sure . . ." growled Cortland, "and like it too."

The butler remained quiet.

Jane and Craig took care of Brant who was not so badly off.

In the meantime, Mr. Glench, who seemed to have been storing all his anger, now came forth like thunder.

"You, you—" he bellowed. "Why you scoundrel."

"Mrs. Glench got what was coming to her."

"Not a word about her—"

"I killed her all right," confessed Philipps; "I could not help it. I had been badly off for a long time, and neither Mrs. Glench nor he would lend me money. Well, I had to get it—somehow. I thought it all out. After seeing her leave, I purposely went to the kitchen to deceive Francois, in order to establish an alibi. I was not heard. I went to my room, but noiselessly slipped out. When I went to my mistress' room, Jane was not there any more. Everything was as I desired. I put on the light, and with luck, found the purse with the bunch of keys; so I did not force open any drawer. The first disclosed all I desired—a case of jewels. As I held one of them, Mrs. Glench came in. I found no excuse to give, nor would she hear any. She said she would call the police. I begged, but all to no use. As she reached for the phone, I sprang at her. She tried to scream, but my left hand was in the nick of time. My hate must have overworked me, for when I released her, she was dead. I got all I wanted, and saw to it that nothing was against me. But you should be complimented, Inspector. I salute you."

"Come along now, I want to get some food." Cortland said, and added when he was at the door, "Here's your wife's diary, Mr. Glench. Goodnight everybody."

Late that evening found Cortland eating with his friend, Craig.

"I say, Sherlock," said Craig. "You have not told me how you did it."

"Did what?"

"Oh, you know what I mean," the other rejoined impatiently. "How did you know Abner Philipps was the murderer?"

"Give me a match, will you. Thanks. That's easy enough. I found black fibers in Mrs. Glench's finger nail. When Philipps

strangled her with his right hand, she tried to free herself by trying to take his hand off. In so doing her nails pulled off some of the black fibers, from his coat, which was made of black serge."

"But another man might have worn black serge too."

"Sure enough. But where was he going to get out? After committing the crime, he had to escape thru some opening. But all of them were locked. I am positive that he could not have passed by the main door as the chauffeur was there with those ladies."

"But he might have been in league with some of the domestics."

"You mean that he unlocked one of those windows or doors, slipped out and had the domestic lock it afterwards?"

"Exactly."

"There could have only been one—that was Abner Philipps. The girl was too good to help the murderer. The cook has a nervous constitution. That eliminates him. So Philipps could have been the only one in league with the real murderer. And that was Philipps in league with himself. It could not be otherwise. You will doubtless notice there was a faint white scratch in his pants."

"I did not notice it."

"Then you have much yet to learn. I examined him very carefully. He had it all right. I am sure that was caused by the demised. She struggled and kicked uselessly. Nevertheless she marked Philipps."

"That is not enough to warrant his arrest."

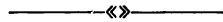
"True. Did you see that the rouge was scattered below the lower lip?"

"What of it?"

"Philipps placed his left hand over her mouth to keep her quiet. In so doing, he unknowingly rubbed the lips and spread the rouge. I did not know he did it. But I guessed. If the rouge spread, surely it would mark on the glove. And it did. I followed up my guess and it succeeded. You remember, I sent Brant to the pantry? That was to have him search Philipps' room. Philipps thought that by hiding the gloves in the pocket of his newly ironed pants, they would not be found. He was mistaken. And that evidence convicted him."

"Gee, but you are great," declared Craig with enthusiasm.

"I know I am," said Cortland slowly, and emitted a cloud of smoke.



## *"Embalmed Minds"*

**S**OME short while since, the Editor of this Journal approached me with his best smile, and after a few preliminary, unctuous remarks, shot me a bolt from the effects of which I am still troubled: Would I write a list of one-hundred good books I had read, for publication in the GREEN AND WHITE. This was the burden of my seducer's song. A tall request, methought. A veritable dilemma for unwary me; Was I to say "No" to a good friend who had never refused me a favor? Or was I to put into the hands of the public, vulgar and elite alike, what must seem a sort of confession of my private life, a betrayal of my

nature, if not of my name.

I remonstrated that I was not a wide reader, not even along one line. That sometimes I am humbled and humiliated, when queried by my friends as to whether I have read G. K.'s latest, or what I think of G.B.S. as a rival of Shakespeare for the dramatic laurel. But the Editor was adamant, and would not brook refusal. Again he smiled, chiefly with his eyes this time; and after some more hopeless dilly-dallying on my part, I yielded the fatal "Yes". No sooner had he made his triumphant retreat, than I was stricken with remorse for my softness. I had been inveigled into his coils; and