

Gore Correspondent

"Dizzy Duo" Yarn



By Joe Archibald

Because they wouldn't let Snooty Piper become a war correspondent abroad, Boston's nutty newsman follows a trail of Axis chatter to bring the battle to Beantown.

I AM SITTING in the city room of the *Boston Evening Star* one afternoon reading the last edition, and having quite a laugh over a yarn on page eleven. It is about a hit-and-run pedestrian, who was caught after quite a chase through Filene's basement. Who was it but Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy, a citizen who works at being a detective quite as successfully as Adolph works on Russia.

It seems Iron Jaw crossed Tremont against a light and hit a truck. The truck lost a front bumper, headlight, and half a fender; the driver of the vehicle hit his new store teeth against the steering wheel

at the impact. The trucking company threatens to sue.

"Binny!" Dogface Woolsey, the city editor, suddenly yelps. "Have you seen Piper?"

"Yesterday," I reply as I turn to the editorial page. "He is still trying to talk the editors of *Gape*, over on Boylston, into sending him to Europe as a war correspondent. Correspondents, as you know, wear green bands on their sleeves. You know how that crackpot likes green. He even found a store in Chelsea that sells long green underwear."

"I'll pay half his expenses if somebody will send him," Dogface roars, "to

Helsinki as it is gettin' bombed now. Oh, there you are, Piper. Nice of you to stop in."

"I almost had the job, Scoop," Snooty says. "I was okay, until I went an' got a shot in the arm for size. I remember walkin' over to the Common sometime yesterday an'—I bet they framed me. Somebody has a relative they want the job for, Scoop. If it wasn't for crooked politics everywhere— How much discount will I git to advertise a portable typewriter for sale in the *Evenin' Star*, Dogface?"

"Huh?" Dogface says and gets a funny look in his eye. "Ah, well, I'll let you off this time, Piper. I could use it for fifty bucks."

"Sixty," Snooty says.

"Fifty-five or you are fired," Dogface says flatly. Snooty takes it. What else could he do?

Forty-eight hours later, Dogface leers at us when we enter the city room. Dogface looks very pleased with himself, like a tomcat that has found an open window in a fish store at night.

"I got a hundred bucks for the typewriter," the neurotic crows.

"Why, you dirty— Scoop, I'll have him locked up," Snooty yelps. "There must be a ceilin' on them. He is a dirty profiteer, a threat to the winnin' of the war. He's a—!"

"I know everythin' that he is," I sniff.

"If you are a dope, can I help it, Piper?" Dogface needles. "Who purchased it, but a dear friend of yours. Abigail Hepplethwaite, remember?"

"Someday you'll go too far, Dogface," I says.

"Not for me he never will," Snooty gripes. "Forty bucks profit! Well, it is a long road—"

Mr. Guppy comes out of his office then, and his old pipe is stewing and upside down. "We have got to help the

F.B.I. get to the bottom of the propaganda that is poisonin' Boston, Woolsey. There's a movement here stirring up sentiment for the Japs and Nazis in case we lick the pants off 'em which we will.

"People are beginnin' to spread sympathy for the rats, Woolsey. On street corners, clubs, saloons, everywhere. Think of the poor Axis women and children. It is Goebbels and Tojo behind it."

"That is an outrage, Mr. Guppy," Snooty says. "They are worse than real saboteurs. They—"

"Get your feet off that desk," Guppy snaps at Snooty. "They don't grow on trees."

"This one did. It is of oak."

Dogface says for us to get out. Mr. Guppy says to stay out.

"They're e-e-either to-o-o young or to-o-o old," Snooty hums. Mr. Guppy is reminded of the manpower shortage, and says he was hasty.

TWO weeks later we are at the Greek's. Snooty sips his beer and says he knows he would have been a swell poor man's Ernie Phyle. "I had my suit all picked out, too, Scoop. And a gadget to make fresh water out of sea water."

We sit there for two hours. Then the Greek's phone rings, and Nick says to answer it. "I got costumers, Piper. Eef a dame answers, hang op! Ha!"

Snooty answers the phone, then rushes out of the booth as if he'd found a nest of copperheads in it.

"It is murder, Scoop!" he says. "In Brookline. A citizen walked into a police station there, nodded to the desk sergeant, then went out for good like Empress Eugenie hats. We have got to hurry."

We do. We take a cab. When we reach the hoosegow Snooty fumbles around in his pocket, and the cab driver gets uglier

by the second. "I s'pose you left your dough in your other pants, Buster, hah?"

"No, it is the only pair I got, Bud," Snooty says, "Pay him, Scoop."

"Somebody is goin' to," the cabby says, and picks up a tire iron.

"Awright, you moocher," I says to Snooty. "One skull fracture is enough for the cops to work on at once. Lay that tire iron down, babe!"

The defunct citizen is spread out in Brookline police headquarters. His papers and things tell us he was once known as Fresco J. Snafferby. The Brookline cops tell us Fresco was a character of means and owned the Snafferby Monument and Gravestone Company, Inc.

"His widow saves money there," Snooty says.

"Look, you Dracula without no blood!" Iron Jaw growls as he enters. "If you got no respect for the dead—"

"Who put up bail for you, you menace to vehicular traffic?" Snooty says and everybody gets a laugh even though they are near a corpse.

Iron Jaw goes into one of his tantrums and makes a pass at Snooty Piper. He misses and his fist goes through some bars to a cell. The cops have to go out and borrow a pinch bar to pry him loose. Iron Jaw has hands that should be stamped with meat packer's elderberry juice. The cops throw Snooty into a cell and make him watch from there. It serves the crackpot right.

The assayer of the departed examines the late Snafferby, and says Fresco was bopped with a more wicked cudgel than a jellyroll. Fresco must have staggered several blocks with the crevice in his skull before the Grim Reaper let him have it for real.

We get some inside stuff on the Snafferby household from a Brookline

slewfoot, who said Snafferby once took him into his confidence.

"This happened, I bet," the dick says, "because Mrs. Snafferby was being blackmailed. Snafferby carne to me one day and said his spouse was being shook down. Mrs. Snafferby, who is not bad-lookin' for her years, got to pitchin' woo with a gigolo, and was silly enough to woo him with a fountain pen.

"Snafferby said he loved the old babe even so. So he agreed to pay up to a certain point, and not even ask who the creep was. The letters up to that time cost him about ten grand. He said when it hit fifteen and the billy-doo was not forthcomin', he was going to make her squawk, no matter what happened, then go and beat the gigolo's brains out."

"Yeah?" Iron Jaw scoffs. "That is what citizens get who hide things from policemen. I don't believe no crook would kill the gander what laid the gold eggs, unless the crook found out the gander was goin' to sing."

"I bet if you went into the poultry business, you would buy all roosters, Iron Jaw," Snooty says. "Ganders are male geese, you dope."

"Binney, you make that mug shut up or I will throw you both out," Iron Jaw complains. "How big is Mrs. Snafferby?"

"If hippos had pin-up dolls," the dick says, "she would be the favorite one over at the zoo."

"I saw you hit that truck," Snooty says to Iron Jaw. "I am a star witness. I was on the Common and was just gettin' over that shot in the arm. The truckin' company would be glad to—"

"Let him out," Iron Jaw chokes out. "I—er—ha, he was taught lesson enough, boys. Now where was we? Oh, this murder.

"Maybe Snafferby said he wouldn't pay no more dough; that his ball and chain

could take the publicity of exposure. He even threatened to sue her for divorce on account of her infidelity. So there she was torn between two fires. She could have slugged him right at home, then Fresco staggered out and walked in a half circle to where he is now.”

“We could borrow a navigator over at the East Boston airport to testify.” Snooty says and I edge toward the door.

“Sure,” Iron Jaw says. “Sometimes you show signs of bein’ subnormal, Piper.”

“We better go and see Mrs. Snafferby,” the detective of the rich suburb says.

“I think she should know,” Snooty Bays and nods.

WE CALL on Mrs. Snafferby at quite an imposing pueblo only seven blocks away. The widow is an overstuffed Hayworth with hennaed locks. Iron Jaw comes right out and does not kid around.

“You had reason to snuff out your husband,” he says. “The blackmailer we know would not cut his nose in spite of his face, Mrs. Snafferby. He had no idea we knew about him so wouldn’t have boffed Fresco. You committed the crime to save your good name in the community. I must ask you to accompany me without resistin’.”

Mrs. Snafferby is not very cooperative. “What?” she yelps. “I am accused of committing the crime? Why you—you uncouth monstrosity!” She picks up a big leather ottoman and heaves it at Iron Jaw. It hits him just an inch south of his equator. The big flatfoot’s breath hisses out through his teeth and his derby falls into an aquarium.

Cops subdue Mrs. Snafferby after the living room has been blitzed. Iron Jaw puts his derby on, and I see a gold fish slide down into his collar.

“Look for the murder weapon!” Iron Jaw yelps, then goes fishing.

“It looks bad for her, doesn’t it, Snooty?” I ask the fathead. “She just proved the power in her biceps. It is not a bad motive, even if Iron Jaw does believe in it. Look, a cop has got somethin’ ”

It is a miniature tombstone. Mrs. Snafferby reluctantly admits Fresco made them for his friends for paperweights. The cop handles the evidence very carefully and labels it Exhibit A.

“If there’s prints on it, O’Shaughnessy, we got her cold.”

“It won’t prove nothing,” the widow wails. “Of course it might have fingerprints, as I picked it up awhile ago. The blackmailer must have killed poor Fresco. Nobody else would have reason as Fresco was loved by all.”

“Exceptin’ his wife,” Iron Jaw sniffs. “Look, we want to see one of those threatenin’ letters you showed to your husband.”

“I—I think I have two around somewhere,” Mrs. Snafferby says. “One came just yesterday. They are dunning letters and not threatening.”

We all follow the widow upstairs. She pulls out a little drawer of a vanity table and rummages around. She finally hands Iron Jaw two letters. They are postmarked Brookline. They are not in longhand as blackmailers cannot afford to be that stupid.

“Hmm-m,” Iron Jaw says and starts to read one of them out loud. “ ‘Please be so kind as to send us your next payment, as you of course realize the consequences of refusal.’ ”

“Emily Post couldn’t have taught more polite blackmailin’,” Snooty says, and stoops down and picks up one of the letters Iron Jaw fumbles.

“Lay off that, Piper!” Iron Jaw howls and yanks the letter out of Snooty’s hand.

“These are Exhibit B against Mrs. Snafferby.”

“I am sorry,” the crackpot says. “I feel a little faint, Scoop. See if I can have a glass of water with an aspirin in it? The thought that such a harmless lookin’ widow is guilty of such a heinous crime upsets me.”

“I am innocent,” Mrs. Snafferby insists, picking up a quart bottle of henna and winding up. A cop spoils her aim, and the bottle only grazes the flatfoot’s noggin. This time his derby goes out of an open window.

“Take her in,” Iron Jaw trumpets. “For the murder of her husband, and assault, and resistin’ arrest. Attempted manslaughter an’—”

“You’d better prove me guilty, you big baboon!” Mrs. Snafferby yelps, “Or you better git reservations on a rattler to Minsk!”

“Minsk?” a cop says. “Reminds me of burlesque, O’Shaughnessy. I wonder—”

“Awright, so Fresco married me out of the Old Howard theatre fifteen years ago!” Mrs. Snafferby yelps. “So it was a disgrace to earn an honest livin’ as a chorus girl?”

“That cooks her, Snooty,” I says as I bring him the drink of water. “Ugh, I shouldn’t say that, should I? That chair over there at Charlestown will have to be let out in the seams an’—”

“It is awful, huh?” Snooty agrees. “The jury never would believe the old doll was a respected citizen now. She could be innocent though.”

“So could Lepke,” I snort.

“Well, there is nothing more for us to do here,” Snooty sighs, and says we should go over to the embalming salon and look at Fresco J. Snafferby once more.

“He has nothin’ more to say,” I remind the halfwit. But I go over there with him. They have got the deceased’s duds nicely

piled up on a table. Snafferby’s double-breasted is green with pin stripe. Snooty wonders if it will fit him, the ghoul. The mortician says to lay off, and Snooty drops the coat.

I see him pick something off the lapel, before he saunters out. Outside I says, “A blonde hair or a brunette, Philo Chan?”

“Why, I do not know what you mean, Scoop,” Snooty says.

THE Greek’s is our next stop to think things over. “With her background and muscles and all,” I says, “Mrs. Snafferby better get a real mouthpiece, Snooty. I would suggest that the cops search for all the leading men left over from burleycue. It is a caution how the old dons think they have woo left, when it is the bankroll the Romeos are after.”

“You jump too much and too quick at a conclusion, Scoop,” Snooty says, and pushes a piece of glass around with a swizzle stick. “Do sample tombstones have windows in them, Scoop?”

“When you are in that mood I don’t even hear you talkin’,” I reply.

“Certain rich citizens are hard hit by withholdin’ taxes an’ war bond purchases, I am sure,” Snooty goes on. “Sometimes even Abigail must have a time liquidating assets.”

“It says here in the editorial today,” I tell Snooty, “Mr. Guppy believes an organization to be at work drumming up compassion for the poor Axis peoples in the event of an Allied victory. Like The Green Shirts and The Knights of the Red Gardenia. This gnawing from within is an outrage, Snooty Piper. I do not mean what is eatin’ at your brain. Something must be done. It shall be done!”

“There is a soapbox out in back,” Snooty says. “I think I will not put it off no longer, no matter how much it will hurt, Scoop. Let’s go and get it over with.”

“Why not?” I sniff. “First tell me what, though.”

Ten minutes later we are on our way to Back Bay. It is mid-afternoon, when we bang the big brass knocker on Abigail Hepplethwaite’s door. Abigail is a card with more kick than an ace. She is supposed to possess enough cabbage to build up what the R.A.F. and U.S. Air Force has knocked down during the last year. The old girl considers any check under four figures so much petty cash, and has put that much on a hayburner at Suffolk Downs twice in an afternoon.

The maid lets us in. She is a cute cookie with short skirts, and no wonder! “How’s tricks?” Snooty asks her.

“Don’t get personal, 4F-Minus!”

“Ha!” Abigail says, mincing out into the hall. “Her name is Trix. How was he to know, girlie? Run along as I know these characters. Come in, boys. Piper, you’re just in time. What does Guppy’s handicapper say about Rommel The Second in the fourth at Suffolk?”

“That bangtail will outrun the field, Ab—Miss Hepplethwaite,” Snooty says. “But—er—this is no social call. You have been feelin’ the pinch lately maybe, huh?”

“You got me, pal,” Abigail says and taps her elbow with her lorgnette. “What is cookin’ with you, Piper? And don’t look at me like I was your mother-in-law.”

“It is my duty I am doin’,” Snooty goes on. “Maybe that last million worth of war bonds kind of left you flat.”

“Yeah? That was peanuts. I should have bought twice as many,” Abigail says. “What ails the goon, Binney?”

“I wouldn’t know.”

“Okay, Ma’am,” Snooty fires. “You maybe needed some extra moola, and found out a certain society doll who is now pickin’ out widow’s weeds was really an ex-burlesque cuty. So you wrote letters on a typewriter sayin’ you knew, and how

much was it worth to the babe to keep your lips buttoned. You was desperate an’—”

“You got to stop readin’ comic books, Snooty,” Abigail sniffs and winks at me. “You are still adolescent enough to let them get you.”

“You deny you purchased a portable typewriter through the medium of the *Evening Star*?” Snooty presses home while I fan myself with my hat and edge toward Abigail’s phone to call the violent ward.

“I do not. Woolsey sold it to me for a hundred dollars, Piper,” Abigail says.

“Let me see it,” Snooty says. “This hurts me more’n it’ll ever hurt you, Mrs. Hepplethwaite. Oh, to think I’d ever see—”

“I sold it for a hundred and twenty-five three days after I got it,” Abigail says. “I’m not above makin’ a little extra sugar, Piper. Anyway two of the keys stuck—”

Snooty’s mouth opens wide. He plunks down into a chair. He pulls out a green hanky and wipes his pan. “Oh, I could shout for joy,” the nitwit says. “Who you stick with it?”

“Got his address here,” Abigail says. “He had to pay me on installments. Let me look in my desk here.”

A few minutes later we have the address of a citizen known as Buford Brinker in Dorchester.

Abigail says she could have told everybody in Back Bay that Mrs. Snafferby was once Dolores DeBras if she had had a mind to. “Why should I?” she says. “I liked the old canary. She is more human than all the so-called society babes I know. O’Shaughnessy better get a conviction, boys, or head for the woods. Now beat it and don’t make no passes at Trix, Piper. You have scared three maids away from here already.”

WE GO and see Buford Brinker. He writes poetry for a very uppity weekly on Beacon Hill. Buford has a big head and spectacles as thick as bomber turret plexi-glass. Snooty takes a quick gander at Buford's typewriter and asks it he had it long.

"A fortnight, not that it is any of your affair, my curious friend," Buford says. "Please go."

"You purchased a typewriter from Abigail Hepplethwaite," Snooty says.

"Yes, and I was swindled," Buford bristled. "I shall not pay her another cent."

"Wanna bet, Shakespeare?" Snooty grins. "What did you do with the machine, Junior?"

"I beg your poddon! I sold it to a gentleman. Now please leave at once."

"Look, I want his name or you git a poke in the nose, Buford," Snooty says. "I am from headquarters."

"A detective fellow?" Buford says. "I shall give you the information you wish if you will just have patience. Just when my muse was working—gad!"

We get the name. It is Ryerson T. Yelk and the citizen has a novelty business on South Tremont. Snooty says we will go there.

"And Yelk has already sold it to somebody in Providence maybe. This could go on forever, you jerk! Why do you want the machine back as you will never get nearer the war than the newsreels."

"I must see justice is done, Scoop," Snooty tosses at me, then we hike toward South Tremont. "Let's see, Dogface robbed me on that deal just two weeks ago, didn't he?"

We walk into Yelk's office. A doll is just covering a big typewriter with a cloth. "Is Mr. Yelk in, sister?" Snooty wants to know.

"He just left, I think," the dame says. "Step inside and see if he's there."

We do. Snooty looks at a sheet of paper sticking out of a portable typewriter. I can see the globules of worry juice forming on his low brow. He pulls me by the arm and goes out again.

"It is important we see Mr. Yelk," Snooty says. "Where is his home?"

The doll says he lives in a big house on Rookem Glen in Brookline, but that Yelk is something of a recluse and wouldn't ever let anybody in.

Snooty says, "You the only employee left, beautiful? All these other desks so dusty—business must—"

"It does," the cookie says. "Definitely."

"Come on, Scoop."

"In another hour I will be a gold mine for a corn and bunion parer," I groan.

"What are you up to, Snooty?"

"And they wouldn't make me a war correspondent, huh?" Snooty growls. "I'll show them how to save the home front—maybe."

ROOKEM GLEN, in Woburn, is full of trees that almost hide the houses. We approach a big old-fashioned abode where lights show under drawn curtains on an upper story.

"Look," Snooty says. "A recluse, is it? There are four swell jalopies out in the yard, and I hear another car drivin' in. We can climb that tree close to the house and get far enough out on a limb to—"

"Now you ain't kiddin', you fathead," I says.

"I will go up first, Scoop."

We climb a tree and inch our way out along one of the big branches. A squirrel runs up and down my back and starts nibbling at my ear.

"The nut you want," I say to the little beast, "is the one ahead of me."

“Shut up, Scoop. Shhh. These are casement windows. I can look right under that curtain. Oh-h-h! Scoop, look!”

I wish I hadn't. There are about eleven citizens in the room, male and female. There is a big banner on one wall that says *Order of the White Geranium*. A tall cadaverous character is standing behind a big table. He has a white geranium in his buttonhole. He has a pair of eyes set as close together as a pair of wall plugs and no hair on his noggin. We can hear him sound off.

“It is regrettable, my comrades,” he says. “The misfortune that has befallen Sister Snafferby. But I am sure she can prove her innocence and will soon back to help us in this worthy cause that has so many blessings. Spread the principle of benevolence everywhere you go. We must save ourselves from stooping to the level of the lion and the wolf. We shall fight on for post-war humanity and—”

“The rats,” Snooty says. “It is only a blind for somethin' Yelk has cooked up. Look at the mottos on the wall, Scoop.”

I read them fast. They say, *To err is human; to forgive, divine . . . The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as the gentle rain from . . .*

Then we droppeth. Snooty has been pressing his carcass too close to the casement widow. It flies inward and he flies with it. The limb shakes. I lose my balance and fall in on top of him.

We get to our hands and knees, and see Yelk reach for something which is not the minutes of the meeting. Another citizen with a big square head featuring a crew haircut picks up a Roscoe himself.

“Who are you two?” Yelk intones in a very distasteful voice.

“F.B.I., you bums,” Snooty says, and I wish I had smothered him the night before. “Not eagle scouts. You wrote the last letter to Mrs. Snafferby on the portable

typewriter in your office, Yelk. It used to belong to me. The O on it doesn't meet at the top. You extortionist! You underminer of U.S. morale—”

“Let 'em have it, boys,” Yelk said. “The Order of the White Geranium must go on!”

A scrawny, deluded disciple lets out a screech that even scared Yelk and his pals. We get some seconds to work in before they can get set once more. Snooty makes the light switch and plunges the big room in darkness, just as a big vase close to my noggin breaks apart from a barrage of bullets.

I do not believe Tarawa or the Anzio beachhead were tougher rhubarbs than the one that followed in the sanctum of the White Geraniums. Old dolls fainted everywhere, as Yelk and his torpedoes fell over them. Somebody bopped me with a wire waste basket. I hit somebody with a statue of Peace.

I hear Snooty yelling for help, but he might as well have been in New Guinea. Somebody is ridin' me piggy-back, belting my ears with both fists. I stagger to the window, reach up over my head and get the jockey around the neck and heave. He goes out into the night.

“Ha-a-alp, Scoop!”

“One gone,” I yelp. Then two big figures loom up in front of me, and I climb a big bookcase. It teeters, then goes over and showers two citizens with enough books to correct illiteracy in three states. I hit the floor and roll into a fireplace which has live embers in it. I get a faint idea how a hot seat feels.

IT IS an awful fight. Finally an old doll gets a door open and flees. Some light comes in. Then I see two big characters holding Snooty down. One is trying to beat out Snooty's brains with a copy of *Rome's Decline and Fall*.

I get a shovelful of live coals and dump some into the slack of Yelk's pants. No Sioux Indian ever reached such high C's. The other rough citizen has one leg in the air. I dump the rest of the load in his trouser leg. He hops off Snooty like he was a toad, and rolls over and over yelling bloody murder. I help Snooty up.

"Mr. Piper, I presume?" I ask him.

"In the flesh, Scoop," Snooty gulps. "Mostly shredded. Do I hear sirens?"

"Yeah," I sigh. "I think all the Civilian Defense Corps has turned out with the cops. How do you like bein' in the F.B.I., you third class moron?"

"I am too hasty at times," Snooty admits and counts his front teeth.

Outraged citizens of Woburn and plenty of cops take over. We show them evidence of subversive skullduggery, and the cuffs are put on Yelk and two other survivors.

"So you erased Fresco Snafferby," Snooty says to Yelk. "Why?"

"I did not," the character denies. "I wrote some letters, sure. Mrs. Snafferby was one of the suckers that believed this racket was for the good of humanity. She knew she couldn't get Snafferby to put dough in it, so she arranged to have herself blackmailed. She faked the imaginary gigolo had letters from her. Three other old babes invested in the Geranium, too."

"Now I have heard most everythin'," I gulp. "Still we got to look for the assassin who liquidated Fresco, huh?"

"Lots of patsies fell for this setup," Yelk say ruefully. "I figured not only to make some dough in these times, but I wanted to be sure after the war was over, we would still import from the Japs. I made lots of dough before the lousy war gettin' that cheap junk they manufacture.

"My partner is Hans Sauerbraten, who did business with the Nazis before Hitler started chewin' up rugs. He wanted t'

protect his interests, too. Yeah, we had branches of the Geraniums in three other key cities, too. I'll give you the names. Nuts! I never slugged Snafferby as I can prove I was playin' poker at the time he was boffed."

"Nice work, guys," the cops tell us. "Uncle Sam won't never forget it."

"Yeah," Snooty says. "The S.P.C.A.—Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to the Axis, imagine that? But we still have a homicidal maniac at large."

We finally reach Police Headquarters in Boston. Mrs. Fresco Snafferby is quite penitent and quite relieved both. She lets her henna tresses down as she knows everybody with dues paid-up in the Geraniums are suffering from exposure.

"Wait," she says, breaking off a line of chatter. "I just remembered something. A letter that I missed from my dressing table the morning of the day Fresco was knocked—killed. I bet the poor dear boy thought it was from the blackmailer, because it was a short note and typewritten. It was signed *L. C. LeRoy* likes to give his business the personal touch. LeRoy Cush is my hairdresser over on Boylston. If Fresco suspected—"

"Now she tells us," Iron Jaw growls. "Let's go."

We barge in on LeRoy's beauty salon and bear down on the delicate character. LeRoy finally breaks down and confesses. Fresco Snafferby had attacked him with a heavy silver-topped cane. To save his life, he had struck back at Fresco with a big hand mirror of the type barbers use to show you the back of your noggin after the shearing.

"The assailant, I had no idea of his identity then," LeRoy says weepingly and simply distracted, "thrust a letter under my nose, then let me have a terrible blow on my clavicle. I fought desperately, gentlemen, to save myself. He staggered

out after I struck him. Of course, I thought he was stunned. It is terrible, simply devastating. My reputation, my name. I—oh-h!”

“Oh, brother!” I gush out and falls into a chair. Then a big metal cone falls over my dome and starts cooking. “Git me out of here,” I scream.

We are over to the Greek’s an hour later getting the stimulant we need. “I wonder how far the ex-chorus cookie has chased Iron Jaw by now, Scoop,” Snooty says. “They can’t convict LeRoy as it was self defense. I got that letter that caused it right here. It says, *Your appointment with*

me is at seven, darling. LeRoy called all his squabs, darling, Scoop. Just think, no murder anywhere.”

“Yeah,” I says. “Wasn’t it all such a bore?”

Snooty walks into the city room of the *Evening Star* next morning.

“A hundred bucks and a steal, Dogface,” he says. “You better steal it, too, or I give a lot of the inside on the Snafferby thing to the *Sun*.”

“All right, Piper,” Dogface groans. “You got me, you dirty chiseler.”

I certainly would hate to be an enemy of Snooty Piper’s.