

# Hide and Go Shriek

*"Dizzy Duo" Yarn*



*By Joe Archibald*

*Maybe there was murder, and maybe not. But when Snooty Piper, the crackpot crime hound, sniffs the spoor of a sucker's pseudo-guilt, it's sure suicide to the security of Boston's Back Bay brotherhood.*

**I**T IS not often that my will power is too much for Snooty Piper. But one night when he comes in to our room and says he has arranged a very boisterous evening for us and two dolls, I put my foot down.

"If you can budge me out of this overstuffed chair, then you can expect to be elected head of the world peace conference."

"Look, this one would be different," the Scollay Square Casanova says. "It is a new canary I got, Scoop. I know any friend she would have would be a piperoo!"

"No good-lookin' chick ever pals with one as good-lookin', Snooty," I says. "It is the unwritten law."

"Awright," the crackpot gripes and lays out his new green suit, overcoat, and hat. "Go on an' hibernate, Scoop. Wait'll I come home and tell you what went on."

"I can wait," I reply.

Snooty Piper breezes in at eleven. He looks about as elated as Hitler reading a dispatch from East Prussia. "Why, I says, "no lipstick on your phisog? You don't smell of One Twilight in Paree, and your breath would make a hit at a temperance meetin'. Now I've seen everythin'."

"No, you haven't," Snooty sighs and sits down on the bed. "She crossed me. She had tickets for a lecture at a church in Cambridge and took her aunt with her. There was an old goat there, the Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy of the gay nineties, who

told all about crime durin' the days Lillian Russell played with dolls. He told about how the horses run away once while he was drivin' the patrol wagon. He said he raided the biggest corn silk smoking gang of all time. I'm through with dames, Scoop."

It is the best laugh I get in months.

"The babe's aunt sits between us all evenin', Scoop. She asked my intentions. Where is the spirits of ammonia?"

ABOUT a week after Snooty Piper's debauchery, he gets a call from Abigail Hepplethwaite, an old bantam who lives in Back Bay and who has more clams than all the sea-food joints from here to Honolulu. We got acquainted with Abigail three years or more ago while solving a terrible crime.

"She says it is very hush hush, Scoop," Snooty says. "She does not want the cops in on it. She makes the appointment for five o'clock this P.M."

"What can we lose?" I says.

We arrive at Abigail's forty-nine-room bungalow on schedule. Abigail looks as much in the pink as the racing dope sheet she has been perusing.

"Sit down, boys," she invites. "What's cookin', good lookin'?"

"You tell us," Snooty replies.

"Okay," Abigail says. "I got a problem, Mr. Anthony. A friend of mine, Carrie Brandish, has a nephew named Seymour who was going to marry Peregrine Rudge. It seems that Carrie handed over the last fifty grand she had in her poke to finance the courtship for Seymour. Everything went fine until just lately. Peregrine came to me and told me something she promised Seymour she wouldn't tell. She made me promise I wouldn't, Piper, but I got to tell somebody or Carrie Brandish won't ever escape the paupers' roost."

We fan ourselves with our hats. "Go on, Mrs. Hepplethwaite," I says. "It can't get no worse."

The doorbell rings, and a very willowy doll wearing a mink coat that could pay off the mortgage on a dozen homesteads in East Lynne trots in.

"Peregrine!" Abigail says. "Why, is anything gone worse than it was?"

"I just had to come here, Mrs. Hepplethwaite," the Back Bay canary says. "I couldn't just sit in my room and wait until the phone rang telling me Seymour had committed suic—"

"Look, Kid," Abigail says to the distraught doll. "I went and called in some help, such as it is. In a way they are private investigators, and the cops are always mad at them. Tell them your story, Peregrine."

She does. She says Seymour got acting as morose as Hitler. He finally broke down and said he was mixed up in a murder. He wouldn't tell her who the corpse was, as he is not sure of his name himself. All he knew he stood near the victim when he was erased.

"It is funny the cops never found a corpse," Snooty says.

"The murderer told Seymour he would take care of it," the society squab gulps out. "He said for Seymour to get out so he would not be mixed up—"

"Where was this slaughter house?" Snooty inquires, always discreet and tactful.

"Seymour wouldn't say. Oh, this is terrible! You see he will always be open to blackmail now he is to marry me." Peregrine sniffles. "How can I marry him if I won't ever be sure if he helped kill somebody?"

"This should be easy, Snooty," I sniff. "There is a corpse where nobody can find it. Nobody knows where it was made a

corpse. Seymour won't talk. Let's give it to Iron Jaw."

"No, please!" Peregrine says and puts her arms around Snooty. "I couldn't stand the awful pub—"

"It was just I thought you two goons might get to Seymour an' break him down," Abigail says. "Isn't it exciting for us to know there was a rub-out and the cops don't?"

"It is positively a scream," I says.

"We will find Seymour," Snooty says. "Leave it all to me, Babe—er—Peregrine. Go ahead an' cry it all out on my shoulder as I am in no hurry—"

**WE GO** to the club where the Harvards play gin and contract. The clerk says he has not seen Seymour Brandish for three days. We go where Seymour worked in a real estate office on Boylston, but a fat citizen tells us Seymour has not showed in a week. We try six hotels and three night clubs the character frequented, but to no avail. So we give up for the nonce and trek to the Greek's.

"It looks like he took a powder," I says.

"I wonder what kind," Snooty sighs. "Arsenic, heroin, or just plain coke. I wonder where anybody would hide a stiff."

"Let's see, they are usually from five feet five and up, and about eighteen inches across and up. I can think of only about three million places you could store a corpse, Snooty."

"Let's forget it, Scoop."

"Shake! You are a pal at last."

It is only three nights later that me and Snooty Piper are standing outside a certain whoopee nook near Park Square trying to get the courage to go in, when who comes out but Peregrine Rudge. She is worn on the arm of a very sartorially perfected

character who appears to be well in the chips.

"Why – er – say!" the aristocratic male suddenly yips. "Just one moment, my dear. These two persons fit the description of the ones who have been following me. Especially the person lacking the chin. Come here, you!"

"Who was your cocker spaniel yesterday?" Snooty says. "That babe with you can tell you why we—"

"Indeed?" Peregrine shoves out haughtily. "I never saw this riff-raff before in my life!"

"You *are* Seymour Brandish?" Snooty snaps.

"Of course."

"You seen a corpse around?" Snooty needles.

Three muscles in Seymour's pan jump. "Why—er—I cannot understand you. They must be demented, Peregrine. Let's go on, shall we?"

"He means we must be nuts, Snooty."

"I know the English language!" the crackpot yelps. "I wish I could figure what goes here."

"It looks to me like a gag on Abigail's part," I says. "She likes her fun, Snooty."

"I'll call that old babe up an' burn her earrings off," Snooty says in a temper. "We could of got arrested or slugged for this. I'll get hunk with that old flibbitygibbet!"

We go down to the main bastille in Beantown and see if there is any crime news. Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy, a detective we know only too well, laughs in our faces as we enter the establishment.

"Say, Piper, I just heard where there is a body. In a dump outside Charlestown. It is either of a Dodge or a Buick. Go and look for foul play."

"How did he hear about that?" Snooty grinds out. "Abigail again. She—awright, I'll go right down, you big slob and take a

police doll with me, as maybe I will need a woman's ignition.

"Look, Iron Jaw," Snooty picks up the gland case's big derby. "I saw a swell trick on the stage last week. You cut a hole in the top of a derby—like this. Then you cover it with a cloth an'—say, Scoop, I forgot. You need two derbies to do this trick. Come on—!"

Iron Jaw chases us all the way to the Charles River, where the Harvards row the Yales each spring. We are amazed to see quite a crowd lining the bank, as this is not spring but the middle of January. More than that, two big cops are pulling something up the bank and it is not an eel.

"It is a stiff!" Iron Jaw yelps between gasps for oxygen. "What in—?"

"Couple of kids spotted it, O'Shaughnessy," a cop says. "On ice and packed in as nice as a haddock. It's a big one."

"Don't throw it back in," I says. "Snooty, that is a bullet hole in his bosom. It is a murder!"

In due time we have the corpse appraiser on the job. He says the remains have been frosted in the Charles for over a week. All identification has been ripped out of the character's plaid suit. Nobody knows him from Adam even if it is six hours past eve.

"Where's his hat?" Snooty asks.

"He won't catch cold," I sniff.

There is nothing to do, it seems, but cart the cadaver off to the city icebox. Me and Snooty sit on a bench on the bank of the Charles and watch the dead wagon shove off.

"It is quite a mystery," Snooty says, "I still say no citizen would be out this month without a hat. Let's walk along the shore, Scoop."

"It is five below," I says. "Why couldn't we have found this corpse near a furnace?"

We walk up and down, up and down. Finally Snooty Piper finds a slouch hat about a quarter of a mile from where the stiff was discovered. It has initials in it. They are M.F.T.

Snooty looks over the hat. "It did not belong to the corpse," he says. "It is too small."

"I have heard at times of a high wind blowin' skypieces off citizens' noggins," I point out. "If we had looked another three hours I bet we would have had eight hats," I sniff.

"Could be," Snooty says.

LATE the next afternoon we hear that Iron Jaw O'Shaughnessy has been credited with some of the most remarkable detective work in the annals of crime. It seems the big flatfoot, at the morgue, has discovered that the corpse had not finished with a dentist; that when he had peeled some composition off snags of teeth in the front of the deceased's mouth, he had told his contemporaries that the victim was going to have porcelain caps put on. We read about it in the *Evening Star*. There is the description of the character's unfinished dental work.

"I get it, Snooty," I says. "A dentist will recognize the work, come to the cops, and give the name of the corpse. It is almost unbelievable, isn't it?"

"Why didn't I notice the teeth, Scoop? If it had been a horse—I still must be dreamin'. Iron Jaw really has a brain? What will they find out next?"

It turns out to be quite a case. The fingerprints of the corpse happen to be exactly like a set on file at the main hoosegow. They belonged to a very shady person known as The Bishop.

We go down to the bastille and learn that the deceased had not been heard from in over twenty-five years, since he did a three year rap for getting a widow's

inheritance mixed up with a bunch of cut-up newspapers. It appears that if there was a con game that The Bishop never heard about in his time, it had never been invented.

“So he was in Boston, huh?” Snooty says. “He got mixed up with other uncouth citizens and got erased. Well, how will Iron Jaw find out what name he was goin’ under when he was nudged off, Scoop? To find out where he lived, you got to get his name, huh?”

“He should have left a name and address with the dentist,” I remind Snooty.

It is just what The Bishop did. A dentist soon read the account of the finding of the cadaver. He identified the corpse and admitted it was once a patient of his. Hubert K. Wilshire owed him a hundred bucks.

A Hubert K. Wilshire lived at the Hotel Kinsmore near Copley Square. Three hours after we heard Iron Jaw went up there, we visited police headquarters and asked for the big ox. Iron Jaw is stomping about like Ferdinand who has found out the Borden cow has gone snorting with another bullock.

“They give some guy the stuff that was in that room,” Iron Jaw trumpets. “The dumb clerks don’t remember what the geezer looked like. What chance has the cops?”

“Hah,” Snooty says. “You got a corpse and know the name it used last and that is all. It is almost as bad as me and Scoop lookin’ for a corpse somebody thinks he helped make an’—Scoop, I feel faint. Git me some water.”

“I hope you got nothin’ worse than leprosy,” Iron Jaw howls. “Look, don’t let the papers print the name of Hubert Wilshire yet. If the guy’s pals are still around, they’ll git scared an’ scam! Until we tell you—they’s the D.A.’s orders I almos’ forgot—”

I give Snooty some water and take him outside for fresh air. “What seems to ail you, palsy?” I ask solicitously.

“Don’t ever go to lectures,” Snooty warns me. “They make you imagine the worst things. But just the same I got to see a guy. If you wanted to know who made the most double plays durin’ Hans Wagner’s time, you would go an’ ask Hans Wagner, wouldn’t you?”

“I always thought epileptic fits had to be born in anybody,” I says, eying Snooty askance. “Tell me again why you was rejected by the Army. And don’t lie. What is this schizophrenia?”

“I will see you at the roomin’ house, Scoop.”

**W**HEN Snooty comes home that night he looks quite mysterious. He is grinning like a cat that knows where a mouse takes its daily dozen. “How much moolah you got, Scoop?” he asks.

“Eleven bucks. Why?”

“Then we got fourteen between us. We should be able to spend at least a half hour at El Fumidor. I see by the papers that a party is to be given Peregrine Rudge and Seymour Brandish at the chic joint. I got some plans that are amazing, Scoop.”

“I could call them somethin’ different,” I says. “I will not go to that joint.”

“Then let the eleven bucks you got go,” Snooty says. “Now I got to have the clams, Scoop, or get rough. This is one of the most important—”

“The eleven bucks will go,” I sigh. “But I go along with them. I am thinking of splitting up with you, Snooty.”

We go to the El Fumidor and get some dirty looks as we pass the doorman. It is about nine P.M. Snooty gives a waiter three fish and tells him to let him know when the engagement party from Back Bay arrives. Then we sit at our table

behind a post, order beer, and get some more very nasty looks.

A doll comes out and sings. Some more canaries, wearing just enough to satisfy the Boston statutes, prance about for five minutes, and Snooty's neck looks like the plumbing under a washbowl as he peers around the post.

"Some pin-ups, Scoop," Snooty says. "I wonder if I wrote a note to the redhead, would she—?"

It is then that the waiter whispers to Snooty. Snooty nods and waits for ten minutes. Then he gets up and goes toward the hat check concession. I figure he has forgot me so I join him.

"Remember?" I says. "I come with you."

"Keep out of the way," Snooty says and grins at the hat babe. I grab hold of a post when he flashes a badge. Snooty says, "Easy, Toots. Don't say nothin'. I would just like to check the hats of the males who just come in with the swell society pheasant."

"Yeah," the keeper of the kellys says. "Why not, Mister?"

Snooty gets six hats, four soft ones and two derbies. He ogles the sweatbands in the chapeaux, then thanks the dame, and asks what she does in her spare time. She says she tries to make her cozy little flat look comfy when her spouse, a wrestler showing at the Boston Garden, comes home after a hard day.

"Don't no swell dame ever marry an anemic?" Snooty says to me as we take over our table again. I notice the crackpot is shaking like he had palsy over at the checkroom. I order four beers. We make the brew last while eating a pair of chicken sandwiches.

Snooty keeps watching the big table over near the dance floor where Peregrine and Seymour are being feted.

"Did it ever occur to you, Scoop, that Abigail was not ribbing us?" Snooty says. "Why would that swell Back Bay cupcake go along with the rib? That marble-puss could not act in a grammar school production of *Two Gentlemen and Verona*. Here is a character who nearly goes nuts, because there is a corpse on his mind. Then he blossoms out as happy as a tick on a fat sheep, and Peregrine refuses to even recognize us."

"Look, Snooty, if you know somethin', you should tell the cops," I says.

"I am not sure yet," Snooty says, then grabs me by the arm. "Shhh!"

"What goes?" I choke out.

"Don't let them see you, Scoop. Keep your face turned the other way, until I say it is all right."

The spiffy caravan struts past and does not notice the riff-raff anyway. Snooty is turned around in his chair and is watching them retrieve their wraps and hats. When they evacuate El Fumidor, he says:

"Seymour and M.F.T. wore derbies, Scoop."

"Come clean or I will wrap this water pitcher around your thick skull!" I says.

"Awright. I went to see the old time slewfoot who lectured at that church orgy," Snooty says. "He remembered The Bishop. He told me about the rag with the shill playing into the part of the sucker. The shill gets the mark and takes him to the store and shows him how to beat the bulls and bears because they happen to have inside quotes from Eastern Union. At first the mark wins some dough, and then the mark is mitted for his whole bankroll."

"When he makes a beef, the shill's Brain uses the cackle bladder after the shill claims the mark was robbed and shoots his boss with a Betsy loaded with ersatz capsules. So the mark sees he is in on a rub-out and does not dare follow up his squawk. The shill promises him to dispose

of the cadaver and to make himself as scarce as nylons in China.”

“Waiter,” I says. “Have you some smellin’ salts?”

“Why, pal? You didn’t see the bill yet?”

“Nothing could scare me now,” I says. “Awright, Snooty, I won’t ask you nothin’ ever again.”

We get a bill for ten eighty-five. For eight beers and two chicken sandwiches. Snooty pays, leaves a fifteen cent tip, and we are as clean of legal tender as a crocodile is of ostrich feathers.

“The Bishop was a sucker,” I says. “He could of opened a night club and never would have been worried by cops.”

**B**RIGHT and early Snooty Piper is up and is indulging in more Nero Chan mental technique. He has the hat he found near the edge of the Charles River in his lap.

“I must call Abigail,” he says, and slips out of the room. I can hear him talking when he contacts the old babe.

“Yeah . . . Yeah . . . So she says Seymour had a nervous breakdown, huh? Imagined things, huh? Yeah . . . How much dough you said Peregrine said he lost? All of the fifty grand, huh? Yeah. You can say that ag’in. You know me an’ Scoop thought you was takin’ us for a ride. Yeah. Yeah . . . I see . . . Yeah.”

Snooty comes back in and I says, “Yeah.”

“Who gits over a nervous wreck in less than a week, Scoop? Abigail says Seymour not only told Peregrine he was an accessory in an assassination, but also that he had lost all his clams.”

“He had quite a roll last night,” I says. “When a doll snapped his map, he pulled out enough hay to pay her off to feed all the beef that will fatten in Texas for the

next fifty years. I happened to get a gander at him.”

“We will call up Dogface and say we are trailing a big scoop,” Snooty says. “I found out where Seymour Brandish lives. What big stock market character leaves for his store—er—office before nine-thirty or thereabouts? To play safe, we will be outside his pueblo on Beacon Street at eight-thirty. He could tell us who slew The Bishop.”

“Huh?”

“Sure, he was the mark mitted by the shill.”

“Stop,” I says. “I have stood everything from you, but I will not listen to that dizzy double-talk. Where did you learn it?”

“It is the lingo of the geezers specializin’ in the old rag, Scoop. Let’s see, about ten days or two weeks ago we had the highest wind in history, didn’t we? Remember it blew Dogface from in front of the *Evening Star* and loaded him in a garbage truck four blocks away. It was mostly likely the night The Bishop was exterminated. Seymour shrugged away a corpse that wasn’t really there, but really was all the time. Maybe he does not even know it.”

I hold my head in my hands. Everything starts getting black. I know what it feels like to be planning a very heinous crime. It is a good thing there was not a trench knife or a Roscoe handy, or at this writing I would most likely have been getting the top of my dome clipped for the hot squat. After a while I get hold of myself.

“All right, Snooty,” I says. “Have it your way.”

We are across the street from the old yellow brick house on Beacon at eight-thirty sharp and are hiding in a doorway. At nine, Seymour Brandish, dressed like a clothing ad, minces down the steps, pauses

and takes a long deep breath. Then he ambles uptown like he owned Lloyd's of London.

"Come on, Scoop."

We hound Seymour all the way to a very respectable-looking building on Boylston Street, and watch him go into the elevator. When the lift comes down again, we brief the up and down jockey.

"Where did the citizen with the big grey overcoat, derby hat, and faun-colored spats get off, Buster?" Snooty asks.

"Huh? Oh, him? A big shot. Tenth floor. He is one of them investment guys it looks like."

We go up to the tenth floor and spot an office with two entrances. On one door it says, Plymouth Rock Investment Service, Inc. "This must be it," Snooty says.

"Let's be calm about this, Snooty," I says. "Who could ever suspect Seymour Brandish of murder?"

"Once he suspected himself, Scoop."

**WE GO IN.** Snooty tells the female on guard he would like to see Mr. Standish or somebody about investing some clams. The doll has eyes as penetrating as a puma's. Her makeup is thicker than a clown's.

"Who recommended you?" she asks and crushes a cigarette into an ash tray like she is quite angry with it.

"Er, a Mr. Hubert Wilshire," the imbecile says. "I am Ezra Boysenberry."

"Woo woo," says the fresh skirt and goes into a big office and closes the door. She soon comes out with a tall, cadaverous, well-groomed citizen we have seen before. She says:

"This is Mr. Trelawney. He will speak with you."

"Mr. M. F. Trelawney?" Snooty inquires as the charter takes us into a big office.

"You said a Mr. Wilshire sent you?" Trelawney asks. I have a feeling it would be no worse for us if this firm was conducted by Karloff and Lorre. "When did you talk to him last?"

"Why, only two days ago," Snooty says.

Trelawney's cigar trembles like a plucked banjo string and ashes drop down on his vest. "That's imp—"

"Why?" Snooty asks and he does not sound very polite.

"Well, that is, he left town—"

"I wouldn't say so," Snooty says. "He is in town this minute. He can be seen anytime—"

The sweat is beginning to ooze out of Trelawney's pan. I look toward a door leading to another office and see it open a crack. For once I says to myself, "You get prepared, Scoop Binney!" There is a big bottle of ink standing on top of a file cabinet not two feet away.

"Let's be frank," Snooty says. "Wilshire is on a slab at the morgue and has been there for quite some time. The cops remembered him as The Bishop. He was a pal of yours, M.F.T. Where's Brandish, huh? We—"

Seymour jumps out then. "Tsk-tsk," Snooty says. "You know what they say about eavesdroppin', Seymour."

"Wilshire? Merton, you told me he left town!" Seymour yelps at M.F.T.

"Shut up!" Trelawney says. "Why come and tell me, you two?"

"It is silly seein' as how you knocked off The Bishop. I found your hat near the Charles River, pal," Snooty says. "Why didn't you tell your partner things like that? Want to see the citizen who worked the cackle bladder on you, Seymour, after he took you for fifty grand? It was this M.F.T. who shot The Brain with the blanks, huh?"

“Merton—they know all—you told me Wilshire left town!” Seymour gulps. “Then you—!”

“Look out, Scoop!”

“Watch yourself, Snooty, as I am way ahead of you,” I says and grab the big bottle of writing fluid just as M.F.T. pulls out a desk drawer. The trouble was that I slipped just before I let it go. It got Snooty Piper a glancing blow and rendered him as bowlegged as a Sioux Indian packing two hundred pounds of jerked meat on his back. Seymour is very horrified and weak at the knees, so he is not much help.

M.F.T. shoots at me twice from only two feet away and does not kill me. It is almost unbelievable. Then he throws the Betsy away and comes at me with his bare hands. I evade his rushes long enough to become armed with a three pound copy of Who’s What in Boston which I nail him with.

M.F.T. catches it right where he smells and staggers backwards. I follow up fast. When the rough boy collapses near the water cooler, I push the thing over on him and sit on him myself.

“Okay, Scoop!” Snooty says. “I got Seymour at the point of a Roscoe.”

“Throw it away as it is full of blanks. It must be the Betsy that they use for a prop,” I sniff. “See if you can find something to tie M.F.T. up with. An’ call the cops.”

**S**NOOTY told the D.A. everything. “It had to be like that,” he says. “There was a corpse and then there wasn’t. This Trelawney was The Bishop’s shill. When

Seymour put up a squawk that he was swindled in a stock racket in that store, M.F.T. made out he was mad at the boss, too, and shot him with blanks. Just as he shot The Bishop, the old crook bit down on a bladder filled with blood and made out he was mortally slain.

“M.F.T. says for Seymour to scam and he’ll hide the cadaver. Well, after that, maybe a week or so, M.F.T. contacts Seymour and says it was all a gag. He had a fight with the big boss and made him fork over part of the dough that was snitched—”

“Yes,” Seymour Brandish cuts in. “He told me Wilshire left town to run his own racket. Then he gives me back twenty thousand dollars and points out to me what a nice business it is if you try the receiving end. Oh, I was a fool! I was weak! I came to the store with Trelawney. We had two suckers lined up—but I didn’t help kill no one, I swear! I didn’t know Wilshire was dead until—oh, this is horrible. Oh, what have I done?”

“Just tryin’ to mitt the easy marks is all,” Snooty says. “That was quite a layout, D.A. The store—a completely outfitted phony brokerage office with clerks and a board. Look, that Betsy with the blanks could have fired real ones at The Bishop, so give it to ballistics. I would like to have that cackle bladder we found for a souvenir though.”

Iron Jaw sits there mumbling and with his eyes crossed. “The rag—the shill getting the mark—getting him to a store—a cackle bladder—ha-haaa!”

“Better take him out,” I says to a cop.