



TOMORROW

By Robert Arthur

☉ The House of Tomorrow in truth! Where Tuesday's paper arrived every Monday morning, and Wednesday's phone calls came through on Tuesday. And sometimes just that could be a horribly grim joke—

Illustrated by Orban

It was exactly the house Henry Harris had been hoping to find—small, new, modern, but not freaky. Everything about it delighted him from the moment he laid eyes on it—its neat geometrical lines, dark-green lawn, flat, sun-deck roof, even its name. The sign on the lawn read:

TOMORROW HOUSE

Completely Furnished
Step In

Briskly Henry Harris turned up the brick walk, went up three steps, and rapped the door knocker,

observing as he did so that from the small porch he could see across the roof tops, down into the blueness of the Golden Gate, dotted with tiny ships and flecked with whitecaps. The door opened to his knock at once. A young man with a slightly harassed look confronted him.

"Good morning," Henry Harris said, with the new air of decisiveness which had come to him since he had inherited the ten thousand dollars his almost forgotten Uncle Ebenezer had left behind after his transition to another and presumably better world. "I'd like to look at the house. I'm in the market for one."

The young man smiled; nay, beamed.

"Come in, sir," he invited. "Er—let me give you a hand."

He grasped Henry Harris' elbow, and just in time. For as he extended his right foot across the threshold, a sudden giddiness swept Mr. Harris. The world reeled; strange tinglings ran through his body. Then he was inside, the young man holding his elbow, and everything was normal again.

"Sorry," Henry Harris said apologetically. "Must have had a touch of vertigo, I guess."

"The sun, maybe," the young man said heartily. "It's hot today. But notice how cool it is inside here. Prefabricated walls, with built-in insulation. But let me show you around. Unless you'd like to rest—"

"Oh, no," Henry Harris shook his head. "Feel fine now."

So the young man showed him over the house, talking rapidly. His name, he said, was Jones. He was the architect and builder both. Tomorrow House was ten years ahead of any other house in America. He'd built it to prove his theories. Now he wanted to sell, to use the cash to form a company to make prefabricated houses. If Henry Harris liked it, he'd take a substantial sum off the purchase price for cash in hand and—

Henry Harris did like it. Enormously. The cozy living room, completely furnished, even to books on the shelves and a radio, with a telephone installed in a niche, needing only to be switched in at the central office. The tiny bedroom, compact kitchen, small hall. The heating plant, air conditioner, and the steel-girder wall construction. It took him no time at all to make up his mind, and having done so, he promptly drew out his check book.

When he tucked the check, representing almost half of Uncle Ebenezer's legacy, into his pocket, young Mr. Jones' expression was one of relief. The slightly nervous manner fell from him. He drew a deep breath and shook Henry Harris' hand.

"Mr. Harris," he said warmly, "Tomorrow House is now yours. I'll tend to all the papers and send them over. I can see you're not a nervous man. But if you were, you could congratulate yourself on your purchase. In Tomorrow House you can rest as unworried as a babe in its crib. It is burglar proof, fire proof, lightning proof and earthquake proof. Perhaps you remember the slight earthquake and thunder storm we had three nights ago?"

"Why, yes," Mr. Harris nodded, remembering. "Quite exciting, too."

"Exciting enough to shift half a dozen houses in the neighborhood off their foundations," Mr. Jones said impressively. "But not Tomorrow House. No, sir! At the very height of the storm and 'quake, a bolt of lightning hit the roof. Neigh-

bors said it would have blasted a Pyramid to pieces. But the metal frame absorbed the bolt and the temblor force, too. Wasn't a sign of damage the next day. Not a sign."

Henry Harris nodded, pleased to hear how his house had stood up under punishment.

"I'm sure I'm going to be happy here," he said complacently. "I've retired from business, and I'm just going to read, maybe write a little, putter around, do all the things I've never had time for. Probably travel some, later on."

"Well, good luck," Jones said heartily. "Those papers will be along within twenty-four hours."

He strode to the door, hesitated a moment, then almost leaped across the threshold. On the little porch he staggered a moment, catching his balance. Then, waving back, he went down the brick walk and was gone.

Henry Harris, beaming with cheerfulness, stepped more slowly outside to stroll around his property and look at his house from all angles—and discovered then why Mr. Jones had seemed so relieved at making the sale.

For, as he stepped out, a swift electric tingle shot through him, and giddiness made him stagger. And when he stepped back in, vertigo again shot through him, almost causing him to fall.

It was impossible to enter or leave Tomorrow House without getting a shock!

After he had made sure of this, Henry Harris retired to the neat little living room and sat down, his middle-aged face sober. He'd been stuck! He'd bought a lemon! There was something wrong with the house. Jones had known about it and he, Henry Harris, had gone and paid out his money without making a thorough investigation!

For a time, Mr. Harris felt sick and desolate. Then, slowly, he brightened. The house, once you were in it, was delightful. Just what he'd dreamed of owning during those thirty long, poverty-ridden years as a bookkeeper for Lord & Johnson. And then it occurred to him that perhaps the strange shock only occurred at the front door. Filled with quick hope, he tried the rear door. But the first trial dashed his hopes. And when, in a last experiment, he tried crawling out the living-room window onto the porch, and found himself gripped by that same dizziness, he knew that whatever it was, affected the whole house.

No doubt, he concluded presently, the lightning bolt that Mr. Jones had told him about was, somehow, responsible. Striking the house during the earthquake of the previous week, it had perhaps magnetize the steel girders of the walls in some way, making a magnetic field that caused you to become dizzy in stepping into or out of it.

At once he felt better. Perhaps it could be fixed—the steel framework demagnetized, somehow. In any case, it didn't seem to be dangerous, merely

uncomfortable. And it had enabled him to buy the house at a bargain. He would investigate further later. Now he wanted to get his clothes from his old boardinghouse, Mrs. Trimble's, and move in.

It took him an hour or so, traveling by trolley, to get his few modest pieces of luggage and return. He took a taxi back, stopping off to phone from a drugstore to ask that the phone be turned on, and to the newspaper office to ask for an evening paper to be delivered each day. The phone and the paper were promised, service to begin tomorrow, and Mr. Harris, well satisfied, paused only enough longer to buy a bag of groceries at a delicatessen before returning home.

He had been back only about half an hour, and was enjoying tea that he fixed for himself in the compact kitchen, when a loud thump in the hall startled him. A cheese sandwich crammed into his mouth, Mr. Harris almost choked in his agitation. But it was only the evening paper he had ordered delivered, folded up into a compact square and dropped in through the door slot by the delivery boy.

Pleased at the promptness of the service—after all, delivery hadn't been supposed to start before next day—Henry Harris was unfolding the journal to scan the headlines when the telephone in its wall niche rang.

Hastily swallowing the sandwich, he answered it.

"Mr. Harris?" a pleasant, feminine voice asked. "This is the telephone company. We just wanted to say that your phone is in operation now."

"Why . . . why, that's fine," Mr. Harris responded. "That's real service. I didn't expect to be able to use it before tomorrow."

"Oh, no," the voice laughed. "We try to keep our promises. The connection order reads for Thursday, and we're right on time."

"But this isn't Thursday," Henry Harris protested. "This is Wednesday."

"No, I'm sorry, but it's Thursday, all right," the young lady told him. "Good-by, Mr. Harris."

Henry Harris hung up, his brow furrowed. Absently he opened the paper that had just been delivered. Then he leaped a little.

The date line of the paper read: "Thursday, November 6th."

He swallowed hard. But it had been Wednesday, the fifth, when he got out of bed that morning. He knew, because he had just paid the previous week's rent, which he always paid on Wednesday. And besides—

Henry Harris looked for the morning paper he had been just this morning. So it couldn't be. He spread it out and stared at it, eyes bulging.

"Wednesday, November 5th," it read. And that had been just that morning. So it couldn't be Thursday now, unless— A sudden, startling sus-

picion flowered in Henry Harris' mind. It was so startling that he leaped up, ran out of the house, disregarding the usual vertigo that he felt upon going in or out, and hurried down to the walk to accost a well-dressed passer-by.

"Pardon me!" Henry Harris puffed. "But—can you tell me the date?"

"Wednesday," the other told him, eying him curiously. "November 5th."

"Thank you!" Mr. Harris gulped, and dashed back into his home. He closed the door and snatched up the phone. The most authoritative agency he could think of was the Weather Bureau. He called them, and in an unsteady voice asked the date.

"November 6th!" a crisp voice answered him, and the phone clicked.

Henry Harris hung up, slowly and soberly, swallowing hard. It was true! His home was twenty-four hours ahead of all the rest of the world!

It was an idea that took considerable getting used to. In fact, it took Henry Harris the better part of a week to really become accustomed to the thought. Even after he proved to himself, beyond any possible doubt, that it was so, he tried to argue that it couldn't be. In the first place—

But there wasn't any "in the first place." No matter from what angle he tried to think about it, it was confusing in the extreme. And Henry Harris quickly abandoned any efforts to think the thing through, to rationalize it in any way. The fact simply remained that in some way, apparently through the combined impact of simultaneous earthquake and electrical shock, his home, Tomorrow House, had literally been thrown forward into tomorrow. So that it was tomorrow's paper that was delivered within its door, tomorrow's phone messages that came in on the telephone, and tomorrow's radio programs that came over the parlor radio. Confusing at first, but not disturbing when you became accustomed to it. Rather pleasing and exciting, in fact.

And so, over a period of several days, it all became straightened out in his mind. Outside his home he was in Today. Inside, he was in Tomorrow. By stepping over his threshold, he moved from one day into another—forward or backward as the case might be.

It worried him at first. He kept expecting something to happen. Just what, he didn't know, but something. Nothing did, however. He left his home as he willed, and returned to it without incident and without discomfort, save for the recurrent dizziness which struck him as he went in or out the doorway. And as the days passed with no untoward incident, his fears dwindled, to be replaced by a secret pride in the uniqueness of his house.

But it was not until the end of the first week

that the glittering possibilities of the situation dawned upon him.

If Henry Harris had been a reader of popular fiction, his very first move would probably have been to look at the morrow's paper that was delivered to his home each evening, memorize the movements of the stock market, the winners of the races at Belmont and other tracks, and then rush out to buy or sell stocks and make bets accordingly, thereby reaping a nice profit.

But Henry Harris had been a hard-working bookkeeper for thirty years, until released by Uncle Ebenezer's legacy. He had never made a bet in his life. And it was only accident that turned his thoughts in that direction.

He was sitting beside his radio, reading tomorrow's paper and seeing with great satisfaction that the British were going to win another spectacular naval battle in the Mediterranean, when in fiddling with the radio dial he got a sudden hoarse voice that chanted in his ear:

"We bring you the results of the fifth at Bowie. Winner, Starlight, post position 4, fifteen-forty, six-sixty, four dollars. Place, Boomtown, post position 7, four-forty, two-twenty. Show, Melissa, post position 1, three-thirty."

Then music liltingly filled the room. But Henry Harris was sitting bolt upright, his sparse gray hair erect on his head. That was it! He had been worrying about the unexpected rapidity with which his inheritance was diminishing. Somehow he had thought it would last indefinitely—ten thousand dollars had seemed such a large sum. Instead, it was going at a rate which would see it all gone within a year or two.

But now there was no need to worry. He could replenish his fortunes, and add to them, by simply betting on races the results of which he knew a full day before they were run!

Perhaps it is a commentary on human nature that, out of a hundred men placed in Henry Harris' situation, a full one hundred would sooner or later have thought of exactly the same thing. But that idea did not bother him in the least, because it never occurred to him. Instead, he dragged out his wallet and fumbled in it for a card which a fellow boarder, a racy, sporting type of individual, had given him when he lived at Mrs. Trimble's boardinghouse. The card contained a name, Sure-shot Sam, and a number. Sure-shot Sam was a bookie. The other boarder had suggested, with a dig in the ribs, that if Henry Harris ever wanted to make a little gamble, Sure-shot Sam would give him action.

Henry Harris had repudiated the suggestion, not because he disproved of gambling, but because he had never had two dollars he dared risk. Now the card was a godsend. He dialed the number it gave, his heart beating rapidly.

"Hello?" a gruff voice demanded after a moment.

"Mr. Sure-shot Sam?" Henry Harris squeaked.

"Sam speaking. Who's this?"

"This is Henry Harris, of 713 Hemlock Street," Henry Harris said breathlessly. "I . . . er, I wanted to find out if I could . . . well, make a small bet on a horse named Starlight in the fifth race at Bowie toda—tomorrow, I mean?"

"Ha-ha!" The hearty laughter had an admiring ring in it. "So it's you, Mr. Harris! I had a hunch you'd be calling about now."

"You . . . you did?" Henry Harris stammered in amazement.

"Sure thing. Race results just come in, didn't they? Bet you was sitting by your radio with an ear glued right to it. Ha-ha! You sure can pick 'em, Mr. Harris! Calling up to ask can you put a bet on Starlight! What a gag."

"I . . . uh . . . I—" Henry Harris was completely flustered.

"The way you acted yesterday," Sure-shot Sam confided, "I thought you was wacky. I almost threw you out. Maybe I should've. If I had, I'd be fifteen hundred bucks better off today. That's life. Come on down and get your dough—fifteen hundred and forty smackers, plus the hundred you bet, and it ain't hay. You know the address."

"No . . . uh, I mean, I've forgotten it," Mr. Harris squeaked, trying to adjust his whirling thoughts.

"Eighty-five Water Street, over Mac's Pool-room. Knock two, then two."

"Th-thanks," Mr. Harris stammered, and hung up, head whirling.

So he'd already made a bet with Sure-shot Sam! Either that, or the fellow was making a mistake of some kind. Because certainly the thought of betting on a horse had never entered Henry Harris' head until just a moment before. Yes, it had to be a mistake. But there was only one way to be sure. That was to go to the number Sure-shot Sam had given him. Henry Harris got his hat, left the house, and somewhat nervously took a trolley down to Water Street.

It was a gloomy section of the city. With much trepidation he mounted the stairs of eighty-five and knocked as directed on the stout, blank door. At once a large, frightening individual opened it.

"Come in," he grunted. "Last is just running at Bowie. You're too late to get any dough down, though."

"I . . . uh, I wanted to speak to Mr. Sure-shot Sam," Henry Harris ventured, stepping into a large, dingy room, across one end of which ran a partition with several wickets, across the other a blackboard covered with names and cabalistic symbols being rubbed out and changed by a perspiring boy. Several dozen men, of varying age and dress, were slouched in worn chairs, listening

to a rapid voice over a loudspeaker describing a race somewhere.

"Sure-shot? What about?" the gorillalike individual demanded.

"About a bet," Mr. Harris gulped.

"Yeah? Well—"

The other shrugged, turned, opened a door to an inner office, where a stout man sat with his feet on a desk, a telephone receiver to his ear.

"Guy says he wants to speak to you about a bet," Henry Harris' guide announced, and withdrew.

Sure-shot Sam barked into the phone, then hung up. He lowered his feet and gazed at Henry Harris questioningly.

"Yeah?" he demanded.

"I . . . uh, I'm Henry Harris," Mr. Harris piped, swallowing. "I was just speaking to you on the phone and—"

"When?"

"About half an hour ago. And—"

"You're mistaken, buddy!" Sure-shot Sam growled. "I never spoke to anybody named Harris today or any other time. What's your game?"

"But I was calling about making a bet on a horse named Starlight and you said—"

"Said what?"

"Said you had some money waiting for me and to—"

"Now I know you're nuts!" Sure-shot Sam snapped. "In the first place, Starlight don't run till tomorrow. And second, I got no more time to waste on you. So get going before—"

"No, wait!" Henry Harris squeaked. "I thought it was a mistake all along. What I came for is because I want to bet on Starlight. A hundred dollars."

"That's different." Sure-shot Sam relaxed at the sight of Mr. Harris' wallet. "What'd you say your name was?"

"Henry Harris, 713 Hemlock Street," Mr. Harris told him.

"O. K., Mr. Harris." Sure-shot Sam made a note and took the money. "Though, confidentially, you're throwing your money away. Starlight is strictly from glue factory. Make it two hundred if you like."

"No," Henry Harris said quickly. "A hundred is . . . is the figure. I . . . yes, just a hundred."

"Well, drop in tomorrow, Mr. Harris," Sure-shot told him genially. "If your dog wins, which it won't, the dough'll be here. Track odds."

Henry Harris mumbled something and made his exit, his thoughts in confusion. On the way homeward he tried to straighten them out. He had called Sure-shot Sam from the house. But actually, indoor time, he'd called him tomorrow, so that presumably he wouldn't get the call yet for twenty-four hours, outdoor time. But be-

cause of the call, which Sure-shot Sam still hadn't received, he, Henry Harris, had come down to make a bet which he knew was going to win him almost sixteen hundred dollars—a bet he would probably not have made except for Sure-shot Sam's reply to a call he hadn't gotten yet, about a bet that wasn't made until after the call had been completed, but which—

Mr. Harris, the instant he got home, took three aspirins and stopped trying to sort out the loose ends. Obviously, the time relationships existing were too intricate for him to fathom. He would simply have to accept them and make use of them, as he did the properties of electricity and radio waves, two other complex subjects he had never remotely understood.

So he spent the evening quietly, reading tomorrow's news and listening to tomorrow's radio programs, and did not go out of the house until the following afternoon. Then, having learned the name of a new winner over the radio, he sallied forth to collect his bet.

With more confidence this time, he knocked upon the door at 85 Water Street, and was admitted by the burly guardian, who ushered him into Sure-shot Sam's office. The stout bookie, his back to the door, was just completing a phone call when Mr. Harris entered.

"That's life," Henry Harris heard Sure-shot Sam saying. "Come on down and get your dough—fifteen hundred and forty smackers, plus the hundred you bet, and it ain't hay. You know the address." He paused a moment, then added a few last words. "Eight-five Water Street, over Mac's Poolroom. Knock two, then two."

He hung up and as he swung around, Henry Harris' scalp was prickling. Could—was— The



bookie settled his speculations by gaping at him as if at a ghost.

"You!" he got out. "But I just finished talkin' to you on the phone!"

Henry Harris swallowed hard.

"I . . . I was just phoning from the corner," he said feebly.

Sure-shot Sam still stared at him with unbelieving gaze.

"Then you must 'a' flew in the window!" he grunted. "Because you was still talking when I hung up!"

Henry Harris, seeing the dark suspicion on the bookie's features, spoke with unwonted glibness, considering he had practically never told a lie before in his life.

"It was really a friend," he said wildly. "I was . . . was just playing a joke on you."

"Huh," Sure-shot Sam muttered, and some of the suspicion faded. "A gag, huh? Feel good because your dog won. Well—"

He paid Henry Harris his winnings, seemingly satisfied with the explanation, and Mr. Harris left another hundred-dollar bet, which Sure-shot Sam took without overmuch enthusiasm. It was a long shot, and had won—was going to win, rather—at twenty to one, which would probably decrease the bookie's enthusiasm even further.

To avoid getting into any more complications such as had just occurred, Henry Harris prudently arranged to have Sure-shot Sam send a check for any future winnings direct to Mr. Harris' bank, while he would send in his bets in the form of telegraph money orders. Matters thus simplified, Henry Harris started home in a glow of excitement so great that on the way, seeing a snappy coupé such as he had always wished to own, standing in a dealer's window, he strode in and bought it on the spot.

The salesman saw to it that he got a driver's license, by means unknown to Henry Harris, and Mr. Harris drove homeward with utmost caution, but with his heart swelling with triumph. Life was pleasant. Life was very pleasant indeed!

The day after he bought the car, however, something happened that Henry Harris did not find pleasant because it mystified him, and, for some reason, upset him.

Returning from a short drive to try out his new car, in the course of which he stopped to chat for half an hour with the only friend he had in the neighborhood, Dr. Robert Jordan, to whom he had been going for treatment of his colds and sinus attacks for so long that they were on the basis of friends now rather than that of physician and patient, he put the coupé away in the detached garage and tried to enter Tomorrow House through the back door.

But the key stuck. The door would not open.

He tried vainly for five minutes to make the lock work, then went around to the front door. But it, queerly, would not open, either. With mounting anxiety, Henry Harris struggled to get into his home. After half an hour he was on the point of smashing a window and crawling in when, unexpectedly, on one last try, the latch turned smoothly and the door opened. Feeling oddly upset and shaken, Henry Harris staggered inside and poured himself a tiny tumbler of apricot brandy, just as the clock struck five.

The drink helped, but he could not rid himself of his nervous, shaken-up feeling. It still persisted the next morning, and in an effort to calm himself, he went out after lunch for a short drive in his car. It was in returning that, three miles outside the city, a tire blew out.

Henry Harris' car went into the ditch, for he was not expert enough to control it, turned over twice, and came to rest right side up ten yards off the road.

Mr. Harris, feeling shaken and bruised, crawled out. A passing motorist took him into town and dropped him at Dr. Robert Jordan's. There he phoned to a garage to go get his vehicle, then Jordan insisted on making a careful examination of him. No bones were broken, but Jordan bound his scratches, gave him a mild sedative, and sent him home by taxi.

Feeling oddly ill and upset, Henry Harris unlocked the door and tottered into his house. As he did so, the clock was striking five.

From that moment dated Henry Harris' gradually increasing nervousness and apprehension over the fact that his home was twenty-four hours ahead of the rest of the world.

Having, the first few days, gotten over his initial fears, he had been excited and interested by the phenomenon. Having discovered no dangers in it, he had accepted it calmly, almost complacently. There were curious contradictions in it, as he had observed. One of these had been his seeming ability to be in two places at the same time.

This latter power had escaped his notice until one Sunday—house time, as he phrased it—he had stayed indoors all day, reading the Sunday paper. The next day, a trifle restive, he had left the house early in the morning, stepping out, of course, into Sunday, outdoor time. Stopping in to see Dr. Jordan, he remained away until late in the evening. It was only as he made his way homeward that he realized he had spent two Sundays, one indoors and one outdoors. Presumably it was the same Sunday. If so he had violated some rather fundamental laws, or apparent laws, by being in two places at the same time. Yet there had been no indication of conflict anywhere in his existence.

Of course, he had practically skipped Saturday altogether, which perhaps accounted for it. Two

Sundays—no Saturday. On the face of it, it was logical. Even so, he was disposed to brood about it until he recalled the International Date Line. Mariners sailing across it, he knew, either had two days the same, or skipped a day. His home was something like an international date line in time.

But now—what had happened had upset all his previous ideas. Logic told him it could not be a coincidence that, the day before, he had been unable to enter his house until five struck, and today, having suffered a nerve-racking accident, he had found it impossible to get back home until the exact same moment, five.

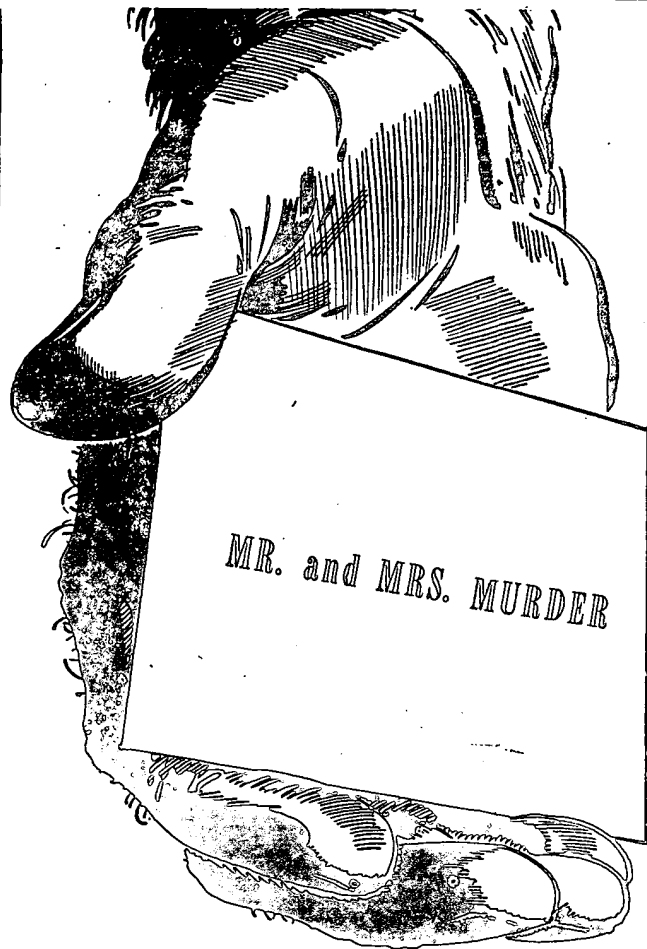
Pondering, Henry Harris thought he perceived the significance. For once he had *not* been able to be in two places at the same time. On previous occasions, with nothing but his free will operating, it had been possible for him to choose where he would be. Thus, since he *could* have been in either place—outdoors or indoors—he had been able to be in both. But this time he had had no choice. His accident, a happening beyond his power to control, had made it impossible for him to enter his home before the hour of five. Therefore, yesterday, he had been unable to get in, because at that moment—indoor time—he was just returning from the doctor's.

So that, when his free will ceased to operate and fate, or destiny, took over, the time structure ceased to be elastic and—

Henry Harris did not pursue the thought. It was too upsetting. Each time he returned home now, he inserted his key into the lock with an inward trembling lest it refuse to turn. It never did. But it might. And if it did—

Although he was still making money by placing bets on certain winners through Sure-shot Sam, and had opened an account with a local brokerage office which daily made substantial gains, all Henry Harris' pleasure in his home was gone. An increasing nervousness with which he entered his home after going out now was affecting him. He became progressively jittery. He brooded. Meticulously he tried to live according to an exact schedule, so that there was no possibility of time conflict in his life. Rigorously he avoided doing anything, making any further experiments or investigations, which could possibly cause confusion or set up an impossible situation among the curiously balanced forces of his environment.

But still he worried. He had read somewhere of a man, coming accidentally into possession of a tomorrow's paper, reading of his own death. He found himself scanning his own evening paper for news of his own demise, which was ridiculous, since, if he had found it, it would have meant he was both dead and alive at the same time, a far different matter from simply being in two different places.



BURK GLOVER was a private detective, and a good one. But he had one thing that set him apart from the others . . . he had Patsy.

Together, Patsy and Burk Glover were drawn into the sensational Laraine Carroy case. Laraine was beautiful, wealthy, gifted, glamorous—but somebody killed her. And Patsy and Burk were probably the only sleuths in the business who could solve the subtle mystery of

THE ORCHID CORSAGE, thrilling story
by Gordon Marling, featured in June

DETECTIVE STORY

ON SALE AT ALL NEWSSTANDS

He became so jittery that, after a couple of weeks, he went to his old friend, Jordan, for advice. The medical man, diagnosing his condition as an aftermath of his automobile accident, suggested a long sea trip. And instantly Henry Harris knew that that was what he was going to do—take a trip and get away completely from Tomorrow House. He'd always wanted to go around the world, if possible; he'd always wanted to see Australia, where his only living relative, a cousin, resided.

He decided to go around the world, if he could, and by air so far as possible—the flight of a New York reporter around the globe on commercial airlines a few years before had stirred his imagination immensely. In any case, he would go to Australia. The Pacific Clippers made that jump now. Maybe he'd stay in Australia. He didn't know. But there he would go.

Promptly he set about making arrangements. It wasn't easy, but in two weeks of intensive activity he did it. Arranged for a passport, for a Clipper passage, and for clothing and luggage. Closed down his brokerage account, converted several thousand dollars into travelers' checks, and prepared to close his house and store the car that, since his accident, he no longer used.

It was with a sense of relief that the last detail was tended to. He had quadrupled Uncle Ebenezer's legacy, thanks to the possibilities of Tomorrow House, and he felt no regret at not having done better. Fate had given him an opportunity. He could let it go now, without being greedy. Unpleasant things, it was his belief, tended to happen to people who reached too far.

The last afternoon before he was to leave he spent with his friend, Dr. Jordan. The next day, at six, the Clipper was due to leave. Within his closet were his bags, packed. A new suit hung waiting for him, his travelers' checks, ticket, passport, and necessary papers in its pocket. He had only to lock the door for the last time and leave. The sense of relief was tremendous.

With Jordan he enjoyed a cocktail, then stayed to dinner at the medical man's urging. It was after dark when he left. They stood for a moment on the terrace, looking down at the night-shrouded bay, dotted with yellow glints, from which next day the Clipper would take off.

"Well, Henry," Jordan told him, slapping him on the back, "this time tomorrow you'll be two hundred miles or more out over the sea."

"Farther than that," Henry Harris said happily. "I'll send you a post card from Honolulu."

Jordan grinned, and Henry Harris started his stroll homeward. It was a mild evening, the moon rising, a queer shade of orange red. Mr. Harris breathed deeply—then his breath caught in his throat. What had Jordan said?

This time tomorrow you'll be two hundred miles at sea—

But in that case, it wouldn't be possible for him to be within his home tomorrow—and inside it was already tomorrow—

Henry Harris, panic stirring at him, began to hurry. Presently he was almost running. His breath was sharp in his chest when at last he stood before his own door, his key held in shaking fingers. Fearfully he inserted it, turned—

The lock would not give. The key would not turn.

After ten minutes of panicky effort to make either the front or back door open, Henry Harris withdrew to the walk and forced himself to calmness. If he could not get into the house, that meant he was not to be in it tomorrow, of course. That, in turn, simply indicated that tomorrow he would be, as planned, aboard the Pacific Clipper. There was no reason to be upset. The very fact he could not get into the house was proof that his plans were going to be carried out.

But—

Henry Harris caught his breath again.

His ticket, his passport, all his vital papers, were inside the house. Without them, he could not board the Clipper tomorrow. Unless he got them, he *wouldn't* be far on his way toward Honolulu this time tomorrow! In order to carry out his plans, he *had* to get inside—

But if he got inside, if he was able to enter tomorrow within the house, that would be a sign that he wasn't going to be aboard the Pacific Clipper when it took off.

So he couldn't leave with the Clipper unless he got in, and if he got in, as far as he could see, that would mean he was not to be on board in any case.

Then, if he was not to be aboard the Clipper, and not inside his home, either, *where was he going to be this time tomorrow?*

The question echoed back and forth within Henry Harris' brain, pounding like a hammer. Where was he going to be tomorrow? Where?

He tried the doors again, and when they would not budge, unreasoning desperation made him snatch up a rock from the garden and hurl it through the bedroom window. Glass shattered with a loud tinkling. The rock crashed on into the room. And there was a hole in the window big enough to admit him.

Henry Harris almost sobbed in relief. Disdaining the fragments of broken pane, he got one foot on the sill and almost dove in through the hole in the glass.

As he went through, the old familiar dizziness seized him. His foot slipped, and he fell heavily. For a moment he lay prone, dizzy, the floor seeming to rock beneath him. Then his senses cleared

and he scrambled up. The floor was quivering, markedly. He had felt the motion once before, years ago, and he knew what it meant. Earthquake!

He must get outside again. But first he staggered across to his closet, snatched the envelope of precious papers from his suit pocket. Then, clutching them, he made for the front door. But even before he reached the hall, weakness gripped him, and he felt warm wetness running down his leg.

He got to the telephone, staring in terror down at himself. His trouser leg was ripped from knee to cuff. And from a deep gash beneath the knee, made when he had slipped on the window sill, arterial blood was pumping in bright crimson spurts.

For a moment he could only stare at those small, jetting gouts of crimson. The house still quivered to the temblor. He was aware of that. And a faint tintinnabulation of music told him he must have left the radio on when he had gone out. Then the power to move returned to him. He pawed on the light, groped for the telephone, frantically dialed Jordan. His friend's voice answered in brief seconds, and Henry Harris gasped out his message.

"Doctor!" he panted. "Come over—right away. Bring—ambulance. I've cut myself. Artery! Now—got to get outside. Earthquake—"

Knowing he could depend on Jordan, he dropped the phone, turned toward the door. But he could not walk. He fell to his knees, crawled toward it, grasped at the knob, and his fingers slipped weakly off. He fell face downward on the hall floor, could not rise from there.

Beneath him he still felt that unnerving tremble as the house shook in the grip of titanic forces. His senses were acutely clear. He could hear the radio, hear voices of passers-by in the street a few yards away.

"And now," a voice was saying over the radio,

"we bring you the weather report. The weather for Thursday—"

Dizziness and nausea shook Henry Harris then, horribly. When his senses cleared, the trembling of the house had ceased, but the radio was still speaking.

"—eather for Wednesday, December 16th—" said the voice monotonously, and Henry Harris, his preternaturally sharpened senses noting the change, understood instantly. In that moment Tomorrow House had returned to today.

So the problem wasn't any problem at all. It wasn't tomorrow any more. It was today. And he wasn't going to be either in the house, or aboard the Clipper tomorrow. Because Jordan would be there any instant, with an ambulance. Jordan would get to him in time. Tomorrow he'd be in a hospital, of course. That was the answer. That was the solution to the paradox.

Weakly, Henry Harris almost sobbed in relief.

And then his heart seemed to stop beating. For he remembered.

It had still been tomorrow when he made the phone call. So it could not be until tomorrow that Jordan received it. Twenty-four hours from now, Henry Harris' frantic plea for help would reach him.

Fleeting, Henry Harris had time to wonder what Jordan would think of that strange phone call from nowhere. Because now, with his last strength ebbing from him, he saw the other answer. Inadvertently he had done what he had been so determined to avoid doing—he had created an impossible situation. He had upset the balance of forces. For just a few seconds he had done something that couldn't be done. And there was only one answer that would keep matters in hand. Tomorrow he wouldn't be aboard the Clipper, and he wouldn't be in his home, and he wouldn't be in the hospital. He wouldn't be anywhere.

Tomorrow—

THE END.



THE GHOST OF ME

By Anthony Boucher

● As is known, a ghost haunts the scene of its murder. And murder would be a shock to anyone, enough so the ghost might be a bit confused and haunt a bit before the murder took place—

Illustrated by Kolliker

I gave my reflection hell. I was sleepy of course. And I still didn't know what noise had waked me; but I told it what I thought of mysterious figures that lurked across the room from you and eventually turned out to be your own image. I did a good job, too; I touched depths of my vocabulary which even the complications of the Votruba case hadn't sounded.

Then I was wide awake and gasping. Throughout all my invective, the reflection had not once moved its lips. I groped behind me for the patient's chair and sat down fast. The reflection remained standing.

Now it was I. There was no doubt of that. Every feature was exactly similar, even down to the scar over my right eyebrow from the time a bunch of us painted Baltimore a mite too thoroughly. But this should have tipped me off from the start: the scar was on the right, not on the left where I've always seen it in a mirror's reversal.

"Who are you?" I asked. It was not precisely a brilliant conversational opening, but it was the one thing I had to know or start baying the moon.

"Who are you?" it asked right back.

Maybe you've come across those cockeyed mirrors which, by some trick arrangement of lenses, show you not the reversed mirror-image but your actual appearance, as though you were outside and looking at yourself? Well, this was like that—exactly, detailedly me, but facing me rightwayround and unreversed. And it stood when I sat down.

"Look," I protested. "Isn't it enough to be a madhouse mirror? Do you have to be an echo, too?"

"Tell me who you are," it insisted quietly. "I think I must be confused."

I hadn't quite plumbed my vocabulary before; I found a couple of fresh words now. "You think you're confused? And what in the name of order and reason do you think I am?"

"That's what I asked you," it replied. "What are you? Because there must be a mistake somewhere."

"All right," I agreed. "If you want to play games. I'll tell you what I am, if you'll do the same. You chase me and I'll chase you. I'm John Adams. I'm a doctor. I got a Rockefeller grant to establish a clinic to study occupational disease among Pennsylvania cement workers—"

"—I'm working on a variation of the Zupperheim theory with excellent results, I smoke Camels, and I'm a registered Democrat but not quite a New Dealer," it concluded, with the gloomiest frown I've ever heard of outside a Russian novel.

My own forehead was not parchment-smooth. "That's all true enough. But how do you know it? And now that I've told you I'm John Adams, will you kindly kick through with your half of the bargain?"

"That's just the trouble," it murmured reluctantly. "There must be a terrible mistake somewhere. I've heard of such things, of course, but I certainly never expected it to happen to me."

I don't have all the patience that a medical man really needs. This time when I said "WHO ARE YOU?" it was a wild and ringing shout.

"Well, you see—" it said.

"I hardly know how to put this—" it began again.

"To be blunt about it," it finally blurted out, "I'm the ghost of John Adams."

I was glad I was sitting down. And I understood now why old Hasenfuss always recommended arms on the patient's chair to give him something to grab when you deliver the verdict. I grabbed now, and grabbed plenty hard.

"You're the—"

"I'm the ghost—"

"—the ghost of—"

"—of John Adams."

"But"—I held onto the chair even tighter—"I am John Adams."

"I know," my ghost said. "That's what's so annoying."

I said nothing. That was far too impressive an understatement to bear comment. I groped in the