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FALL-WINTER 1977 \$1.95

VOLUME 34



## 1 SHORT NOVEL

**REX STOUT**  
(and NERO WOLFE)

## 3 NOVELETS

**GEORGES SIMENON**  
(and INSPECTOR MAIGRET)

**LAWRENCE G.  
BLOCHMAN**  
(and DR. COFFEE)

**JULIAN  
SYMONS**  
(and the bus murders)

## 14 SHORT STORIES

Dick Francis  
Hugh Pentecost  
Michael Gilbert  
Ellery Queen  
Robert L. Fish  
Patricia Highsmith  
Ron Goulart  
Jon L. Breen  
William Brittain  
and others

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**ELERY QUEEN'S ANTHOLOGY**

FALL-WINTER 1977 \$1.95 VOLUME 34



the WHO'S WHO of WHODUNITS

# ELERY QUEEN'S ANTHOLOGY

FALL  
WINTER  
1977

EDITED BY

*"Elery Queen"*

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NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003

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**W e d d i n g     A n n i v e r s a r y**

*Ernst Bauenfel was probably the best-loved man in Wrightsville. His benevolence was a byword—indeed, it had earned him the title of "Mr. Bountiful." He was a man without an enemy—and yet . . . One of Ellery's strangest cases—with a strange clue of the sort that only Ellery seems to encounter in these days of so much "clueless detection" . . .*

**Detective: ELLERY QUEEN**

**I**n spite of his passion for Wrightsville, hardly a visit of Ellery's does not turn up some major crime, as if in savage welcome to his gifts. Compelled to use them against the object of his affection, he yet goes back, again and again and again, hopefully turning the other cheek. It is no reward for his devotion.

On this occasion he was beguiled by the season. The magnolias were in their improbable New England bloom, the syringa enriched the town with outcroppings of gold, the grass in Memorial Park stretched in greenest innocence, the ancient maples along State Street were in their infant leaf. It was simply not a day for death.

Or so Ellery told himself.

He cut across the Square (which is round), passed the Town Hall and the American Legion Bandstand, and turned into the alley of the County Court House Building, whose downstairs west wing houses the Wrightsville Police Department.

"I'm dodderin'," Chief Anselm Newby said, pumping Ellery's hand. "When you called from the Hollis to ask me to supper, I clean forgot about Mr. B.'s anniversary blowout. So I phoned him and he said, 'Sure, bring Mr. Queen along.' I hope you don't mind, Ellery."

It appeared that Ellery did not mind; to the contrary. Ernst Bauenfel was one of the few prominent Wrightsvillians whose path had never happened to intersect his, even though he kept

running across the name in the news and advertising columns of the *Wrightsville Record*, to which he was a mail subscriber.

As the town reckoned such things, Bauenfel was a newcomer to the community. But what he lacked in local ancestry he more than made up by good works. As one of the leading merchants of High Village—he was a jeweler, with branches strewn about the state—Bauenfel's was to Wright County what Cartier's is to Fifth Avenue. He was a past president of the Chamber of Commerce, he held high office in most of the benevolent societies, he had twice been elected to the Board of Selectmen, he was regularly asked to take charge of the Red Cross, Community Chest, and other important drives, and his private benefactions had earned him the title of "Mr. Bountiful," which the *Record* abbreviated to Mr. B. It was said that no one ever came to Mr. B. in genuine need and went away empty-handed.

"From all I read about him," Ellery said as Chief Newby drove him up toward Hill Drive, "he's the nearest thing to a civic saint that Wrightsville's ever had."

"There isn't a living soul in Low Village or High," the police chief said, "who doesn't swear by him."

"Aren't you forgetting some juicy rumors a year ago, Anse?"

"You mean when he remarried?" Newby grunted. "You know small towns. They even talked when he got married the first time. Hester, his first wife, was a lot younger than Mr. B.—she was twenty-five when she gave birth to Amy, their only child, and Ernst was more than double that, fifty-five—and it made a lot of tongues go clickety-clack in the ladies' auxiliaries, especially since Hester was a Dade, and you know how far back the Dades go in this town. But the gabble soon died out, and there wasn't another unkind word said about Mr. B. until last year, after Hester died in that auto smashup. I mean, when he married Zelda Brown, Al Brown's youngest—the ice-cream parlor Brown—less than a month after Hester's funeral."

"What was the scoop?" Ellery asked in his nosiest Wrightsville tone. "The *Record* was annoyingly tactful."

"Well, for one thing, Zelda was Mr. B.'s secretary-bookkeeper in his Wrightsville branch store; they were together a lot. And Zelda's pretty sexy-looking. So as soon as Mr. B. married her the ladies began whispering that they'd been having an affair behind Hester's back. The damn flapmouths! I know Mr. B., and in my book he's as straight as they come. Of course, the short time be-

tween Hester's death and Ernst's remarrying helped the gossip along—"

"Some men are born for marriage," said Ellery, with the authority of one who was not.

"—but it wasn't only that. Ernst pulled the boner, or maybe in the excitement he just forgot, of marrying Zelda on what would have been Hester's birthday."

"The most generous of men," the sage pointed out, "is often the least tactful."

"Anyway, Ellery, that's ancient history. The biddies haven't found a thing to rip Zelda up the back for in the year she and Ernst have been hitched. She's raising Hester's kid—Amy is five now—as if she were her own flesh and blood, and that sort of thing goes a long way in this town. They're good people, Ellery. You'll like 'em."

As, indeed, Ellery did. He liked everything about the Bauenfels, from their chalet-type house with its squared-timber construction and steeply projecting eaves (evidently built by Mr. B. in an early nostalgia for his native Switzerland, to what must have been the astonishment of its Colonial neighbors on Hill Drive) to the solid *bürgerstand* furnishings of the interior.

They were simple, hearty folk, like a peasant soup. Mr. B. was portly and florid, with a gray Teutonic brush and eyes with a malty sparkle; he wore a brocaded vest festooned with a heavy gold watchchain; and Ellery thought he needed only a tray and a white apron tied around his girth to step into a *Züricher* beer garden. As for Zelda Bauenfel, née Brown, Ellery almost failed to recognize her. He had last seen Zelda as a nubile teen-ager working after school hours in her father's ice cream emporium on Lower Main. Now she was a well-fleshed, handsome *hausfrau* in a struggling girdle, cheerful and authoritative and obviously well-loved.

It took no seer, either, to divine the affection between Zelda and her husband's first wife's child. At the approach of the stranger, little Amy clung to her stepmother's skirt, her pale Dade eyes enormous. Zelda briskly soothed her, Ellery went to work on her, and in a few minutes the child was on his lap.

"We used to love you," Amy lisped.

"Really, Amy?" Ellery said. "When was that?"

"When my mommy was bery young."

"And that, young lady," said Zelda, pink as a geranium, "is the



last time I'm ever going to tell you any of my girlish secrets! Kiss Mr. Queen and Chief Newby and your papa good night, and off to bed."

"I ought to feel jealous, Mr. Queen," chuckled Ernst Bauenfel as his wife took the little girl upstairs. "That is a secret my Zelda never confided in *me*." He had a slight German accent.

"Or me, worse luck."

"But I am not a jealous man; it is one of the things for which I thank God. Too many waste their lives envying and hating. And I am being a Saturday-night philosopher! I think that is our other guests—excuse me." And Mr. B. hastily went to the front door.

"I told you," Newby laughed.

"I'm glad I came, Anse."

But Ellery's gladness was within a half hour of destruction.

The three other guests were men also. At first Ellery suspected that the absence of ladies might be significant. But it turned out that Franklin Lang was a bachelor, Rob Packard was a widower, and Martin Overbrook's wife was entertaining an uninvited spring virus and had insisted on her husband not disappointing the Bauenfels on their anniversary party.

Of the three, Ellery had met only Lang. A tall weedy man with an occupational tic under his eye and bottle-fed veins in his nose, Lang was managing editor of the *Record*; Ellery's visits to Wrightsville, which the *Record* considered news, had brought them into contact from time to time. The newspaperman had always struck Ellery as rather indrawn. There was nothing indrawn about Franklin Lang this evening. He punched Mr. B.'s heavy shoulder and then threw a long arm around it.

Ellery knew Rob Packard by hearsay. He was a one-time real estate broker who had blossomed overnight into a general building contractor and had actually succeeded in supplanting that hardy Wrightsville perennial, J. C. Pettigrew, as chairman of the town's Realty Board. Packard was a red-haired man in an Italian silk suit and a bow tie, with a handshake like an oil salesman.

He, too, embraced his host.

Martin Overbrook Ellery did not know at all, although he recalled that one of the old red-brick buildings in Low Village bore the white-on-black stencil, *Overbrook Paperbox Factory*, on its grimy side walls. Overbrook was a feisty little fellow who came bursting in like the White Rabbit, glancing at his watch and cry-

ing, "Am I late, Mr. B.? I hope I'm not late—Jinny couldn't come, she's down sick—oh, she phoned Zelda, I forgot—congratulations," beaming all the while, the reports of his Yankee voice bouncing around the room like shellfire.

There were hail-fellow introductions and lively conversation, a good deal of it concerned with the unexpected presence of Wrightsville's self-adopted son; then Zelda Bauenfel came flying downstairs, everything bobbing, and there was more embracing, and some jokes about first anniversaries, and much laughter; whereupon Mrs. B. dug her elbow into Mr. B.'s meaty ribs and said, "You're a fine host, you are! Weren't you supposed to do something the very first thing?"; and Ernst Bauenfel seized his head and exclaimed, "Ach, I forgot! Excuse me a minute," and trotted out to return a moment later pushing a bar cart with a bucketed bottle of champagne on it and a queerly shaped liqueur bottle, six wine glasses and a liqueur glass (and now he does look like a *biergarten* waiter, Ellery grinned to himself).

"Well, open it, Ernst," said Mrs. B., "what are you standing there for?"; and Mr. B. with a sly smile said, "Before the very first thing comes the *very* first thing, Zelda," and he took from the pocket of his jacket a jewel box and offered it to her, saying, "As a jeweler, I know that the first anniversary gift should be a clock. But how could a clock express my feeling? Open it, *liebchen*"; and Zelda Bauenfel opened the box, and gasped, and held high a magnificent emerald bracelet, and burst into tears. Then she rushed into her husband's arms, and he said softly, "I wish I could give you the whole world, Zelda," and it was said with such simplicity that no one was embarrassed, not even Ellery, who was allergic to clichés.

And when Zelda had blown her nose, and tried on the bracelet, and everyone had exclaimed over it, Ernst Bauenfel cried, "To work!" and he began struggling with the champagne cork, popping it unexpectedly and drenching himself, his young wife laughing so hard that every curve in her body described a parabola.

Then Mr. B. was filling the wine glasses and passing them around; and when Ellery said, "You've left yourself out, Mr. Bauenfel," Mr. B. shook his head and said, "Zelda will tell you I am no drinker, Mr. Queen. I never drink anything but the liqueur, and this only on very special occasions, like tonight," and he opened the liqueur bottle and poured himself a critical quantity of its topaz-colored contents, as if each drop was precious; and

then he held up his glass and said, "My friends, a toast. I give you a German proverb: When an old man marries a young wife, death laughs. To my Zelda!" and the guests echoed, "Zelda!", and drank their champagne, and Ernst Bauenfel raised his liqueur glass to his lips and looked at his blushing wife over the rim, and chuckled, and threw his head back and drained the glass—which was not, in Ellery's view, the respectful way to imbibe a prized liqueur, even in a toast—and then the jeweler's eyes opened wide, and he clutched his throat with a hoarse cry and groped with the other hand as if seeking something to hang onto, and finally fell heavily to the floor, where he lay, incredibly, writhing.

And Ellery found himself on his knees beside the stricken man, saying, "Poison, poison. Anse, call Conk Farnham—hurry!" and while Chief Newby ran to phone Dr. Farnham, Franklin Lang led an open-mouthed young wife away, and Rob Packard and Martin Overbrook hovered over their recumbent friend with popping eyes. The writhings had stilled and the breathing had become shallow and very rapid.

"Mr. Bauenfel—Ernst," Ellery said urgently. "Can you hear me? Do you know who did this? Who poisoned your liqueur?"

The cyanosing lips tried desperately to tell him. But they could not. Then an odd thing happened. The dying man's left hand fumbled its way to his abdomen and found the lower left-hand pocket of his brocaded vest. With his forefinger and thumb he made his way in little stabs into the pocket. Then he withdrew his fingers and stretched out his hand as if offering something, and his heavy body arched like a drawn bow, and released its arrow.

And there he lay.

"Dead," said Ellery bitterly. "I swear I'll never set foot in Wrightsville again."

But then he opened Ernst Bauenfel's left hand.

In it lay a large unset diamond.

"What was he trying to tell you?" Packard, the building contractor, muttered.

"With a diamond, of all things," said little Overbrook, the paperbox manufacturer. "Why a diamond?"

But before Ellery could reply, Chief Newby came back.

"Dr. Farnham will be over as soon as they locate him," said the police chief, and then he stopped. "He's *dead*?" he said, looking down at his friend. "Mr. B.?"

"I'm sorry, Anse."

"You're sorry. We were his best friends."

"I know." And after a moment Ellery said, "A quick-acting poison. It can only have been in that bottle of whatever it is—the liqueur."

"Who could have wanted to kill Ernst?" said Packard. There were tears in his eyes; and Overbrook turned away.

The police chief picked up the bottle by the neck, sniffed its contents, and set it softly down. He was one of those occasional small compact men who contrive to look as if they are made of rock. His sensitive face was now as hard as the rest of him. He went over to the settee, unfolded an afghan, and draped it carefully over Ernst Bauenfel's body. Then he turned away, saying, "I never heard of this stuff," jerking his head toward the liqueur bottle. "What is it?"

Ellery came to. He inspected the label. "It's new to me, too. Made at a monastery in Switzerland. Zelda should know."

"Zelda does know," said Zelda; and the newly made widow appeared in the archway, followed by Lang, who was shaking his head as if to say, "I couldn't keep her away." The young woman's face was blotched from weeping, but it was set in as rocky planes as Newby's. She went over to the corner of the settee, near her husband's body, and sat down. "No, I'm all right," she said as Ellery and Newby stepped toward her. "I want to help. I've got to help. Mr. Queen, what do you want to know?"

"All about the liqueur. I've never heard of it."

"Its never been sold outside Switzerland, because the monks could only make small quantities. Ernst adored it—it's the only alcohol he could drink, as he told you. Then the monastery was disbanded. Ernst bought up as many bottles as he could find—about half a dozen, I think it was—and brought them with him from the old country when he came to the United States."

"How many bottles are left?"

"This is the last one. He kept hoarding it. It's the only thing Ernst was selfish about."

"That's true, Ellery," Franklin Lang said. "Ernst would give you the socks off his feet, but in all the years I knew him he never offered me a drink out of this bottle. Did he ever offer you any, Rob?"

Packard shook his head, and Martin Overbrook said, "Mr. B. dead. It's not possible," and again turned away.

"In other words, no one ever drank from this bottle except your husband, Zelda? Not even you?"

"That's right, Mr. Queen." Now she was struggling to control her voice. "In fact, tonight is the first time I've seen even Ernst drink any, there's so little left in the bottle. He was trying to make it last as long as possible."

"Then the poison could only have been intended for him," Chief Newby said in harsh tones. "And what's this I heard about a diamond, Ellery?"

"When you went to phone Farnham, I asked Bauenfel if he knew who poisoned him. He tried to talk but couldn't. The last act of his life was to take the diamond out of his vest pocket."

The police chief examined it. "I don't see anything special about it except its size. Do you know anything about this, Zelda?"

The young widow shook her head. "I didn't even know he was carrying it. Ernst often had unset gems in his pockets. Most jewelers do."

"He was trying to answer your question, Mr. Queen. Is that what you think?" asked the contractor.

"I don't see what other construction we can put on the last responsive act of a dying man," Ellery said. "Who killed you? I ask him, and he answers with a diamond. So we have to start from the diamond."

"A diamond," said the paperbox man, "is a diamond."

"Yes, Mr. Overbrook, but it also stands for something. Remember the occasion. This was his wedding anniversary party; the anniversary was uppermost on Ernst Bauenfel's mind. So let's think of a diamond in relation to wedding anniversaries.

"In the traditional listing," said Ellery, "the diamond is associated with the sixtieth and seventy-fifth wedding anniversaries. In that list the gift for a first anniversary is paper. But when Ernst, earlier this evening, mentioned the gift *he* associated with first anniversaries, he didn't say paper, he said a clock. Well, the clock as a first-anniversary gift happens to head the official list authorized by the jewelry industry. In the jewelers' list a diamond represents the thirtieth wedding anniversary. Ernst was a jeweler. We have the right to assume that, in answering my question as to who poisoned him, he replied with the jeweler's symbol for thirty."

"Thirty," muttered Chief Newby. "Who the devil could he have meant by thirty? It makes no sense."

Ellery was silent. Suddenly he said, "I hope no one will mind if I make an experiment? Mr. Overbrook, do you have a connection with anything associated with thirty?"

The little manufacturer jumped. "You mean you suspect me of having poisoned Mr. B.'s bottle?" he sputtered. "I don't like your experiment, Mr. Queen! Or your question!"

"Why don't you answer it, Martie?" asked Zelda Bauenfel quietly.

"What do you mean, Zelda? I couldn't have been closer to Ernst if I'd been his brother!"

"Yes, Martie," she said, "but have you forgotten about the loan?"

"Loan?" Overbrook licked his lips. "I don't see what that has to do with anything . . ."

"What loan?" asked Ellery.

"This is ridiculous! Three years ago I was foreman of the paperbox factory. The owner decided to retire. He offered me the chance to buy him out, but I didn't have nearly enough cash to put down, and I couldn't give the bank the collateral they wanted. Ernst came to my rescue. Without a cent of collateral he loaned me enough to finance my purchase of the factory."

"How much was the loan?"

Overbrook licked his lips again. "Thirty thousand dollars." He went on quickly, "But that's just a coincidence—"

"It may well be, because at least one other thirty is represented here." And Ellery swung about to face Franklin Lang.

"Me?" said Lang.

"I'm afraid so, Frank. As a newspaperman and managing editor of the *Record*, you don't have to be reminded that the numeral 30 written at the end of newspaper copy means 'the end'; it's a trade-wide symbol in journalism, at least in this country. I merely point it out, Frank."

The newspaperman snapped, "I felt toward Ernst the way Martie Overbrook and Rob Packard did, and everyone else in town. Four years ago I was hospitalized for eight months after an operation. I had no savings, and the medical expenses were enormous. Well, for almost that entire period Mr. B. paid my bills. Does it stand to reason I'd repay him with poison? It wasn't even a loan—Ernst wouldn't hear of my paying him back. Besides, about this thirty nonsense—how many people outside the newspaper field have ever heard of it?"

"A point," Ellery conceded. He looked at the building contractor. "I wonder, Mr. Packard, about you."

"And thirty?" Rob Packard nodded slowly. "It's a queer thing, Mr. Queen, but there's a tie between me and Ernst, too, in that regard. It was Ernst who got me out of the realty brokerage game. He owned a parcel out in Hill Valley, near the airport, and he came to me with a proposition. He foresaw that Wrightsville housing was going to expand in that direction, and he offered to put up the land and the financing, with me providing the know-how and the management, on a partnership basis. I snapped at it like a trout. It started me out as a building contractor. We named the development Thirty Acres, from the amount of land we built on. You'll find it on all the newer maps of Wrightsville." Then Packard said, "Does that sound as if I'd want to kill Ernst Bauenfel?"

Ellery said ruefully, "I admit, motive in this case is the tough one. Probably half of Wrightsville could come up with similar favors that Mr. B. did for them. By the way, Zelda," he said suddenly, turning to her, "your husband was a wealthy man. And you're young enough to have been his daughter. Forgive me, but it's happened before. At the least, his death would mean to you—"

"In terms of gain, Mr. Queen," said Zelda Bauenfel, examining him as if he were a germ under a microscope, "absolutely nothing. When we got married a year ago, I insisted that Ernst write a will to leave Amy everything he had. I had reasons for this which aren't anyone's business, but in view of what's happened I'll tell you.

"In the first place there was the talk, as I suppose you've heard. Well, I didn't want Ernst—when he heard the gossip—to think I'd married him for his money.

"In the second place I wanted to protect Amy and, incidentally, reassure Ernst about her future. After all, I wasn't her real mother, and if Ernst died before I did, which was likely, he being so much older than I, Amy would be left to my care. We had quite an argument about the will. Finally, Ernst compromised. He made it out in such a way that, after three years of marriage, Amy and I would share his estate equally.

"With Ernst dead now, after only one year, I'm left with nothing. Why would I kill him? As unthinkable as that is."

"Not unthinkable," said Ellery gently. "Here's a possible reason, as old as the hills and as new as this spring: another man."

Her chin came up. "You look for one, Mr. Queen. You, too, Anse. Look all you want. You won't find any. I loved my husband, and I've been faithful to him."

Ellery half turned away, frowning.

"Don't any of you blame Mr. Queen," said Chief Newby in a mumble. "Questions like these have to be asked . . . Zelda, Ernst kept the liqueur bottle in the liquor cabinet in the dining room, didn't he? Did he keep the cabinet locked?"

"Ernst never locked anything here, Anse. You know that."

"Then anybody could have got to that bottle! I don't know how many people in town have been entertained in this house at one time or another. We'll fingerprint the bottle, but my hunch is this is going to be a long, long job."

"Maybe not so long," said Ellery; and he turned to the widow again. "Zelda, you and Ernst weren't married in Wrightsville, were you?"

The question took her by surprise. "Well, no, Mr. Queen. We thought it . . . best to do it in Connhaven, and we went straight on to New York, where we spent our honeymoon. We left Amy with my mother while we were away."

"Then that could be it." Unaccountably, Ellery looked relaxed and relieved. "There's no legal proof, Anse, but I can give you a theory that covers all the facts."

"Earlier this evening," said Ellery, "Zelda said that she had never seen Ernst take a drink of his private-stock liqueur before tonight. In recalling this, I wondered why he hadn't dipped into it when he and Zelda were married, which would surely be one of those extra-special occasions on which he could be expected to indulge. Zelda just gave us the reason: they weren't married in Wrightsville, and they spent their honeymoon in New York. So Mr. B. had no access to the bottle when he and Zelda married.

"Since only three or four weeks elapsed between his first wife's funeral and his remarriage, it's reasonable to assume that Ernst had last taken a drink from that bottle during his first marriage—that is, while Hester Dade was still alive.

"Put that together," said Ellery swiftly, "with the climate in this town a year ago. There was plenty of talk, you told me, Anse, when Mr. B. and Zelda Brown married. Zelda was working for Ernst up to that time. Suppose before her fatal automobile accident Hester had got a jump on the gossips—suspected that there



was something going on between her husband and his secretary-bookkeeper. Suppose, true or not, it became an *idée fixe* in Hester's mind. Suppose, in her jealousy, Hester poured poison into the bottle of liqueur from which only her husband ever drank."

"Hester," Zelda Bauenfel whispered.

"Tonight, when he realized he had been poisoned," Ellery went on, "Mr. B. remembered something, just what we'll never learn. But it was enough to convince him that his liqueur had been poisoned by Hester. Unable to speak, he used his last strength and took out the diamond to leave us a clue—the 'thirty' clue. He was too far gone to realize that it might point to his three best friends as well."

"I still don't get it," complained the police chief. "How does this thirty thing tag Hester for the poisoning?"

"You told me yourself, Anse, on our drive up here. Hester, you said, was twenty-five years old when she gave birth to Amy. Amy is now five. You also told me that Ernst married Zelda on Hester's birthday. So today is not only Ernst's and Zelda's first wedding anniversary, *it would have been Hester's thirtieth birthday.*"

Chief Anselm Newby was never able to prove that Hester Dade Bauenfel reached out from the grave to kill Mr. Bountiful, but then Newby never pinned the murder on anyone else, either. To tell the truth, he didn't try very hard.

As for Ellery, while it is to be doubted that his absence will remain permanent, the fact is he has not yet paid another visit to his favorite scene of the crime, Wrightsville.

