

THE AGONY COLUMN

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The agony column by Earl Derr Biggers

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EARL DERR BIGGERS

**THE AGONY
COLUMN**





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COLUMN**

by

EARL DERR BIGGERS

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Love Insurance, etc.*

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CHAPTER I

TWO years ago, in July, London was almost unbearably hot. It seems, looking back, as though the big baking city in those days was meant to serve as an anteroom of torture—an inadequate bit of preparation for the hell that was soon to break in the guise of the Great War. About the soda-water bar in the drug store near the Hotel Cecil many American tourists found solace in the sirups and creams of home. Through the open windows of the Piccadilly tea shops you might catch glimpses of the English consuming quarts of hot tea in



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order to become cool. It is a paradox they swear by.

About nine o'clock on the morning of Friday, July twenty-fourth, in that memorable year nineteen hundred and fourteen, Geoffrey West left his apartments in Adelphi Terrace and set out for breakfast at the Carlton. He had found the breakfast room of that dignified hotel the coolest in London, and through some miracle, for the season had passed, strawberries might still be had there. As he took his way through the crowded Strand, surrounded on all sides by honest British faces wet with honest British perspiration he thought longingly of his rooms in Washington Square, New York. For West, despite the English sound of that Geoffrey, was as American as Kansas, his native state, and only pressing business