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Jumping the Breath

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by Ben Lucien Burman

THIS HAS HAPPENED
Attempts have been made on the life of Elise Marberry, an American girl who owns and lives on property adjoining the queer little jungle-bordered town of Porto Verde, in west central Brazil.

Several mysterious deaths have occurred, including that of one of her foremen. Her two-year-old orphaned nephew is kidnapped, but is found again, largely through the efforts of Vilak, her cousin and protector, who is known in Porto Verde as Attorney Davis. Elise's lawyer, Vilak has sent for Lincoln Nunnally, elderly American chemist, to help him get at the bottom of the mystery.

They are ignorant of the cause of this hostility toward Elise but suspect that a man named Gaylord Prentiss, a reticent and forbidding character, is somehow involved.

Word is brought to Elise that the manager of her property at Villapa is desperately ill and must see her at once. Vilak suspects a trick and he insists that he and Nunnally accompany her.

On the road to Villapa they are ambushed by a band of ruffians in the uniforms of soldiers. They tell Vilak that he and his companions are wanted for murder. The charge is obviously a fake. Vilak is convinced their captors are in the pay of Elise's enemies and mean to kill them, but he shrewdly contrives a way of escape. At Villapa, Elise's manager says he had not sent for her.

Vilak persuades Elise to agree to leave the country. Meanwhile, constant rains threaten Porto Verde with flood.

NOW BEGIN THE STORY

CHAPTER XXVI
Vilak rode to the wharf to ascertain if the floods were holding up the boat or whether it would arrive on time. But the drowsy, red-shirted negro clerk in charge could tell him nothing.

Leaving the dock, he visited the slovenly tobacco store, bought some tobacco and matches and meeting D'Albentara, who had come on a similar message, rode with him part of the way along the road.

D'Albentara said regretfully that he had not yet had an opportunity to thank Elise for her courtesy as he had been having considerable trouble with two or three of his men, and this had occupied all his time. He feared, he added, that he might never have the pleasure of a visit, as the rising waters had been playing havoc with the railroad property in other places to a far greater extent than at Porto Verde, and he rather thought he might be ordered back in the direction of Avilios that afternoon.

He had received no information about the boat, though he thought that in view of the conditions it would very likely be delayed, perhaps even a day or two. They shook hands at the crossroads and Vilak rode on to the fazenda.

"Looks mighty doubtful about your getting away tonight," he remarked a trifle anxiously as he entered Elise's room and watched her heap piles of baby clothes into a trunk. "Mighty doubtful. And after what happened yesterday, you yourself know how vital it is that you get away. I suppose all we can do is to go down to the wharf at six o'clock when the boat's supposed to come in and wait. Then, if it doesn't come, we'll have to build a raft, or something equally desperate, and ship you down two thousand miles on that."

By noon Elise had finished her packing. She spent a few hours in giving explicit directions to the servants as to what was to be done in her brief absence; then, after a quick tea, gave the child to Hannah, who was waiting in the dog-cart beside a gray-haired negro driver. Then she mounted her piebald mare and touched it lightly with her whip.

They rode off, Vilak and the old man on horseback on either side of her, the carriage close behind. They reached the wharf and dismounted. Six o'clock arrived without the hoped-for prolonged whistle that usually marked the arrival of the steamer at the bar a mile up the river. Seven o'clock. Still no whistle, no trail of black smoke. Seven-thirty. The equatorial night began its swift descent. Eight o'clock. Total darkness and the boat nowhere in sight.

Elise uttered impatiently thru the mud of the tiny docks. "We'll have to camp here all night, I guess," she said. "I don't know whether anybody else is, but I'm getting hungry. Extremely hungry. And terrible."

She peered up the river anxiously, then began pacing the dock again. Suddenly she turned as a confused murmur of excited voices drifted up from the silent, darkened town square a quarter of a mile away. A clatter of hoofs sounded up the road. The noise became louder.

Vilak's eyes narrowed. "Wonder what that is," he murmured. He took a bit of betel. "Think I'll go have a look. Back in a hurry." He spurred into the darkness.

A few moments later he was speeding back. "The dam at Avilios has burst," he said quickly. "A wall of water forty feet high is sweeping down the valley. But it won't reach here for half an hour or more. You and Nanny hurry up to Chacos Hill."

Elise and the old man looked at him incredulously, for his voice was even as though he were relating some placid story in the corner of a dim lighted room. He had barely finished speaking when a horseman came speeding down the road shouting in frenzied Portuguese that death was upon the inhabitants if they did not flee. He vanished. Windows opened violently. Lights appeared. Animals aroused, men cursed, bedlam broke out in the street.

"You and Nanny go on to Chacos Hill," Vilak repeated. "With Tinky."

His words roused Elise from her daze. She caught the bride of her horse. "What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Go and warn some of the people in the outlying districts here."

Don't get excited, Nanny. Keep cool, keep cool," he added, as the old man, trembling with excitement, tried to scramble upon his horse and hopelessly entangled his foot in the stirrup. "A man's like an engine. Much better when he's cool. Half an hour's a long time. Don't be stampeded."

He stooped down and with a quick movement freed the other's foot. The old man clambered on to his mount. Elise, too, leaped into her saddle. "I'm going with you," she said to Vilak. "We can't let these poor people on the outskirts die like beasts. Two of us can cover much more territory. Hannah can take Tinky up to Chacos. She's proved she can take care of him. It's only a few minutes."

"All right. We've no time to argue. Come on."

She kissed the baby quickly, then spoke a few words to the driver of the dogcart. The vehicle rattled off. The old man looked confusedly after it an instant, bewilderingly began to follow it, then turned and came awkwardly galloping back to Vilak. The three riders eyed toward the murmuring town square. As they reached it, a panic-stricken parade began to sweep past them.

Here a donkey struggled heroically to trot through the sloughs with its fat master and screaming mistress clinging hysterically to its back; here three squealing pigs lurched ahead of a grunting negro, driving them on with a club; there an Indian woman with huge ornaments in her lips and ears scurried through the mud shouting at the five naked and shining children who ran before her. So absorbed were the terrified villagers in their headlong flight that they hardly saw the three riders coming past, and Vilak was constantly bringing his horse to a violent halt in order that he might not run them down.

Elise swept her mount round a bed toppled into a street by some frozzled householder. "Where are you going?" she flashed to Vilak. "Prentiss' place?" he snapped. "He'll get it the worst down there, he's so low. We've got time. We can get to Itztuba Hill from there just as quickly as to Chacos from here and be just as safe."

He heard her draw a sharp breath.

"I realize that you don't like him. I don't either. But however bad he is, we can't let him drown. No one else in the town will think of warning him, he's so hated. After all, he is a fellow human being. All grudges are done in a case like this. It's the jungle law as well as the human."

She stooped to sweep safely under a low-hanging branch. "You're right. Of course we've got to do it. I was drifting into the family feud state of mind, I guess."

They swept on, and began to leave the city behind. Here and there Vilak on one side of the road and Elise on the other checked off their horses for a moment before a miserable cabin of rushes to about to the occupants the news of disaster. But in each case an answering shout, or kindly bobbing frantically through a door told them they had already been notified.

"Odd," he called to Elise as he bobbed furiously up and down. "No one's been overlooked. They're been quite systematic in carrying the news. Couldn't have done better if one man had taken charge of it. Never knew these lackadaisical natives to have so much method and energy. It's astonishing." They wheeled past a Porto Verdean bouncing along in a clattering ox cart, thorough a pack of racing, wild-eyed dogs who had been infected with the human panic and were fleeing from them. They knew not what; then over the wooden bridge they had crossed so slowly a few hours before. Vilak looked down at the narrow stream below. "That's odd, too," he murmured. "Water looks lower than it did this morning."

They took the crossroads paralleling the railroad tracks and galloped on.

(To be continued.)

Prentiss is distrustful of Vilak, but finally decides to admit the party to his house, where a new danger is encountered.

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Easy? Quite. Merely Wesson Oil and vinegar and as much salt and pepper as you wish. If you like it mild use three parts of Wesson Oil to one of vinegar. If you want it tart use

two parts of vinegar. It depends somewhat on the strength of your vinegar. Some prefer lemon juice to vinegar, and many add a dash of paprika for color.

And to this very delightful French Dressing one thing or another may be added to captivate your guests. Worcestershire sauce or a bit of chutney for green salads, mustard sauce for fish and meat salads, or some strong mint jelly on a salad of fruit.

But do use a good salad oil. Wesson Oil, for instance. It is clear and light in color and very delicate in flavor and so good to eat that it makes delicious French Dressing.

SHARKEY'S LIFE--AS HE TELLS IT

Bostonese Admits Thinking He's On Threshold of World Championship

BY JACK SHARKEY

(As told to Jimmy Powers)
I have been mistaken for everything from a Polack to a Mick, on account of my name, I suppose, so here is the straight dope on myself as requested.

I come from Lithuanian stock. My original name was Joseph Paul Chikoschay. I was born in Binghamton, N. Y., on October 26, 1902. My father, mother and sister still live there. I live with Mrs. Sharkey and our two children in Boston.

Just three years ago I came to Boston as a sailor, making \$350 a year as wages, on the U. S. S. Delavoy. At the present time, if I keep on fighting, my manager tells me I can make \$1,000,000 in purses.

When I started boxing professionally I took the name, Jack Sharkey.

I called myself Jack, after Jack Dempsey, whom I have always considered one of the greatest champions the ring has ever known, and the Sharkey end after Tom Sharkey, old time heavyweight, who like myself, saw service in Uncle Sam's navy.

The name Jack Sharkey caught immediately. It was so popular with me that I petitioned successfully the court in Boston to have it made my legal name. So I shall be Jack Sharkey legally as long as I live.

I spent my boyhood days with my parents at Binghamton. It was my mother who formed the code of living that has enabled me to reach physical perfection that has brought me ring success. I have always listened to my mother's advice because I know it is unselfish. I consider my success her success.

When I was boxing with Wills my mother made the trip from Binghamton to New York so that she could be near me. She waited in her room in an uptown hotel until I hurried to her after the bout. And when she held me in her arms and found I was not marked, she sobbed with emotion.



Jack Sharkey, who fights Jack Dempsey in New York on July 21 for the right to meet Gene Tunney in a title bout, is training for the bout in Gotham. The loquacious Lith, who assumed his name from the names of Jack Dempsey and Jack Sharkey, is confident that he will be the next champion of the world. And there are many who agree with this belief of the Bostonese.

As a boy I attended school in Binghamton. I completed the third grade in the Oak street school and then transferred to St. Patrick's parochial school, where I was taught by the good nuns.

I was in the eighth grade at the age of twelve and would have received my diploma the following year. Father then became ill and mother had to nurse him.

In a few months mother's illness was gone. Someone had to go to work to get our household together, so I went to work in a shoe factory and tacked shoes and assembled lasts. I am still handling leather.

When I was 14 I quit the shoe bench for a pick and shovel job and joined a construction gang building a dike in the river bed at Binghamton. It was hard work but it paid good wages and it kept me out of doors.

Everybody was then at war. I slipped away to Bridgeport and applied at a recruiting station. "Too young," they told me, even though I advanced my age and said I was 15 years old. I was hungry and penniless and stranded in Bridgeport but I soon got a job shoveling coal on a barge. I worked eight hours a day for which I received \$30. From Bridgeport I traveled to New York by passenger coach, worked for a short time in New Jersey and then returned to my home in Binghamton by freight. The close of the war found me there.

In 1920 I presented myself at a navy recruiting station and was accepted. I wanted to travel and believe me, I did. I gave the navy full credit for developing me as an athlete.

I weighed 190 pounds when I first entered the service. I fought my first bout off the Azores against a colored boy, same weight, whose name was Green. I knocked him out in one round. From then on I fought in all the tournaments.

One cold day the Denver ploughed through the waters to Boston. (Continued on page 5)