

Judith Lane

by JEANNE BOWMAN

SYNOPSIS: Morton Lampere is going to launch his attack against Big Tom Bevins' will—and against Judith Lane, who has been left the Bevins millions to complete Big Tom's dam on the Rio Diablo. Judith's husband, is Lampere's law partner, and friend of Big Tom's side and his treacherous daughter Mathie. But Judith stands firm behind the promise made Big Tom when she was his trusted secretary.

CHAPTER 18

TOM BEVINS SPEAKS

JUDITH stood up. She had removed the small hat and the beruffled jacket and with it some of her girlishness. In the plain cream blouse, her hair drawn smoothly back in a coil, she looked more the efficient secretary than the girl who had been seen at previous board meetings.

"Before going into this, Mr. Chairman, I wish to ask one favor. Will you please look upon me as secretary to the late Mr. Bevins, not as the wife of a member of your legal department?"

"At the time I received the orders from Mr. Bevins pertaining to the dam and to be executed in case of his death, I was not married. I went to his physician, Doctor Kenneth Kelly, to learn the seriousness of his condition."

"Doctor Kelly assured me that Mr. Bevins had every chance to live to be a hundred, if he took a reasonable amount of care of his health. Because of this assurance, I went on with my marriage, which I had sincerely hoped would not be thrown from its normal course by my return to business."

She sat down, conscious that several stockholders were looking at her with new respect. Then Morton Lampere began to talk and her attention was literally riveted to his message.

"An everyone present knows, our dearly beloved colleague, so recently departed, left five million dollars with this little lady." He paused impressively. "He also left her the controlling interest in the Bevins Construction Company." Another pause.

Judith controlled an impulse to demand why she had not been called into the closed meeting if she held this power.

"Prior to his departure from this world, the old gentleman had begun the development of the hobby of his life, the building of the Rio Diablo Dam. During the survey, word came to me that he was making a vital mistake, that due to certain phases of the river bed understandable to engineers only, it was not advisable to follow the natural bed but start an artificial channel through virgin land."

"Bevins refused to listen to reason and as a result we, the stockholders, may suffer complete loss of our investment."

"In an effort to avert this calamity, we the remaining members of the board, ask you, Mrs. Dale, to relinquish your claim on the money left for the purpose of erecting the dam, that we may carry on this work in a safe and sane manner, and in accordance with the advice of our finest engineers."

"We are willing to give you time for your decision."

"You needn't," Judith was standing, eyes bright. "You may have it now!"

"DON'T be hasty," warned Morton Lampere.

"Hasty—" Judith's voice was low, controlled. "Mr. Lampere, the decision was made for me by Mr. Bevins on the night of August 25th. He foresaw all of this. He even knew that you would be the one to lead the insurrection."

"Mr. Lampere, under no condition will I resign!"

Judith sat down, trembling with emotion, but with her mind alert. She saw Mathie whisper to Norman, but Norman did not seem to hear. His face was haggard and Judith cried in her secret heart for the pain she was causing him.

"You have made that final, Mrs. Dale," observed Lampere with satisfaction. "Now kindly accept the unanimous resignation of your board and the withdrawal of your stockholders."

"The resignations and the withdrawal are accepted," agreed Judith, and turned to the men who were watching her with different expressions. "May I ask what you wish to do with your stock?"

"I'd like to get my money while the gettin's good," remarked one man.

"If you will make an appointment with my secretary, I will attend to that," interposed Judge Morgan.

"And now, gentlemen," said Judge Morgan, "I would like to read a message to you from this man whom you admired and respected during his life—"

"I protest," Lampere was on his feet. "This, this is entirely out of order."

A low sob from Mathie Bevins caused the distressed focusing of interest in her direction.

"Mr. Lampere, kindly put this to a vote."

"Those present voted unanimously to hear the message, and Judith, after a quick glance at Norman, turned to the judge who stood waiting for attention."

"My friends: There has come to me, suddenly and unexpectedly, knowledge that some of you are working to undermine my plans. And to your desire to exploit the Rio Diablo land for selfish purposes, I am warned by my physician that I haven't time to wait and prove all of my faith in the girl who has worked at my side the past four years. Judith Lane, daughter of my former partner and life-long friend, Jimmie Lane."

"Miss Lane has in the past carried out my plans with such perfection of detail, that I feel no hesitancy in leaving my orders for the construction of the dam in her hands. She is qualified to act as a construction engineer, but has preferred to remain as my secretary, realizing her ambition vicariously through me. It is this quality in her which makes me feel she will not be swayed by adverse opinions, but will subordinate her individual desires and carry out my plans."

"With the storm of criticism which my will is bound to raise about her, it will not be an easy task, and I am asking you who are my friends in truth to stand behind her in the reorganization of the company. There will be a reorganization, for I can see, even now, that the original firm will disintegrate through dissension."

"I am leaving money for the actual construction of the dam, as I feel liquidation of stock may embarrass the financial standing of the old company. However, she will need the moral support and the help of strong men and I am asking you, who listen to this and who understand, to supply these."

Judge Morgan sat down and Judith arose.

"GENTLEMEN," she said, "those of you who wish to carry on with the Bevins Construction Company may join me in Judge Morgan's office in the Oil and Cotton building, immediately after the adjournment here. It was Mr. Bevins' desire that the new company be organized and ready to start operation immediately upon the dissolution of the old, so the men at the dam would suffer no loss."

"Mrs. Dale," Lampere was on his feet, "what do you propose to call this new company?"

"Mr. Bevins proposed that its present name be retained."

"Why, why, you can't do a thing like that. It's preposterous, presumptuous... the idea... look at that poor bereaved daughter sobbing her heart out while you, a mere hireling of our beloved friend dare stand there and say that you... you will carry on a company in his name, the name of Tom Bevins."

"Lampere!" Justin Canard, retired engineer, tall, canured, advanced towards the two. "You insult the intelligence of this board. We are not a jury in a criminal court to be moved by emotional appeal. It seems to me that Tom had a pretty thorough idea of what he was doing when he took his legal affairs away from you. Now, young lady, I'm ready to join you; you may count on my full time if you desire it."

"Canard," barked Lampere, "it isn't ethical to carry on or reorganize a company using the name of a deceased man against the objections of his heirs."

"In this case it's not only ethical but legal," interrupted Morgan, "for it is so expressed in the deceased's papers. Now, Mrs. Dale, are you ready to leave for my office?"

Judith was sure, in the hours which followed, that she had said the things expected of her, cleared doubts in the minds of the seven men who followed them to Morgan's office, discussed the matters which needed their immediate attention, but all the time like a low cry, her thoughts rang, "Norman, Norman."

Canard drove her home. He had been made first vice-president of the newly organized company, and chairman of the new board. Judith retained the position of secretary to the late Tom Bevins, President, a peculiar arrangement, which left her free to carry out his posthumous orders.

"And they needn't lose a single day's work," Judith said of the men at the dam, as they stopped before Hillendale.

The cottage was aglow with lights and the quaint old-English standard lamps which lighted each flight of steps to the knoll were glowing in the purple dusk. Canard looked at the house, then at Judith and his usually taciturn features relaxed into a semblance of sympathy.

"Young lady, if an old man's support and confidence mean anything, you have mine."

(Copyright, 1933, by Jeanne Bowman)

Judith steps into a domestic crisis, Monday.

There are more words in a lie than in the truth.

Suffer from Backache?



Elmer Ross of 608 So. 10th St., Home, Idaho, says: "Some time ago I had a pain in the small of my back. When I sat down, the ache became more severe and I felt so stiff and sore across my back. My kidneys seemed to be weak, acted much too free! Mr. Pierre's Anker completely rid me of the backache and kidney weakness. All struggles. Send 10c to Dr. Pierre's Clinic, Buffalo, N. Y., for a trial pkg. 'Be Do Our Part'."

A Complete Printing Service Quality Counts NELSON P.P.O.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



A FAST STEPPER

JOE PALOOKA



4-12

OLLY OF THE MOVIES by Ollendorff



DIANA DANE

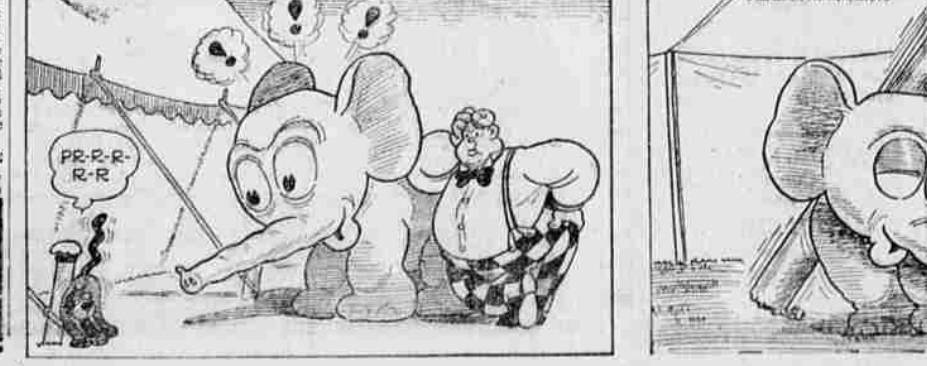


SCORCHY SMITH



4-12

THE DILLYS



THE NEWFANGLES

Among the Missing!



4-12

Big Hearted Mothaw



4-12

Will The Climb Be Worth It?



An Apt Pupil

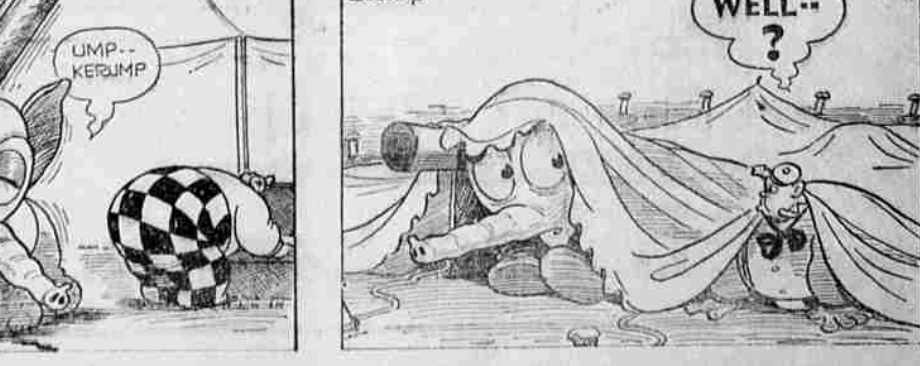


Fast Work



4-12

Starting From Scratch



NOTICE

We have put in a new stock of Feeds, Seeds, Salt and Poultry Supplies.
Gaither Ice & Fuel Co.
Phone MAIN 528

BUS SERVICE

For WALLOWA, ENTERPRISE, JOSEPH and Way Points. Leave La Grande, Daily 4:10 P. M.
For PENDELTON, Way Points Leave La Grande, Daily 10:30 A. M.
U. P. Stage Depot, 1308 Adams Phone MAIN 49