

LOVE BRAVES ANATOM BOMB

by OREN ARNOLD

SAFETY IN THE WEST

VIII
THE STORY: Carolyn and Bob agree that the X-999 must remain a secret and the remaining portions safeguarded against danger. Leana Normi comes to Carolyn's office, Carolyn overhears her impassioned plea to Robert to make the power that is theirs. "Together we can be the man and the woman of the ages."

AT the end of Leana's melodramatic speech to Bob, Carolyn had wanted to interrupt. But a latent, creeping fear of the woman with the foreign name had somehow become intensified in that quarter-hour. It was a senseless fear, she told herself. Leana probably was just wrought up over everything.

But no; no, she wasn't either. She spoke too earnestly, too impressively; plainly she had been thinking all this out. Plainest of all now was the fact that Leana loved Dr. Robert Hale.

"She's crazy about him!" Carolyn half-whispered to herself.

A flash of practical reasoning told her instantly to quit this strange new secretarial job and go back to her old position in the bank or find a new routine somewhere with good, solid Ken Palmer. Ken, the kindly plodder who loved her sincerely, but who had no more color than the bookkeeper or was.

She knew in the same instant that she would never do that now. If all the X-999 in Bob's laboratory was about to blow up in her face, she'd still stick to this new job, even though she couldn't have said why. Here was too much potential; a lot had already happened, and every hour gave promise of a great deal more. It was like being in a mystery play.

Intuition rather than practicality also prevented her from revealing her presence to Leana Normi.

She heard Leana's plea; heard Bob take a courteous, kindly, but somewhat superficial reaction to it, giving Leana very little to tie to. Leana worked herself into tears and so fled rather abruptly. Bob came immediately to Carolyn's office. Carolyn felt herself blush guiltily, even though she had no actual guilt.

"That was Leana Normi," he said, unnecessarily. "Did you hear her?"

"Oh, yes—yes." She wouldn't lie about it! "She sounded rather distressed, Bob. Naturally so, of course. At least, I thought I heard her voice indicate that, uh—"

"She will be all right. She is a brilliant woman. Girl. She is only 29. I mean, well, that's a woman, isn't it?" He smiled a bit. "Exactly, when does a girl become a woman, come to think of it?" "I wouldn't take that up today if I were you. We still have a long time on hand."

"That's very true. And you were saying you had an idea."

"My idea was about moving the X-999. It seems to me that the only safe place to store it is away out on the plains or mountains. You said you would need electric power to run the experimental laboratory. I mean, while you and your helpers adapt the stuff to—factory engines, and trains, and automobiles, and whatever. Isn't that so?"

"Yes."

"Bob, aren't there electric power lines from dams and things on rivers? I saw in the movies, or read somewhere—"

"I see what you mean!"

"Good! There's, well, Boulder Dam. That's in Arizona, isn't it? Mr. O'Malley at the bank used to talk about it. It's a long way from any city. But the electric

line runs over mountains and things, and—look, couldn't we maybe get the X-999 out there even before you had a laboratory built? Maybe store it in a cave to ease your mind?"

"Goodness, Bob, you'll have no peace as long as it stays in this city laboratory here, you know that. Any nearby farmhouse such as you first chose would be dangerous. But away off—"

"That's the ticket!" Bob had hung one leg on a corner of her desk, half sitting, but he suddenly got up to walk back and forth as he did when intent on anything. "That's exactly the right hunch, Carolyn. You're a dream!"

That startled her a bit. She looked quickly at him. But he was gazing off, planning. It had been simply a careless word of thanks.

FOR another hour he did a great deal of thinking out loud. During that time he ordered maps brought in. He surveyed the western half of the United States with minute care, measuring the distance to cities, calculating mileages, estimating what his laboratory needs would be out there and how best to meet those needs. "Okay, I shall catch a plane tonight," he suddenly announced, relaxing. "I don't know why I never thought of this myself. I was reared out there, you know. I can—"

"Were you, Bob? In the West?" Carolyn showed new interest in him.

He nodded. "In Colorado. B. S. degree from Colorado U. I'm practically a cowboy. He laughed at that. "I really can ride, Carolyn. Could, I mean. When I had time. In the last year or two—"

He ended a bit wistfully, she thought. But she studied him anew. That rearing accounted for a lot of his physical appearance and his mannerisms. A boy from the West!

"Of course, every conceivable care must be exercised in moving it and, of course, I shall do it myself." He was back at work again. "There must be no mistake this time."

(To Be Continued)

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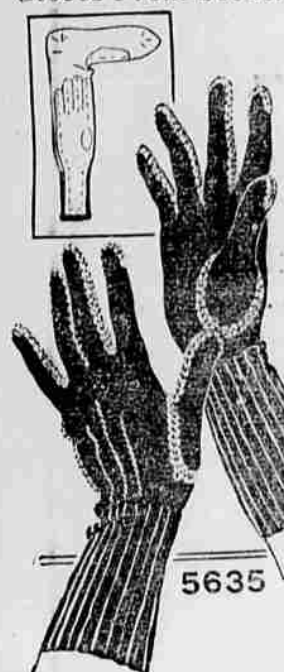
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Road Contracts to Be Awarded Oct. 29

SALEM, Sept. 27 (UP)—Tentative plans have been made by the highway commission to award the first contracts for Oregon's three year, \$36,000,000 post-war highway building program at a meeting to be held in Portland Oct. 29.

However, the contracts cannot be awarded until congress authorizes states to begin the program. Highway Engineer R. H. Bullock said congress is expected to give the go-ahead signal next week.

The commission expects to award \$2,000,000 worth of contracts to start the program and an additional \$10,000,000 in contracts this winter. The program calls for an expenditure of \$12,000,000 yearly.

RFC Orders Sale of Coquille Equipment

PORTLAND, Sept. 27 (UP)—Another government-owned wartime plant—the Coquille Ore, chrome separator plant—nearly the end of the trail as the RFC offered for sale some of its equipment.

The plant was built early in the war, when it was feared chrome imports would be cut off, as insurance the metal would be supplied to war industries. Bids on \$50,000 worth of equipment will be received until Oct. 11.

Deeds Filed

T. W. Ruckman, Jr. et ux to Lewis G. Johnson et ux, Lot 5, Blk. 10, Wisconsin's addition, La Grande city, \$10 and other considerations.
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