

Our Weekly Serial Story Installment

STRAIT GATE

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SYNOPSIS

Sarah Lynn Dana, youngest of the Dana women of Danavale, Calif., chafes at the well-ordered life approved by her mother, Adelaide, who is trying to marry her to Duncan Van Doren, Detroit society youth. Great-Granny Dana, covered-wagon pioneer, and community matriarch, recognizes in the girl the restless adventurousness of the "dark Danas," a trait shared by her and Cousin Sally Ann Dana, traveler and author, and pleads with Sally Ann to take the girl abroad. Uncle Lynn, wheelchair invalid, adds his plea to Sally Ann to save Sarah Lynn, as does the girl's young brother, Bill. Another plea comes from Miss Pennington, "Penny," adoring governess of the girl, saying she is unhappy and misunderstood. At a family dinner party, Sally Ann first hears of Keaton Dana's ultra-modern wife, Ardine, who runs a roadhouse called the Stewed Prune, and is trying to wangle a flight with Gunnar Thorwald, Norwegian ace, famous for his refusal to fly women, through their mutual friend, Jim Allison. Gunnar Thorwald arrives with Jim Allison, and Sarah Lynn is attracted to him. Duncan invites her to the Stewed Prune. Sarah Lynn refuses to drink anything but ginger ale, which Ardine herself serves. Cousin Mary Dana Webster tells Sarah she suspects Ardine and her friends of framing on Gunnar, and Sarah Lynn, in an increasing stupor, decides to warn him. When Gunnar arrives, angry at Jim Allison for missing connections, he hears Sarah Lynn cry, "Go away! Don't come in! Ladybug, fly away home," and sees her carried out to the ladies' room, unconscious. Gunnar arrives at the airport and he is told Allison is ill. Sarah Lynn, partly out of her stupor, imagines the sensations of flying with Gunnar at the controls. Gunnar, flying to Los Angeles, senses someone standing behind him.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"Oh, glorious—glorious!" she stammered. "I don't understand—Am I here?—flying away in the night? Am I still pretending?"—her teeth were chattering with cold, with excitement—"in the Stewed Prune? It's so wonderful—so splendid!"

It was not Ardine Dana, but the dark, thin girl with the lost and lonely look he had noticed at the Henry Dana house, whom he had seen again, maudlin with drink. But now her face was white and her eyes blazed with thrilled rapture, and she seemed to be transported with a wild, incredulous joy.

Happy, triumphant over the success of their trick!

"Keep away from me, drunken fool!" he said savagely.

There was a stifled wail behind him but he did not look around. He busied himself with directions. Where—granted that he must forego the pleasure of pitching her out in mid-air—was the first place he could land her? Anywhere he could get his ship down with a semblance of safety!

Unless he carried her all the way to Los Angeles—or Glendale, which was his destination—and that was unthinkable—he must apparently detour to a place called Fresno.

A stealthy look, presently, showed him that she had settled herself in a seat, a blanket wrapped around her. Her face was pressed against the window, but she turned and saw him and started to rise again.

"I must tell you—" she began urgently, her voice shrill above the motor. "You must listen to me! I wasn't—I wasn't—they gave me something—" She started to stand up, to come forward again.

He made an imperative gesture. "Keep back. Do not come here. Stay where you are."

She dropped beside the window, huddling under her blanket, peering out into the quiet sky.

CHAPTER VI

Miss Pennington always marveled that her charge never wept, even in childhood, but Sarah Lynn was crying now, bitterly and uncontrollably, salt tears running into her mouth, shivering under her woolly coverings.

In spite of the cold, the stinging, biting air, she was seared and shriveled by the flame of Gunnar Thorwald's scorn and contempt.

"Keep away from me, drunken fool!"

The hideous irony of it—Sarah Lynn, flat-tire in the mad tempo of fourth generation Danavale because

she would never take a drink! She looked at his rigid shoulders, at the relentless angle of the head in the sternly classic helmet and absolved him utterly. Why shouldn't he have believed the worst of her, seeing her there in that loathsome place, heavy-eyed and staggering and babbling?

"I'm not afraid!" she exclaimed. "I'm not the least particle afraid. I adore it. This won't be the last time—I won't let it be. I'm going to fly all my life. It's fun! It's heavenly! It's the kingdom and the power and the glory!"

There was a bump which threw her forward in her seat, and then they were thumping along over a field, terrestrial again, all glory gone. They turned and drew up presently in front of brightly lighted buildings with a big group of people before them. An attendant came running to meet them.

Gunnar Thorwald did not leave his seat. He spoke through the window.

"Thorwald, San Jose to Glendale."

"Gas?"

"Nothing. I land a passenger." Without looking round, Gunnar indicated Sarah Lynn with a motion of his shoulder.

The man opened the door and thrust in his head. "Getting out, lady?"

"I—yes, I suppose—" Sarah Lynn got to her feet, tripping over the blanket, gathering it clumsily into her arms. The attendant reached a hand to help her.

The Norwegian ace did not turn his head as she went by him.

"I am sorry," Sarah Lynn began unsteadily. Then the words came in a rush. "No, I'm not! I'm glad, glad! It was the most wonderful, glorious—"

The pilot was silent, eyes set forward.

"Look out, lady! Low bridge!" the attendant warned her.

Sarah Lynn, looking at Gunnar, lifted her chin defiantly and struck her forehead on the casing of the low door, and the man helped her to the ground, the blanket trailing. She raged at herself. Must she always be grotesque before him? Always a figure for scorn and loathing?

"Say, is that Gunnar Thorwald? Feller that flew the ocean?" the attendant wanted to know excitedly.

"Yes."

"Well—gosh! Hey, Eddie! That's Gunnar Thorwald! You know—the Norwegian ace?"

The other came running. "The deuce it is! Why, sure—that's his ship, all right. Hi, fellers!" he waved a beckoning arm. "Know who that is?—Gunnar Thorwald!"

Sarah Lynn was aware of a gathering group as the plane took off.

"Can you feature that?" one of the workmen said in a low tone.

"Just came down to dump her, huh?"

"Yeah; threw her out like she was a sack of mail."

"And look at her! What's the big idea?"

A large and noisy element was added to the crowd, pouring out of the bright waiting-room, a man in evening dress, a girl in bridal costume, half a dozen men and girls with flowers and old shoes and rice and confetti, all staring at Sarah Lynn.

A man in the company's uniform came up to her, touching his cap. "Beg pardon! Is there anything we can do for you? Would you like a taxi? I mean, where are you going?"

"To San Jose; to Danavale." She turned round then, coming out of her abstraction, painfully aware, suddenly, of the curious throng. Her face flamed. She gathered up the blanket and shook it and tried to wrap it around her.

"We haven't another plane tonight."

"I must telephone my father," Sarah Lynn said. "Where—"

The bride ran after her and

caught hold of her arm. "Say, listen, sister," she said in a high, sweet voice, "are you in a jam?"

"I'm quite all right," Sarah Lynn said stiffly.

"Well, is that nice? Throwing you out like a sack of mail! Is that a good old Norse custom?"

"I want to telephone—"

"Here—I'll show you!" She picked up her glistening train.

Sarah Lynn followed her. "Is this Fresno?"

"Well, for Pete's sake! Didn't you know where you were landing? Yes, this is Fresno, and here's your booth. I'll wait for you."

"Thank you," Sarah Lynn said coldly. "It's not necessary." She looked fully at her for the first time and took in the details of white



"Did he take our picture?"

satin and filmy veil and orange blossoms. "I mustn't keep you from—"

"Oh, that's all right!" she said easily. "It's just one of my weddings! Married in Hollywood and flying to Frisco and set the ship down to say hello to a bunch of nit-wits. Go ahead and telephone your folks." The young man had followed them and he said something to her in a low tone. She nodded. "Don't shut the door, dearie—you'll smother in that box. I'll stand right here."

The youth lit a cigarette and strolled away, but kept within hearing distance.

"I want Danavale 3704. Yes. It's a suburb of San Jose. I want to speak to Mr. Dana—Mr. Edwin Lynn Dana."

There was at once panic and reassurance in the sound of her father's voice, thick, drowsy, amazed. "It's Sarah Lynn. I'm at Fresno. Fresno. F-r-e-s-n-o! Why, I flew down. Flew! With Gunnar Thorwald. What? I don't know where Duncan is. Oh, Dad, please—I'll explain everything when I see you. How can I get home? I haven't any money." She was silent, listening.

"Yes, at the Fresno airport. Shall I wait here? What? All right. Yes; the Californian hotel and ask for Mr. Pond. How soon can you get here?—Tell Mother not to worry, please! I'm perfectly all right. Yes—I understand—Mr. Pond, Californian hotel." Her voice, thin, strained, hoarse, warmed suddenly.

"Oh, Dad, it was glorious—glorious!—yes. Good-by."

The young man came close to her, speaking with controlled excitement. "You're Miss Dana? From Danavale? I used to work on the newspapers in San Jose. You flew down with Gunnar Thorwald? Well, of course you did," he grinned.

"but what I mean is, weren't you going all the way to Glendale with him?"

"No," Sarah Lynn said briefly, aware now of the avid curiosity in his gimlet gaze.

"Isn't it a fact he vowed he'd never take a woman up in his ship?"

"Yes."

"And then he kidnaps you in a blanket and—"

"He did not!" she defended him hotly. "It wasn't his fault—I mean, he didn't intend—" she stopped, confused.

"Why did he dump you out like that? Didn't you ask him to set you down at Fresno? But you didn't know it was Fresno, did you? I guess maybe it was a pretty wild party, wasn't it? Do you mind telling me just how—"

The bride put a protective arm about the forlorn, thin figure. "Lay off the interview, Beanie! Isn't it a girl's privilege to get out and walk home when she wants to? Probably the Great Dane got a little too primitive and she—"

"No!" the girl said vehemently. "It wasn't his fault! I told you it wasn't his fault!" She walked away from them, her blanket spreading out behind her like a train, and spoke to the uniformed attendant.

"I want a taxi, please."

"Wait!" the bride ran after her. "There's a flock of cars here. I'll have somebody drive you. Look—I'll come with you myself!"

"Please don't trouble," Sarah Lynn was rigid. "I want a taxi, please."

"No trouble, lambie! Hi, Larry!" she hailed the groom. "Listen, angel; I'm driving this child to the hotel. Back in a jiff." She flung her long white gloved arms about him and gave him a painstaking cinema kiss.

"No, of course I won't run out on you, beautiful! You just stay here and play with your wooden soldiers and the first thing you know it'll be Christmas morning!"

The young man spoke to her in a low voice. "Hold everything for a sec', will you, Kit? I want to get the two of you together, with your train and her blanket. Boy, is this a wow or is this a wow?" He beckoned to a man with a camera who came swiftly forward. "All right, Mike; make it snappy."

The bride arranged her veil and settled the little lace cap, and thrust her arm through Sarah Lynn's. "Come along, babe! Well, will you look who's here!"

Sarah Lynn glanced up. There was a soft explosion, a dazzling flash.

"Slick!" the reporter said gleefully. "It's a knockout!"

"Oh!" Sarah Lynn cried out in panic. "Did he take our picture? He mustn't! My mother would be—"

"Don't you worry! I know how his stuff turns out—we might as well be a couple Native Belles of Mo-zamee village. Here we are, hon!" She shepherded Sarah Lynn to a car garlanded with white streamers. "Californian hotel, Tommy, my lad, and let 'er step!"

The instant they were out of hearing the youth flung himself upon the telephone and shouted a number.

"Hello! Nick? Say, feller, just pin the ol' ears back and listen! What a story! Ready? Gunnar Thorwald, Norwegian ace, who has just flown the Atlantic, and who had taken a vow never to fly a woman in his ship, set the Hermod down at Fresno at 2:45 a. m. and unceremoniously landed Miss Sarah Dana, of the famous Danavale colony, exclusive suburb"—he drew a reviving breath and went on—"of San Jose, and I got a picture that's a honey—the gal in a formal and a blanket—blanket, yeah, b-l-a-n-k-e-t, standing beside Kitty Medill, Wild Woman of the Air, Hollywood's stunt-flyingest fool and her nth bridegroom!"

The big and beautiful lobby of the Hotel Californian was dimly lit and drowsy, the exquisite Regency cocktail room was asleep, but the man behind the desk was wide-awake and cordial.

"Why, hello, Miss Medill!" Then he laughed. "Beg pardon! I mean, Mrs. Van Dalton!"

"Old stuff, big boy. Don't you ever read the papers? Sure, I'm another bride. I checked the groom out at the field while I brought you a customer. This is Miss Dana from up north. She was flying to Los' and changed her mind, and she wants to stay till her folks come for her. Make her comfortable, will you?"

"Gladly!" His puzzled gaze went from her bridal finery to Sarah Lynn's blanket. "Will you register, Miss Dana?" A buzzer sounded behind him and he turned to answer the telephone. "Yes, Mr. Pond?—just arrived this minute. Very well, Mr. Pond." He turned back to them. "Miss Dana, your father telephoned. Mr. and Mrs. Pond will be right down. Won't you have a chair?"

"Then everything's jake, and here goes the bride!" She waved aside Sarah Lynn's stammered thanks with a heavily jeweled, well-decorated hand which was slightly grimey. "You tell your Big Swede I don't like his fireman's hat! Tell him all the regulars over here wear boudoir caps." She gave her a comradely hug. "Don't let it get you down, dearie! By!" She spread out her satin train, dropped her eyes with maidenly reserve, folded her hands and went out of the lobby with slow and timid steps, balancing uncertainly on the balls of her feet at every pace, humming tenderly—"Here comes the bride—"

The hotel man and his wife came hurrying down immediately, kind, concerned. Mr. Pond understood perfectly: her father had explained the situation and asked them to make her at home until he arrived: it was a privilege to be of some slight service to her father's daughter.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Usefulness of Tin Cans Just Begun When Empty; Serve Many Purposes

Deep in Inner Mongolia, across the wastes of the Gobi desert, there is a monastery with a glistening gold roof. Well, anyway, it looks like gold from a distance.

Roy Chapman Andrews, the famous explorer, thought it was until, on approaching closer, he found that the roofing materials had come from Bayonne, N. J., rather than some hidden mine in the desert, says the United States Steel News.

The roof was made of tin kerosene cans, hammered flat. Rust from the uncoated edges gave it its golden appearance.

In the same part of the world, in the remote sections of Manchukuo, the railroads are sometimes plagued with bandit trouble. The guards assigned to protect the trains and passengers have developed a new type of armored shelter—baled tin cans.

The cans are dried by heat, then crushed into bundles or bales by large presses and used for the construction of bulletproof block houses.

The list of odd uses for tin cans, which crop up in the most unexpected places, is almost endless. There are, for instance, the Chinese morticians in San Francisco who use tin cans to ship back to China the ashes of Chinese who

want to be buried in the homeland.

Nor can we forget the compressed tin cans which are used instead of crushed rock in building roads in West Palm Beach, Fla., nor the baled cans with which the bed of the Los Angeles river is "paved" to prevent it undercutting its banks.

In South America, purchasers of canned goods in large quantities demand tall, six-gallon cans, because they have a cash value of 50 cents each as water carriers. After the natives have punched holes in the top, to insert the pole on which the can is carried, it will still hold five gallons of water.

Use of Word "Bit"

"Bit" is the British slang for any small coin. The expression was transferred, in the South and West, in the United States, to the old Mexican real, worth 12½ cents, an amount which at one time was called a shilling in certain eastern states. In those regions within the Mexican sphere of influence, quarter is said to be almost unknown. A short-bit is 10 cents, and a long-bit is 15 cents. Four bits and six bits are common there, but people east of the Mississippi get confused trying to compute bits at 12½ cents each.