

Our Weekly Serial Story Installment

STRAIT GATE

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CHAPTER VIII—Continued

"No matter. I am free."
And Sarah Lynn was free! Her own plane, her own life!

"So, now," Gunnar was saying gravely, "you will fly."

"Now I will fly."

"That is good."

They met the car from Danavale and Sarah Lynn jumped out and ran to explain. "Oh, you've brought Lightning!"

"We had to," Lynn Dana told her. "She was having refined hysterics. Better take her along. I'll telephone your mother." They waited, watching contentedly, until the fliers were out of sight.

Lightning crouched at Sarah Lynn's feet, making small sounds.

"Mountains I like; large trees I like," Gunnar said, coming out of one silence and going into another.

She nodded without speaking, and the companionable stillness held, mile on mounting mile.

Redwoods were outlined against the hearty blue sky.

"So, now you fly," Gunnar said again, seriously. "So, now, also, we are friends?"

They were now friends, she told him with a gravity matching his own, and comfortable cloaks of silence enveloped them again.

But a sound of pure astonishment escaped him at sight of the first forest giant.

"But—I have never believed it could be so!"

"Wait!" she pledged him happily. "That is only the prelude to the great ones."

He settled back in his seat with a long, relaxing sigh of contentment. "Large trees I like," he said, "and mountains and the sea, and songs and books; most I like the sky. Also I like a friend."

Sarah Lynn leaned over Lightning and gave her a hug. "You have one good American friend already. My Uncle Lynn says Conrad Jordan is the best possible person in this country for you to know. He says he's everything—a fine flier, a scholar, a sportsman."

"Also, he makes good music."

"Oh? I didn't know that."

"But yes. At his lodge on the Lake of Tahoe, many nights I have sat by the fire, wind and rain sounding, to listen to his deep thoughts from the piano." He gave generous gangway to a truck. "You shall hear. I will bring you there one day."

She did not answer, unless, indeed, he heard the thumping beat of her heart. She thought he must. It was a relief to reach the park and get out of the car, and to watch his face as they went walking into the presence of the Big Trees.

The effect upon him was satisfying. He would never be ecstatic or explosive, she knew, but all the appreciation and emotion which others expelled went into the quality of his looking, his silence. He stepped softly, as if he found himself in a cathedral, and his face, under the thatch of unsalted-butter-colored hair, might have been the earnest countenance of a Boy Scout bent upon good deeds.

Gunnar was looking only at the trees, so Sarah Lynn was able to look at him. He seemed younger, somehow; his austerity was giving way to a little-boy-like wonder, with an interlining of wistfulness.

"So, now, you fly," he began as before. "So, now, we are friends."

"Yes," she told him contentedly.

"Friends," he repeated, but there was clearly more on his mind. "Fliers," he stated with authority, "shall not marry."

"Not?"

"No."

"No," she agreed docilely.

Then they walked on, and he was quite evidently relieved at having settled an important matter swiftly and finally. She would be a flier, and they would be friends, and fliers did not marry.

Newspaper publicity broke out like a rash.

Miss Ethelinda Pennington proved to be putty in the hands of bright young reporters and bland feature-writers from San Jose and San Francisco papers. Quickly and painlessly they extracted a vivid picture of Sarah Lynn's odd childhood with many quaint details as to the mornings in the meadow and her pre-occupation with ladybugs, and departed jubilantly for their typewriters.

Thorwald, Sarah Lynn sat in silence watching his sure hands, looking, learning, remembering, and stored up questions for the earth.

"I have the wish to see your Golden Gate in sunset," he said one day.

They were driving to the landing-field. "Gunnar, I want to come down in a parachute," Sarah Lynn said.

"Yes. But not yet. There is for you much more learning."



When they reached the field Gunnar placed a friendly arm about the man. "Still game?" he asked.

ers before she was well out of the ether.

Ladybug was a rich theme and they rang endless changes upon it. Many pages went from the wheeled-chair to Sally Ann in Cornwall.

"There was an epic battle between Cousin Adelaide, big and beautiful and lyrically maternal, and the little old matriarch, small and mighty and mad. 'I'm sorry for you, Addie,' she said, 'but you better make up your mind to it. You're worse off than the hen that hatched ducks; you got an eagle, and I guess maybe it's harder to watch 'em fly than swim!'"

"We bought her that flying-machine, Lynn and me, and we're paying a young feller to teach her to run it. Didn't I tell you, first time ever I laid eyes on the young-one? I knew right off she was one a' the dark ones."

"Then she went close and peered up at her and shook a parchment finger in her face. 'And you listen to me, Addie, for it's the gospel truth. She's more my child than she is yours, for all you borned her and there's worse than seventy years between us!'"

Sarah Lynn was sincerely sorry for her mother's martyrdom, but life contained for her now only two shining and splendid facts—flying and Gunnar Thorwald: when other subjects came into her mind it was like pouring fluids into an already brimming bowl; they simply ran over and off.

Whenever she flew with Gunnar

"Of course. After I can really fly. It must be the most satisfying thing in the world and not so terribly hard. Just wait and count ten before you pull the string."

"That is, you think, so simple?"

She shivered happily. "It must be the most gloriously terrifying thing—just bailing out into the blue beyond with a silly trick parasol over you! But I want to do it, Gunnar."

He nodded. "You shall do it. That I promise. From my plane. But—when I say you are ready."

"Yes." She settled back in her seat, entirely content.

Lynn Dana had written Sally Ann the night before: "As to your question—I don't know. Our queer dark one, beyond all possibility of a doubt, quite literally worships the air he flies in. As for the lad—he approves her utterly for her courage and cleverness, but he's flint-hard and bat-blind. If her heart's on her sleeve, he doesn't see it, and she has a nice young dignity and reticence."

Something did not quite suit Gunnar in Hermod's rhythm as they flew up the valley, and they came down at Oakland before crossing the bay. It needed only a minor adjustment, but would take a little time.

"Tea, while we wait," the ace said. He hailed a taxi and put her in it, and they drove a couple of blocks. "Here! This will do!"

It was a shabby little eating-house with a menu written in chalk on a blackboard at the door.

"Wait!" Gunnar directed the taxi-driver.

"Sure," he said amiably. "Comin' in myself. 'Lo, Lena!" he greeted a big-busted woman with dyed hair. "How's tricks?" He sat down in the last seat before the counter which was close to the kitchen.

The fliers sat near the door. "Tea and bread, honey," he ordered briefly.

The woman slammed down their plates and cups and Gunnar was buttering a thick slice of bread.

Their taxi-driver had risen and slouched into the back room, and now a little man in an enveloping apron came out. He had scared eyes and an unimportant chin, and he was staring at them. He spoke over his shoulder. "Honest? You ain't stringin' me, Nick?"

The woman said something to him and he popped out of sight like a

woman served them truculently. Her husband came edging out of the kitchen again to stare at Gunnar and Sarah Lynn. He had a droll little pot-bellied figure and pipe-stem legs, and he stood nervously rubbing his hands over his dirty apron.

"I just gott ast you," he began in a hissing whisper. "Nick, he's a great one to kid you along. On the level, are you Gunnar Thorwald and—and that girl?"

They were, they told him, Sarah Lynn gently, the Norwegian ace with a sudden friendliness which surprised her.

The wife wheeled about, snarling. "You get back where you belong!" She took an order. "Stack a' wheats!" "Ham and!"

Without a word he scuttled back into his unsavory domain.

Gunnar finished his bread and honey and drank off his tea. His eyes were narrowed to a gleaming blue slit. Then he stood up and walked back through the stuffy room, past the hunched figures feeding at the counter, and stuck his head into the steam and stench.

"So it interests you—flying?"

"Interests—say, boy! I read every scrap I can lay hands on, and I see every movie that's got flying in it, and when I stand here, hashin' and hear 'em go by in the sky—" he stopped, gulping, his Adam's apple moving convulsively in his stringy throat.

The wife came back with a pile of soiled plates and pushed rudely past the flier. "Pop, you tend to business! Tea-bone and country fry!"

The Norwegian looked through and beyond her. "Yourself would wish to fly?"

The little man put down a long pronged fork and clasped small pudgy hands with broken and black-rimmed nails. "Just once—before I die—I wouldn't ast nothin' more. I wouldn't—"

"Come, then!"

It was all done in a flash. The aviator's arm which seemed to lift him bodily out of his fetid trench and propel him through the tiny restaurant and into the taxi, the driver, wiping his mouth, grinning, running after, jumping into his seat, Sarah Lynn, delighted, agast, following Gunnar, the staring customers, the woman emitting shrill staccato cries—

"Pop! Pop! You come back here! You crazy? Want to break your fool neck? Pop!" She began to whimper and storm. "You let loose a' him, Mister! I'll call a cop! You can't kidnap—"

They were rattling down the street, the little man wedged in between them, the unhealthy pallor of his face suffused with scarlet excitement.

When they reached the field Gunnar placed a friendly arm about the man. "Still game?" he asked. To which the fellow, too overcome to talk, nodded eagerly.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Soil Treatment Kills Japanese Beetle Grubs That Feed on Roots of Vegetation

When Japanese beetles, the offspring of those that slipped unobtrusively into the United States some time before 1916 on nursery stock from the Far East, were first discovered in New Jersey, entomologists could suggest no effective way to stop their spread. In their native home, various parasites and predators keep these beetles from becoming a serious economic pest but those that migrated here brought no natural enemies with them. Consequently they multiplied rapidly.

Now they infest continuously about 11,400 square miles, mostly in New Jersey but running into New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. Isolated colonies have sprung up elsewhere along the Atlantic seaboard. Nothing can be done to stop the natural spread of the Japanese beetle here. Each year it extends its territory a few miles on every front, notes a writer in the Detroit Free Press.

The only effective control measure for the Japanese beetle, treating infested soil with lead arsenate, is too expensive for use over a large

area. In small, isolated areas of infestation, it is a cheap safeguard against a spreading infestation that would soon become very costly.

Soil treatment kills the beetle grubs that, just below the surface, feed on the roots of grass and other vegetation. Unsightly brown spots in lawns and on golf courses in the East are evidence of this feeding. Adult beetles feed on about 260 different plants. They live mainly on foliage and the upper and outer parts of plants exposed to bright sunlight.

Effervescence in Champagne
The effervescence of champagne is brought about by the yeast fermentation of sugar to carbon dioxide and alcohol during a secondary fermentation in the bottle, according to Industrial and Engineering Chemistry. The correct amount of sugar must be employed in making champagne since too high a carbon dioxide pressure will break the bottles, and too low a pressure gives an insipid beverage, it is said. Rock Indians precisely similar skills.