

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN

By OREN ARNOLD Copyright, 1937, NEA Service, Inc.

CHAPTER VI

Stuart Blake escorted Carolee back part way up the trail toward her home, after they had begged mid-afternoon lunch from the cook in Superstition Lodge. The danger over, both could laugh at their mountain adventure and enjoy the comradeship that the experience wrought.

Carolee was afraid he would ask formally to call on her at her home on the high mesa. That would never do, she knew, and he ought to realize it. He had discovered her family's hostility. To forestall him she suggested meeting him—on signal—at the trading place. She would hang out the white sheet when she could ride.

When Stuart returned a second time to Superstition Lodge the hour was near sundown, and there was a hubbub of conversation on the front porch. One glance told him something had happened. His father was there, obviously excited. But Nina greeted Stuart.

"Dismount, buckaroo, and listen to the old scout's story," she called. "Somebody's been shooting at dad."

"What's the matter? Who's done what?"

Mr. Blake, Sr., was serious about it, and started.

"Somebody shot at me this noon, up in the mountain," he explained. "Three or four times. I might have been killed. I could hear the bullets, plopping right near me."

Stuart was incredulous for a moment.

"Are you serious, dad? Are you sure?"

"Certainly I'm sure! I was just telling the folks here about it."

"The folks?" included Nina Blake and half a dozen other lodge guests and employees who happened to be within hearing; even the old Indian women, who were eternally weaving baskets or molding pottery in the shade nearby, stopped to listen open-mouthed.

That's about all there was to the story. Mr. Blake re-told it a dozen times. He had simply squatted behind a rock for nearly an hour, badly frightened; then he had gone back to the place where he had tied his horse, and hastened to return home. He had no idea who could have done the shooting. The bullets came from across a wide canyon, evidently at considerable range.

Stuart remembered his own experience with Carolee and warned his dad against getting lost, but the father had been on higher altitudes where the going was less blocked by brush. Besides, he was a keener observer than his children. He informed them; he could backtrail.

Stuart decided immediately that the Colter men had done the shooting.

He mentioned that fact to his father, and the latter partially agreed. Still, there would seem to be no logical reason for it. The Colters might harbor animosity for Stuart, following the episode in the Phoenix store, but hardly for Stuart's father.

Mr. Blake pointed out that the store incident had been trivial in the first place. But the Colters obviously were touchy, surly, hence likely to do foolish things. And on top of all that, they were out after gold and suspicious of anyone who tried to thwart them. They might have thought Mr. Blake was trying to spy on them.

Nina Blake declined to get worked up about it, as usual. She was more interested in probing her brother's personal affairs.

"Been out all day, haven't you brother de-ear? Isn't love the grandest thing?"

"Shut up," he grinned. "Carolee's all right, though."

"You're telling I? Pretty! But just the same, watch out. The old man probably tries to use a shotgun."

He threw up his hands and a quiet and asserted things at Nina until she ducked and ran, while everybody laughed at them.

Talk of the shooting occupied the upper hour and the starlight conference, too. This was a balmy evening, and the lodge people loafed on the great rustic porch, enjoying the new thrill in conversation. Mr. Blake was quite the hero.

Both he and his son had telephoned into Florence, the Pinal county seat, and reported the matter to Sheriff Watson. But the sheriff hadn't been very helpful. Probably some careless hunter, he had suggested; hardly worth a search. People were always reporting "mysterious" shootings up in old Superstition and he was prone to scoff at such pranks. But even at bedtime the Blake men weren't satisfied.

Soon after breakfast next morning Stuart ordered his horse saddled and—more sensibly than the day before—trapped on a gallon canteen of water and a small package of food. He didn't want to admit being lost the day before with Carolee, and wouldn't even admit to himself that he couldn't ride through the mountain alone.

The horse was tied and waiting when Stuart came out. And when he did appear, he snatched of a movie camera of some terrible Tom-from-the-rain-forest. At least Nina told him so.

Was to the villains on a day like this? she exclaimed, loudly. "Will you capture them alive and torture them?" Or just shoot them down in dust?

Stuart was a carriage bolt, however from the lodge owner. A businesslike revolver hung on one hip, too; and he carried a shiny repeating rifle that he had bought in town.

As a matter of solemn fact, he did look rather impressive. Nina's admiration was at least partly genuine. Stuart could have been a movie hero, with luck and talent added; and he had the looks. He was masculine enough. Usually he was gay and full of banter himself, but not this morning.

"Somebody shot at dad," he announced, as if that were sufficient. "Come to think of it, it was. Nina told herself."

"I don't know exactly. For one thing I'll go a little target practice."

Dad traced out the route he took yesterday. He was about four miles from here. I'll go there, and learn what I can."

Nina was suddenly concerned.

"Don't be a fool, Stuart. If somebody shot at dad, somebody might shoot at you. And the aim might be better today. Why don't you take a guide?"

"Dad wasn't armed. I am. I don't think the shooting will occur again anyway. I just want to investigate. Besides, I'm getting interested in that Lost Dutchman Mine. If it's important enough to make fools of the Colters and cause dad to be shot at, then some of those other stories about the mountain may be true."

"Undoubtedly some of them are true," Nina declared. "They are on record. The deaths, I mean. But why are you interested?"

He smiled, then, for the first time this morning.

"Come out for adventure, didn't we, while dad rests? So far he's done the adventuring. I want to trace down a few clues myself. But don't go spending the treasure until I find it."

Nina leaned against a front post, a crooked ironwood log, and watched her brother mount. She couldn't help being concerned for his safety, but he did look out of place to her, out of atmosphere. She was accustomed to Stuart in full dress or a tux, or in correct city sport clothes behind the wheel of his roadster. He was strange to cowboy regalia.

"You look grand," she conceded. "If you only had a wagon train to rescue. Or a Poonchoutas to woo!"

He glanced at the Indian handworkers near the porch, already weaving and mixing clay. Not one was under 40 years, nor under 180 pounds. They were just old women, tolerated there because they were picturesque.

"Sorry, sis, but you can't make a square man of me. So long. I may lay out tonight (he was already picking up the speech of the western cowboy), so don't look for me for a day or two."

"And another thing," he flung back as he rode off, "if there's any shooting done this trip, I'm going to do some of it. Tell that to dad."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

4-H Sewing Club Is Entertained

WOLF CREEK, July 2.—(Special)—Mrs. Viola Farmer, 4-H sewing club leader, entertained the club Tuesday evening with a party. Club members present were Wilma Hooker, Carmen Taylor, Zelda Marsh, Hazel Eaton, Blanche Farmer and Violet Lundeen. Guests invited for this occasion were Marshall and Marcelous Butterfield, Boyd Fry, Victor Lundeen, Cecil and Lyle Newman and the Farmer family. The hostess served lunch.

From Independence

Miss Pauline Sloper, of Independence, is a guest at the home of her aunt, Mrs. Mae Hooker and family, this week.

Mr. and Mrs. John Cowden and son Dickie, spent the week-end in Eugene where they attended the wedding of Mrs. Cowden's sister, Miss Estelle Thompson, Sunday.

Stories in STAMPS

INDIAN HEROINE OF WHITE COLONY

Several white settlers of Jamestown were taken prisoner by the Indians and some were killed when Pocahontas, pretty daughter of Chief Powhatan, was enticed aboard a British ship, taken to Jamestown and held as hostage for the return of the colonists. It was she who, legend insists, threw herself upon the prostrate Capt. John Smith, as the ax was about to fall on his neck, and saved his life. Now, as prisoner among the colonists, she became a Christian and married John Rolfe.

In 1616, Rolfe took his bride to England and presented her to King James I. Dressed in her queer court costume, she became a sensation, and was entertained by the nobility. She gave birth to a son, Thomas, who was educated in England and later returned to Virginia.

Before Pocahontas could return to America with her husband, however, she died of small-pox. Her portrait, as she appeared before the king and queen of England, is on the five-cent stamp of the three issued in 1907 on the tercentenary of the founding of Jamestown.

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U. S.—1907 Jamestown Issue Pocahontas 5c blue

NEXT: Stamp news.

For Clothes You're Proud to Wear JOE RICHARDS MEN'S STORE 873 Williamette

Then the sudden is not in distress today. I take it. It's best to let her have a bit anyway. Where will you go to?

"I don't know exactly. For one thing I'll go a little target practice."

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

Gotta Go

By HAROLD GRAY



THIMBLE THEATRE Starring POPEYE

NOW SHOWING—"WE FELLERS HAVE GOTTA STICK TOGETHER."

By E. C. SEGAR



SECRET AGENT X-9

The G-Man's Material Witness

By ALEX RAYMOND



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

Stumped

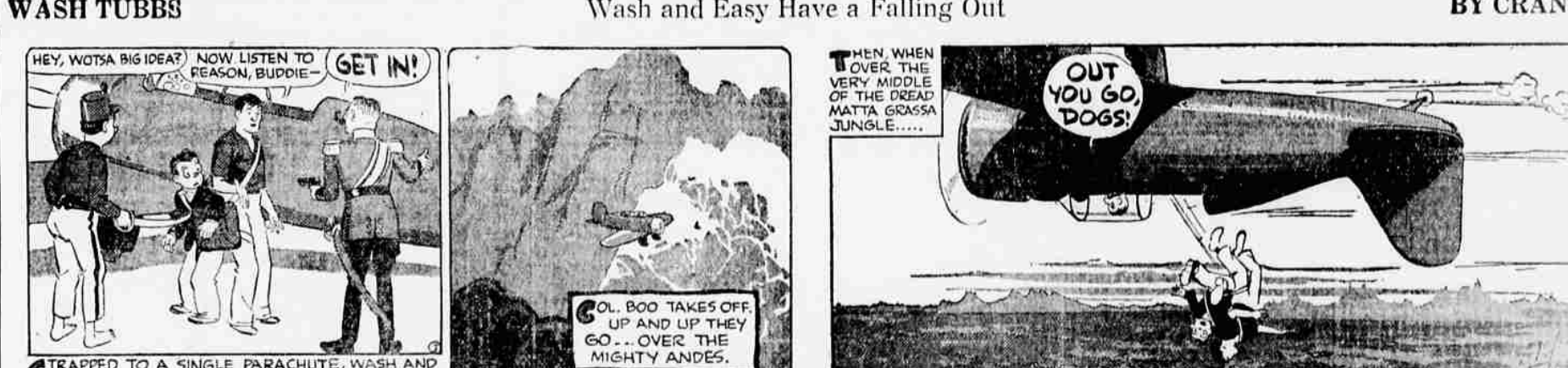
By MARTIN



WASH TUBBS

Wash and Easy Have a Falling Out

BY CRANE



OUT OUR WAY

By WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE . . . with . . . Major Hoople

