MADMAN'S ISLAND

By NARD JONES

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CHAPTER XIV

When Grant Harper and Kay Dearborn went down those dark, damp steps they fully expected some death trap . . . perhaps an unchained well to smother them out of existence. Or a pit in which they would be at the mercy of the owner of that insistent voice that came to them out of the night's blackness. Clutching Grant Harper's arm, Kay found her mind filled with all sorts of fantastic possibilities. Step by step they went deeper, and she felt sure that each step would be the last.

"Here we are," the voice said. Then Kay felt the man brush past her, heard the unmistakable sound of a latch.

What Kay and Grant saw in that sudden flash of light they would never forget on this earth. It was a long, paneled hallway, well carpeted. Beyond was another door. Dazed, Kay turned to her captor. He was the same man she had taken command of the "Chinook" and from whom she had attempted escape. Easily he snapped the flashlight into his pocket, but the revolver he kept ready.

"You are surprised," he said with a smile. "Indeed, I have other surprises in store for you. I am so proud of my little place. I find myself anxious to show it—after so long a time."

"We're not anxious to see it," Harper said evenly. "We're not going on the island. You can't possibly—"

"Never turn down hospitality," the man interrupted with a strange gleam in his eyes. "That door ahead will take you into the living room. Please go ahead." The revolver moved ever so slightly.

* * *

He urged Grant ahead. "Please," she said. "We—we may as well do what he says."

"May as well?" The mad man chuckled pleasantly. "You must do what I say. You will find the place delightful. The electricity comes from my own little motor-driven plant. There is an air conditioning system, too. You'll note that the air is quite as fresh here as above. I have only one slight inconvenience. It does grow too cool in the earth. Does it not?"

Kay shuddered, felt Grant's arm grow tighter around her waist. "Easy," he whispered. "Try not to show you're afraid. We may be able to . . ." He stopped as their strange host drew closer, opening the door from the hallway.

Ahead was a large room, panelled like the hallway, even to the ceiling. It was beautifully furnished, and the pictures and decorations reflected impeccable taste. "There is still more," the man said. "But suppose we sit here for a moment. You both must be—ah—tired after so strenuously trying to avoid my hospitality."

"Thank you . . ." Grant Harper gave Kay a glance full of meaning. "Of course, you can understand that we weren't aware of your intentions?" He settled in one of the huge leather chairs. This is hardly what one would expect to find.

The other smiled. With a curious gesture he slipped the revolver into his pocket. But there was no doubt that he was still aware of it. "I am glad you find it acceptable. You will have to excuse me for a brief time. There are some things I have to attend to. Make yourselves free here. There are refreshments on the table there. In the sideboard you'll find fresh sandwiches and a bottle of very good wine."

He started toward the door. Then he turned. "Of course, it will do you no good to try to escape. I wouldn't advise it." With that he left the room. Kay and Grant heard the lock turn definitely from the outside.

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In panic, Kay started across the room toward the door. "Wait!" Grant said. "One thing we must do—and that's lose our heads. The man is obviously a paranoiac of some sort. But that may be in our favor. At least he has nothing logical against us. He's not looking for revenge against us in particular—so we may have a chance to dissuade him."

"But what can we do?"

Harper smiled grimly. "For a start, nothing. He said there was food in the sideboard. I move we make use of it."

"—it may be poison," said Kay.

Grant was at the sideboard. "At least we can depend on the seal. This seal is authentic, it hasn't been tampered with." He watched him break it open, fill the glasses set atop of the sideboard.

He brought one to her. "Here you are. To what shall we drink?" Kay took the glass in trembling hand. "There's no use," she said finally. "I'm—I'm scared. Why don't we pretend that he isn't going to kill us?"

"Because," said Harper, touching his glass to hers, "we're going to keep him from it."

Then they had sipped the wine, Harper walked to a fireplace where logs and kindling were laid. "A glass of wine and a fire. Not bad, at that." He knelt down, touched a match to the crumpled paper. "We must accept his hospitality. He's very clear about that, you remember, and it may be the key to his mind if he has one." Harper sat on his heels before the fresh blaze. "Only that smoke has to go somewhere above. It might be like the 'Mistral.'"

"Do you really think they'll find us?"

"One thing you can be sure of, Kay, Tom are looking. When they come along that path I could have sworn I heard the speedboat's engine."

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ADD CHAPTER 14 madman's isle

It was more than an hour later when their host returned. Now he looked as Kay had seen him on the "Chinook," for his clothes were dripping wet.

"Ah," he said, smiling. "You have made yourselves at home. That is good. You will pardon my appearance, I know. Sometimes it is a bit inconvenient, living on an island without a boat. But then, I do not mind. I am a strong swimmer—and one dries out quickly before a hearth fire."

Harper went forward disarmingly. "Better let me take your coat, old man. It's soaking."

"No, thanks . . ." The man drew back suspiciously. Then he smiled again. "You have been comfortable?"

"Very. You know, I'd like to know how in the world you've done all this. It's remarkable."

The other shrugged. "Not so remarkable, my friend. It was begun many years ago. I have merely improved it. Over a long period—ordering my materials and equipment from one place and another, so as to avoid publicity."

He walked toward the hearth, turned suddenly with his back to the fire. "Would you really like to hear the story of these rooms?"

(To Be Continued)

IN DELIGHT VALLEY

DELIGHT VALLEY, Sept. 11.—(Special)—Mr. and Mrs. Charles Conner attended the funeral of Mrs. Winnie Huff of Dufur, Ore., a sister-in-law of Mrs. Conner, at the Mills chapel in Cottage Grove Tuesday afternoon.

Mrs. Gertrude Burge has returned to Eugene where she has employment. She visited at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Snow for a time.

CLUB MEETS

DRAIN, Sept. 11.—(Special)—The Sew and So club met Thursday afternoon at the home of Miss Edna Harlan. Eight members were present. The next meeting will be held at the home of Miss Helen Davis, Sept. 23.

IS LODGE OFFICER

MARCOLA, Sept. 11.—(Special)—Mrs. Wilma Addington is the new recorder for the Royal Neighbor lodge, taking the place of Mrs. Dorah Hall who has moved to North Bend. Mrs. Hall has been recorder for several years.

CLUB MEETING

LORANE, Sept. 11.—(Special)—The Pollyanna club will meet Thursday, Sept. 16, at the home of Mrs. R. G. Conner with Mrs. C. A. Davis as co-hostess. Members are to wear print dresses.

Stories in STAMPS

A "WATCHFOB" PRINCIPALITY

LESS than eight square miles in area, with a population less than that of an average town—22,153—Monaco is a watchfob principality equally unique and famous around the world. It is located nine miles east of Nice on the Mediterranean, hemmed in on all sides by France.

Supplanting the Phoenicians, the Greeks colonized Monaco before 1000 A. D. They erected a temple to Heracles, surnamed by the Greeks "Monoikos," hence the derivation of Monaco. In succeeding centuries the little territory came successively under French and Sardinian rule. It now operates under a national council of 21 members and Prince Louis II.

Keystone of Monaco is Monte Carlo, gambling resort to the world. For this concession, running from 1898 to 1947, a company paid 400,000 pounds in 1899, 600,000 in 1913, as well as a rent of 50,000 pounds yearly to 1906; 70,000 to 1916, 80,000 to 1926, 90,000 to 1936 and 100,000 to 1947

The inhabitants of Monaco are forbidden access to the gambling tables, but are exempt from taxation and derive large profits from the gambling visitors. A view of Monaco is shown on a 1922 stamp.

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Fed one bushel of corn, a lean hog will gain 10 pounds in weight, creating 7 to 8 more pounds of marketable pork.

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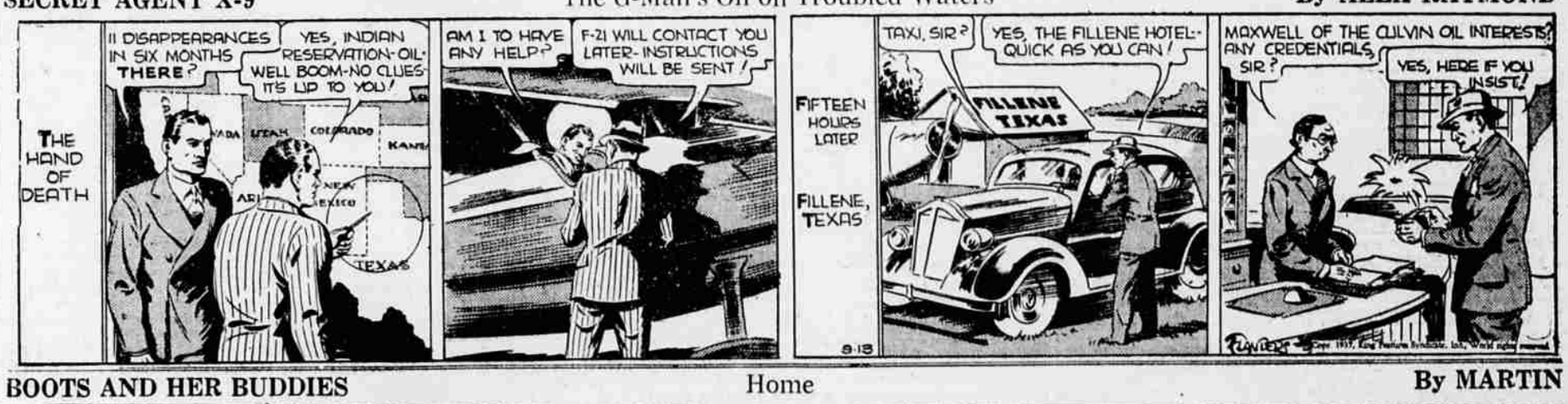
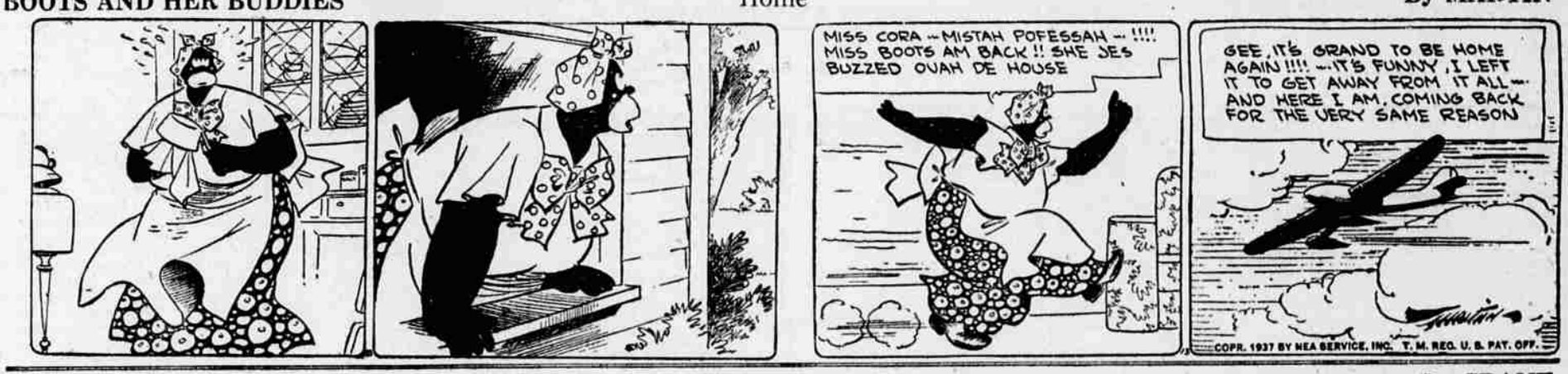


BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES — Home — By MARTIN



WASH TUBBS — No Sale — By CRANE

OUT OUR WAY — By WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE - - - with - - MAJOR HOOPLE