

# DAGGER

by Mary Dahlberg

### Chapter 34 AN AMAZING INVITATION

Dagger returned to the hotel that afternoon, brows puckered in speculation—and entered her room to receive another surprise. Flowers were everywhere. On a table lay an envelope of heavy Chinese paper, addressed to her in elegant characters that suggested at once Chang's personality and the ideographs of his native tongue.

"Dear Mrs. Vanering," she read. "I am taking the liberty of presenting you with a few trifles to bring you in touch with China. If you will permit, I will help you to explore its recesses, which are accessible to few westerners."

"Chang-Kai-Sho."

The following evening she was guest of honor at a dinner the Consul gave for her. The Consul met her in the hall and drew her into an anteroom.

"Look here," he began, "Chang got wind of this affair—he knows everything that goes on, of course—and put in an application for an invitation. He's inside now—wants to sit next to you. What shall I do?"

"Are you serious?" she demanded, suspecting the twinkle in his eyes.

"Never more so, but I can't help chuckling over it all. He's really a big man, about the biggest in China, and he's acting like a sophomore off on his first house-party. If it annoys you—"

"Oh, no," denied Dagger. "I can take care of myself. Besides, I want some information he can give me."

The Consul regarded her with increased respect.

"Bully for you," he said. "But if he bothers you, just holler. I'll come. Perhaps you aren't aware of it, but Chang has the Oriental attitude toward women."

"Not toward me," she answered. "Or if he has, he'll learn something."

"I bet he will."

And the Consul took her arm, and led her into the reception room, where the other guests awaited them. Chang easily the center of interest, his giant form towering over all. He was, Dagger was relieved to observe, discreet in his attention and she marvelled at the innate poise and courtliness of this ex-bandit son of a peasant. While he talked with her often he did not ignore the woman on his other side, and also engaged in general conversation but she didn't fall to notice that whenever he turned to her, his voice dropped to a more intimate pitch.

She early made an opportunity to introduce Howard's name into the conversation. Chang replied readily, but it seemed to Dagger that there was a shadow of reserve in his manner.

"A friend I shall ever prize," he said. "He helped me more than any man I have known. He could have anything he wished of me. He is my brother. But—" the broad shoulders lifted—"in the long run his own people were dearer to him."

"Why do you speak of him as if he were still with us?" she asked.

Chang's silent eyes studied her. "And why do you not use the word that is in your mind?" he countered.

"What word?"

"Dead—the word westerners fear most."

"I cannot think of him as dead," answered Dagger.

He frowned, his eyes fixed now on the plate in front of him.

"Be not mistaken," he said presently. "Death is not to be avoided—it will come to me it will come to you. And nothing we can do will avert its touch when it is ready for us. There are but three things in life of which we may be sure. The first is birth; the second is that the strong man succeeds; the third is death."

"You do not speak of love," Dagger reminded him.

"No, for love depends upon a woman—and who can be sure of a woman?"

"Surely, not one who doubts her."

His eyes gripped hers once more, almost with a hypnotic force.

"True, and yet—" He switched abruptly into a description of past campaigns.

A second week slipped by. Chang's motor was at her door punctually every morning; her vases were kept filled with flowers from the Tu-chun's gardens. And although she didn't know it, she suspected from the veiled remarks of the foreigners she met, that she was the subject of a great deal of gossip in the city.

The third week of her visit was half finished, and to tell the truth, she was commencing to weary somewhat of Sung-fu, when she received a second and more amazing invitation from Chang:

"Dear Mrs. Vanering," the block-like characters said. "I have a matter to discuss with you which is of interest to me and may be of interest to you. Will you honor me by being my guest at dinner tonight? I shall ask no others."

Dagger gasped. She had heard many tales of the Tu-chun's palace, of the intrigue that permeated it, of the bizarre harem of women representing most of the races of the world. Should she trust herself in the power of a man who was accustomed to follow every whim which occurred to him? Was there a sinister implication in his concluding sentence?

She was tempted to go to the Consul, to loyal, little Mr. Araki; but in the same breath she flung back her head, the old Dagger of the plains, fearless, self-confident, hungry for adventure. No, she'd go, and say nothing to anyone, not even her maid.

She wasn't afraid of Chang. He couldn't be more difficult to manage than a Villa or a Semual Shukh. And likewise, she admitted to herself, Chang revealed none of the symptoms of the petty soul who stoops to the flagrantly dishonorable offenses. A thief, he was a great thief, a sensualist, he was too accomplished to savor pleasure in forced embraces.

(To be Continued.)

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### LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

The Bottle Goes Ashore

By Harold Gray



### REG'LAR FELLERS

Nearly A Hero

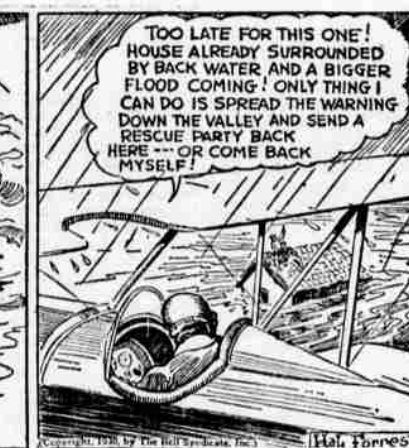
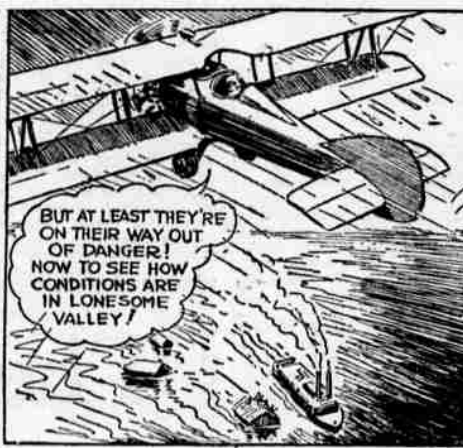
By Gene Byrnes



### TAILSPIN TOMMY

Tommy As An Aerial Paul Revere!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



### SCHOOL DATE SLATED LATER FOR HARVESTS

Amity—The opening of the Amity schools has been postponed from Sept. 2 to September 13, as many of the students have employment in the hop yards and prune orchards.

### AIR TRIP ENJOYED

Molalla—Al Granquist took an airplane trip to Seattle over the week end. It took an hour and 20 minutes to go from Portland to Seattle with a three minute stop over at Tacoma. This was a four passenger plane and he enjoyed the trip very much as this was his first time up. While there he went to Tacoma and spent several hours.

### BILLY IS SOLOIST

Brush College—Mr. and Mrs. Utley and son Billy of Brush College motored to Oregon City Wednesday where Mrs. Utley and Billy sang in an entertainment given at the First Baptist church that evening. Mr. and Mrs. Utley did not intend to remain but Billy will visit friends in Oregon City this week.

### GUESTS FROM YREKA

Amity—Mr. and Mrs. Bud Merriman and son and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Marion Merriman of Yreka, Calif., are Amity visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wardens. Mrs. Merriman Sr. and Mrs. Wardens are sisters. The Merrimans were residents here years ago. This is their first visit here in fourteen years.

**ACROSS**

1. Grow uninteresting

2. Cool settle

3. Pallid

4. Wings

5. Before

6. City in Iowa

7. Delivered an instructive discourse

8. Anarchists

9. Dissenting name

10. Sacred language

11. Hindu queen

12. Herald

13. Eastern chieftain

14. Hindling light

15. Foolish position; abate

16. Twitling

17. Flirtation

18. Pastry

19. Fines

20. Cover with metal

21. Ring

22. Values

23. Vegetables

24. Newspaper paragraph

25. Acquire by labor

**Solution of Yesterday's Puzzle**

N	O	R	A	L	S	O	L	I	S	T	E	R	A	C	S	W	I	L	L
I	P	E	C	A	C	F	R	E	E	W	I	L	L	A	L	L	L	L	L
L	E	N	O	V	E	N	A	V	E	A	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
L	I	R	E	N	O	V	E	R	S	E	A	P	T	L	L	L	L	L	
T	A	L	E	S	A	I	L	O	U	S	E	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
A	T	O	M	B	R	A	I	D	A	R	E	S	L	L	L	L	L	L	
E	R	Z	O	S	O	P	A	S	P	I	S	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
E	R	Z	O	S	O	P	A	S	P	I	S	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
D	E	A	N	S	A	B	O	T	T	O	N	A	L	L	L	L	L	L	
E	R	I	C	A	S	A	P	A	L	M	O	L	A	R	L	L	L	L	
P	A	N	N	Y	H	O	B	O	D	O	F	T	L	L	L	L	L	L	
A	S	L	O	O	P	R	I	T	E	O	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
R	E	S	I	D	I	U	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
T	R	A	V	E	R	S	E	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	

**DOWN**

1. Companion

2. Liquor

3. Conscience

4. Epistle

5. Volant man

6. Native metal

7. Devote

8. Improve

9. Guided

10. Feminine ending

11. American Indian

12. Coastal part

13. Knot again

14. Wrong

15. Long narrow boards

16. Pertaining to an ancient Greek city

17. Justice

18. Language books

19. Merriment

20. Rode easily or proudly

21. Bone with coating

22. Wax ointment

23. Novels of the sea

24. Distract

25. Feminine name

26. Presorts

27. Hall

28. Half mound

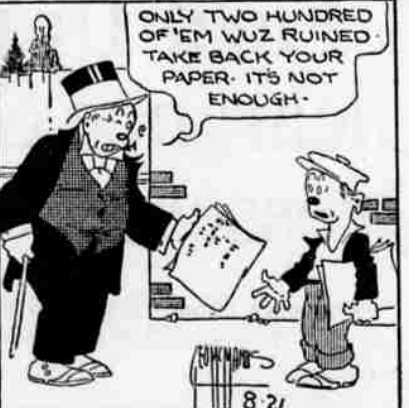
29. Young boy

30. Cunning

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13				14			
15			16				17			
18						19	20			
21	22					23			24	25
26						27			28	
29						30			31	
32			33						34	
35	36								37	
38									39	
40	41					42	43		44	45
46						47			48	
49						50			51	

### BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



### MUTT AND JEFF

Jeff Makes The Tree-Sitting Team

By Bud Fisher

