

Gambler's Throw

by Eustace L. Adams

SYNOPSIS: Once more on the kidnap trail, Jerry Calhoun intends to wipe out his former failure to run them down. He remembers exactly how when Hans Westworth was captured, a shot put him out of commission until after she disappeared, and that his efforts to follow the man's hydroplane led to the ransom money collected for his poor airplane. Now he has a powerful new plane and with Emory Battle and a detective, Stevens, is on the lookout for the hydroplane. A new system of ransom, the demanding of installments of board money, makes it impossible to prosecute the man's intentions. Five men have been captured, as well as Hans-Luc, a gambler, and four wealthy men, Hamilton, Mallory, Williams and Martin. Far away from their friends, the captive wait, well guarded in some tropical place, that they cannot recognize. They are breaking under the suspense and heat.

Chapter 10
MURDER PERMITTED?
Jerry swung over lake and shore line in a series of immense concentric circles, urging his powerful new ship up and until her controls became loose and the pointer on the altimeter refused to rise on the dial.

He was happier, at this moment, than he had been since he could remember. The pulsing drone of the marvellous new 525 horsepower motor was sweeter music to his ears than the most exquisite harmonies of a symphony.

Emory, his fiery blue eyes dancing with anticipation, was studying the magnificent panorama through navy binoculars. Never, since inheriting his father's substantial fortune, had the mere ability to spend freely given him such pleasure as now.

It seemed to him that never had he made as wise a purchase as the airplane. What better use of money than to buy adventure. He remembered the toast of the old gang in his squadron. Hard-bitten, hard-eyed men rose and drank "bottoms

SUNDOWN STORIES

JOHN'S ROOM

By Mary Graham Bonner

John was almost ready to begin building his boat which he was anxious to have in the water as soon as possible.

Freddy was going to help him because Freddy was very clever about boats.

"Aren't we getting along quickly?" John asked old Jonah, who was on his way down to put the finishing touches on the boathouse he had built by the river.

"We're certainly getting along smartly," said old Jonah. "Least-a-way I think so."

Old Jonah Ottaway had built the little house which the children were going to use for their work-and-play house. They wanted to spend all their time over in Riverbank as they had named the land which their father had recently bought. They had started their gardens, the house was ready, the boats were in the boat-house, and everything as old Jonah had said, was in good shape.

"It's certainly great, having this piece of land," Freddy said. "We can do all sorts of things before we're through—maybe fix up a playground in the center of the land—put up a swing—any number of things—and, best of all, we're so near the river for swims."

"I guess I could stand a swim today," John said. "It's getting hot again. Are the other boys coming over later?"

"Yes, they said so," Freddy answered.

"We'll finish up my room in the little house now," John said. So they moved the table and the old rug and the chairs around until they decided they were just right, and then they put up a map, a picture of a very rough sea, another picture of polar bears floating around on cakes of ice and their school flag on the wooden wall.

He wondered if Williams knew how he hated him. If this soul-

destroying tension was not lessened, he, Hamilton, might be driven to doing something about it. He carefully placed a red seven upon a black eight.

Martin, now. He pouted. His whole face pouted, black eyes, Roman nose, thin pink lips; they all pouted. His silence and moroseness was almost as irritating as Williams' unchangeable garrulity. Extremes, amid all this heat, were bad.

If the man's eyes would not swirl around the room so! Those slightly popped eyes distracted Hamilton's attention from his solitaire and caused him to make exasperating blunders. He wondered whether Martin would stop looking like that if one asked him to desist. Or would he just sit there in story silence and stare? Hamilton, stole a glance at him and felt his nerves edging prickly. Yes, still staring.

The girl was a plucky one. Not his type, perhaps, but he was conscious of a distinct admiration for the way she was holding her own against the weather and the men. When she had first arrived, Hamilton had thought she would break down. She had eaten little. The vivid coloring faded out of her smooth cheeks. She spent much of her time in her own room. When she emerged, her eyes were suspiciously pink. But she had seemed to gather strength with the passing of time. No doubt she had been forced to, for with every new day the men had become more ardent in the attentions. It had been diverting, watching her handle them. Strangely enough, Hamilton did not resent Lucel. Of all the men on the heat raddled island, Lucel was alone in remaining true to type. He looked, thought, talked and acted exactly like One-Shot Lucel.

At an altitude of 20,000 feet the three in the monoplane watched the orderly lake front suburbs slide smoothly beneath their silvery wing. "I have a hunch, Jerry said, "that we're in for a long hop. That fellow down there is sticking to a course that's as straight as a plumb line. We may as well settle down. Emory, take the stick while I stretch my legs."

Theodore P. Hamilton capped the black deuce with the red ace, deftly swept the cards into a pack and began to shuffle. He looked cool and comfortable in the spotless white linen suit which one of the house servants had laid out before lunch. It fitted his tall, thin frame as though it had been cut to measure. Sitting there at the table, his bony face half hidden from the light, he was a perfect picture of the successful American business man enjoying a moment's diversion from the routine of his work. His hair was graying, but his close-clipped mustache was as black as his jutting eyebrows.

He glanced idly about the room and, catching the saturnal green eyes of the half-drunk Mallory, nodded pleasantly, impersonally. It was little short of amazing, the solitaire played mused, how quickly Mallory had broken. Half-back on the county polo team, a golfer, tennis and handball star of considerable note, the man had gone completely to pieces under the strain of nearly three weeks of enforced idleness on this heat encompassed isle.

The president of the United States Textile corporation considered the matter and decided that unless they were freed before long, someone would have to kill Mallory. He was startled by his own thoughts. A month ago he would have viewed the impending murder of a fellow citizen with horror. Now he found himself judging Mallory impartially and looking upon his possible taking-off abstractly, without concern.

Williams, too, he could do without. He remembered the clothes in which Williams had arrived. Too neatly cut, they had been. Blue, pin-checked and with slanting pockets, the man was always interrupting his solitaire with his silly blither about Chicago and the grain market.

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