

VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

SYNOPSIS: Left unprotected among the swirling mists of the Gila desert, Margaret Mallory wakes to find Ralsul, son of the Kaid of Mekkas, in her room. He is a handsome young man, but she is a girl who cannot find love. Her husband, who has been made drunk by Ralsul, is in a state of shock. Behind it all is a series of plots against France involving the Kaid, Ralsul, and Major Napoleon Riccati of the Foreign Legion, encamped not far away.

MARGARET PERPLEXED

As Margaret approached the heavy iron studded garden door at the foot of the staircase that led up to the apartments of the Lady Elisa Beth el Ain, who was also the Senora Mallory, an old man, clad in a dirty hooded cloak, rose from the great square stone that was at once a mounting block and a door-step.

"I want to see," began Margaret, and the man shook his head, realized that it was useless to speak to him in English.

"Go down," he said, and again the man shook his head, and with uplifted open-hand, signed to her to stay where she was, while with the other he pointed first to himself and then to the stairs.

In the shadow of the vast wall of the courtyard, Margaret waited until Hassan el Miskeen, reappearing beckoned to her to come with him.

Followed by Margaret, the doorkeeper climbed three steep flights of stairs and traversed several dark and airless stone corridors.

At another heavy iron studded door he halted, unfastened it, pushed it open and held aside a heavy curtain for Margaret to enter.

The conversation that ensued was difficult and unsatisfactory, both by reason of the ladies' lack of proficiency in one of their mutual languages—which were English and French—and by reason of what

Margaret considered the other's unreasonable attitude. "Yes, my son Jules is here," Margaret understood her to say in her curious English and still more faulty French. "He is ill—very ill. It is your fault. If he could have stayed with me, he would never have learnt these nasty foreign habits. And why are you so cold? And why are you not obedient to Jules, as a good wife should always be to her husband?"

In English where she could, and in French where she must, Margaret endeavored to point out that it was only when he had returned to his own country that Jules had developed bad habits, and that in England he had been an abstemious and had never, on any occasion, so far as she knew, drunk more than was good for him.

Whereat the mother shrugged and looked skeptical. Nor should Elisa Beth el Ain forget that she too had English blood in her veins, and that an English wife held a position very different from that of an Arab wife. They were not slaves, and they were not expected of the that they should be unquestioningly obedient to their husbands. They were their husbands' partners, friends and equals—not their chattels.

"Jules is not my master," "Isn't he your husband? Aren't you married?"

"Yes, he is my husband," "Very well, then..."

"In any case," Margaret pointed out, "there is no question of my leaving my husband. I'm not talking of leaving here alone. Jules will accompany me, of course. We only came here on a visit."

"A visit," smiled Elisa Beth el Ain. "Apparently Jules doesn't tell you as much as he tells his mother. It will be a long visit."

"Why? Because this is his home, or, at any rate, Morocco is his home. He has got to come into his father's business and that is here in Mekkas and Tangier, and sometimes in Gibraltar where my mother came from, and in Marcellen."

"I am certainly not going to live in Morocco," said Margaret. "Then it's a pity you married a man who is..."

"Yes," Elisa Beth el Ain shrugged eloquent shoulders. "Anyhow," said Margaret, "I will see Jules now."

"He is sleeping. He is very ill." "All the more reason why I should be with him. If he is ill, I am the proper person to nurse him."

"Mothers sometimes make good nurses. I will nurse him." "I'll help you then," smiled Margaret diplomatically. "Sara is helping me," was the reply.

"Look here," said Margaret angrily, rising from the divan. "This is all nonsense. Where's my husband? I'm going to him now. I insist."

The Lady Elisa Beth el Ain smiled tolerantly. "People don't insist here, my child," she said. "No one does that except the Kaid—or Zainub and Ralsul through the Kaid. Insist!" repeated Elisa Beth el Ain, and laughed gently.

"Where is Jules?" asked Margaret, fighting back a slowly rising tide of fear, cold and horrible. "Up here, in my husband's bedroom."

"Where's that?" replied Elisa Beth el Ain, pointing to a small door in a Moorish horse-shoe setting, opposite to the one by which she had entered.

Without further remark, Margaret ran to the door, only to find it

entirely devoid of any kind of handle, latch, bolt or keyhole—and entirely immovable. Having pushed with all her strength, and thrown herself against the door as heavily as she could, Margaret rushed across to the other one, determined to find a way round. Pulling back the curtain that hung on the inner side of the thick wall, she tried to open the door. This also was immovable, presumably locked from without.

Hammering upon the heavy mass of wood, endeavoring to shake it, Margaret realized that she was pale-stricken; that the cold tide of fear was rising higher and higher.

This would not do. She must not lose control. Panic was never any good to anybody. She must be cool, and wary, and brave.

She turned back into the room. "Is this a trap?" she said. "A trap?" smiled Elisa Beth el Ain. "Of course it's not. Don't be so absurd. You came here of your own free will, and you can go whenever you like."

"Jump over that balcony, do you mean?" asked Margaret. "If you wish. But it would be pleasant to give the signal to Hassan el Miskeen that we want the door open. You knock twice quickly and three times slowly, and hard, for Hassan is getting a little deaf and might not hear knuckles. Use the handle of that dagger."

And Elisa Beth el Ain pointed to where, on a table, lay a large dagger with hilt and sheath of heavy cut steel, the top of the handle fluted out into the shape of an open fan, and the end of the sheath curved sharply round in a small semi-circle.

Margaret picked up the dagger. "Thank you," she said. "Could you give me this? Might I take it with me?"

"Certainly. Souvenir to take home—when you go."

Margaret hung in doubt for a moment, and then came to a decision.

"I'll tell you something," she said, "and then perhaps you'll understand—if you didn't before—why I insist on being with my husband."

"Last night, knowing that my husband was not there, Ralsul came to my bedroom and insulted me unbelievably, unspeakably. . . . Made love to me. . . ."

"Ralsul did?" "Yes, Ralsul."

"He made love to you?" "Insulted me, I said. Told me that he loved me, and that he. . . ."

"Only told you?" "How did you get rid of him, then?"

"It was quite dark in the room, and I told him I would shoot him if he did not go. I pretended I had a pistol. Could I get one?"

"No, you couldn't. And you'd better not take that knife if you're thinking of stabbing Ralsul."

"Thinking of stabbing him? Of course I'd stab him or anybody else who came into my room in the night and. . . ."

"Well, you'd better stab anyone else, then. Don't stab Ralsul, unless you want to suffer a more terrible death than you can imagine. The Kaid would. . . ."

"I'd rather suffer the terrible death."

"And Jules? And his father, my husband? And I, his mother? Are we all to die, because you're a silly English, mis, cold and flat and skiny? Can't you take a joke?"

(To Be Continued)

Waldo Hills Club Presents Program

Waldo Hills—The Waldo Hills community club held the regular meeting at the hall Friday evening. In charge of program and entertainment arrangements are Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Geer, Mr. and Mrs. Karl Hahuber, Mr. and Mrs. Edson Crockstock and Mrs. Helen Paget. The supper is in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bowers and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cunningham.

Waldo Hills—Mr. and Mrs. Miles Ottaway and their daughter, Beverly, have moved from their home in Silverton to John Moe farm in this neighborhood.

PUFFY

The lady, Puffy and Pass, are reciting in style.

"Kind sir," answers Puffy, "it is not hard to choose."

You serve such good food 'twould be cruel to refuse!"

MUTT AND JEFF

FOR THE LOVE OF MARY, HERE'S AN OLD PHOTO OF ME SITTING ON MY FATHER'S KNEE. I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD. GEE, I WAS CUTE!

JEFF, I WANT YOU TO LOOK AT THIS QUANT PHOTO!

WHO'S THE VENTRILOQUIST?

THAT'S NOT A VENTRILOQUIST—THAT'S MY FATHER AND THAT AIN'T A DUMMY ON HIS KNEE—THAT'S ME!

DUMMY! AND I STILL CLAIM I'M RIGHT!

IT LOOKED LIKE THE REAL MCCOY TO JEFF

Answers to Questions

Q. Where was the picture, "Bring 'Em Back Alive," made? W.L. A. It was made in Spain.

Q. Do the Hawaiian Islands produce coal and oil? D.G. A. The Hawaiian Islands are all volcanic, containing no coal or oil.

Q. How many men were killed in the fight between the Monitor and the Merrimack? V.Z. A. There were virtually no casualties on either side. After Lieut. Worden, the commanding officer, had been blinded as a result of a shot, the Monitor withdrew and the Merrimack steamed back to Norfolk.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

By Frederic J. Haskin

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Q. In modern times how many different kinds of wrestling have there been? M.C.T. A. In modern times there have been three different styles of wrestling. Greco-Roman, a combination of ancient Greek and Roman grappling, which now is featured mainly in European countries; Ju Jitsu, originated in Japan; and catch-as-catch-can, the model which prevails in the United States and has followers throughout the world.

Q. How are chain stations connected? R.O.D. A. Each station in a radio chain is connected to the central control station by telephone wires, which are different from regular telephone wires in that they are used for no other purpose. The central control stations broadcast to the stations in the chain, which rebroadcast to the public.

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his reasonable wants and those of accompanying persons dependent upon him until such time as he is likely to find employment; and when bound for an interior point railroad ticket or funds with which to purchase the same.

Q. What is the term used to describe the ice on trees after a sleet storm? B.W. A. Technically this is not a sleet storm. The smooth coating of ice on trees is termed, glass, by the weather bureau.

Q. Of what material are paste diamonds made? W.R. A. Paste jewels are often made of glass, which is a brilliant lead

glass used in the manufacture of artificial gems. Strass paste is a mixture of potassium and lead, often with borax, alumina, white arsenic, etc.

Q. Please explain the word technocracy, which has recently come into general use. D.M. A. Howard Scott recently defined it as follows: "The word technocracy, as representative of a new body of thought, means governance by science—social control through the power of technique—and as such has no connotations of dictatorship by the technician or a soviet of the engineer. Technocracy is a new approach to social phenomena."

Q. Please give a few Gypsy words of cheer. L.J. A. Bax or bax, meaning fortune; bawo, rich; buteder, better; gu, song; kusto, good; sala, morning; disola, it dawns; mor de atra, don't be afraid.

Q. From what is commercial salt manufactured? H.F. A. Commercial salt is mainly manufactured from natural brine and rock salt.

Q. What adulterants are used in cigarettes in the United States? A.L.N. A. In the United States nothing can be put in cigarettes except tobacco.

Q. Are Bi-centennial stamps still being issued? S.S. A. The Post Office Department says that the government stopped printing the Washington Bi-centennial stamps November 4, 1932. The ones on hand will be disposed of and no more will be issued.

Q. What minerals are there in milk, which are of special value to a person? R.F. A. Mineral constituents of milk which are especially important to the body are phosphorus, iron and lime.

Q. Where are the principal furniture manufacturing centers in the United States? A.F. A. Chicago, Ill., New York city, Grand Rapids, Mich., Rockford, Ill., Jamestown, N. Y., High Point, N. C.

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