Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Caroline Leigh Just has heard Susie Van Berg declare that she has caused the attempted murder of Elmer Van Berg by making Elmer jealous of Jim Randall, friend of Susie, and the man Caroline loves. Jim is in hiding, his memory lost, because evidence seems to point to his having shot Elmer and stolen the famous Van Berg emeralds. But Caroline knows Jim could not have done such a thing. She encourages Susie Van Berg to continue her story.

Chapter 35

MRS. VAN BERG'S STORY

"I must tell someone. It just goes on and on in my head all the time. I dont sleep, you know."

"You can tell me—I'm safe," said Caroline. And then as soon as she had said it she had a revulsion of feeling. "No, don't tell me—don't! Don't tell me anything! Because if you did it, and they thought it was Jim, I should have to tell them."

Susie shook her head again.

"It wasn't like that. What did you think? I didn't shoot Elmer—I didn't mean that. Did you think I did?"

"I dont know. I didn't want you to tell me anything you'd feel sorry about afterwards."

"I must tell someone," saidl Susie piteously. "If I don't I'll go crazy."

She broke off with a start. "Look out of that door and see there's no one listening!"

Caroline opened the door and looked out. There was no one in sight. The contrast between the room and the passage was extreme. The air was cold. Against an uncurtained window about three yards away the rain was beating. An inky cloud hung like a curtain across the sky. It was so dark that the sun might have set already.

She went back to the sofa and sat down.

"There's no one there."

And at once, without any preliminaries, Susie Van Berg said:

"Jim shot Elmer."

"No!" said Caroline. "No!"

"Jim shot him. It was my fault—I made Elmer jealous. You know I cant help flirting—I'm made that way. What did Elmer marry me for if he didn't like it? It made him mad, and—you know the way it is—I liked making him mad. But he ought to have known there was nothing to it."

Caroline heard her voice, harsh and unfamiliar.

"Wasn't there anything in it?"

"Only nonsense—and Jim wouldn't even play up to that. He thought a lot of Elmer. There was an invention they both thought a lot of. That's what Jim came to see him about that night. Did you know he was here the night Elmer was shot?"

Caroline nodded. "What happened?"

"Did you read what I told the police? I didn't tell any lies, but I didn't tell all the truth. They'd have arrested Jim straight away if I had."

"What didn't you tell?"

"I told them I went downstairs to get a book, and heard voices in the study. I didn't tell them that it was Jim's voice I heard."

"What did you hear?"

"They were quarrelling — that's why I listened. I heard Elmer say, 'I'm through with you-' And I heard Jim say, 'I'm damned if I'll be spoken to like that!'

"Was that all?"

"No, it wasn't. Jim said, 'You take that back!' And then Elmer got up—I heard his chair scrape along the floor and he came towards the door, and I thought how angry he'd be if he found me there and I ran away."

"Jim never shot Mr. Van Berg," said Caroline. "Jim isn't a thief. The person who shot Mr. Van Berg is the person who stole the emeralds."

Susie Van Berg put her hand to her head. She spoke in a weak, extinguished voice.

"I don't mind about the emeralds—he shot Elmer. And I tore the page with his finger-prints out of Elmer's book. I knew if the police found it they would arrest him, so I tore it out." She sat bolt upright, her hands locked upon her knee. "I tore it out, but I didn't tear it up. Do you know where he is? If you do, will you tell him that?"

"That you tore it out?"

"Tell him I tore it out, but I didn't tear it up. If Elmer gets better, I'll tear it up, but if he doesn't—" Her locked hands strained one against the other; a line of vivid pallor showed beyond the painted line of her lips. "If he doesn't—if he dies—I'm going to give those finger-prints to the police, and I'm going to swear that I heard him threaten Elmer."

Caroline fought the sharpest fear she had ever known. What had really happened in the library that night?

She steadied herself. Susie Van Berg had not moved. The patch of color on either cheek had spread a little, as a stain spreads in milk.

Caroline said, "Why?" Then as Susie went on staring at her she made a quick movement. "I don't understand. Why did you tear the page out?"

"To help Jim—because it was my fault."

"You wont have helped him very much if you mean to tell the police in the end."

"Only if Elmer dies," said Susie with dry lips. Her eyes stared past Caroline at a picture of Elmer dead.

"Jim didn't shoot him."

"Yes—he did. If Elmer gets well, he'll tell me what to do. That's why I tore out the page, and why I didn't tell the police. But if he doesn't get well, I shall say that Jim shot him, and that it was my fault. I can't go on like this." There was a dreadful finality about the way she said it.

Caroline got up and put on her coat.

"Are you going?"

"Yes," said Caroline.

Susie drew a long sighing breath and turned her head.

"Is it still raining?"

"I expect so — it looked very black."

Susie shuddered and stood up.

"There's a storm. You can't go if there's a storm."

"I'll get home before it breaks," said Caroline.

Now that she was on her feet, she wanted to be gone. Her head burned with the heat of the room, and her knees were trembling. Outside, in the wind and the rain, it might be easier to feel sure about Jim. She said "Good-bye," and went out without touching Susie's hand.

As soon as she had shut the door she began to run. She wanted to get right away, and she had a feeling that Susie might call her back. She turned the corner, and then turned again. The passages were very dark. She stopped running and wondered if she had taken the wrong turning.

The house was old and rambling. She had a bewildered feeling of having lost her sense of direction. A sudden flare of lightning gave a blinding picture of two corridors meeting at the foot of a narrow stair. Darkness followed immediately, and one of those peals of thunder which sound like giant girders being thrown down upon an iron roof. The noise was deafening.

Caroline shrank instinctively away from the window, and found herself six or seven steps up the stair, holding to the narrow baluster and waiting for the horrible noise to stop.

When she opened her eyes, she saw above her a very faint streak of light. There was a door a few steps up, and the light came from under it. It was just a thin pale streak, but it meant that there was someone in the room. Caroline had a feeling that someone else's company would be pleasant. She could say that she had lost her way in the passages.

She went up to the level of the door, and as she lifted her hand to knock, the light of another flash flared up from behind her and below, and a crash more violent than either of the others followed. Urged by a blind instinct for shelter, Caroline opened the door.

She was inside the door and leaning against the jamb with the door shut behind her before the second crack of thunder came. She could not have moved to save her life. She was in the room, but she could not see it at all, because a four-leafed screen covered the door, one panel being flat against the wall on her left, while the other three zig-zagged out from it at an angle.

Caroline had taken about three steps, when, in the room on the other side of the screen, someone spoke.

"Do you think it's going over?"

Caroline stood still just where she was. She had only heard that voice once before, but she would have known it anywhere. It was Nesta Riddell who had spoken.

(To be Continued)

Club Group Active

Brooks—A special meeting of the Brooks Community club was held Wednesday at the home of the president, Mrs. B. F. Ramp. Plans were made for a bazaar and rummage sale to be held soon. A pot-luck dinner was served at noon by the hostess, to Mrs. Virgil Loomis, Mrs. A. E. Harris, Mrs. Roy Reed, Mrs. Willard Ramp, Mrs. Cecil V. Ashbaugh, and Mrs. Olaf Neilson. The next meeting will be November 15 all day with pot-luck dinner at noon.

GUESTS AT MEITHOFS

Hopmere—Guests recently entertained at the Meithof home were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Diem and family, Mr. and Mrs. William Meithof and family, also their nephews, Frank and Raymon Diem, and Edward Meithof.

SUBLIMITY VISITORS

Sublimity—Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Rehorst and family, and Miss Helen Ruettgers of Washougal and Miss Lucille Ruettgers of Portland, visited at the home of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Chris Ruettgers over the week-end. Mrs. Rehorst and two daughters remained for a few days.

Sundown Stories

NO MORE GAS

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

Jelly Bear and Honey Bear had stepped into the plane Christopher Columbus Crow had brought so that they could escape from Grandpa Grouchy Galump, who was chasing them because they had stolen nuts.

How eager they were to get back to Puddle Muddle where Willy Nilly, the little gnome-like man who was a friend to all of them, was living.

But now they were in the plane it would not take off.

"You weigh too much at this time of the year," said Christopher.

"What shall we do?" asked Honey Bear. Now that help had come it would be just too much if the plane wouldn't work.

"We'll take out some of the gasoline and make it lighter," said Christopher.

In a few minutes they tried again and this time they were off. They flew across country and they flew quite high as Christopher wanted to be sure that no one would see them.

Jelly Bear did not care about looking at the world from up so high, and Honey Bear felt a little dizzy and neither of them liked the sensation of going through air pockets. But every time they looked at Christopher he was going straight ahead, not seeming to mind anything.

"Probably he stole the goggles and helmet too," thought Jelly Bear. But who was he to think in such a way? He was being chased because he had stolen nuts. And, too, Christopher had thought of them in what he had done.

All of a sudden the plane seemed to be behaving strangely.

"The gas is giving out,' Christopher cawed nervously, "just as we're almost home."

Tomorrow—"The Parachutes"

Solution of Saturday's Puzzle

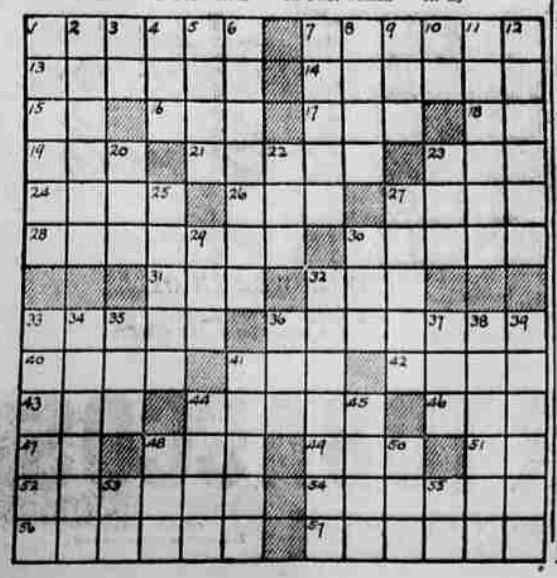
A	M	O	R		H	E	R	E		A	B	O
N	O	M	I	N	A	T	O	R		D	I	N
I	D		V	I	L	E		G	L	I	B	
L	E	V	E	L	E	R	S		S	T	A	R
E	L	A	T	E		N	O	R		S	C	U
	I	S		C	A	P	O	N		I	D	E
E	R	N		C	A	L		C	O	N	T	E
R	E		M	A	P			T	O	Y		C
S	T	A	I	N	E	D		D	E	W		S
E	A	R	N		R	O	S	E	S		S	A
	L	I	A	R		T	A	P		S	P	I
T	I	A	R	A	S		C	O	L	L	I	D
E	A		E	N	O	W		S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

ACROSS

1. Put new bottoms on
7. Dialgure
13. Football team
14. Living being capable of voluntary motion
15. Palm lily
16. Tropical bird
17. Outfit
18. Note of the scale
19. Congealed water
21. Urged
23. Ingredient of varnish
24. Split
26. Angry
27. Dexterous
28. Without beginning or end
30. Walks in water
31. Legal action
32. Kind of meat
33. Mixed rain and snow
36. Desert train
40. Nobleman
41. Queen of the fairies
42. Number of the Muses
43. Age
44. Sensational
46. Hail and farewell
47. News organization; abbr.
48. Harden
49. Also
51. Small fish
52. Having a veil or vellum
54. Dismay
56. Decrees
57. African fly

DOWN

1. Withdraw
2. Draw forth
3. Symbol for selenium
4. Germ cells
5. Unaspirated
6. Puzzles
7. Ventured
8. Wife of Geraint
9. Kind of fruit
10. Exist
11. Decanter
12. Chooses
20. First woman
22. Four quarts: abbr.
23. Played first
25. Sinned
27. The Old Testament cony
29. Clear profit
30. Armed strife
32. Natural abode of a plant or animal
33. Silk not yet twisted
34. Circled
35. Sea eagle
36. Wheeled vehicle
37. By way of
38. Blacksmiths' hammering blocks
39. Sewing implement
41. Deadens the sound of
44. Native of the Kurland peninsula
45. Small cups used in diamond cutting
48. Membranous pouch
50. Unclose: poet.
53. Long Island: abbr.
55. By



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

By Frederic J. Haskin

Q. Was a picture ever taken just of Abraham Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln? W. T.

A. It is said authoritatively that all of the pictures which show President Lincoln and his wife together are made photographs, since they never posed for one of this kind.

Q. Where are some of the oldest sets of chimes in this country? F. J.

A. The oldest include those of Christ Church in Philadelphia, Christ Church in Boston, and Trinity church in New York City. The chimes in Christ Church, Philadelphia, were a gift from Queen Anne.

Q. When was the first clearing-house established in the United States? G. B.

A. In New York City in 1853. In 1854, the clearings of the New York clearing-house aggregated $5,750,455,987. In 1929 they ran close to $500,000,000,000.

Q. What was the birth rate in the United States last year? C. B.

A. In 1932, in the birth registration area, exclusive of Massachusetts and Utah, there were 1,961,618 births. This number is the lowest since the establishment of the Federal birth registration area in 1915. The birth rate in 1932 was 17.3 per 1000 population. The birth rate in 1931 was 18.0 per 1000 population.

Q. Was scalping a practise among the Indians before the white people arrived? H.G.S.

A. The practice of scalping was not common to all the American tribes as is so often supposed. It was confined originally in North America to the territory in the lower St. Lawrence region held by the Iroquoian and Muskhogean tribes and their immediate neighbors. It was absent from New England and much of the Atlantic coast region and was unknown until comparatively recent times throughout the whole interior and the plains region. It was not found on the Pacific coast, in the Canadian Northwest, the Arctic region, or anywhere south of the United States with the exception of an area in the jungle in South America. Throughout most of America the earlier trophy was the head itself.

Q. Did Barnum and Bailey, the circus owner, leave large fortunes? E.L.H.

A. Ph'neas Barnum is said to have left one of the largest theatrical fortunes, one million pounds, while James A. Bailey left four hundred thousand pounds.

Q. What occupied the site of the old Madison Square Garden before it was built? E. V. R.

A. It was the site of the Hippodrome, opened in 1873 by Barnum. This was supplanted by the old Madison Square Garden in 1879. This location was the original site of the old Harlem Railroad Station.

Q. What are the three kinds of typesetting used by newspapers? W. P.

A. They are linotype, monotype, and hand setting.

Q. Can cats really see in the dark? M. B.

A. It is true that cats see in the dark. The pupils of a cat's eyes, which, as a rule are vertically linear, are capable of great expansion and contraction, according to the light about them. The eye sight is good at all times, but at night is supplemented by the highly sensitive feelers (vibrissae), long hairs projecting from the muzzle and above the eyes, each springing from a follicle from which a special nerve center communicates with the brain.

Q. Is there any personal description extant of Peter the Hermit, leader and preacher of the First Crusade? H. G.

A. Gibbon says: "His stature was small, his appearance contemptible; but his eye was keen and lively; and he possessed that vehemence of speech which seldom fails to impart the persuation of the soul." He had been a soldier but is declared to have adopted a monk's robe to escape from an old and ugly wife.

Q. What is the population of Berlin, Germany? F. Z.

A. In 1930, the population was about 4,300,000.

Q. How often has Venizelos been Premier of Greece? G. S.

A. He has been Premier eight times and a leading European statesman since the World War.

Q. How old is Nazimova? W.E.D.

A. Alla Nazimova was born in 1879 in Crimea. This year marks her 54th birthday.

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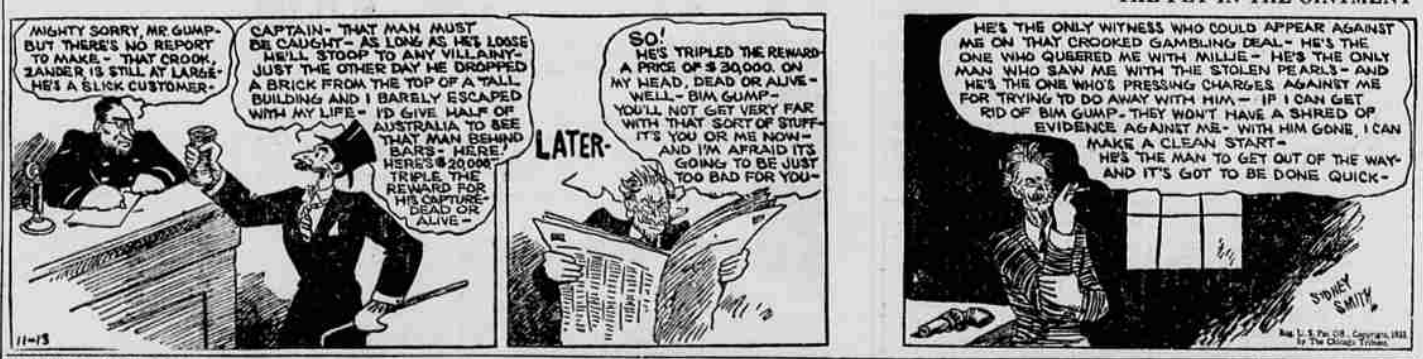
NEWS FROM HOME

THE GUMPS



THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

TAILSPIN TOMMY

By Glenn Chaffin and Hal Forrest

HELLO, PAL

Some Eagles have taken poor Fluff for a feast;

Each bird is expecting one mouthful at least.

But Puffy, and Brooder are hot on their trail.

Says Puff, "It's one time that we simply can't fail!"

MUTT AND JEFF

JUST A CIVIL QUESTION, A CIVIL QUESTION, THAT'S ALL