

Westport Landing

By HOMER HATTEN

(AP Newsfeatures)

CHAPTER 7

The two men facing each other in the dim storeroom had no time for candor; there was death in their eyes and in their curving fingers, death in the grim game of tag they were playing there in the semi-darkness.

Regan was advancing, his burned and blistered hands held out before him like two gross, misshapen clubs, his body crooked like that of some relentless jungle animal that prepares to spring as it over- takes its prey. Dupre faced him with his back against the wall, his white shirt gleaming in the pale light from the window, his legs still quivering from the liquor he had consumed.

Suddenly Regan sprang, throwing all his solid mass of meat and bone and iron-hard muscle against Dupre's chest. Few men, and least of all Dupre, could have withstood such a headlong charge, but Dupre had turned a little as Regan struck him, giving to the blow instead of fighting it, twisting to escape so that his right arm locked itself around Regan's neck. As the left hand grasped the right wrist to provide leverage, Regan's head was held like a mallet in the curve of Dupre's arm.

Poised on his left foot, with all his weight thrown into his arms and shoulders, Dupre strove desperately to twist Regan's head down and toward him. If the trick succeeded and Regan lost his footing and fell, the fight would be over, for in that position a few well-placed kicks would render him incapable of further resistance.

But Regan was no tyro in fighting. The raw frontier had schooled him well, and now his hard-muscled right arm swung like a sledge, driving the heavy club of his fist into Dupre's groin, falling of its full deadening and crippling objective because there was no room to bring all his strength into play, but still inflicting punishment enough to cause Dupre to loosen his grip for the fraction of a second that was all Regan needed to break away.

Regan was moving forward again, and this time, as Dupre tried to slip aside, Regan's heavy left foot swung forward in a savage arc, perfectly timed to smash into the front of Dupre's kneecap just as Dupre moved, so that the impact of his own movement intensified the impact, cracking the round, heavy bone at the joint and bringing him helpless to the floor.

Regan was upon him like a tiger, one hand clutching for his throat, the thumb of the other clawing at Dupre's eyes. Frantically Dupre rolled aside, felt his hand close upon a broken fire-place poker that had been thrown into the storeroom with a catch all of other rubbish, and raised it to strike. He struck and struck again, feeling Regan's weight roll

away from his body just as the black waves of unconsciousness swept across him.

It was the fire that brought him back to consciousness. The room was an inferno. Flames and smoke swept across it in a crackling, choking cloud. It had cut a path across the floor between Dupre and the door, and even as he watched and tried to raise himself on one knee he saw it sweep out into the hallway and attack the step and railing of the stair.

Little by little, pulling himself across the room with his elbows, he gained the narrow window at the other end of the room that lay between Dupre and the door at the back of the house. He pulled himself up to the window ledge, and his voice, sharpened with terror and pain, shattered the stillness of the violet dusk.

"Help! Help! For God's sake—help!"

He knew he was screaming at the top of his lungs, but it seemed to him that the mellow darkness muffled the sound, draining it away into an empty and barren nothingness.

He screamed again and suddenly saw the swift flutter of a pale figure running up the garden path toward the house. Instinctively he knew that it was Sally, and he called her name, begging, beseeching, imploring her to look up and see him and send him aid.

She had heard his first desperate cry and had turned to run toward the house, but it was only when her flying feet carried her out of the dark cloister of willow and magnolia trees that she saw the sharp, bright, banners of the flame flying above her house and saw him clinging to the window ledge, a dark silhouette against the mottled background of the savage torch that blazed above him.

"Jump!" she cried, her voice like a slim silver lance lifted in the night. "And you must jump! You can't go back! You must jump! Hurry, Andre! It isn't far! You'll be safe!"

But there could be no reckless leap into the sullen darkness for Andre. The broken leg trailed behind him like a load of stone. He had already tried to lift himself to the window ledge and found it beyond his strength.

For a long, horror-stricken moment Sally stood rooted in her tracks, her eyes frantically searching the attic window that was a window no longer, but the fiery portal to a flaming hell. But even in that instant of panic and terror, her mind was already initiating a new course of action that sent her flying into the house, her skirts lifted and her heels beating a staccato tattoo on the gleaming parquet floor. Gasping for breath, she flung open the door of Andre's room, groped her way across it, and snatched up the leather money belt that she had watched Andre fill and place there less than an hour ago.

As the night descended she watched the crimson fingers of the blaze tear at the house until it was only a blackened, ravaged monument to all her hard-held hopes and plans.

She turned and walked slowly toward the town. The Natchez would sail at midnight; it would serve as well as any other means to carry her away from the blackened ruins of disaster and despair.

(To Be Continued)

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KGW	KOIN	KEX	KSLM	KGAE	KOCO
628 NBC	970 CBS	1190 ABC	1350 NBC	1430 Ks.	1490 LBS
12:05 N.S. Wife Stella Dallas W. Brown What Is He Doing	12:15 Top Nac. Carl Smith On Spot Kirkham	Kay West Kay West Kay West	Top Trade Gals 90's Musie	Sandwith Sternade Moon News Sernade	Baseball Baseball Baseball Baseball
12:35 Plain Bill Farrell Dance & Bar Dance Wife	Kay Owens Little Show Kirkham & I Believe	Carl Tinner Carl Tinner Musie Revue	Jack Kirkwood S. Bastian Musie	Record Room Record Room Record Room Melody	Baseball Baseball Baseball Melody
12:55 Welcome Travelers D. Garwood	Tanefully Kirkham Past Godfrier	Musie Revue Bill Ring For the Girls	Musie Paula Hens Kirkham	Record Room Record Room Record Room Melody	Melody Record Room Record Room Melody
1:00 L. Beautiful Musie Box Musie Box	Kirk. News Godfrier Past Curt Massie	N'westerners Sari Case Baseball Happy Time	Baseball Baseball Baseball Record Room	Record Room Record Room Record Room Young Heart	Ind Look Ed Nichols Baseball Young Heart
1:05 Harkness News E. Peterson	Ed Murrow Kirkham Frank Goss	Van Factory Flight Rep. Bob Garred	Paul. Lewis Hemingway Sam Hays	Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart	Musie U Wan Musie U Wan Musie U Wan
1:10 Musie Musie Most Year Maich	Chamelson Chamelson Steve Allen Steve Allen	Weatherman Home Edition Listening	Merry Mall Musie Mart Your Host Cecil Green	Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart	Musie Musie Musie Musie
1:15 Hill Parade Hill Parade S. Swaze Falling Man's Family World News K. Knows	Hill Parades Orchestra S. Swaze Forum E. Starvald Al Stevens Mr. Keen	Silver Eagle Silver Eagle Attorney Amateur Hr. Amateur Hr. Unexperied	G. Heater N. W. News Ranch Sam Hayes Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart	Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart	Candle Light and Silver Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart Musie Mart
1:20 Dragnet Dragnet Communist for FBI	Peace & War Mus. Theatre	Bandwagon Bandwagon S. Star Search	TBA TBA Ranch Grande	Sign Off	Track 1490 Track 1490 Track 1490 Track 1490
1:25 Asperter Sports Final The Chase The Chase	5-Star Final Yes & Wild Musie Mart Orchestra	Final Editor Dance Time Dance Time Dance Time	Glen Hardy Full Fawls News News News	Track 1490 Track 1490 Track 1490 Track 1490	Track 1490 Track 1490 Track 1490 Track 1490
1:30 News Lwen McCall Wallington Wallington	Orgzan Orgzan Bandstand	Dance Time Dance Time Dance Time	Mystery News News News	Night Song Night Song Night Song Night Song	Night Song Night Song Night Song Night Song
1:35 News News News News	Dance Time Dance Time Dance Time Dance Time	Dance Time Dance Time Dance Time Dance Time	News News News News	News News News News	News News News News
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