

SERIAL STORY

STANTON WINS

By Eleanor M. Ingram

Author of "The Game and the Candle," "The Flying Mercury," etc.

Illustrations by Frederic Thorndyke

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SYNOPSIS

At the beginning of great automobile race the mechanic of the Mercury, Stanton's machine, drops dead. Strange youth, Jesse Floyd, volunteers, and is accepted.

CHAPTER I. (Continued.)

"Go in to throw away the race an' wreck your machine, for foolishness?" he inquired. "That's just like you, Ralph Stanton. You'll risk a blow-out an' a smash to save five minutes in a twenty-four hour race. You can drive, but you won't use common sense."

Something snapped under Stanton's mask. Raging with silent fury, he slowed down his car and swung into the paddock gate as they came opposite it, thundering through to his own camp.

"Fix that tire," he commanded, as the swarm of mechanics surrounded them, and descended from his seat to confront the assistant manager. "Have you got me another mechanic, yet? This one won't do."

"Why, no," Mr. Green deprecated. "The driver who alternates with you wants to keep his mechanic; besides, the man isn't exactly ready to go with you, and he couldn't do both shifts, anyhow. I've telephoned to the company to find a man and rush him here. What," he looked toward the group around the car, where Floyd's bronze head shone in the electric light as he directed proceedings, "what's the matter with this one? Scared?"

"No," conceded Stanton, grudgingly just. "Insolent and interfering."

"Well, if that is all—"

Stanton turned his back upon the speaker, recklessly and blindly angry, past all reasoning.

When the brief operation completed, Floyd sprang up beside his driver for the start, Stanton surveyed him through his goggles.

"If you are nervous about my driving and my sense, you had better get off now," was the grim warning. "For I drive as I see fit, and I'm going to make up these laps."

"Why are you wasting time here, then?" countered the mechanic, practically.

The Mercury hurtled viciously down the line of training camps and burst out on the track like a blazing meteor. Stanton shifted into high gear on the curve, and began to drive—as he saw fit.

The close-packed witnesses stood during most of the next hour, alternately applauding and shouting dismay, climbing on seats and benches to see. The other racers gave the Mercury room on the turns, after the Alan car tried to steal an inside swoop, and skidding, missed destruction through and with Stanton by the narrow margin of a foot.

There was neither opportunity nor wish for speech between the two who rode the verge of death on the Mercury. Floyd attended steadily to his duties; pumping oil, brushing the yellow trackdust from the pilot's goggles to clear his vision for each turn, watching the tires and the other machines. But he made no protest at the deadly methods of his companion.

Near the end of the second hour, the scream of the klaxon sounded its significant warning of trouble.

"It's us—lamps out," called the mechanic, after a comprehensive review of their machine.

Stanton shook his head impatiently, and kept on; deliberately passing the paddock gate instead of turning in. As they shot by the grand-stand for the second time, the klaxon sounded again, long and imperiously.

"Go in to fight the judges?" hissed Floyd, with careful politeness.

The driver did not speak or glance from the funnel-effect of light, and dark into which they were boring, but the catch of his breath was not gentle. However, he swung into the paddock, on the next circuit, and halted a brief instant to have the lamp re-lighted. Familiar with his usual wants, a man ran bringing a pithier of water to Stanton; who swallowed a little, then pushed the vessel so roughly toward his mechanic that some of the liquid splashed over the recipient and trickled down upon them both.

"Here," he offered curtly.

"Thanks," Floyd accepted, and drank as they bounded forward, tossing the tin pitcher back over his shoulder, where a reporter gathered it up and sat upon a keg of oil to write a pretty account of the volunteer mechanic who had made the Mercury's entry possible and of the consequent regard of Stanton for him.

The next hour passed a trifle more quietly. Perhaps even Stanton was sufficiently tired by the strain to drive with some conservatism; perhaps he acknowledged mentally that no car built would stand such viciously gr-

elling work for twenty-four consecutive hours. But he kept the lead gained, for all that, and a pace like the long swoop of a swallow.

"Car coming out of the paddock. Hundred and eightieth lap. Car stopped around the bend," Floyd reported, at intervals. Otherwise there was mute attention to business on the part of both men.

"Signal," Stanton abruptly ordered, at last, as they rushed across the stretch of track between the grand-stand and the training-camps.

Floyd obediently rose in his place, raising his arms above his head in the accepted signal to their men to stand ready for the car's entrance. On the next circuit Stanton turned into the paddock and came to a stop before the Mercury's tent.

"Get out," he directed, and himself left his seat.

The two men who alternated were waiting to relieve the two who descended from the machine. The workmen swarmed around to fill tanks and give swift inspection, and the fretting car sped back to the track.

Left opposite each other in the flickering glare of the swinging electric lamps, driver and mechanic stood for a moment, weary, car-stiff, and still tense. Stanton unclasped his mask with a jerk, took a step toward the tent, then turned toward his assistant.

"The three hours are up," he observed roughly. "I suppose you leave me."

"Why do you suppose that? Are you through with me?" Floyd asked, with studied quietness.

"I made the offer to any man who would go for the first three hours. The time is up; you're free to get your money from Mr. Green, and leave."

Floyd took off his own mask and bared his white, steadfast face and tired eyes to the other's gaze.

"I entered for the race, or for as much of it as you want me," he corrected. "Until you quit, or find a substitute you like better, I'm with you."

They looked at each other.

"Go rest, then. There is coffee inside," bade Stanton, and swung on his heel.

At the entrance to his tent he was met by the exultant assistant manager.

"I've got you a mechanic, Stanton!" he exclaimed jubilantly. "I telephoned our fix to headquarters, and Jack Rupert is coming down—the chief tester at the factory, you know, who used to race with the chief himself. He phoned that he wouldn't see the Mercury thrown out but to tell you he was going to cancel his life insurance policy first so he would not be accused of suicide for the benefit

through the fence; a heap of discarded metal which men were striving frantically to restore to activity, while in the illuminated hospital tent its driver and mechanism were undergoing a kindred process of rehabilitation. Other cars went in and out from their camps, for oil, for gasoline, for tires and minor repairs—for all the countless wants of a racing machine. Stanton looked for the Mercury, then, satisfied, crossed the track and entered the space before the grand-stand.

Along the edge of the cement promenade were parked a row of automobiles whose owners preferred to witness the race from their own cars rather than from the tiers of seats behind. Past them Stanton turned, avoiding the fire of attention and curiosity he would draw by crossing the lighted space where recognition must follow. He was going to the restaurant in the interior of the stand.

But as he passed a big white touring car at the end of the row, a woman leaned from the shadow of the top. "I beg your pardon," she summoned, her tone composed and rather imperious.

The apology veiled a command. Stanton halted.

"Madam?" he responded, astonished and scarcely pleased.

She deliberately stepped down beside him, accompanied by the crisp sound of shaken silk and a drift of faint, rich fragrance. She wore a dark motor-veil, and in the mingling of dense shadows and glaring lights it was not possible to distinguish more than her general effect of youth and well-poised grace.

"I fancied by your costume that you were one of the racers," she explained. "And as I only arrived an hour ago I wished to beg some information."

"I am one of the men driving," he corroborated.

She turned to glance at the car rushing by, struggling for the lead.

"Thank you. Can you tell me whether Ralph Stanton is now driving the Mercury?"

"No," he answered, interested for the first time. "But he will take the wheel again in half an hour."

"Ah? I have heard so much of his spectacular feats, I," she gave a care less, rippling laugh, "I confess I should like to see some of them."

"Yes? Well, half the people here come to see whether some of the men won't take a chance once too often. They say there is a pleasant thrill in watching some one else get killed."

"Hardly that," she demurred. "Still if one comes to an automobile race one wants to see something more exciting than a drive in the park; something more exciting than—that." She waved a fragile hand toward the



"I Am One of the Men Driving," He Corroborated.

of his heirs. Funny chap! He'll be here before you go on the track again."

"What for?" demanded Stanton. "If I kill my mechanic, I kill my car and myself—I don't need two men, and I've got one."

"But I thought you said—" began the amazed Mr. Green.

"I was wrong. Phone Rupert that I'll keep Floyd. Now, I'd like to get some rest."

The assistant manager stepped aside from the entrance, confounded.

CHAPTER II.

The Risk and the Lady. Two hours later, Stanton emerged from his camp and strolled toward the paddock exit. It was after two o'clock in the morning; the dark arch of star-set sky overhead, the black emptiness of the central field except for the line of tents, contrasted oddly with the glistening white track where the meteor-bright cars circled tirelessly with the accompanying monotone of many voices, varied by the occasional wall of the official klaxon. One machine was out of the race, after going

track, shrugging her shoulders with an airy amusement and scorn.

Stanton surveyed the scene, the darkness hiding his expression.

"The Mercury is marking time with a substitute driver, the Duplex is off with a choked feed-pipe, and the Stern went through the fence," he summed up. "The others are driving to win by endurance, playing for accidents to the faster cars. It is a dull period, just now. Yet every car there is going fast enough to face destruction if anything goes wrong."

She turned to him again, and he knew her gaze swept him interrogatively, searchingly. But his close-fitting linen costume offered no means of identification, since he purposely kept from the light the silver letters running across his jersey.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

No Danger.

"I can't understand why you wish to go to the legislature. Don't you think your business will suffer if you are elected?"

"Oh, no. You see, I manufacture things which are needed in furnishing public offices."

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ST. PAUL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WOODMERE—Services and sermon at 11 a. m., every Sunday. Sunday School at 1:30 p. m. Communion service, on second Sunday of each month. Dr. Van Water and Rev. Oswald W. Taylor.

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GRACE EVANGELICAL CHURCH, LENTS—Preaching Sunday at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 10 a. m. Young Peoples' Alliance every Sunday at 6:30 p. m. Prayer meeting and Bible study each Wednesday evening. Special music All cordially welcome. Rev. Conklin, pastor.

LENTS FRIENDS CHURCH—South Main St. Sabbath School 10:30 a. m. Service 11:00 a. m. Christian Endeavor 6:30 p. m. Evangelistic service 7:30. Prayer meeting Wednesday 7:45 p. m. Myra H. Smith, pastor.

LENTS M. E. CHURCH—Corner of 7th Ave. and Gordon St. Sunday School 10:30 a. m., Services at 11:30 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Epworth League 6:30. Prayer meeting Thursday evening of each week. All most cordially invited. Rev. W. Boyd Moore, pastor.

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ROCKWOOD GRANGE—Meets first Wednesday at 10 a. m., and third Saturday at 10:30 a. m. M. L. W. Grange, No. 71—Meets the fourth Saturday in every month at 10:30 a. m., in Grange hall, Orient.

FAIRVIEW GRANGE—Meets first Saturday and the third Friday of each month.

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GRESHAM GRANGE—Meets second Saturday in each month at 10:30 a. m.

DAMASCUS GRANGE, No. 286—Meets first Saturday each month.

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CLACKAMAS GRANGE, No. 298—Meets the first Saturday of each month at 10:30 a. m., and the third Saturday at 7:30 p. m.

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UNION DEPOT, NORTHERN PACIFIC Phone A 6841, Main 9681

Leaves 7:10 a. m., 10:30 a. m., 3:30 p. m., 11:15 p. m. Arrives 7:00 a. m., 3:30 p. m., 6:30 p. m., 10:30 p. m.

OREGON SHASTA AND SEATTLE Phone A 612, Private ex. 1

Leaves 8:30 a. m., 1:45 p. m., 3:30 p. m., 11:00 p. m. Arrives 6:45 a. m., 2:30 p. m., 5:30 p. m., 6:30 p. m.

FENDELTON LOCAL THE DALLES LOCAL

Leaves 4:00 p. m., arrives 10:00 a. m. OVERLAND

Leaves 10:00 a. m., 8:50 p. m., arrives 12:40 a. m., 8:50 p. m.

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Leaves 8:30 a. m., arrives 3:30 p. m. ROSEBURG

Leaves 3:50 p. m., arrives 4:00 p. m. CALIFORNIA TRAINS

Leave at 1:30 a. m., 5:50 p. m., 8:15 p. m. Arrive at 7:00 a. m., 8:15 a. m., 2:30 p. m.

WEST SIDE

Corvallis, leave 7:30 a. m., arrive 6:20 p. m. Hillsboro, leaves 7:30 a. m., 8:45 a. m., 6:30 p. m., 8:40 p. m.

Arrive 8:00 a. m., 10:20 a. m., 2:45 p. m., 4:10 p. m.

JEFFERSON STREET

Dallas, leaves 7:40 a. m., arrives 5:45 p. m.

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Dallas, leaves 4:10 p. m., arrives 10:30 a. m.

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Leaves at 4:00 p. m., arrives 10:20 a. m.

TILLAMOOK

Leaves 8:45 Hillsboro, 10:00 Tillamook 4:35; leaves Tillamook 7:30 a. m., Hillsboro 1:40 p. m., arrives in Portland 2:45 p. m.

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