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RUNAWAY JUNE

By George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester

ELEVENTH EPISODE.

In the Clutch of the River Thieves.

CHAPTER I.

HERE was a wild clanging of bells on the yacht Hilarity. June Warner had cast off the swift little motor tender. Blye shouted again his impatient commands to the officer on the quarter deck. Sleepy sailors were on deck now fumbling with the davits on each side.

In midstream streaked the speedy little motorboat Flash, which had been stolen from that dock while the overcoat and cap peacefully slumbered in the boat at the wheel sat a natty little figure with a chauffeur's cap and a tiny mustache. "Voila, Mlle. Marie!" "Voila!" she hastily uttered.

For only a moment the well known and justly famous private detective, Bill Wolf, looked after the swiftly swishing Henri; then he turned and pounded up the dock, racing for the nearest telephone. "Well, I got him!" came the hoarse voice of Bill Wolf. He's on board the yacht Hilarity, and, say, with the girl. Immediately Honoria moved very swiftly.

"Lower those boats!" shouted Gilbert Blye. The escaping beauty was rounding the point.

In the pretty apartments which Ned and June Warner had fitted up to be their nest Ned rose from the couch where he had fallen asleep with the miniature of June in his hand and recognized the rasping voice of Honoria. "Well, we've located your darling!" And there was a shrill cackle. "She's on board the Hilarity with my husband."

Ned wasted no time. Bobbie Blething had a staunch little boat, and Bobbie was routed out of bed immediately.

As the beautiful girl sped toward the marshy shore a low, gray skiff with a portable motor attached to its stern slipped in and out of the dimness among the black hulls at the river's edge.

In the skiff were three rough looking men and a roughly dressed woman, who sat huddled in the bow. Suddenly the woman leaned forward and touched the nearest man on the knee. The woman pointed, and the man turned his evil eyes in that direction. Surrounding by black coal barges was a shining houseboat with brass rails, mahogany cabin and all the fittings and appointments which extravagance could devise.

The man at the stern slowed down the engine until it was noiseless. They completely circled the two adjoining docks before they came back to the slip where the coal barges lay; then the skiff glided in beneath the overhang of the barges, and the big man with the scar on his chin knocked on the hull. No noise from within. The man picked up a club and pounded. No stirring. The woman looked up at the houseboat as if she were estimating for herself its plan, arrangement and all the mysteries which it might contain.

She shrugged her shoulders and put her roughly shod foot into the big man's outstretched palm. He raised slowly and lifted the woman straight up so that she could draw herself on board. She disappeared. The three men sat silent. "Ad right, Ben." The woman's face peered over the rail. The lean Jake stepped forward promptly and climbed up over the big man's back. The third man took the rudder; then the huge Ben jumped up, caught the deck rail and drew himself upward. The man was at that moment skirting the marshy shore and hunting a place, no matter how desolate, in which to hide. A small boat rounded the point, and for a moment June's eyes distended. Involuntarily she crouched.

CHAPTER II.

The three river thieves in the exquisitely furnished houseboat worked with deft rapidity. Within an incredibly short space of time they had the skiff piled high with the richest and the best which the houseboat had contained; then they spread the tarpaulin over their plunder and disposed their bunches of celery so that the green leaves protruded in a fringe from under the edge of the tarpaulin; then the heavily laden skiff, with its four passengers and its loot, wormed its way clumsily from amid the barges, looking like an innocent farmer boat.

The sun, now a golden ball in the eastern mist, looked down upon a baroque busy with the pursuers of the little runaway bride. Henri and Marie were swishing swiftly; Ned and Bobbie and Iris were leaving the dock in Bobbie's speedy little cruiser; Honoria Blye and Bill Wolf were putting out into the river in the Eagle Eye Detective Agency's steam yawl. Gilbert Blye and the heavily lidded Edwards were just leaving the Hilarity in the keen little racer; Cunningham had been slow and below decks when they put off, but he followed now in the cutter. The racer pointed around which June had disappeared. Tommy Thomas waved a scarf after them and shouted absurd instructions to them, but Mrs. Villard stood quietly by the rail, her eyes fixed somberly on that distant point.

Slowly June raised from her crouching position. Once more she breathed a sigh of relief, but even as she did so she heard a familiar sound—the siren whistle of the Hilarity's cutter! And it was near! Frantically now she scanned the shore. There was another inlet just ahead of her, and in desperation she steered into it. It was a narrow but distinct channel, winding about amid a tangle of shrubbery and marsh grass and stunted trees. There were high banks presently and then a tiny island, in the center of which was a decrepit hut. June was about to step ashore when she heard the low purring of a motor. She was away in a flash, circling the island. From the other side she saw that the channel led away into the marshes, probably to another inlet, and she had started to dart down this lonely waterway when suddenly she spied a rope trailing out into the water from under some bushes matted with marsh weeds. The whir of the motor was rapidly advancing. She could scarcely hope to escape unseen. Her wits sharpened by her peril, she steered

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SOUTHERN PACIFIC

John M. Scott, Gen. Pass. Agent, Portland, Oregon

June 9-16-23-30

he slashed savagely at his onrushing opponent. With a roar of rage Big Ben caught the descending wrist, wrested the weapon from it and plunged it to the hilt in Flub's breast.

There was a piercing shriek from the attic and a tearing of boards. The woman, quick of mind as she was of body, was the first to comprehend what that might mean. She sprang to the ladder, but as she went she cast a backward glance at the lifeless man on the floor. There was no shudder in her, only cold triumph.

"It's a girl! She's on the roof!" cried the woman as she gained the attic.

Lean Jake was the first out of the door, and Big Ben just after him. They rounded the corner of the hut just in time to see June jump from the roof and dart for her boat. It was the woman who caught her.

"Let me go!" implored June. "I won't tell!"

"Drown her," advised Lean Jake.

A shot and then another answered June's piercing shrieks, and down the channel from the inlet swiftly sped the little cutter, with Orin Cunningham at the wheel, revolver in hand.

"Hands up!" yelled a strong voice, and another shot startled the air of the marshes. Gilbert Blye!

Big Ben had dropped June at the first shot and had reached for his revolver. Lean Jake had dropped flat on the ground behind a boulder, but before Big Ben could return the fire of the oncoming boats from the Hilarity he was confused by a shot from another quarter, and through the reeds of the marsh there pushed a narrow steel gray motorboat, in which stood a tall man with a soft hat and a loosely knotted cravat.

A stranger! And he was nearer to the helpless June than her pursuers from the Hilarity! She ran toward him like a deer, and as his driver drew close inshore June sprang into the boat. "Hurry!" she cried. "Please hurry!"

A shot whizzed over their heads as they started, and shot after shot resounded from the upper channel.

Another boat came swishing down past the island. It was driven by a blazing eyed little chauffeur with a tiny mustache, and he was shouting at the top of his voice. Behind him sat stiffly a woman with high cheek bones and a wildness of gums, and she, too, was shouting:

"Voila! Voila! Voila!"
(To be continued.)

67 BIRTHS DURING MAY.

Stork Makes Record, While Grim Reaper Claims 38.

May was a record month for births in Lane County, according to the report just made out by Dr. W. L. Cheshire, county health officer. According to his books the number of births reported during the month was 67, of which 41 were boys and 26 were girls.

The report from each city and locality in the county is as follows: Eugene, 18 boys and 12 girls; Cottage Grove, 5 boys and 1 girl; Junction City, 4 boys and 1 girl; Springfield, 3 boys and 2 girls; Lorain, Jasper, Marcola, Pleasant Hill and Divide, 1 girl each; Donnas, Alvadore and Irving, 1 boy each; Mabel 2 boys; Florence 2 girls; the county at large, 7 boys and 3 girls.

There were 38 deaths, 27 of them being males and 11 females. In Eugene there were 7 males and 5 females; Springfield, 4 males; Junction City, 2 males and 1 female; Cottage Grove, 1 male and 1 female, the others occurring in different sections of the county.

Care of Mares in Foal.

"There is a lot of nonsense about the care of mares in foal," say the animal husbandry officers of the Oregon Agricultural College. "After she is bred she should be kept rather quiet for several hours, but after that the best thing she can have is steady work and three good meals a day. She should not be worked so hard as to become run down on good feed. If there is any slackening of work it should be about the fifth or sixth month. During the last three months she can do a lot of farm work, such as plowing and harrowing, without injury, clear up to the time she drops her foal. She will then be in good physical condition to stand the physical strain and have her digestive system in good working order."

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