

# Gambler's Throw

by Eustace L. Adams

**SYNOPSIS:** Jerry Calhoun, who has been trailing Limpy Ashwood's gang of kidnapers, arrives at Ashwood's hideout headquarters, hoping to be believed a catfish. He has flown to a nearby island, where a detective and a friend, Ashwood is holding prisoner. Jerry Westworth, abducted over Jerry's defense, and five men.

## Chapter 17 HORNET'S NEST

I've been reading the newspapers, Mr.—but you haven't introduced yourself," said Jerry. "How neglectful of me," apologized the cripple, "I am called Limpy Ashwood."

"Sorry," Jerry shook his head thoughtfully. "That doesn't mean a thing to me. But, as I started to explain, I do read the newspapers and I'm afraid that I've stumbled into a hornet's nest. There are a lot of people in this country who would like to be introduced to Miss Wentworth and One-shot Lucel, right now."

"Then I'm sure you'll understand," murmured Ashwood suavely, "why you may as well settle down to become a member in good standing of our little houseparty."

Jerry grinned ruefully and nodded. Then he patted his dripping clothes suggestively.

"A thousand pardons!" exclaimed the cripple. "Alfred, show Mr. Peabody to his room instantly. We'll complete the introductions at your convenience."

The first oblique shaft of morning sunlight snapped Jerry out of a sound night's sleep. For a moment he gazed in bewilderment around the plain, comfortably furnished room. Then, with a wide grin of anticipatory excitement, he leaped out of bed and strode to the window. The Gulf of Mexico was an infinitely vast lake of molten silver, shimmering under the cloudless sky. Another hot day was indicated for not the slightest whisper of wind rippled the surface of the water. The palms leaned this way and that as though discouraged and weary. Their leaves were dry, browned at the tips.

No wonder, thought Jerry, these people were unstrung and ready to leap for one another's throats at the flicker of an eyelid. Never, even during those last hectic days at the front when pilots came in from patrol cursing at the tops of their voices, had he known such nervous tension.

All evening, as the "guests" had sat about the living room he had expected to witness a riotous outbreak among the fidgeting, taut-nerved men. Lucel and Mallory, their puffed and bruised faces covered with bandages, regarding each other with malevolent eyes, greedy for an opportunity to finish the struggle of the evening before. Those two strange, silent men, Martin and Williams, gazing steadfastly at Miss Wentworth with expressions in their sombre eyes which caused the flyer to watch them more closely than he did the others. Lucel and Mallory, whatever they may have been before coming to the island, were now savages, knowing it and not caring. But what damage the heat and the unnatural atmosphere of the place had done to Martin and Williams was not so evident. They would bear quiet watching.

That devil, Ashwood, had lounged in his chaise longue, playing upon their nerves as an organist manipulates his banks of keys. A dozen times during the hot, interminable evening, Jerry had tensed his muscles, expecting the victims of the cripple's thrusts to break into a murderous frenzy and run amuck. But always, at the very last instant before an outbreak, Ashwood would smooth the other's ruffled nerves and turn his attention to the next. Only two of all those who had dwelt in that house for many days seemed unmoved by his verbal efforts to arouse their anger. Hamilton, concentrating upon his everlasting solitaire, answered the cripple's quips carelessly, seeming to regard them as only slightly irritating interruptions to the vastly more important business of placing one card upon another. And Nancy somehow came through the evening unscathed. Ashwood's sallies in her direction did not cut to the raw. They were kinder, perhaps. At any rate, the girl held her own without great difficulty.

Jerry had not sought an opportunity to explain his presence to her. At dinner, he had surprised her studying his face thoughtfully and, meeting her eye, had seen her shake her head ever so slightly, then look away. So he knew that she recognized him and was warn-

ing him to make no slip — could betray him.

It was with much regret that he gave up hope of drawing her aside for a few moments conversation before Emory and Stevens precipitated a battle royal. She could have told him how many guards patrolled the beach, how many machine guns could be expected to open fire upon the airplanes and where, perhaps, would be the most likely place for him to start a row to take the defenders' attention away from the approaching monoplane.

He knew, of a certainty, that the extraordinary Ashwood did not believe his ingenious story of being cast away upon the neighboring island.

He did not underestimate, in the least, the difficulties before him. Ashwood would be warned by his suspicious visit and would undoubtedly see that his guards did not relax their vigilance. This Ashwood was no heavy-fisted morose; he was infinitely more dangerous as an enemy.

Jerry knew that the most practical plan would be to find some way to signal his friends to fly to the nearest town and secure adequate assistance from the authorities. But, being young, reckless and headstrong, he resolutely pushed the conviction away.

Suddenly he stiffened in alarm. The familiar bark of a powerful motor beat into his ears. Its throbbing roar mounted as it responded to an advancing throttle until the entire house seemed to vibrate. Then, dying down, it popped and back-fired unevenly.

Jerry's first impulse was to rush to the porch to signal to the silver-winged monoplane. But after the first instant of indecision, he realized that he was listening to Ashwood's amphibian in her hangar at the inlet. He dressed hastily and hurried out into the fragrant morning air just in time to see the odd-shaped plane taxi slowly to the channel and take off toward the south. He stood on the porch, his hands clenching the rail, watching the amphibian's rising flight.

What a fool he had been to underestimate Ashwood's shrewdness and not to know that he would make an effort to check up on his story! If the amphibian continued on her present course for five minutes her crew could not fail to see the monoplane, whose bright wings would loom up in the sand like an air marker thoughtfully placed there to draw attention to the spot.

The white-coated steward appeared at Jerry's side and bowed civilly.

"Mr. Ashwood's compliments, sir, and will the gentleman kindly join him at breakfast?"

Jerry hesitated. He wished to watch the course of the amphibian. But the steward waited as though he expected the summons to be obeyed immediately, so the pilot nodded reluctantly and entered the house.

In the long, dim dining room, Ashwood awaited him, cool and immaculate in a suit of Chinese pongee. The large table, set with napery of magnificent damask.

"Good morning, Mr.—ah—Peabody," smiled the cripple. "It is so good of you to join me. Our other guests will presently have their breakfasts in their rooms and I dislike eating alone."

Jerry acknowledged the greeting absently. He was listening for the faint whisper of the amphibian's engine. Had it stopped suddenly or had it dwindled into silence in the distance?

The soft-footed steward placed an iced grapefruit before him. He found that despite his disgust of mind, he had not lost his appetite.

"Nice place you have here," he observed politely.

"Isn't it? I congratulate myself upon a happy thought when I purchased this house in sections and had it assembled here after my plans. The guests inhabit the west wing which leads off the living room. My rather large staff uses the east wing and some living quarters over the hangar-boat house. An admirable arrangement."

Jerry grinned wholeheartedly. There was something in the nerve and the imagination of the fellow that was very appealing.

"Mr. Peabody," said the other unexpectedly, "were you ever in the Air Service?"

"Yes," admitted Jerry steadily. "Why?"

"Did you, perchance, know Captain Jerry Calhoun?"

"Is Jerry trapped, or can he be successfully released? He receives a serious warning tomorrow.

## EXCELLENT PROGRAM ENJOYED AT SESSION JACKSONVILLE GRANGE

Jacksonville Grange held regular social meeting July 23, with a more than average attendance. Patrons appreciated the efforts of the new lecturer, Miss Ruth Severance, in providing an excellent program, and are looking forward to the next one, August 12.

The following numbers were presented: Two saxophone solos by Dr. James Johnson of Medford; readings by Lulu Sausberry; solo numbers on the musical saw by William Vinmont of Sams Valley; vocal numbers by Florence May Severance; saxophone obligato by Dr. Johnson; Ruth Severance played the piano accompaniment for the musical numbers, and lastly, Webb Clark of Medford entertained with clever sleight-of-hand

stunts and tricks, the most surprising of these being the handing of a lemon to Charles Hoover. Chester Wendt, master, expressed his appreciation of the program and to those who helped with it.

Ways and means committee held a candy sale which netted a very satisfactory amount for the Grange treasury. This committee is planning several other benefit affairs which are to combine pleasure and profit.

Members of the home economics club enjoyed to the fullest extent the theater party at the Holly theater last Wednesday afternoon with Mrs. Anne Wendt as hostess. After attending the matinee the guests were invited to Mrs. Wendt's home where they were served ice cream, cake and iced tea. A brief meeting was held to take care of routine matters.

Next meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Florine Severance, who will act as joint hostess with Mrs. Peter Pick. This meeting is scheduled for August 10.

OREGON CITY. — Final plans for proposed postoffice building sent to Washington, D. C. for approval.

SALEM, Ore., July 28.—(AP)—Robert Ripley, on trial here for the murder of James Iverson, Silverton night watchman, on May 1, 1931, this noon entered a plea of guilty to first degree murder. His trial was started Tuesday and several witnesses for the state had already been heard.

Ripley will be sentenced Saturday and it was reported he will be given a life term.

Dupree Poe, convicted of first degree murder in the same case, was sentenced to a life term by Judge Fred W. Wilson here today. The jury in its verdict early Tuesday recommended the sentence.

Call Lottie Howard, Rep. Investors syndicate, 1336-L.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter Makes a Discovery



## S'MATTER POP—Misinterpretation



## BOUND TO WIN—The Long Trail



## THE NEBBS—A Convincing Argument



## MUTT AND JEFF—Proving Again That Figures Don't Lie



## BRINGING UP FATHER



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## QUEST DISBURSER AS FUNDS SHRINK

PORTLAND, July 29.—(AP)—Because the fund for the care of indigent soldiers in Multnomah county is exhausted, there is no need for a disbursing officer.

This was the conclusion of the county commissioners Wednesday, and they removed A. P. Goss, who had held the post more than five years. Miss Lucy Lillie, secretary of the office, likewise will be removed, both effective August 8.

Removal of the disbursing officer will mean transfer of some \$280 a month in salaries and \$50 a month in expenses to the Red Cross, which will direct the work for indigent sol-

## Lake Rim Road Open for Autos

The rim road around Crater lake is open, according to announcement made here today by guests returning from the scenic wonder. The road was opened yesterday and is already being traveled by numerous guests. It was stated at the local bureau for registration of out-of-state autos.

Keep your skin soft and lovely. Use Coty Hand Lotion, \$1 bottle special 50c. Heath's Drug Store.

When you shop at the Groceteria park your car at the Groceteria parking lot, 127 No. Central.

Dance at Lake Creek Grange hall, Saturday, July 30. Good music. Body fur in 3-tier lots at \$1.75. Medford Fuel Co. Tel. 631.

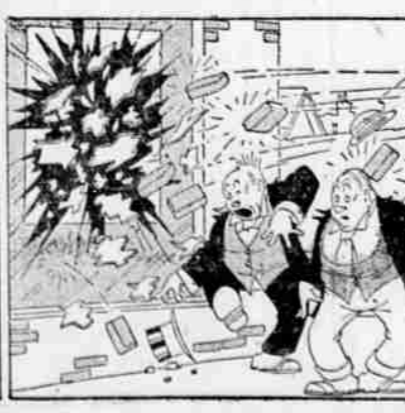
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