

Gambler's Throw

by Eustace L. Adams.

SYNOPSIS: Two men have been murdered in one night on Ashwood's island, where he is holding his prisoners for ransom. Stevens, a detective assigned to capture Ashwood, Jerry Colkoun who wants to rescue Nomsu Westworth, one of the prisoners, and Jerry's friend, Henry Hollis, have been caught and held by Ashwood.

Chapter 24 FOOTPRINTS

"No gun on him, eh?" Stevens' voice was almost casual. "No, nor ammunition, either," declared the guard.

"Huh," the detective scratched himself in melancholy meditation. "Sort of upsetting having someone running around with a crazy for cutting people's throats. Already there's \$100,000 of our reward plumb out of sight. Don't see how we can collect on Williams, now. And if we aren't careful there'll be others get it, too."

"It was one of the men in the house," stated Ashwood, positively. "My men are tough, but they aren't cutting throats. If they wanted to kill, they have guns."

"Uh, huh," Stevens was noncommittal. "Well, there ought to be some tracks around."

The cripple snapped on his searchlight and the three cut a wide circle about the body. At last they picked up a trail, a single pair of tracks which led through the sand and the sawgrass directly to the house.

"Did you walk here?" demanded Ashwood of the guard.

"No, boss, I cut around to the right, there."

Stevens strolled over in the direction indicated and proved the accuracy of the guard's statement. Then he returned to the suspected footprints and examined each of them minutely as the three worked their slow way to the house.

"No use," mourned the detective when they had almost reached the porch steps. "We can't tell a thing. This sand's loose as dry ashes. Can't tell whether these prints are from a number seven shoe or a twelve. Let's see if he went through the living room or into a window."

The tracks led directly to the porch steps. A few grains of sand made a faintly distinguishable path on the fibre rag of the living room but they did not extend into the hall. Nor was there any way of being certain that the outside guard had not brought the sand in when he had come to give the alarm.

"Let's have a drink, Steve," suggested Ashwood, pressing a button. "In the morning I'll search the house until a needle couldn't remain hidden in a mattress. We'll turn up that gun and then decide what to do with the man who has it."

The steward, Alfred, appeared, as neat and efficient as though he were just coming on duty after a full night's sleep. Ashwood gave his order.

"Tell you what I'll do, Limpy," said the detective slyly. "I'll match you for the gun."

Ashwood stared at him.

"Uh, huh," repeated Stevens, comfortably. "I'll match you for it. You need it to prevent your prisoners from getting loose or knocking each other off. I need it as sort of a key to get out of here myself."

The cripple watched Alfred place a heavily loaded tray on the table. He poured out two stiff highballs with methodical care and passed one to the detective.

"Do you know where that gun is, Steve?" Ashwood's face was set in deep lines as he studied the untroubled countenance of the other.

"No not yet, beyond the fact that the murderer has cached it away where we can't find it and he can."

"All right, then, who is the murderer? Mallory? Lucet?"

The cripple's thin fingers drummed restlessly against the frosted tumbler. Stevens shook his glass to cool the highball more swiftly.

"That's up to both of us to find out," he said after a satisfying taste of the excellent whiskey. "I got a hunch that if we don't find out pretty soon, he's going right on enjoying his killing jag. Besides, I want that gun and so do you, finders keepers."

don't find the killer, there's likely to be more hell let loose on this island than I had anticipated, even in my roughest dreams."

"You should have thought of that," the other reproved him gently, "before you brought them all down in this heat, five men and one girl. You remind me of the kid who didn't know it was loaded."

"Do you think I care one single damn about those two who have had their throats cut?" demanded the cripple scornfully. "Not a snap of my fingers. But I will not have my plans ruined. Do you understand?"

Stevens raised his glass and sipped slowly, contemplatively. Ashwood refilled his own tumbler and watched the old man with moody eyes. At last, tired of the silence, he shrugged and pushed himself out of his chair.

"Steve, it's mighty refreshing, once in a while, to see a man who sticks to his ideals." He took a turn or two across the room, his extension sole giving forth a hollow sound as he walked. "But I'm certainly afraid that I'm going to have to kill you before this affair is over."

"Now don't go getting yourself all upset about that," advised the little man placidly. "Fact is, I been shot at so many times I've sort of come to the conclusion that when I die it'll be with my best sight on and a hot water bottle at my feet."

He leaned over and selected a cigar from the box on the table. He broke it and put half of it in his mouth. His jaws moved violently for a moment, then a bulge appeared under his left cheek.

"You know, Limpy," he said with some difficulty as he settled back in the deep chair, "if it wasn't for a couple of little wrinkles that run the wrong way in your brain, you'd be a right nice fellow to know. What happened; did somebody drop you on your head when you were a baby?"

"We're all crooks in a greater or lesser degree, Steve," replied Ashwood. "The only reason you think I am just a little crazy is that I use my head and select crimes that appeal to me instead of those that would bore me. Why are a few spectacular, intelligent crimes more dreadful than many small, dreary ones?"

He rose and hobbled restlessly back and forth across the room.

"Is it because I break laws that you ask me if I'm a little crazy, or is it because I don't break those particular laws that are disregarded by everybody? In a generally lawless society, I break laws. Right-o! But I do so intelligently, observing the same privilege of picking the laws I wish to disregard as do those who break the laws of the Constitution or the traffic laws, or what not."

Stevens sighed pensively. "If I was a judge, Limpy, I bet you could talk me into giving you a room and bath in the funny house instead of a chair in the death house. It's right comforting to know that you aren't the kind of a feller who'd shoot me in the back when I'm not looking. And for that very reason I'm going to send a small bunch of flowers to your funeral. If I'm not retired and in California by that time, I'll come and walk in your procession."

Their eyes met squarely and they both grinned. On opposite sides of society's fence, these two, yet each knew and respected the other's measure as a man.

"One more drink, Steve," suggested the cripple. "Then to bed. I have much to do tomorrow."

"Fair enough," smiled the older man. "No water in mine."

Soon after breakfast, Ashwood's great amphibian nosed out of its waterside hangar, shook the entire island with the full-throated roar of its mighty engine and, after a splashing race across the water, soared away in a purring flight toward the north.

"Let's get a little breath of air before the heat closes in," suggested the detective as he, Jerry and Emory looked away from the dot in the sky which was the fast-vanishing plane. "Maybe a little stroll in the air now will help us to stand the heat later."

There was an undertone of urgency in the old man's voice which caused the two flyers to follow him down the porch steps and out among the palms.

"We've got to crash this place pretty soon, now," he declared, as the three sat in the little circular patch of shade beneath a palm. "There's hell to pay."

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Jerry proposes a surprising plan for Nancy's rescue, tomorrow.

FILL IN FROCKS FORECAST FALL FASHION TRENDS

By DIANA MERWIN
Associated Press Fashion Editor
PARIS.—(AP)—New "Fill-in frocks"

—forecasting fall fashions and designed to stop the gaps in swagger summer wardrobes—have made their debut in the style world.

They are designed for the woman who wants a fresh frock for August which can be worn throughout the fall, and "utility" is their watchword.

Their bright hues predict a gay fashion color card this fall, while their slightly longer skirts, accented sleeves and draped bodices hit at silhouette changes yet to be confirmed by fall style shows.

A dull silk crepe, pebbly weave or plain, made in a lark color and trimmed with a bright touch is the most practical model shown, since it may be worn both morning and afternoon.

A frock of chocolate brown marocain, designed with bell sleeves and a rather high round collar, has a touch of brilliant orange crepe in the lining of both collar and sleeves.

A black satin with a sunny tucked bodice, has wide sleeves faced with cinnamon rose satin, and a high necked purple crepe is finished with a scarf of lapis lazuli blue.

Plain frocks of putty-beige, leaf-green and bright red crepe, designed with semi-high waists and slender skirts, add further color to the picture.

The wool models exhibited among the "fill-in frocks" are as light in weight as a film of feathers. Their trims are often a touch of some flat fur such as shaved lamb or galyak.

A leaf green wool crepe, made along straight belted lines, has a narrow rib of black galyak. A putty-beige wool crepe has a belt and cuffs of brown shaved lamb, and a brown wool is accented by a square yoke plastron of brown astrakhan.

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GIANT NEBRASKA TEAM OF HORSES BROTHERS

DORSEY, Neb. (AP)—What Nebraska claim is one of the largest teams of horses ever grown is made up of Dick and Barney, 10-year-old giants on W. L. Brady's farm. Each of the horses weighs around 3,000 pounds and measure 21 hands high. Despite their bigness the animals are almost perfectly proportioned.

Tillamook—Work progressing rapidly on court house.

DUCHESS CHOOSES WHITE FOR TEATIME

PARIS (AP)—The Duchesse de La Rochefoucauld chooses white for teatime wear. At a recent tea which she gave she wore a frock of fine white georgette designed with a soft draped bodice and an intricately pleated skirt having a hemline about six inches from the floor. Her only jewels were a rope of pearls.

Florence—Bids to be asked shortly for surfacing 13.5 miles Oregon coast highway north of here.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

TAILSPIN TOMMY—The "Tell-Tale" Tracks Of A Laden Truck!



S'MATTER POP—It Would Be An Orderly Arrangement



By C. M. PAYNE

BOUND TO WIN—The Two Palms



By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—I Should Say Not



By SOL HESS

MUTT AND JEFF—A Great Compliment



By BUD FISHER

GOLD IN HOCK GOES INTO BANK OF ITALY

ROME.—(AP)—A new way to get the old gold watch or ring out of hock has been invented by the Bank of Italy in its campaign to build up its gold reserves.

The pawn ticket is presented at the bank. The bank sends an expert to the pawnshop, appraises the article, pays off the pawnbroker and pays the owner according to its gold weight, minus the money given the pawnbroker.

Portland—Remodeling of Oregon Hotel building to start at once, project to cost about \$7,500.

Weston—Tollgate road work progressing rapidly.

KANGAROO TYRANTS STARVE OUT SHEEP

SYDNEY.—(AP)—Two thousand kangaroos have usurped a "kingdom" on 5,000 acres, 18 miles from Koroit in western Victoria.

They are starving the sheep out, smashing through the fences and bowling over lambs with flying feet or awing tails that stun them as effectively as bludgeons.

It is unlawful to kill kangaroos in Victoria but sheepmen have appealed to the state to have the ban lifted.

Mt. Angel—Mt. Angel Co-operative creamery plan constructing a new plant here.

Roseburg—Deer Creek Dairy installed new equipment.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus