

Gambler's Throw

by Eustace L. Adams.

SYNOPSIS: Jerry Colburn and Nancy Wentworth are reunited after their secret marriage by Limpy Ashwood, who had intended to marry Nancy. Ashwood has kidnapped her and she, one of whom has been murdered, and holds them on an island for ransom. Jerry, a gangster, one of the prisoners, hopes to out-trick Ashwood.

Chapter 29

SUPPRESSED HATE

"IF YOU'LL excuse us, we'll go out on the porch," Jerry told Ashwood. "We find the room crowded." He turned to Nancy, who, repressing a start of surprise, rose instantly and put her arm through his.

"Why not, indeed?" agreed the cripple. "I think it is duly recorded in the 'Book of Etiquette' that the young couple should invariably sit for an hour or two gazing stargazed at the moonlight, if any."

Jerry stood there in hesitation, his self-control worn to a thin edge by the subtle taunts. If Ashwood had only been of Lucci's build! What pleasure he would take in beating him down! Nancy's slight pressure on his arm brought him back to reason. He bowed mockingly and followed his wife out into the darkness.

Hamilton swept his seven rows of cards together, placed the deck meticulously in the upper left corner of the table and, murmuring a conventional word of apology, left the room.

The wide, comfortable porch, in the utter quiet of the tropic night, was like a haven of peace after the throbbing intensity of the living room. Nancy stepped to the rail, silently surveying the long, sparkling path of moonlight across the black waters.

"What do you think Ashwood will do, Jerry?" she whispered. "I don't know, Nancy," he answered honestly. "It hit him hard. That's the only thing I'm sure of. I'm getting so I don't know what anyone will do. We're all strained to the snapping point. Word has percolated through the crowd that Ashwood is flying away from here tomorrow. There's been a lot of activity at the hangar all afternoon. One-shot and Hamilton have asked me a dozen times whether we're going to be released tomorrow or not. Ashwood has said nothing about it and they're all afraid we're going to be left here while he gets away. If we have another hot night tonight, there's no telling what may happen. The whole place vibrates with suppressed hate."

"If he takes me away tomorrow, I'll jump out of his plane," she burst out passionately. "And if I'm tied in, I'll jump overboard from his yacht tomorrow night."

"He won't take you away," he declared firmly. "The first move he makes toward you in the morning, I'll grab him with my two hands and break his back before his guards can pull a trigger. If I were positive he still had it in his mind I'd walk right in there and do it now."

"Please, Jerry," she whispered. "Aren't things bad enough now without your adding to them before it becomes necessary?"

He made no reply, being afraid that if he spoke at all, it would be to say too much. He dared not even look at her cameo-like profile, lest he lose the words which trembled upon his lips. For some moments they stood there in silence. At last:

"Nancy, you—you aren't worrying about—tonight, are you?"

"I don't know, Jerry," she confessed, hardly above a whisper. "I was watching Ashwood's face when he listened to your announcement. He's going to make it as difficult as he can for us, if only out of a perverse wish for revenge."

"Well," he ventured, cursing himself for his fumbling about in a difficult situation, "we'll have to make a pretense of being real—married, you know, or all this business won't do any good."

Why couldn't he express himself to girls as he could to men? If he were talking to a fellow, now, he'd have no trouble. But here he was floundering like a silly kid, making it more difficult for her instead of less. His cheeks were hot, too. It was fortunate that the night his face. He'd give his share of the reward, right now, if Lucci or Malory were to stride out on the porch and give him someone to poke at.

"Listen, Nancy," he added. "You go to bed early. After you've gone to sleep I'll just creep in and stretch myself on the floor right against the door. You'll never know I've been there."

She was still silent. The pause seemed interminable.

"Poor little girl," he murmured

soothingly. "But by tomorrow night I'll probably be all over."

She suddenly became rigid and stared through the darkness.

"Look!" she whispered, clutching his arm. "There's someone down there in the palm grove, crawling on his hands and knees."

He peered in the direction indicated and saw a faint blur against the darker background of the trees. As he watched, it moved, progressing very slowly through the sawgrass toward the black bulk of the hangar.

"That may be the bird who killed Williams and the guard," he whispered. "You stay right here on the porch until I come back."

"Please, please be careful, Jerry," she whispered.

He pressed her hand reassuringly, then vaulted over the rail, landing with cat-like silence on the resilient sand. In another instant, he was uptempo in the direction taken by the crawling man. Hurrying at first, then slowing his pace as he caught sight of the man he was pursuing, he dropped to his hands and knees, creeping cautiously from the shelter of one palm trunk to another. Sand burrs punctured his knees, elbows and bare hands like a thousand tiny needles. The hangar was not far distant now. He heard a faint hiss from the man before him. A door in the side of the long, low building was opened. The man hunched again. There was a moment's pause, then Jerry saw the crouching figure rise and enter the hangar. The door was closed.

Still exerting the utmost care lest he rattle fallen palm leaves and invite the deadly probing of machine-gun bullets, the pilot inched his way to the side of the building. Then he began a slow, cautious journey around its matched-board wall in the hope of finding a vantage spot where he might overhear what was going on within.

Ah! Luck! He found that the rear of the hangar was protected only by a thick thatch of palm leaves. An effort, he decided, to minimize the force of tropic storms. The open back would allow the winds to sweep through unhindered, lessening the pressure against the structure. From the other side of the thatch he could hear the murmur of voices. Leaf by leaf he parted the barrier with his hands and burrowed his way toward the interior.

"... you guys will be outa luck, nothing else!" It was Lucci's voice. Unmistakable, that sound; he would have recognized it anywhere.

"How'll we be outa luck?" challenged a strange harsh voice. Jerry held his breath. New complications!

"Well, I suppose Limpy's going to remember you in his will, hey?" It was Lucci, again, his tone vibrant with scorn. "What are you going to do when he makes his fade-out, hey? He's going to lam for his swell private yacht and retire, he says!"

"Aw, Limpy's treated us right!" A new voice entered the discussion, but there was an undercurrent of uncertainty in the statement that Lucci was quick to detect.

"What do you mean, treated you right? You're a good pilot, ain't you? You could have made twice as much flying for my mob as you've got now, and you wouldn't be facing a shift for yourself, now, either. Sure, Limpy's split with you birds. I split with mine, too. Listen, you guys; I'll lay you five to one that I've split grand with my gang while Limpy's been splitting centuries."

"Maybe so," agreed the doubtful one, who was, apparently, one of the pilots of the amphibian. "But your men got bumped off so fast the money don't do them any good."

"Pah!" Lucci's voice was contemptuous. "A few torpedoes and muscle men get too slow drawing their heats and the other guy fogs away first. That isn't what I want you for. I want you birds to do the smooth stuff. The brain work, see? Murphy, here, will boss the flock of new flyers I'm getting together. This aviation racket is a new one to me, but there are millions in it and I'm going to hop on it good. The rest of you will be collectors and Tommy men. And," he added significantly, "you can trust me never to lam out on you when things get hot and leave you to shoot it out with the dicks, see?"

"What do we stand to make if we come over to you?" This was from a man who had not spoken before.

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The gangsters plot an attack on the house, in the next installment, and Jerry and Stevens strengthen their defenses.

Famed Painting Defaced

PARIS, Aug. 12. — (AP) — An unidentified person, presumably a mental defective, slashed Millet's famous painting, "The Angelus" with a razor in the Louvre today.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

August coal special, \$13.00 per ton. Med. Fuel Co., TN. 631.

JOHN GILBERT IN FOURTH MARRIAGE

HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 12. — (AP) — The film camera was still grinding on the studio lot at 5:45 o'clock last evening. Before one of them stood Virginia Bruce, an actress, portraying the part of a crippled trader's daughter in a picture of African life. She was in rage and her face was stained. John Gilbert walked onto the set and interrupted the scene.

"We're going to be married at 6 o'clock," he calmly announced, and they were.

The marriage was Gilbert's fourth, his divorce from his third wife, Ina Claire, actress, having become final last Saturday.

Graves Jewelry Shop, one block north of postoffice. Phone 499-W.

Fender and body repairing. Prices right. Brill Sheet Metal Works.

RAILROAD TRAFFIC SHOWING INCREASE

NEW YORK, Aug. 12. — (AP) — Signs of a pickup in railroad traffic became evident today with the announcement of the New York Central of an indicated increase in the carloading requirements for the latter half of August. It was unofficially estimated by this road that its loadings would run from 15 to 18 per cent over the first half of the month.

Mill Near Eugene Destroyed By Fire

EUGENE, Aug. 12. — (AP) — Flames which for a time threatened the entire community of Veneta, yesterday destroyed the A. M. Matlock saw mill near there and burned 75,000 feet of timber. The plant was closed and nearly all machinery had been removed. Loss was about \$5000.

GOOD NAME IS WORTH \$135,000 TO PACKER

ALTON, Ill., Aug. 12. — (AP) — August Luer, retired meat packer of Alton, spent \$135,000 to keep his name unblemished in his home town. Although under no legal obligation, he paid that much for bonds now considered worthless, because about four years ago he sponsored

Flier's Fiance Was Drug Addict, Claim

MIAMI, Fla., Aug. 12. — (AP) — Testimony that Haden Clarke, for whose slaying Captain W. N. Lancaster is on trial, was a narcotic addict, and that he frequently discussed suicide and that he suffered in New Orleans from an illness with which he was afflicted at the time of his death, was given today by Dick Lavender, Clarke's former companion.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Story—And A Call To Arms!



S'MATTER POP—Those Questions Will Spring Up



By C. M. PAYNE



BOUND TO WIN—The Treasure



By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—I Accept The Nomination



By SOL HESS



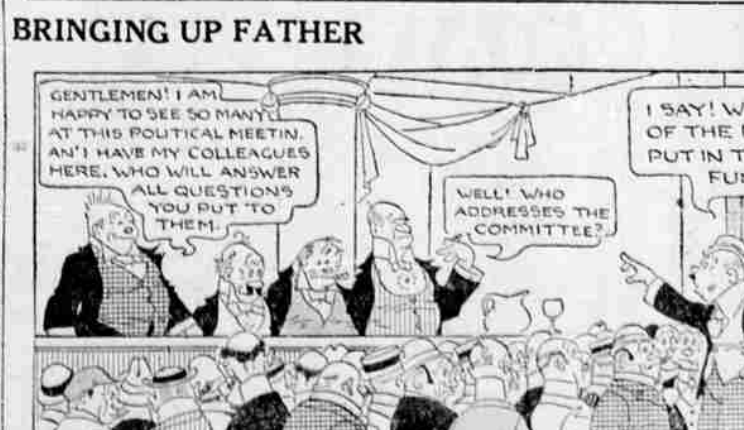
MUTT AND JEFF—Levity In The Mutt Homestead



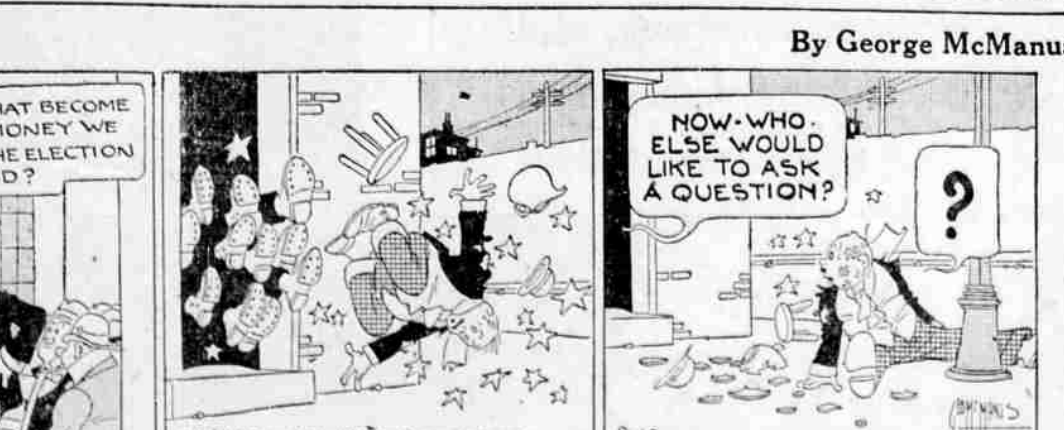
By BUD FISHER



BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus



Top Ripped From Auto In Collision

The automobile belonging to Archie Pierce, was badly damaged in a collision at the corner of Fourth and Central streets yesterday afternoon when the car was upset, and the top torn off. No one was injured. Mrs. C. A. Cobb of 415 Woodstock was driving the other automobile, according to reports filed this afternoon at the city police station.

Elks State Meet Opens At Seaside

SEASIDE, Ore., Aug. 12. — (AP) — With streets alive with purple and white bunting and banners, bands playing and flags flying, Elks of Oregon paraded into Seaside today for the lodgemen's annual state convention. More than a thousand members of the benevolent and protective order and their families, are expected to attend the three-day meeting.

Mexico Refuses Veterans Haven

MEXICO CITY, Aug. 12. — (AP) — President Ortiz Rubio announced today that Mexico would not permit American world war veterans to establish a colony here. This decision was in response to a request by Denis Carter, leader of one wing of the American bonus expeditionary force.