

Gambler's Throw

by Eustace L. Adams

SYNOPSIS: Expecting an attack from Ashwood's gangsters, Jerry and Stevens walked down the long, silent hall of the west wing.

Chapter 31 "DROP YOUR GUN!"

VERY quietly, listening for sounds from the servants' quarters, Jerry and Stevens walked down the long, silent hall of the west wing. Door after door they passed until at last they reached that which they knew opened into Lucci's room. Here they stood for many moments, listening against the pine panels for sounds of the occupant. Of Lucci there was not the least sound, but their hearing was disturbed by the steady footfalls of a man in the next room, who appeared to be pacing back and forth within the close confines as a ship's captain marches to and fro on his lofty bridge. But Lucci was still out of the building. Of that much the pair were sure. He could scarcely have gone to sleep with his plans for the night so close to maturity.

"Who is doing all the walking?" whispered Jerry cautiously.

Stevens glanced about, mentally tallying the occupants of each room.

"Hamilton," he breathed and tiptoed to the door from which the sounds were issuing. After a moment of stony immobility, he beckoned to the flyer, who joined him, ear to panel.

The man within, walking restlessly, could be heard muttering disjointed phrases. As his voice rose and fell, scraps of sentences came to the ears of the tense men outside.

"Chicago . . . always talking . . . driving me mad with . . . Williams, another word and I'll kill . . ."

Ten steps forward, ten steps back. Ten forward and ten back, endlessly. The muttering subsided. Jerry straightened up and looked at Stevens with growing horror in his eyes. The little man still crouched, attentive, his calm face showing no expression. The voice rose again.

"Martin's pop eyes, always looking . . . looking . . . can't play canfield with those eyes staring. . . Too hot to wear wool. . . Price going down . . . Martin's fault, damn him." The voice rose in sudden crescendo. "I'll kill him and then I'll be cool again!" The footsteps ran across the room. There came the sound of a key turning in the lock.

The detective straightened up and dragged Jerry to a position against the wall, just beyond the hinges of the door. Hamilton, wild-eyed, dshavelled, stepped out into the dim hall, a heavy automatic in his hand. In an instant Stevens had twisted the gun out of his grip. Jerry, his powerful arms around the slender figure of the crazed man, pushed him, struggling, biting and kicking, back into his room.

"It's too hot to start anything tonight, sir," Stevens told him, soothingly.

Hamilton still struggled, but his emotional crisis had passed. He looked thin, haggard and old.

"I must see Martin," he whispered helplessly. "If I can see Martin for a minute, everything will be all right. It'll be cool again, the price of wool will go up and we'll have a little peace."

"That's all right," murmured Jerry, lifting him and placing him at full length on the bed. "You'll see him in the morning."

Swiftly, skillfully, Stevens tied his hands and feet with torn strips of sheeting, adjusted his limp figure to a comfortable position and pushed a pillow under his head. He walked to the dresser, opened several drawers, then, with an exclamation of satisfaction, took out a double handful of cartridge clips and stowed them in his pocket.

"See you in the morning, Mr. Hamilton," he said quietly. He switched off the light and followed Jerry into the hall, carefully locking the door behind him. "Come on, kid. We got a gun, now."

The living room was still deserted. They stepped out on the porch, looking toward the north where, near the end of the long, narrow island, the hangar nestled beside the inlet. From the direction of the hangar came a dark figure, making no effort at concealment.

The sound of voices could be heard from the westerly corner of the porch. The footsteps of two men crunched through the saw-grass and the sand. Those would be Ashwood and Emory, Jerry decided, returning from their stroll. The flyer crunched a little, sending an approaching crisis. The three walking men would reach the porch steps simultaneously. He felt Stevens' arm brush against his side and heard the faint metallic click of a safety catch. He could see the cripple's white hair, now, almost within reach from the porch rail. Suddenly the two strollers stopped. The white head turned toward the oncoming figure.

"Who is that?" Ashwood inquired, idly curious.

"It's me, Lucci."

"Have you forgotten that I told you to remain in your room at night?"

Stevens, on hands and knees, crept toward the rail, Jerry close at his side.

"Ah, to hell with you and your orders!" snarled Lucci. "Stick 'em up, quick! I'm covering you and aching to drill you both!"

"You are indiscreet, Lucci," the cripple told him coldly. "Have you forgotten my guards with their machine guns?"

"Not by a damn sight!" retorted the gangster. "They're my guards now! Since you're fading out the picture they're joining my mob, starting now. Listen, Limpy, either you're joining up with me, or I'm going to bump you off, here and now, see?" His voice was malignant.

Jerry had no doubt that he would carry out his threat.

"Drop your gun, One-shot!" Stevens did not raise his voice but the effect of his words was almost magical. Ashwood and Emory jumped in surprise. There was a crimson spurt from Lucci's automatic. The bullet spat between the two crouching men on the porch.

The gangster, with a curse, turned and ran at full speed to dodge the hangar, zigzagging and dodging behind the slender trunks of the palms as he continued his precipitate flight through the darkness. Ashwood's gun flamed once, twice.

"Better cut it, Limpy," said the detective calmly. "You'll need all your cartridges. Wish you could get my old revolver from the feller who frisked me. Those new-fangled automatics are always jamming at the wrong time."

His voice was mildly regretful as he fussed with the instrument in his hand. The cripple gazed wonderingly at the porch.

"And they say there's no Santy Claus!" he marvelled.

"Better come up here and let's talk it over," suggested the old man casually.

The screen door squeaked on its hinges. Jerry spun around, his muscles quivering, tensed for sudden action. Then he relaxed. It was Alfred, the steward. He glanced at the two vigilant men.

"Beg pardon, sir," he bowed, an anxious frown on his usually expressionless forehead. "I was looking for Mr. Ashwood, sir."

"Here I am, Alfred," called the cripple, limping up the steps. "What is it?"

"Sir, I must tell you that the other servants have all gone down to the hangar. I'm afraid there is trouble, sir. Here is a revolver. You will need it soon, I think."

"Good boy, Alfred. Better keep the gun. Any more of them around?"

"No, sir. I had this one hidden under my mattress."

"So the whole outfit has deserted, eh?" The leader's voice held a tinge of regret. "I had thought they were loyal."

"They were, sir," the steward assured him, "until Lucci told them they would be arrested as soon as you left. Since they knew I would not join them, they did not trust me. I do not know their plans but I think they are going to steal the planes and fly away."

Ashwood turned to the others. "Alfred was my batman during the war," he explained simply. "We can count on him."

There came a series of staccato snapping noises, as though an oxidizer were sizzling his whip about their ears. The dive diver unceremoniously for the shelter of the living room. From the easterly corner of the house the knife-like flashes of a machine gun stabbed the darkness.

"That's the guard on the inshore beach," said the cripple. "Seem to be pretty well surrounded, don't you?"

(Copyright, Dial Press)
In the midst of the confusion, tomorrow, Nancy disappears.

POET IN TRIBUTE TO DIAMOND LAKE

DIAMOND LAKE, Aug. 15.—(Sp.) The following poem was found tacked to the bulletin board at Diamond Lake lodge. It was signed Nelson H. Randall, who was registered from Carmel-by-the-Sea, California.

A jewel in a mountain setting,
Its waters crystal clear;
Heid fast by its verdant wooded banks
And guarded by Thielson's spear;
Affire with the hues and colors
Of a sun that's setting low;
Or glistening in the silver
That moonbeams may bestow.

A jewel in a mountain setting—
And they call it Diamond Lake:
A paradise for fishermen
Who would the limit take;
A joy for all who may behold,
And all who see it say
They'd like to linger on and on,
And never go away.

ELKS OF OREGON ELECT LEADERS

SEASIDE, Ore., Aug. 15.—(P)—T. E. J. Duffy of Bend was elected president of the Oregon state Elks here at the final business session of the annual convention of the lodge.

was left to the mid-winter executive meeting, although sentiment at the convention appeared to favor Eugene.

Other officers are A. C. VanNys of Corvallis, first vice-president; B. C. Lamb of Tillamook, second vice-president; Harold B. Heidman of Pendleton, third vice-president; A. W. Jones of Salem, re-elected treasurer; J. L. Tucker, Portland; Perry O. DeLap, Klamath Falls, and E. H. Jones, Baker, trustees.

August special. Three loads 16-in. slabs for \$6.75. Med. Fuel Co. Tel. 631.

Hop Pickers Pay Ten Cents Lower

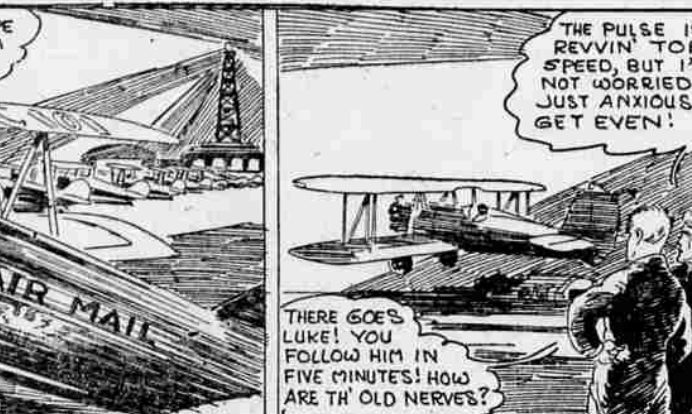
SALEM, Ore., Aug. 15.—(AP)—Hop pickers in this vicinity will receive 80 cents a hundred, or 35 cents a nine-bushel box, this year it was decided by Salem district members of the Oregon Hop Growers' association at a meeting here today. This year's price is 10 cents lower than last year's.

Garner to Visit Roosevelt Home

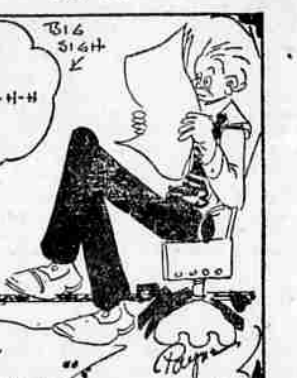
HYDE PARK, N. Y., Aug. 13.—(AP)—Governor Roosevelt, spending the last week-end at his Hudson river home before entering upon a two months' invasion of Republican territory, tomorrow will entertain his running mate on the Democratic national ticket, Speaker John Garner of Texas.

Desirable houses always in first class condition for rent, lease or sale. Call 105.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Three-Point's Aerial Defy!



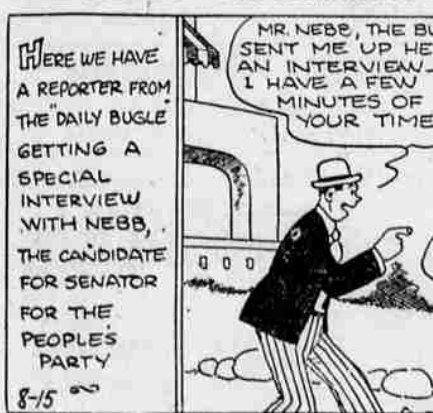
S'MATTER POP—He Should Have Taken A Dinner Pail



BOUND TO WIN—The Second Chest



THE NEBBS—The Commoner



MUTT AND JEFF—Rather Mysterious, Eh, Wot?



YOUNGSTER RESCUES 2 FROM WATER IN WEEK

ENOENE, Ore., Aug. 15.—(P)—Word reached here today that Kenneth Hatch, 8, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Hatch of Florence, rescued two youngsters from drowning within the past week.

First, he saved two-year-old Bruce Girard after the tot had fallen from a boat into Allison lake. A couple of days later he rescued his sister, Betty, 7, who had fallen in the Suslaw river near the north fork bridge at Florence.

PORTLAND, Aug. 15.—(P)—The first Dillard cantaloupes to make their appearance in Portland this season, arrived today, shipped by Wesley Williams, Douglas county grower.

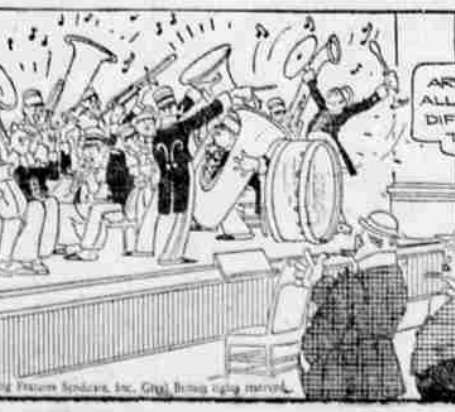
Husband Wins As Wife Drowns

PARMA, Idaho, Aug. 15.—(AP)—Edith Wilkie, 34, and Mrs. Emma Grey, 32, drowned in the Boise river here yesterday while the husband of the elder woman looked on helplessly, unable to swim. The girl slipped into the water from the bank of the river where she was fishing. Mrs. Grey leaped in after her but the swift current and deep water caught them both.

SALEM, Ore., Aug. 15.—(P)—Robert Stewart, 7, son of Rev. and Mrs. J. R. Stewart of Salem, was fatally injured tonight at Quincy, Ore., when he climbed a tree and came into contact with a high voltage wire.

Graves Jewelry Shop, one block north of postoffice, Phone 462-W.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus