

Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Nan Weare stumbles into knowledge of a plot between Robert Leonard and a fast driver to run down an unnamed person she is sure to be her husband, Jervis Weare. She also believes it was Leonard who attempted Jervis's life few years before, when she saved him. Since the day of the rescue she has loved Jervis deeply, but he has married her only as a means of saving for himself the fortune which Rosemond Carter, his former fiancée, tried to secure for herself by selling Jervis. The departure of Nan's sister Cynthia, with her husband, for Australia makes Nan bitterly lonely.

both arms up and down with enthusiasm. "Well, if this isn't the best thing that ever happened!" Nan looked on breathlessly, and saw Jervis break into a smile. "Francis!" he cried. "The little man puffed harder. "Rather! This is the best thing I've struck since—well, there isn't any since about it. I'd rather have run up against you than have gotten an invitation to tea with Mussolini with carte blanche to print every word he said and photograph him while he said it—and I can't say more than that. So far he's eluded me. I've interviewed President Hoover, and Ramsay MacDonald, and Clemenceau, and Trotsky, and the unfortunate late czar, and Gene Tunney, and Dean Inge, and Don Bradman, and Al Capone; but so far Mussolini has eluded me." Jervis continued to smile. "You'll collect a crowd, F.F." "What else do I live for?" said Mr. Francis. He turned, holding Jervis by the arm. "I've got to apologize for breaking in—" His bright brown eyes darted a question at Nan; his manner intimated plainly that he awaited an introduction. "Let me introduce, Mr. Ferdinand Francis," said Jervis. The next moment Nan's hand was being shaken by one that felt very thin and very strong, and Mr. Francis' high-pitched voice was saying earnestly, "I'm very glad to meet you—but he hasn't told me whom I'm very glad to meet."

Chapter 8 ENTER "F. F."

NAN did not know that she was going to run, but she found herself running breathlessly, blindly on. When at last she stopped running, she had no breath in her and she was shaking from head to foot. She had turned a corner and was in a street she did not know.

She stood still—not thinking—getting back her breath. Then she began to walk again mechanically, her mind pulled this way and that by her clamorous thoughts. She set to work to quiet these thoughts, to make them speak reasonably. It was very, very difficult, because, instead of being calm and judicial, she was quivering with fear not for herself, but for Jervis.

Robert Leonard had come out of the house. He had spoken to the driver of the taxi. She tried to put together what he had said.

The more Nan thought, the more an anguished fear took hold of her. For ten years she had believed that Robert Leonard had struck down Jervis Weare and left him to drown on Cropton rocks. Now she believed that there was to be another attempt upon his life. Robert Leonard had said, "He is sure to walk—he is crazy for exercise." She was quite sure that the "he" was Jervis. The driver was to "drive dangerously." If "he" took a taxi, he was to do the best he could. He was to risk prison, and he was to earn twenty-five hundred dollars.

An accident. The word sprang into her mind. It seemed to make a loud noise there. Nan felt as if someone had fired a gun close to her ear. The word deafened her. An accident—to Jervis. That was what they had been planning.

As the noise of the word died down, she found herself walking quickly and thinking clearly. The train got in at four-fifteen. She must meet Jervis and tell him what she had heard. She looked at her watch. It was five minutes to four. If Jervis was coming up from Weare she could catch him at the Twenty-third street ferry. Of course he might be coming from anywhere else.

She reached the ferry with two minutes to spare. She wasn't frightened any more. She would see Jervis, and everything would be all right.

He came striding up. Nan ran after him, let him clear the crowd, and touched his arm. He turned, stared, took off his hat. The ferry house became a place where anything might happen. It had the true atmosphere of romantic adventure. Nan was so inspired by it that a dimple came out on either side of her smile as she said, "You didn't expect to see me?" "Did you expect to see me?" he asked.

Nan nodded. "I came to meet you." "Did Page tell you I was coming up?" She shook her head. "Nobody told me." "Then how did you know?" said Jervis Weare. Nan saw the dark colour rise in his face, and wondered what had brought it there. Her dimples trembled away. She said quickly, "I'll tell you how I know. I've got things to tell you—important things."

They were standing still, with a stream of people flowing past them. A fat man swung a bag of golf-clubs within half an inch of Nan's ear, and as she ducked and stepped aside, she heard an exclamation, and out of the stream there burst a small thin man with ginger hair and bright twinkling eyes. He had a Gladstone bag in one hand, a tin hat-box in the other, a camera slung from his shoulder, and an extremely ancient rucksack bound like a hump upon his back. He burst from the stream, cast the hat-box clanking upon the pavement, bumped down the Gladstone bag, and caught Jervis by one hand and the wrist of the other—the second hand being occupied with his suitcase. He pumped

himself. "I should say you were a first-class liar, F.F.," said Jervis. "Tomorrow, to Nan's horror, Jervis refuses to take heed for himself."

"It's a good little bag," said Ferdinand, "and a real antique into the bargain. If I was to tell you that it had belonged to the late William Ewart Gladstone himself—what would you say?"

Nan saw Jervis laugh, and felt the thrill of a young mother whose child does something new. She hadn't seen him laugh before. "What would you say?" said Mr. Francis. "I should say you were a first-class liar, F.F.," said Jervis.

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AUTO PLATES MADE OF NEVADA COPPER

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP)—In a campaign to "sell" the governor and motor vehicle department on copper license plates for 1933. Warden Matt Penrose of the state penitentiary had two sets made at the prison factory as samples.

MINERS TURN FARMER WITH HELP OF WALES

PARIS.—(AP)—A new tobacco, virtually devoid of nicotine, is to be offered to French smokers. State botanists in the Grand Duchy of Baden grew it by crossing different varieties over a number of years and French growers are preparing to cultivate it.

ONE SORE THROAT EASY FOR 'TURTLE'

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—A sore throat isn't serious in the life of "Hank," an inhabitant of the Minneapolis library Zoo. He uses his other throat in a case like that—for "Hank" has two of them.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Another Rat Trapped!

French Avoid Nicotine

BOUND TO WIN—Ben's Plan

French Avoid Nicotine

S'MATTER POP—He Wished To See The Incubator In Action

French Avoid Nicotine

CHILLED BEEF FOUND BEST FROM AUSTRALIA

CAMBRIDGE, England (AP)—England may some day be importing more meat from Australia and New Zealand and less from the United States and Argentina as a result of scientists' work here. By putting a certain percentage of carbon dioxide into the air, they have succeeded in keeping beef in excellent condition by chilling instead of freezing, long enough for the Australian journey. It may also open up to England the rich waters of the Equator as a source of fish. Three tier body hr. \$5.25. Quality and measure guaranteed. Med. Fuel Co., Tel. 694.

HORSE IN COMEBACK IN HOME OF AUTOS

LANSING, Mich. (AP)—Old Dobbin is making a valiant comeback in Michigan, center of the automobile producing industry. The animal husbandry department at Michigan state college says that Michigan is buying more horses than any other state. More than 10,000 horses have been purchased in the state since January 1, a record number of sales. The average value per head is now about \$110 as compared with \$70 five years ago. The depression is believed to have forced many farmers to abandon their tractors and trucks. Permanent waves \$1.95, wet finger waves 25c. Prevost Beauty Shop, 16 Laurel, Phone 747-J.

