



# Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

**Chapter 45**  
**"I PREFER YOU DEAD"**

RISING above Jervis was a sheer and unclimbable rock. The light came up to the ledge where Leonard stood. It was a mere still like a wide door-step, with the mouth of the passage rising in an irregular arch above it.

Leonard swung the light round past his own shoulder and let the beam play on a half open iron gate, heavy, rusty, and strong. Closed, it would fill the arch. A new chain and padlock dangled at its edge; the light picked out the bright steel links. Then the torch was set down again.

"Got that?" said Leonard. "No getting up without a ladder. The ladder's up here, and it'll stay here until we come to terms. Now—what about business?"

"What do you want?" said Jervis. "Now you're talking! It's not so much a question of what I want—because I've already told you that you'd suit me best dead—it's a case of what sort of compromise I'm willing to make. You ought to be glad I'm willing to compromise at all."

Jervis kept his mouth shut. If he could have laid his hand on a loose bit of rock, he would have chanced it and had a shot at the pale blur that was Leonard's face. But there weren't any loose bits of rock; the drag of the tide saw to that.

Leonard went on speaking. "I prefer you dead—but you can buy yourself off if you like."

"Look here, Leonard—"

"I don't want you to," said Robert Leonard. "I keep telling you so. I want you dead. You'd be a lot safer dead. You'd be a lot safer, and I'd be a lot richer. It's money in my pocket if you like to be a fool and drown."

There was a hard, bitter silence. Jervis held his tongue, and like David, it was pain and grief to him.

"Well, if you're not going to ask me why it would be money in my pocket if you insist on drowning, I'll tell you all the same, because I'd sooner have all the cards on the table. Mine are all ace, so I don't mind showing them. If you're dead, Rosamund gets the cash—and what Rosamund gets I get. You see, she couldn't marry you the other day, because she was married already. We've been married 11 years."

"Is that true?" said Jervis sharply.

"You've got a nasty unbelieving nature as well as the devil of a temper! I don't think you'll be missed if the tide gets you. True? Of course it's true! I married Rosamund the day she was 21."

"So you see you've kept us out of Wear's a good long time. You know, I shouldn't have been heart-broken if you'd been drowned when you came to grief on the rocks of Croyston 10 years ago."

"You were married to Rosamund then?"

"We'd been married a year. It would have been very convenient if you'd been drowned. I merely mention this to show you that I've waited quite long enough, and I'm getting a bit impatient."

"What do you want?" said Jervis.

"A hundred fifty thousand dollars," said Robert Leonard.

"Talk sense!" said Jervis contemptuously. The sum staggered him.

"Sense?" said Leonard. "I'm giving you your life. If I look that gate behind me and leave you here, I get Wear and a million, don't I? I'm asking you a seventh—I might take the whole, I've only got to leave you here."

"Then why don't you?" said Jervis.

He really wanted to know. If Leonard was married to Rosamund, it was quite obvious that Jervis Wear was worth a good deal more to him dead than alive. Leonard had put the matter in a nutshell. Only why didn't he crack the nut—why any hesitation about leaving Jervis to drown? He felt quite unable to credit Leonard with a quail of conscience.

"Rosamund has an objection," said Leonard regretfully.

Jervis threw up his head and laughed.

"Not really! May I ask why?"

"Sentiment," said Leonard. "Rosamund!"

# Old Romance Renewed Though Eyes Now Blind

PERTH, Western Australia, Oct. 13. (AP)—Many years ago whenever young Charlie Sparkes went to a dance, he looked for a girl named Annie. She was pretty and graceful, and there was no one else with whom he liked to dance so well.

quarta struck him in the eye and destroyed his sight.

Charlie Sparkes, old and blind, was sitting in the Braille society's home the other day.

A woman joined him. She, too, was blind.

She talked to him of the days when she was a light-hearted girl, 50 years ago. She told him of the dances she had been to in Melbourne, and of a young man she always

danced with there. "His name," she said, "was Charlie Sparkes."

They meet often now. They cannot see white hair and wrinkles. To each, the other is young and handsome—gay, dashing Charlie Sparkes, and beautiful Annie.

of \$29,600 was low bidder for the storehouse for the national soldiers' home at Roseburg. Other bids were Murch Brothers, St. Louis, \$31,900; Devereux Olson Construction company, Minneapolis, \$32,200.

**DRESS SALE**—200 new dresses just arrived. A regular \$5 value—special at \$2.95. Other dresses up to \$12.50. Coats \$8.95 and up. Shoes \$1.49 to \$4.95. THE BAND BOX & SHOE BOX. "The store that saves you money."

### BIRTHS

Born to Mr. and Mrs. L. G. Calkins, a daughter, weighing four pounds, at the Community hospital Tuesday.

Broken windows glazed by Trovbridge Cabinet Works.

Real Estate or Insurance—Leave 13 to Jones. Phone 798.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Aerial Polo!



## BOUND TO WIN—Ben Remembers



## S'MATTER POP—No Problem At All



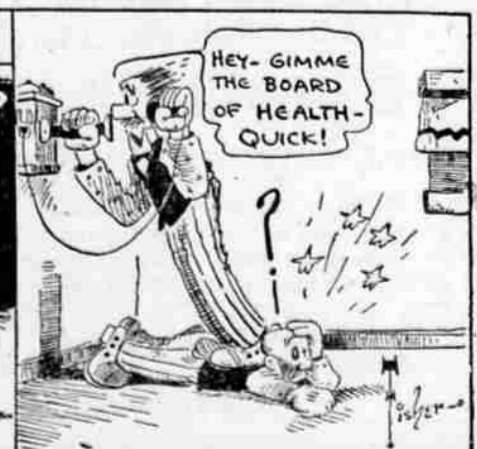
## THE NEBBS—The People's Candidate



## MUTT AND JEFF—Jeff Took The Doc's Orders Too Literally



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## Army Aviators Crash To Death

SAN ANTONIO, Tex., Oct. 13.—(P)—Lieut. Joseph A. Barnes and Private Frederick R. Douglas were killed when their plane crashed at Brooks field today. The plane burst into flames and the bodies were cremated.

## Curtis Stumping Spokane Region

SPOKANE, Wash., Oct. 13.—(AP)—Vice-President Charles Curtis left by automobile at 8:45 o'clock for Pullman, Wash., for a short stop en route to Lewiston to deliver his first campaign speech in Idaho.