

VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

SYNOPSIS: Like a lamb among wolves Margaret Malignt wanders about the Citadel of Mekazen, switching sides, her husband, grows more and more like a Moor, and entangle himself deeper and deeper in the unending intrigues of the palace. The King of Mekazen plots with a German captain to France, Italy, the King's son plots with Major Napoleon Riccioli of the Foreign Legion to take over Riccioli's soldiers and make Riccioli commander of the King's army. Unknown to Margaret, her pit-brood sweetheart, Gibo Salame, is in Riccioli's command.

Chapter 19 RAISUL IN LOVE

JULES: "Is that you, Jules?" said Margaret, confused, suddenly awakened from sleep by a slight sound in the pitch-dark room—for nowadays she slept as lightly as a mouse or a bird.

"Who's there? Is that you, Jules?" repeated Margaret, wondering whether she had been mistaken.

She had retired to rest in the great stone turret-room, leaving Jules smoking with his father, Raisul, the Kald and the curious man whom Pedro Malignt addressed as Herr Schlacht—although Jules had told her that he was a German officer, Ober-Leutnant Carl von Mittengen.

There had been cognac, Algerian elaret, and assorted French liqueurs on the low table in the tiled garden,

"He knows, too, that he is not really persons grata with the Lady Zainub, and that if both she and I became two minds with but a single thought—well, you'd soon be a single woman again. Wouldn't that be nice? For you know you don't love him, Margaret. And surely you must be deadly bored with him by now?"

Springing from the bed, Margaret seized her dressing-gown which lay upon the foot of it, threw it round her, and slipped her feet into the mules which lay beside the bed.

"Have you gone completely mad?" she asked, facing about, to where, between her and the balcony, the figure of Raisul loomed dark against the starlit sky.

"Completely mad," replied Raisul. "Mad for love of you; love at first sight. I saw you at noon on a day in May, and I loved you at a minute past noon on that day, desperately, devotedly, madly, as you say. I loved you then, I have loved you every hour of the day and the night since then. I love you now, and I shall love you every hour of the day and the night until I die. And then in Paradise or Heaven—or Hell—I shall still love you for the whole of that Eternal Day or Night. I tell you..."

"Would you kindly tell me, instead, where my husband is?" Inter-



There was someone in the room!

and Jules had flatly refused to leave the party when she had suggested retiring.

It seemed, nowadays, that he was carrying his principle of "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" altogether too far, and enlarging it to "When in Rome, make your wife do as the Romans' wives do." But there she had drawn a very firm line. Because she was in Morocco, she was not going to behave as a Moorish woman.

There was someone in the room... Margaret felt for the box of matches which should be on the stool beside her low uncomfortable bed.

"Would you mind answering, Jules?" she said, with some asperity.

"Fraid he can't answer," said a voice, "he's—er—speechless."

Raisul.

"D'you mean he's ill? Have you come for me? What's happened?" cried Margaret, sitting up. "Where are the matches?"

"No, I wouldn't say he's ill," replied Raisul, "but I think he will be tomorrow. At the moment he's very drunk indeed. Speechless, as I said. As to whether I've come for you... Well, I've certainly come for a talk with you, my dear. A conclusive one—with no interruptions."

"I'm going to finish what I began saying in England, and what you've contrived to prevent my saying, on numerous occasions, here. And finally, as to the matches, I've got them."

"Go out of my room, instantly. I'll... I'll..."

"In fact, 'Unhand me, monster, said the village maiden to the 'il-lain," continued the cool and mocking voice. "Or you'll do—what? Just what will you do?"

"My husband will..."

"He won't. Don't you think it, my dear. In point of fact, your husband will do exactly as I tell him, for our good Jules knows on which side his bread is buttered. He also knows that some quite funny and amusing things happen in this place.

rupted Margaret, icily. "And I'll tell him something. I'll tell him to give you the finest horse-whipping that ever a gentleman gave a cad."

"My dear, the poor Jules couldn't understand you, for he's far too drunk. And if he were sober he wouldn't understand you, for he's far too wise. He realizes, as you're going to do, that there's no law here—except mine; there are no police—except mine; no friends—except mine; no servants—except mine; no transport—except mine; no food or water—except mine—no hope—except in me."

"For the Kald, my father, rules in Mekazen as Allah rules in Paradise—and I rule the Kald."

"And you call yourself a gentleman and you..."

Raisul laughed again.

"Not a bit of it, my darling. I call myself a man," he interrupted, "and I pay you the compliment of calling you a woman fit to be the mate, and, if you like, the wife, of such a man."

Margaret gasped.

"I can only suppose that you've been drinking, too," she said, endeavoring to control her voice.

"Been drinking? No, I'm drinking now, the sound of your voice, the fragrance of your presence," and Raisul strode toward the spot where Margaret stood.

"That's what I am drinking, Margaret, a million times more intoxicating than alcohol. Alcohol! We Moors invented al-kohl, but not to drink it. We leave that to Christian swine. No, I won't call them that for you are a Christian, for the present. But you are going to be a Moorish princess, Margaret—Sultana of Morocco. I will make you a Queen. I will lay a kingdom at your feet and..."

"Meanwhile you will kindly get out of my room."

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Margaret finds herself in another terrible predicament, tomorrow.

DEATH FOLLOWS BLOWS ON TIRE

KELSO, Wash., March 2.—(AP)—A few blows with a hammer on a weakened truck tire and Chester Morgan, 35, Kelso logger, was on his way to a hospital this morning with injuries that proved fatal within half an hour.

STIR UP TURMOIL CLATSOP JOBLESS

ASTORIA, Ore., March 2.—(AP)—Leaflets bearing the name of the "hunger marchers committee," calling on workers and farmers to stage a hunger march demonstration at the courthouse here March 3, were scattered about the streets of Astoria today.

Atchison, Lumber Magnate Passes

PORTLAND, Ore., March 2.—(AP)—James Clark Atchison, 65, west coast lumberman, who died here yesterday, will be buried tomorrow.

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S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



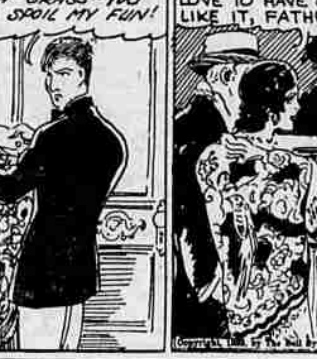
THE FAMILY ALBUM—THE BATHROOM GLASS

BY GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter's Romance Gets A Jolt

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Some Conclusions

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—You Telling Me?

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



INDIANA ENFORCING ACT IS REPEALED

INDIANAPOLIS, March 2.—(AP)—Governor Paul V. McNutt signed the bill repealing the Indiana prohibition enforcement act today.

Governor McNutt also affixed his signature to another bill that not only provides repeal of the prohibition enforcement law but legalizes the manufacture and sale of beer if congress modifies the volstead act.

Rooster's Spur Poisons Judge

PALESTINE, Texas, March 2.—(AP)—Ben J. Kennedy, county judge of Anderson county, died here today from blood poisoning which developed after he was spurred on the knee by a rooster a week ago.

There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation