

# VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

MEANWHILE MARGA ET, sick with indignation, fear, anger, resentment, and a terrible sense of helplessness, passed a bad hour. Had her intuition been right when she first became engaged to Jules, and was there a yellow streak in his character? She had told him, at the time, that she did not love him, and had talked about a twelve-months' engagement.

Here Margaret pulled herself up sharply, once again.

Whoever he was, and whatever he was, she had married him of her own free will, and with her eyes open—and she would make the best of it. He was her husband, and she would make the best of him.

If he were weak, she must try and strengthen him; and if Morocco had a bad effect upon him, she must get him out of the country, and never let him come back to it.

And, in any case, she must get out of this horrible place. It was like living in the Tower of London in the days of Richard the Third, or Henry the Eighth.

And meanwhile what to do? How to find Jules?

How long had she been in this beastly room? And what would happen if she merely sat tight? Elia Beth el Ain—her mother-in-law!—had simply said, "If you insist on remaining in this room, I'll leave it."

Another hour passed, and a gnawing hunger was added to Margaret's other troubles.

If she grew tired of waiting, and went away, would she be readmitted if she returned?

On the other hand, she would look rather foolish if she merely sat there suffering a self-inflicted imprisonment. She was being absurd. Everybody had treated her perfectly kindly, and she had had nothing whatever of which to complain—save for Ralsul's incredible madness of last night.

Of course this woman Elia Beth el Ain was bitterly jealous of her, but surely she would do her own son's wife no harm, nor permit anybody else to injure her?

Anyhow, this was no good. Springing up, Margaret went to the outer door and hammered upon it, as Elia Beth el Ain had told her to do. Almost at once the heavy lock was turned, a big bolt withdrawn, and the door opened by Hassan el Miskeen.

"I want to find my husband, the Sidi Jules Maligni," she said; repeated the statement in French, and attempted it in a shocking jargon of Spanish and Arabic, as she realized that it was a waste of time to address this dirty old man in English or French.

Hassan el Miskeen, smiling pleasantly, shook his head and then, opening widely a cavernous mouth, made patent the fact that he had no tongue.

Margaret shuddered, pushed past him, and rushed down the corridor, turned to the right at the end of it, and tried to remember whether the turning that she should take out of this passage was the third or fourth on the left, or the second or third on the right.

She could try both sides, and if one passage did not lead her to the stairs, another would.

The second on the right seemed familiar, and yes, there were the steep, worn stone steps that led down to the inner courtyard which was the garden and place of recreation.

But no, this was wrong. There should be three flights of stairs, and she had only come down two flights. Should she go back, or follow this empty, unlit passage in search of another descending flight of steps, and if so, should she turn to the left or to the right?

Well, she could explore in both directions, and return to these steps, if she did not find the other flight that she must descend to get down to the courtyard.

She must not get lost, and she must not yield to panic. She must remember that she was an English girl, staying with her parents' dwell. She must fight against this foolish fear, this idiotic feeling that she was caught, trapped, and in some hideous danger.

Turning the corner at the end of the passage, Margaret stopped. What was that sound?

Had somebody coughed or spoken, or dropped something?

Or had it been the sound of a foot step?

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Margaret meets a surprising man, Monday, and is offered aid.

## Chapter 24 RAISUL'S FUN

HOW do you know she threatened to shoot him?" Jules demanded of his mother.

"She told me so herself."

"Well, then, presumably she told you why."

"Why? You know, Ralsul; you know what this Ralsul is. Finding her alone and knowing the state you were in, he thought he'd have some fun."

"Fun?"

"What he calls fun."

"Yes, but surely that's a case for the swift smack, the slap that brings the blush of shame to the cheek of naughtiness. Margaret's an English girl, and they don't go about shooting wayward young men very much. What did happen?"

"Oh, she'll tell you, no doubt, and make a mighty story of it. Probably try to give you the impression that she had a desperate struggle with Ralsul and that the only possible thing now is for you to kill him, to avenge your honor or some hysterical rubbish of that sort."

"That's absurd, of course, but... well... it's a bit difficult. Ralsul mustn't annoy her, and if she really threatened to shoot him he must have annoyed her badly. It's a bit awkward."

"Very awkward. Oh, my son, why on earth did you marry an Englishwoman when you knew that you would come and join your father in Morocco, when the time was ripe?... So unsuitable... only an additional expense and responsibility and anxiety. Now, a girl like this Sara, a girl of the country, with knowledge and understanding..."

Jules Maligni laughed.

"You may laugh at me, my son, but I implore you to heed what I say."

"Well, what do you say, Lady Mabeth?"

"I say this: your wife must not offend Ralsul with her airs and graces."

"But suppose Ralsul offends Margaret?"

"Then one of two things; she must not take offense—or she must go."

"Go where? You don't mean go to Heaven, do you?"

"It's said to be a good place for saints," replied Elia Beth el Ain dryly. "But I did not mean Heaven. She could go back to England."

"I can't go back to England now. Father and I are..."

"I did not say you, my son. I said your wife. Since she finds Ralsul's nonsense so shocking she has a simple remedy—she can go away; she can go back to England—in theory until you rejoin her. If she gets tired of waiting there for you, she can come back again, and see how Ralsul behaves then."

"Why can't women help their husbands instead of hindering them?" she added angrily. "Help them as I've helped mine—at any cost."

"You're different, my dear. You're very different. I put my husband's interests and welfare—let alone his life—before a silly trifle like a kiss."

"Yes, I said you're different from Margaret."

"Very well, let this different woman go back to her own country."

"And what about me?"

"Yes, and what about you—and your father, not to mention your mother—if the girl refuses to go, and also refuses to be friendly with Ralsul?"

"Oh Lord," groaned Jules. "Perfect little headache-cure, aren't you? Better than three aspirins and a cup of coffee, any day."

"I'll have both, I think," he added. "So you beetle off, and make me a cup, strong and black and about a pint of it. Beetle off, Mother, and let Sara bring it."

And having forestalled her daughter-in-law, and sown certain seeds in her son's mind the Lady Elia Beth el Ain "beetled" off.

## FIRST LAMB TONGUE YET TO BE PLUCKED IN ANNUAL CONTEST

The first lamb tongue of the season is yet to be plucked, according to announcement this morning from Johnston's shoe repair shop, where the annual first lambtongue contest is on.

This year is the sixth contest sponsored by Fred L. Johnson, proprietor of the shop. In 1922 the first lambtongue was brought to his shop on March 4. In 1923 it appeared February 14; in 1924 on March 2; in 1925, March 5 and in 1928, March 9.

Unless someone finds the first flower within the next two days, a new record for retarded blooming will be established by the popular local flower.

The boy or girl who brings in the first blossom, be it daisy or orchid in color, will receive new halozies and heels for shoes, free of charge, at Johnston's Shoe Repair shop.

Desirable houses always in first-class condition for rent, lease or sale. Call 109.

Viola Corbin announces new Beauty Shop at Fountain Lodge, 326 W. Main. Phone 917-J. New low prices.

Real estate or insurance—Leave it to Jones. Phone 798.

## JOHNSON SLATED FOR MEAD'S POST

WASHINGTON, March 8.—(AP)—Fred W. Johnson of Rock Springs, Wyoming, today was understood in informed circles on Capitol Hill to be President Roosevelt's selection as commissioner of the general land office.

No successor to Commissioner Elwood Mead of the reclamation bureau yet has been decided on.

Johnson, an attorney and long active in Democratic affairs in Wyoming, was one of the leaders in the Roosevelt campaign in the state last year.

FORD WINS SUIT ON WINDSHIELD CLAIM

PITTSBURGH, March 8.—(AP)—Mrs. May Kable Banker, executrix of the estate of her husband, Arthur L. Banker, today lost her suit for \$18,000 against the Ford Motor company for alleged infringement on a windshield patent.

## S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



## THE FAMILY ALBUM—THE HORN

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



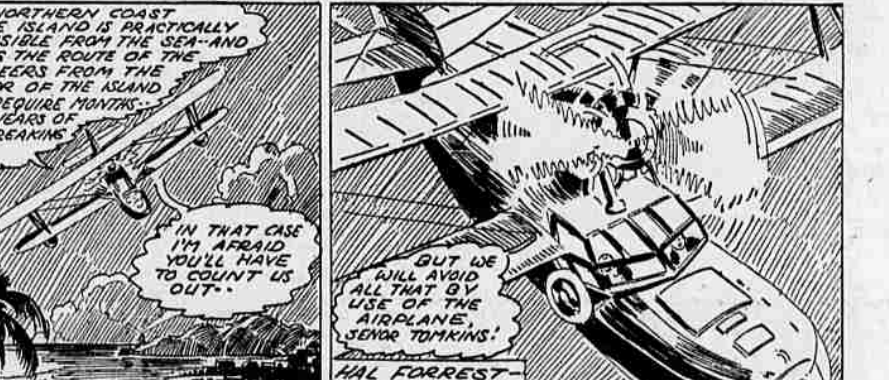
## TAILSPIN TOMMY—You Can't Discourage A "Treasure Fan!"

By ULENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



## BOUND TO WIN—Briar's Discovery!

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—What A Difference

By SOL HESS



## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



## DEPOSIT GUARANTEE IS HARRISON'S IDEA

WASHINGTON, March 8.—(AP)—Senator Harrison (D., Miss.), who will be chairman of the finance committee in the new senate, said today he favored legislation guaranteeing the deposits of all solvent banks and strict federal regulation.

## LABOR TO CO-OPERATE IN MONEY EMERGENCY

WASHINGTON, March 8.—The American Federation of Labor promised complete cooperation and support to the president in the present emergency in a statement today which also said that if currency inflation arose, labor would demand increased wages commensurate to the rise in commodity prices.

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