

VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

SYNOPSIS: Just in time to prevent Major Nicholson, Riccooli's best friend, from being captured by the French Secret Service, the Kaid of Mekazen, Colonel Le Sage of the French Secret Service steps in. He captures Riccooli a few moments before Riccooli planned to enter the hands of the French Secret Service. The Kaid and his posse of loyal men of the Foreign Legion from Riccooli's command wait in the audience chamber for the Kaid, who plans to turn, to capture and torture Le Sage.

Chapter 45

THE TRAP IS SPRUNG
AROUND. The turning of a key in the lock. The door opened, and the Great Kaid, Haroun Abd'allah Karim, stood in the doorway. He entered the room, and, like a following shadow, the giant negro, Ibrahim the Lion, stooping through the six-foot doorway, followed his master. Behind him came the Kaid's confidential scribe.

Softly the door closed behind him, and Le Sage suppressed a sigh of relief. Intent upon his victim, the Kaid noticed the absence of his trusted Vizier, and, in the noise of his booming speech, the faint, almost inaudible sound of a turning, well-oiled key, was lost.

Seating himself on the throne, his bodyguard and secretary behind him, the Kaid smiled again. "Assalamu, aleikum!" he boomed. "How is your health? Well? That is well. We would have you get the fullest enjoyment from such life as may remain to you by the Grace of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate."

Le Sage bowed and seated himself. "I trust that Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate, will not only give the Great Kaid many long years of health, but to me at least an equal number in which I may know that he is—safe where no enemy can reach him, and..."

Leaning back upon his throne, his great jeweled sword across his knees, the Kaid gave vent to his humor in his great roaring laugh for which he was not only famous, but feared.

And scarcely had that leonine roar of dreadful laughter begun before there was another roar, a shout, a cry in Cockney English. "My Gawd! It's 'im! It's 'im!"

Savior Harris sprang to his feet. "E'ung my chum on the 'ooks!" And, leaving the scribes as he shouted, Savior Harris, his fixed bayonet at the charge, rushed upon the Kaid.

Even as Le Sage sprang to his feet, the madman lunged and drove the long lean bayonet through the heart of the Kaid. "Take that, you bloody torturer," shouted the mad Harris, as he drew forth his bayonet and stabbed again. "Ready," shouted Le Sage, striking Ibrahim the Lion on the side of the head with all his strength, as the latter stooped to seize the Kaid's sabre.

Ibrahim staggered and almost fell. Otho leaped upon him, bringing him to the ground, while William Bossom, with excess of zeal, gave the unfortunate scribe so heavy a right-bander on the point of his jaw that he crashed to the ground and lay as one dead.

In a moment Ibrahim the Lion sighed, relaxed, closed his eyes and lay still. "Well, my man," said Le Sage, turning to the panting Savior Harris. "You solved a problem—with the bayonet. What were your orders?"

"I forgot meself, Sir," panted Savior Harris. "E' laughed like that when 'e killed my chum an' tortured me. 'E'd have 'ad you on the 'ooks, Sir."

"What were your orders?" "I see red, sir. I went mad when I 'ard 'im laugh."

"Well, all right, now; madness, all right, now?" "Yes, sir."

Suddenly there was a swift, tremendous swirl of struggling humanity. Ibrahim the Lion had suddenly drawn up his legs, flexed his mighty arms, shot out his feet, sent flying the man whose bayonet was at his throat, crashed together the heads of the men who held his arms, and struggled free.

Leaping like a man of India-rubber to his feet, he snatched his master's sword and sprang at Le Sage. Ere the great shining blade could descend, and cleave Le Sage's skull, Otho struck.

With his bare flat he drove a tremendous well-timed smashing blow between the giant's eyes, driving him staggering back.

Springing in, Otho crashed in a left and right, drove a tremendous right at the negro's mark, and, with his left seized the wrist of his sword-hand—and fell as his foot slipped on the marble floor. Ibrahim the Lion wranched free his sword-hand, and whirled up the sabre, once more to try to decapitate a man.

Otho flung up his arm to guard his head, and Savior Harris again sprang. "You too, you bloody beast," he roared, as he lunged.

Ibrahim, a lion to the last, fell unconscious beside the master for whom he had lived, and from whom he had received nothing but permission to live.

"Thanks, Harris," whispered Otho, as he rose. Le Sage gave directions for the scribe, who still appeared to be unconscious, to be bound and gagged.

"We'll come back here afterwards," said he, and then struck four double knocks upon the door, with the butt of the pistol he had taken from Riccooli.

"All's well," said Le Sage, as Mallign stood in the doorway. But with the Senor Pedro Mallign, obviously all was not well.

Trembling from head to foot, with tears streaming down his cheeks, with shaking, clutching hands and broken voice, he implored Le Sage's instant help.

"What's wrong, man? Pull yourself together," urged Le Sage. "What is it? Has Langaec...?"

"My son, my son," wept Mallign. "Come quickly, Comonel. Something terrible has happened. Hassan el Miskeen is trying to tell me something about Jules and Ralsul. One of them has killed the other, and I fear it is my son who is dead."

And so great was the grief and horror of Hassan el Miskeen that he, too, even dared to pluck at Le Sage's sleeve.

"Ralsul, the Kaid's son? This way?" asked Le Sage, in Arabic. And the dumb slave, darting forward, turned and beckoned, dumbly calling Le Sage on, as does a dog that would lead its master to some tragic spot.

Le Sage hung in doubt for but a second. "What does Mallign in league with Ralsul?"

"The Kaid is dead, long live the Kaid!" Had Pedro Mallign known that Ralsul was hiding in Mallign's room that day, during their quiet little private talk? A plot, a plan to show Ralsul, the Rising Star, how the clever and faithful Mallign had fooled and caught the French officer who pretended to be a German friend and ally?

"Lead on in front of me, Mallign," he said, and gave the Senor Pedro Mallign a gentle push—with the muzzle of his cocked revolver.

"Yes, yes, come on," cried Mallign, and Le Sage decided that the man's state was genuine, and that he was in the grip of a most powerful emotion—sweating, weeping, trembling with horror, fear and grief.

Hassan el Miskeen at length brought the party to a low horseshoe doorway, from which a stone stair wound up in the thickness of the wall, and ended in another low doorway which gave upon a lofty battlement, bathed in brilliant moonlight.

Rushing forward, Hassan el Miskeen dashed, pointing and gibbering, to where a rope, looped round an embrasure-urn, dangled down the wall.

Craning through an embrasure, Le Sage saw that the rope just reached to a small balcony that jutted out from the wall—a dozen feet below.

Trail

TRAIL, March 31.—(Spl.)—Eagle Point Grange ladies were entertained Wednesday by Mrs. Floyd Hutchinson at Mrs. S. W. Hutchinsons. A covered dish luncheon was served at noon. The ladies worked on a quilt

and visited. They presented Mrs. S. W. Hutchinson with a beautiful hand embroidered pair of pillow cases in appreciation of the use of her home. There were 20 Grange ladies and eight guests present. Mr. and Mrs. W. Hughes of Roseburg left for home Wednesday after spending several days with Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Watson. Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. Watson are sisters.

Mrs. Lizzie Nicholson of Ashland was a house guest over the week end of Mrs. Harry Newman. While here Mrs. Nicholson called on old friends. Everyone here is glad to know Mrs. Ed Beckelhymer has recovered sufficiently to leave the hospital. Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Watson entertained with a turkey dinner honoring their guests, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes. Those present included Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Tucker and son Wilber, Doc Grim, Cliff More, Bud Hager and the host and hostess.

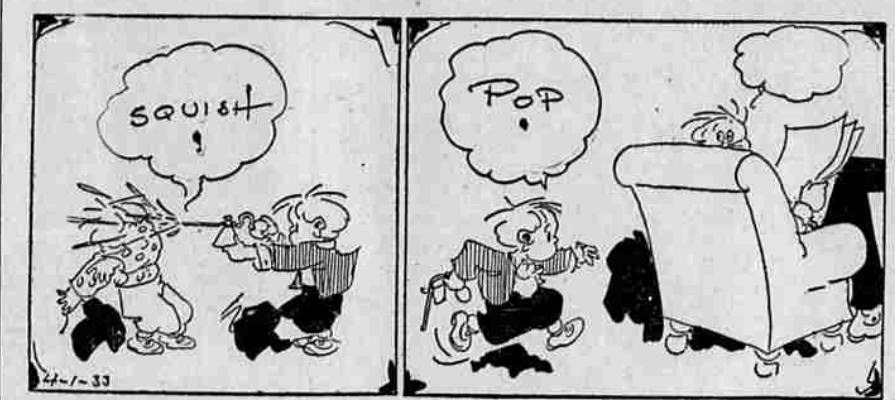
Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Tucker left for Ashland Thursday to be with his mother and brother through the coming summer. Friends here hope they will return again next fall. Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Hutchinson and Hood River, where they expect to reside. They are going into business with Mrs. Hutchinsons parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Ogden. Their many friends here are wishing them success. Mr. and Mrs. B. Morgan entertained at dinner Sunday Mr. and Mrs.

Ed Pence, Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Cotrell and little daughter Barbara and Wes Hagedale. Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Tucker gave a chicken dinner Monday evening with 18 guests present. After dinner visiting was enjoyed.

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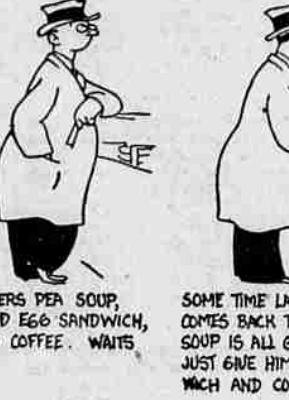
By C. M. PAYNE



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QUICK LUNCH

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Share and Share Alike—That's Skeeter!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Roomers Not Wanted!

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Penny, The Great

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



Eagles To Celebrate Passing Age Pension
Eagles of Medford will motor to Klamath Falls Monday afternoon to join the Eagles in that district in celebrating passage of the old age pension law, sponsored by the lodge. The Klamath Falls meeting will be held at 8:00 o'clock and trucks will be leaving here for the neighboring city at 4:00 o'clock.

All Eagles planning to attend are asked to call Jack Hueston at 1138-L regarding transportation.

The infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Caser, Dean Clarence, born in Eagle Point two years ago when the family lived in the Arglee Green home, passed away March 24 in Medford.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

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