Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: A man is picked up after the Alice Arden is smashed by a storm. In the Elston hospital he mumbles in his sleep about something "like a kid's green beads," and repeats the name "Jimmy Riddell," or perhaps it is "Randal." Nesta Riddell goes to the hospital in response to a query broadcast by the authorities, and is taken to the man's bedside. The nurse is called away by an accident; the man continues to mumble, this time about emeralds. Nesta, frightened, demands permission to remove the man, who is her husband, she says, and tells her brother Tom, who is waiting in a car outside, what she has done.

Chapter Four

DANGER AHEAD

TOM turned the color of a tallow candle.

"The—the emeralds?"

"He kept right on about them—how he'd hidden them, and no one else knew where they were. I tell you he kept right on. I've got to get him away before anyone tumbles to what he's talking about."

Tom leaned back against the side of the car and fixed an alarmed gaze upon his sister's face. His eyes were of the same shape and color as Nesta's; he had the same straight nose and short dark brows, the same line of cheek and chin. But the driving force was lacking. He felt the steel teeth of the trap, and struggled ineffectually.

"Look here, Nesta—"

She mimicked him.

"Look here, Tommy—"

"'Tisn't fair to go bringing me and Min into this. You go off on your own and marry a man we've never so much as set eyes on, and then all in a hurry you come along and tell me he's a crook, and before I know where I am you've dragged me into this Van Berg affair, and there's a man shot and emeralds worth no one knows what missing—and why should I be dragged into it when all I ever did was to lend him my motor-bike? Why, all I saw of him was to hand it over in the dark."

"Hold your tongue!" said Nesta sharply. "You won't come to any harm if you do what you're told. Now look here, Tommy, you're not to get rattled. It's not the first little job we've done together—is it?"

"I'm going straight now I'm married—I told you I was."

She patted his arm.

"So you shall. But we've got to get Jimmy away from here. Listen! He came to himself yesterday, and he didn't know a thing—not his name, nor who he is, nor anything. When he's awake that's how he is; but when he's asleep he talks all the time, and the sort of thing he talks about is the sort of thing that'll land you and me in jail. Now you've got it straight—and now you know why I'm not leaving him here to talk. I want my share of those emeralds, and I bet you want yours. You can go straight afterwards as much as you like, but you've got to help me now."

"Nesta."

She gave his arm a squeeze.

"Buck up, boy! We'll pull it off. I'll get you safely back to Min—don't you worry. Now drive right in—and remember we come from Marley, and all you've got to do is to hold that wheel and keep your tongue between your teeth."

"MISS LEIGH?" said the day nurse.

"Oh yes," said Caroline Leigh in that warm, dark voice of hers.

Someone once said that Caroline's voice was like damask roses. He was an infatuated young man who wrote poetry. Caroline laughed at him kindly but firmly, and all her friends chaffed her about her crimson voice. All the same there was something in it.

"We're up to our eyes," said the day nurse. But she did not say it as firmly as she might have done if Caroline had not been gazing at her with the sort of melting intensity which very few people had been known to resist.

"I know," said Caroline. "And I'm too sorry to bother you, but I've come about the message that was broadcast last night, because I think the man who was picked up may be my cousin, Jim Randal. And oh, please may I see him?"

The day nurse took the time to look at Miss Caroline Leigh. They were busy in the ward, but perhaps not quite so busy as she had said. The six bus cases were none of them desperately serious, and they had all been got to bed and had their injuries dealt with.

She could spare a moment to look at Miss Leigh, who was a very easy person to look at—shining eyes and pretty hair, and a way with her. She was sorry to have to disappoint the eager creature. She didn't look as if she was used to disappointment; she was more like a child that puts out its hands and expects to have them filled with flowers or sweets. "Life isn't like that—well she'll soon find out," said the day nurse to herself.

"I'M sorry," she said aloud, "but I'm afraid it wasn't your cousin who was here."

"Was?" Caroline was the picture of dismay. "Has he gone?"

"The name was Riddell," said the nurse. "And his wife came and took him away."

"Oh, his wife?"

"We let him go because she seemed so keen on it, and there was a bus smash we had to take in. Mrs. Riddell's one of those people who will have it their own way—at least that's how she struck me. I'm sorry it wasn't your cousin."

"Oh," said Caroline—"so am I."

"He was on the Alice Arden?"

"I don't know. Oh, I hope he wasn't!"

"If you don't know, I should go on hoping," said the day nurse.

Caroline looked at her with shining eyes.

"Yes, I can—can't I? You see, I haven't seen him for a long time—oh, not since I was about fifteen—and he's been all over the world—he's an engineer—and he came home in July, and I was in Scotland. Then he wrote from London, and I wrote back and said why not come and join us. And he said he would. And he was going to come by coastal steamer because he liked the sea."

"Then you don't know that he was on the Alice Arden?"

"No. But I'm afraid, because he hasn't written. You're sure it wasn't Jim?"

The nurse nodded.

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"His wife took him away," said the nurse.

Caroline gets a clue, a very small one, tomorrow.

WALNUT BLIGHT CAN NOW BE CONTROLLED

SAN JOSE, Calif., Sept. 26.—(AP)—Development of an effective control for walnut blight after six years of research was announced today by Dr. Bert Rudolph director of the University of California deciduous fruit experiment station here.

Dr. Rudolph described his treatment as an application of "Bordeaux 8-4-50" a fungicidal spray mixture of vitriol lime and water to be used just as new growth starts on the tree in the spring and again after the nuts have set and the buds have disappeared.

Bowman's Beauty Parlor and Barber Shop now located in attractive new quarters at 16 and 18 South Central Avenue.

Heating costs can be reduced. For complete heating service call Art Schmidli 418—1662.

HONEST GIRL RETURNS SHERIFFS LOST MONEY

SALEM, Sept. 26.—(AP)—Sheriff A. C. Burk of Marion county deals with crooks and sharpers, but the opposite was his pleasure yesterday.

A card from Miss Faye Demorest of Portland advised Burk that she found an article bearing his name. Last night he called and identified his wallet containing $80 in greenbacks.

Miss Demorest found the purse near Newberg. Sheriff Burk finally persuaded her to accept one of the greenbacks.

St. Ann's Altar Society is sponsoring a Dinner at Pariah Hall, Wednesday evening from 5:30 to 7:30. Public is invited.

APOLLO PIANO STUDIO—Class lessons for beginners 25c. Right foundation. 126 N. Holly.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE

THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

TAILSPIN TOMMY—West Indian Night Scenes!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

BOUND TO WIN—What Now?

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—I Should Say Not!

By SOL HESS

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

CHAMPION 'BOOMER' PRINTER SUCCUMBS

NEW CANAAN, Conn., Sept. 26.—(AP)—Edmon W. Chan, 80-year-old compositor, whose boast it was that he had worked for newspapers in nearly every state in the union, died today.

He had worked in the composing room of the New Canaan Advertiser 20 years.

He laid claim to being the founder of the first newspaper in Seattle, Wash.

Auto glass, plate and shatterproof. Brill Metal Works.

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