

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

PROPHET: A man, picked up on the shore after the wreck of the Alice Arden, has been identified by Nesta Riddell as her husband, Jimmy Riddell, and taken to her brother Tom's home in Ledington. Shortly after, Caroline Leigh arrives at the hospital where the man had been, searching for her distant cousin, Jim Riddell. She is about to leave disappointed when the nurse mentions a scrap of letter in the man's pocket, signed by someone named "Caroline." Caroline determines to continue the apparently hopeless search. Meanwhile, the man awakens and Nesta tells him he is her husband. He declares he does not know her; neither can he recall other events of the past.

Chapter Eight STILL LOST

SOMETHING began to roar in Jim's ears. He felt himself slipping and fell back against the pillows. The room went round. He heard the women's voices as they hear voices in the roar of heavy traffic. They came and went, and they meant nothing. Actually he had done no more than lean back and close his eyes.

Min Williams said, "Oh, he's fainted!"

Nesta took her by the shoulders with a quick, "Run along and don't talk nonsense!"

After that the door was shut. Nesta stood waiting with her back against it, and in a moment he was looking at her. His eyes were of so dark a gray as to seem black. His brows frowned above them, making the shadow deeper. He went on speaking as if there had been no interruption.

"When were we married?"
"On the twenty-fifth of July."
"Of what year?"
"This year."

"This is—what month?"
"August."
"What date?"
"The thirteenth."

"We were married—here?"
"No in London." She crossed the room, opened a drawer, and came to him with a paper in her hand.

"There's the certificate."
A voice in his mind said quickly, "She had it ready." It was like what stage directions call a voice off. It didn't seem to have anything to do with him, but he remembered it afterwards. At the time, he was looking at the certificate, which set forth that James Riddell had married Nesta Williams at a registry office in Kensington on the 25th of July, 1931.

Nesta put out her hand to take the paper back. The hand shook, and all at once it came to him that, whether he liked her or not, it was hard lines on her. He didn't like her, but it was damned hard lines. Her hand shook. There was enough to make him shake.

He said in a constrained voice, "I don't know what to say—I can't remember."

THERE was no more talk that day. It was Min who brought him his meals, and Min was much too scared to talk. She left the door wide open, put down the tray, and was gone. He guessed she thought of a man who had forgotten his name and his wife as well over the border line of insanity.

Presently she would come back with a quick glance over her shoulder, pick up the tray, and hurry from the room. He could almost hear her breath of relief as the door swung to. Nesta never came near him.

He lay in the darkened room and wrestled with the thing that had happened to him. Presently the sheer blank horror passed. He wasn't mad. His head ached, but he could order and control his thoughts in a perfectly normal manner. He could repeat the multiplication table and the capitals of all the countries in Europe.

He knew all the ordinary things which don't need thinking about, but he didn't know anything at all about himself. The minute he began to think about himself the fog came up and choked his mind, and with the fog, the horrible panic sense of being lost in empty space.

He forced thought back to the things he knew. He had had a knock on the head. His memory would come back all right if he would let it alone. That was it—he'd got to let it alone—keep himself quiet, eat, sleep, say the multiplication table, conjugate French verbs, count sheep jumping over a hedge.

The sun went behind a cloud, the room darkened. Presently he did sleep, and, sleeping, heard again that voice which he took to be his own. Echoing it, he muttered and cried out.

Min ran half way up the stairs

and called to Nesta shut in her room.
"Nesta! He's talking to himself!"
There was no answer.
"Nesta! He does frighten me. He just keeps right on. Can't you come down?"

Nesta's door opened. Nesta stood there, harshly contemptuous.
"What a baby you are!"
"He's—right on talking."
"Well, you needn't take any notice, need you? Go into the kitchen and shut the door!"

With a frightened gasp Min took in the fact that Nesta was dressed for the street.

"You're not going out!"
"Why shouldn't I go out?"
"I can't stay alone here."
"Why, what d'you think he'll do to you?"

"Oh, Nesta, please don't go." Nesta pushed past her.

"Don't be a fool, Min!" she said, and ran downstairs.

There were three rooms on the ground floor—kitchen, parlor, and bedroom. The two latter were at the back. Nesta stood for a moment at the foot of the stairs. The vague mutter of a man's voice came along the passage. After a moment's hesitation she walked to the bedroom door and stood there listening with the handle turned and the mutter louder. Every now and then there were words.

"Green—heads—" said the muttering voice. "Finest in the world—no one knows but me—no one—green—like a kid's head—" Then, with a change of tone, "They'll never find them—nobody'll ever find them—unless I show them how—Emily's dead."

NESTA had pushed the door ajar. If she spoke to him, would he answer, or would he wake? Old Caroline Bursell used to say that if you could put a sleeping person's right hand into a basin of cold water without waking them, they would answer you anything in the world you liked to ask. People said she'd done it too, and that was why she had such a hold over Mr. Entwistle—she'd certainly got something more than a housekeeper's place at the hall.

"Isn't it awful!" said Min's voice at her elbow.

Nesta shut the door and whirled round in a fury.

"Get into the kitchen and stay there!" she said, and banged out of the house.

It was a little house in a street of little houses on the outskirts of Ledington. She turned her back on the town and walked in the opposite direction until the rows of houses gave way to fields and hedges, with here and there a cottage or a farmstead.

She was walking to walk the anger out of her. She didn't care where she went or how far. She was walking to get away from the look in Jim's eyes when he heard she was his wife. If she couldn't walk away from the anger which was tearing her, she might just as well throw in her hand.

What did it matter how he looked at her as long as she got the emeralds? This was the cool, calculating Nesta who bossed her brother and meant to boss Jim Riddell.

"I'm not poison, for him to look at me like that! What'd he do if I chucked him out to go on the parish?" This was a curious incalculable Nesta who had seen herself played with the thought of taking Jim Riddell twenty, thirty, forty miles into the country and leaving him nameless, penniless.

She could do it easily enough—another sleeping draught, Tom's car, a quick run out to the marshes or Winborough Common. "Wouldn't mind if he died either. If there was another fog—" she pulled herself up with a jerk. And throw away the emeralds! Not much! He knew where they were, and he'd got to say.

She walked on, her mind very busy. Min had got to be kept away from him. Fortunately she was scared to death. "She is a fool. But then Tom would marry a fool. He wanted a change after me—somebody to make him feel the real human." She gave a laugh of affectionate contempt. "Tom! Anyhow he'll do as I tell him, or he'll know the reason why."

She walked for an hour, and came home with her plans made. Tom was back from the garage, and Min was all smiles again.

They left Jim Riddell to himself and turned on the radio in the parlor.

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Tomorrow, Jim finds he can walk.

KENNEL-ELLIS TO PROMOTE CONTEST

For the third consecutive year, the Kennel-Ellis artist photographers, 32

North Central avenue, are sponsoring a big photographic contest for babies and children between the ages of 8 months and 8 years. This photographic event has in the two years' time, reached surprising proportions. In 1932 there were approximately 500 sittings. Merchandise awards for this year's winners are to be given by: M. M. Dept. Store, Cupp Furniture Store, Pluhner's Bakery, Schade's Jewelry, Strang's Drug Store, Ray's Barber Shop, Lampert's Sporting Goods, Snider's Dairy.

As in former years, four different entries will be made: babies from 8 months to 12 months; girls from 1 to 5 years; boys from 1 to 5 years and twins.

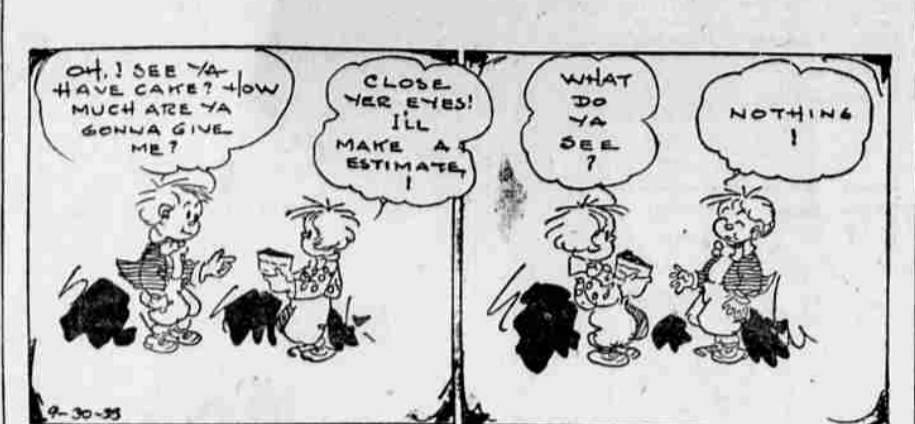
The judging is done from the photographs, prizes awarded for the most winsomeness and attractiveness. The child's clothing or the photograph itself do not enter into the judging. The judges will be three prominent local Medford people, one who have no immediate interest in any younger children. The exhibit of portraits of the baby

show, together with specimens of general portraiture will be on display in the lobby of the Hotel Holland at a date to be announced later. Heating costs can be reduced. For complete heating service call Art Schmidt; 418-1022.

Card of Thanks
We wish to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to our neighbors and friends for their kind deeds and words in our recent bereavement; also for the beautiful floral offerings; Mrs. Margaret Germer and family.
For Sale—Fresh Chinook salmon eggs Valentine's Cafe.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



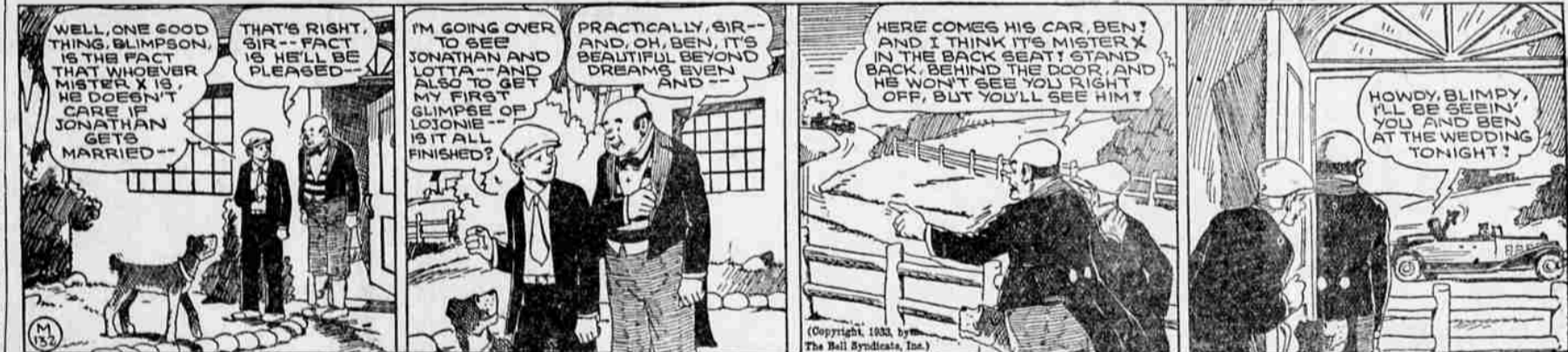
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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Hail—And Farewell To The Bandits!



BOUND TO WIN—The Stranger Grows Stranger

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Extra Special Service

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



Culy Identified As Bear Slayer

C. N. Culy was the member of C. L. Macdonald's hunting party, who bagged the bear near Burns last week as was learned yesterday, after the bear story had passed around the town from one member of the hunt to another.

Culy, who apparently was too bashful to admit his own good luck, said "axx Macdonald." The latter could not be located so the bear went unclaimed in Friday's Mail Tribune. It weighed approximately 200 pounds, and its appearance caused Culy great palpitations of the heart and a little "bear" fever, fellow nimrods stated.

WE'RE CARRYING OUR END!
WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT
THE PERFECT GUM

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