

# Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

**SYNOPSIS:** The man Nestor Kildell claimed as her husband has fled. Nestor told her he had stolen the Van Berg emeralds and shot their owner. Flashes of memory he cannot pin down make him fear she tells the truth. Caroline Leigh thought the man might be Jim Randall, her cousin; Nestor would not let her see him, however. Now Caroline has caught sight of a man wearing her cousin's hat at night. He looks a little like Jim. She follows him; she is sure it is Jim!

## Chapter 11 THE MEETING

"JIM—what's the matter? Why do you look like that, as if you didn't know me?"

He said in a heavy, shaken voice, "I—don't—know you."

The hands let go of his arm; she stepped back. He had a sense of emptiness and loss.

And then she was laughing—such a pretty laugh, low and full of something that was very young and innocent.

"But I'm Caroline! Darling—didn't you guess? I don't call that a bit bright of you. Who did you think I was?"

He shook his head. "I don't know... Caroline?"

Caroline stopped laughing, because something in the slow tentative way in which he said, "Caroline!" made her stop.

"Jim—what's the matter? Jim darling!"

After a moment he said, "Why do you call me that?"

And all at once Caroline began to feel cold. The dream was changing in the way dreams do. One minute she had found Jim and her heart was singing with joy, and the next there was a vague something that was cold and frightening. She didn't know what it was, and that made it worse.

She said, "What do you mean, Jim?" and he caught her up in a loud harsh voice.

"Why do you call me Jim? Jim what?"

Caroline said, "Oh!" and backed away.

"Jim—what's the matter?"

"Jim what?"

"Aren't you well?"—That was just a whisper.

He controlled his voice. "Tell me why you called me Jim."

"Because it's your name. Don't you know?"

"No."

"Jim darling, don't you know that you're Jim Randall?"

He went past her in a blundering sort of way—right past her and as far as the stone steps which led up to the heavy door. He sat down on the second step and leaned over his knees with both hands covering his face. It was just as if a dam had broken. All those things which had been battering against his consciousness came flooding in through the breach. He was giddy and buffeted.

He sat there, and knew that he was Jim Randall, and that this was Hale Place where he had grown up. This was Hale Place, and he was Jim Randall. But of course he was Jim Randall.

Who was Jim Riddell? "You're Jim Riddell, and I'm your wife."

Who had said that? Nestor—Nestor Riddell. "I'm Nestor"—"I'm Caroline." Nestor—Caroline—Jim... Jim Riddell—Jim Randall.

He lifted his head like a man coming up out of deep water.

"I'm Jim Randall, and this is Hale Place."

Caroline was sitting on the step beside him. Her hand came out and touched his.

"Didn't you know?"

"No."

"Oh, Jim! But you know now."

"Yes." He gave her hand a squeeze. "It's awfully odd—" He stopped, laughed a little uncertainly, and let go of her. "Odd? It makes my head go round!"

Caroline did not speak. She didn't really want to speak. She wanted to sit quite still and let the knowledge that Jim wasn't drowned soak right down into her. It was like silver water coming in with waves of joy. It was like a tide of light and happiness.

She didn't feel dizzy like Jim; she felt safely, blessedly secure and fixed. Everything was right again, and Jim was here; if she put out her hand, she could touch him. But she didn't really want to put it out.

Just for the moment she had all the happiness that she could hold. One drop more, and it might brim

over and drain away. When she up, she leaned her shoulder against the stone balustrade which flanked the steps and watched him with shining eyes.

He walked to the edge of the grass and, turning, looked again at the house. That was just how she had seen him from her window. How long ago? Half an hour? It was very strange to think that the world could change and be quite a different world to you in half an hour.

Jim stood and looked at the house. He looked at it for a long time. Then he walked to the edge of the gravel sweep and back again. He did this several times, and just at the end a little whispering dread stirred in Caroline's mind.

She pulled herself up by the balustrade and stood on the step above him. He said,

"Caroline, I'm in a mess."

"So that's why she had begun to be afraid. She said,

"What sort of a mess, Jim?"

"I don't know that it's fair to tell you—in fact it's not. I'm confused still, but I do know that you oughtn't even to be here."

"How dreadful!" said Caroline. "Where else ought I to be?"

"In bed—and you'd better be getting along, my dear. I don't know how you came here at all."

"Oh, I followed you. All romantic, darling—it really was. I looked out of my window, and you lifted up the latch and came into the garden and stood looking up. And I knew you at once, so I followed you. And if you think, after that, I'm going back to bed without hearing all about everything, well, you've just got to think again, darling—and quite differently."

"This was a Caroline he knew—a sweet, imperious, gently obstinate Caroline, with a laugh in her voice and a coaxing hand on his arm. Since she could speak at all he had been "Jim darling." He said heavily,

"All the same, you'd better go."

"As if I would! Jim—tell me—what's the matter?"

"Go home, Caroline!"

"You're home."

He pulled away from her roughly. "Don't talk nonsense! Then, on a changed note, "Caroline—go!"

The laugh went out of her voice as she said,

"You know I won't go. You know I won't."

"I know you ought to."

"We ought to do lots of things that we don't do. And this is one of the things that I'm not going to do."

She came down from the steps and slid a hand through his arm. Her voice dropped on to a deep loving note.

"It's no use, darling—you've got to tell me. Better get it over. You can't make me go."

"I ought to be able to make you."

"Come and sit down," said Caroline seriously. "Now, Jim—what have you been doing, and why did you let me think you had been drowned?" Her voice went down into despairing depths.

"Did you?"

"Yes—in the Alice Arden. And there was an S.O.S. about a man in hospital at Elston who had lost his memory, and I went to see if it was you, and they said—Jim, they said that he had just been fetched away by his wife. That wasn't you?"

"Yes."

"How could it be you?"

"It was."

"How could it be?"

Jim was silent. He did not know of any answer to her question.

She went on in a trembling voice. "I went to Ledington. The nurse said you had my letter—a bit of it—the bit with my name—with Caroline—so I went. But it wasn't you, Jim—it wasn't you."

"You went to Ledington?"

"I found the woman. She dropped a bill, and the nurse gave it to me, so I found her. Her name was Riddell—Mrs. Riddell. She was the most horrible woman. But it was her husband who was in the hospital at Elston—it wasn't you."

Jim did not speak. He looked through the moonlight to the dark trees.

"It was her husband," Caroline said in a whisper. "It couldn't be you—you're not her husband."

He spoke then in a loud, harsh voice.

"She says I am."

(Copyright, 1933, J. B. Lippincott Co.) Caroline, tomorrow, learns some startling things from Jim.

# IDAHO TOT DIES IN HOME ABLAZE

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho, Oct. 16.—(AP)—Richard Singer, 5 years old,

was burned to death after his mother, Mrs. W. E. Singer, was severely burned in heroic attempts to rescue him from their burning home at Squaw Bay, near here, last night. A three-year-old brother escaped. Mrs. Singer, with a sister, Mrs. Robinson, left the house to search for straying livestock. Returning, they found the house in flames. Frantically the mother tried to

make her way in the burning house, but was forced back by the flames. The smaller brother said Richard had been playing with matches.

# TRUCK LAW WAITS COURT DECISION

SALEM, Oct. 16.—(AP)—A moratorium on bus and truck law arrests

was announced late Saturday by Public Utilities Commissioner C. M. Thomas until he confers with members of the Oregon Truck Owners and Farmers' Protective association Thursday. A supreme court decision on appeal of the constitutionality of certain provisions of the law was expected this week.

Portland Leader Dead PORTLAND, Oct. 16.—(AP)—Albert Edward Jenkins, 55, prominent wholesale grocer here, died suddenly late Saturday from a throat infection which developed into pneumonia. He had retired from business five years ago. Jenkins was a brother of Hopkin Jenkins, principal of Jefferson high school, and was prominent in the business life of the city.

## S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Back On The Job!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



## BOUND TO WIN—The Stranger's Departure

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—Oh Yeah?

By SOL HESS



# NAKED ACTS TABOO ON GOTHAM STAGE

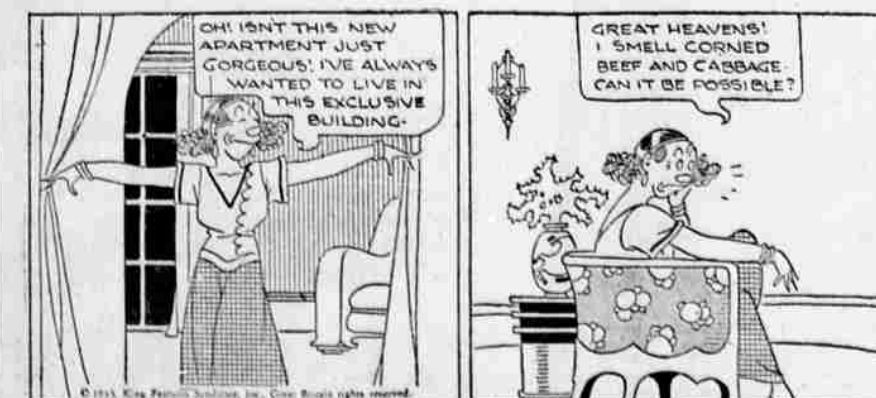
NEW YORK, Oct. 16.—(AP)—The managers of two burlesque theaters were told to eliminate "indecent" diabolical acts today by Sidney S. Levine, new license commissioner, who made Sally (Pat) Dance) Rand put on bloomers last week.

The theatres to which Levine delivered his "dress up or close up" ultimatum were the Irving Place theatre, owned by District Attorney Thomas C. T. Crain and operated by an amusement corporation, and the Republic theater, in West 42nd St.

Gators Up North. ROCK ISLAND, Ill., Oct. 16.—(AP)—They're finding alligators in the Rock river. The second one sighted was killed by Charles Hutchins, operator of an inn near Moline, Ill.

## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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