

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: By sheer accident, Caroline had found her cousin, Jim Randal, whom she had thought drowned. But his memory of past events is confused; he has been told by Vesta Niddell that he is her husband, and worse, that he has stolen the Van Berg emeralds and shot their owner. And his memory shows him flashes of himself drinking with Van Berg, and of the emerald in Van Berg's hands! Jim cannot disprove Vesta, since he cannot remember his immediate past. So Caroline starts to London to check up on Vesta's marriage, and on the train bears that glasses are being lighted for finger prints by the police. She is frightened.

Chapter 25 SUDDEN DECISION

Mrs. Rodgers sunk her voice to a sepulchral whisper.

"There was a tray with whiskey and soda and two glasses in Mr. Van Berg's study, and the police took 'em for finger-prints. And Mrs. Henry says to me, 'That wasn't no plain straightforward burglar,' she says. 'If a burglar comes in on a gentleman in the middle of the night, they don't sit down and have drinks together—not much they don't,' she says."

"Were the glasses full or empty?" said the shy young man.

"Empty down to the last drop," said Mrs. Rodgers. "And what's more—but there, praps I didn't ought to repeat that."

"I'm sure none of us will let it go any further," said the elder Miss Borin.

"Well, I don't know as I'd better, seeing as Mrs. Henry wouldn't ha' told me if it hadn't been for me overhearing what passed between her and Mrs. Van Berg's maid."

Caroline's heart began to beat hard and fast. What was she going to hear? She felt as if at any moment this fat good-natured woman might say something that couldn't ever be unsaid again—something dangerous, something that might hurt Jim.

Everyone was begging Mrs. Rodgers to go on.

"Well, I don't know as I ought. That's the worst of talking—you run on, and then you can't take it back again. Lor bless me if we haven't got to Meade already!—and perhaps just as well, or I might have said more than I ought. Now, I wonder if anyone 'ud be good enough to hand my basket out after me. It's a deal easier to get out backwards when you come to my size."

The train jerked and clanked to a standstill. The shy young man opened the door. Mrs. Rodgers backed out, took her basket, and bade the carriage at large an affable farewell.

WITHOUT having thought of it beforehand, Caroline found herself saying, "Please may I pass?" She had to say that because the schoolboy was standing right in the doorway. He moved as the guard came along to shut the door.

Caroline said in a soft breathless voice, "I'm getting out," and jumped down on to the platform just as the train began to move. She didn't wait for the guard to scold her.

Mrs. Rodgers was already giving up her ticket. Caroline ran after her and caught her up just outside the station where Meade Hill runs steeply up between hedges full of brambles and elder.

Mrs. Rodgers stared at her in astonishment, and Caroline realized that she had no idea what she was going to say. It must have come over her suddenly that she simply couldn't let Mrs. Rodgers go, and now that she had caught her up she said the first thing that came into her head.

"Can I help you with your basket?" Mrs. Rodgers looked her up and down.

"What's a young lady like you want to carry my basket for?" "I'm going your way."

"And how do you know what way I'm going, miss?" Caroline looked rather as if she had been caught stealing jam. Her lips trembled into a smile.

"I ran after you," she said.

Mrs. Rodgers set down her basket in the road and nodded.

"Honesty's the best policy. What brought you after me? For by the look of you you hadn't any thoughts of getting out here."

"No," said Caroline, "I should truly like to carry your basket." She picked it up, and they began to mount the hill.

"And that's what you came after me for, I'll be bound!"

"No—I came after you because I wanted to talk to you."

"That's straight anyway. And what have you got to say?"

"I didn't want to say anything. I

wanted you to tell me what Mrs. Henry told you."

Mrs. Rodgers swung her ample black skirts in silence. They just cleared the dust of the road. Her color deepened as she climbed.

"Mrs. Rodgers—"

Mrs. Rodgers turned a streaming crimson face upon her.

"Talk on this 'ill, I can't," she panted, and Caroline had to get what comfort she could from that.

At the top of the hill there was a stile, and on the step of the stile Mrs. Rodgers seated herself and proceeded to get her breath. Caroline stood before her with the basket and felt her courage slip and slip away.

"Well!" said Mrs. Rodgers at last. Caroline looked at her imploringly.

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AUTO CRASH BASIS OF DAMAGE SUIT

Two damage suits were filed in circuit court Thursday against Philip Coffin and the Firestone Service Stores as the result of an accident on Riverdale avenue in this city October 6.

The first, filed by Valentine Ritech, asks \$20,000 and attorney's fees of \$350 on the claim that the plaintiff received serious injuries in a wreck here, caused by the defendant.

The second, filed by Alice Lowder, administrator of the estate of R. N. Lowder, deceased, asks \$10,730 on the claim that Mr. Lowder died in Josephine county on Oct. 12 of injuries received in the same collision. She also claims that the defendant was responsible for the wreck.

Guy C. Masey, 22, of Zebulon, N. C., is the youngest deputy sheriff ever appointed in his county.

PACIFIC WALNUT RULES IN EFFECT

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 20.—(AP)—Walnut control board with headquarters here, announced today that all walnut growers in California, Oregon and Washington are operating under the "license for packers of walnuts grown in California, Oregon and Washington," as signed by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, October 11.

"One of the important regulations established by this license," said

Goodspeed, "requires every lot of merchantable walnuts shipped or otherwise disposed of by packer to be covered by certificate."

A historic blockhouse on Johnson's Island in Lake Erie, where Confederate officers were imprisoned during the civil war, is to be restored and preserved. It has been used as a stable.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



GLUYAS WILLIAMS

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10-20

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Missing Mail Plane Carries Heavy "Pay-Load"

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—The Unsigned Message

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBES—The "Go Between"

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



New Flight Record
DERRBY, West Australia, Oct. 20.—(AP)—Charles T. P. Uim and three companions arrived here at 4:15 p. m. Greenwich meridian time (11:15 a. m., E. S. T.), today, establishing a new record.

SALINA, Ore., Oct. 20.—(AP)—The bus and truck law, recently held constitutional by the state supreme court, will be discussed here tonight by truckers and State Utilities Commissioner C. M. Thomas, administrator of the law.

NRA
WE DO OUR PART

NOW IT'S UP TO YOU

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