

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: First Caroline Leigh learns from Suse Van Berg that Jim Randall and Elmer Van Berg had quarreled the night Van Berg was shot and the famous Van Berg emeralds were stolen. Suse threatens to tell the police if Elmer dies. Then, frightened by a storm, Caroline blunders into Caroline Russell's room and overhears a "recess" in which the "Blue Room" at Hale Place, Jim's boyhood home, is described in connection with the emeralds. Caroline loves Jim, and is sure he had nothing to do with the theft—but Jim's memory has gone, and he cannot help prove his innocence. He is hiding at Hale Place.

Chapter 37

HALE PLACE AGAIN

IT was more than an hour past midnight when Caroline came to Hale Place again. Out in the dark, with the damp air blowing in her face and the trees of the avenue making a soft swishing sound overhead, Caroline had her first chance to think over the events of the afternoon. The more she thought about them, the more they frightened her. If Elmer Van Berg died and Suse went to the police with her story of Jim's fingerprints... Caroline simply couldn't force her thought any farther. It encountered an icy wall of fear and shuddered back.

She passed the scene in Caroline Russell's room. The woman terrified her with her smooth voice, and her hints, and her pool of ink. But she hadn't looked into the pool while she described the Blue Room. Caroline wondered, shivering, whether she knew what room it was, and where. She felt sure that Nesta didn't know.

How could Suse Van Berg's emeralds be at Hale Place? How could they be in the Blue Room? Caroline Russell had never said that they were there, but she had described the room. She had described the room, and she had begun to describe the bed. Was it possible? Nesta had stopped her. If she had only known...

"No, it's silly to feel so frightened. She doesn't know—she doesn't! Suppose Caroline Russell tells her... She mustn't—oh, she mustn't! Hurry—hurry and tell Jim!" She ran the last part of the way and came breathless to the back door.

It was wide open, and that halted Caroline. She had brought a flashlight with her this time, and she sent the little bright ray quivering ahead of her before she entered.

ALL at once she felt that the ray of her torch was a danger. Suppose yesterday's burglar had returned. Suppose Jim were not here... She did not wait to suppose any more, but turned off her torch and went through the hall and up the stairs in the dark.

The house had an empty, friendly feeling. It did not frighten her to be alone in it. Generations of her own people had gone up and down these same stairs, had been born and married and had died in the dark rooms on either hand.

She came to the door of the Blue Room and, feeling before her, found it open too. She knew that the room was empty before she crossed the threshold. She stood in the middle of the floor and switched on her torch again. This was what Caroline Russell had seen with those pale, fixed eyes. "I am in the middle of the room—I am turning—" That was what Caroline Russell had said.

Caroline Leigh stood in the middle of the floor and turned slowly, counting the windows as Caroline Russell had counted them—one, two, three, four, five narrow windows like slits. Then the fireplace—two candlesticks on the shelf, one of them broken, with the candle lying beside it.

She went on turning. Caroline Russell had said, "I am still turning." The door came next, then a space of wall, and then the recess that held the bed. The torch shone on the wall and flickered over the bed foot and the two carved pillars.

Caroline sent the ray of her torch straight to the head of the bed, a piece of massive carving supported by pillars. The pattern of the carving was an apple-tree with Adam and Eve on either side of it, and in the middle of the tree a shield with the arms of Ralph de Burgh, whose heiress had married a Randall and brought this bed with her.

The arms should have been there, a castle and three spear-heads, but—Caroline caught her breath. The beam wavered in her shaking hand. With both hands on the torch to steady it, she came up to the bed.

THE shield stood out at an angle like a door and showed a dark cavity behind it. Caroline knew the

trick of it well enough. Jim had showed it to her when she was fourteen. You twisted the third apple from the bottom, and it turned the latch which held the shield in place.

She knelt on the bed and focused the torch upon the cavity. It was a little cupboard with a shelf across it. In the bottom of it was a pencil and a button. Caroline remembered them quite well; she had put them there ages and ages ago. There was nothing else at all in the little secret cupboard.

Only someone who knew the trick could open the shield.

Who had opened the shield? Caroline went to the door and



Caroline focused the torch upon the cavity.

looked down the passage. It was empty. Where was Jim?

Caroline came slowly downstairs into the hall. The house wasn't empty now. It was full of all the people she had known when she was a child—Mrs. Crofts, the very fat cook; Miss Milton, the jolly young governess; Aunt Margaret's maid, Hallday, frightfully grim; Nanna, who spoiled them all; and a succession of maids, with one or two standing out from the rest—that very pretty Cissie Jones; Maggie, who had to be called by her surname, because her Christian name was the same as Aunt Margaret's, and Emily, whom nobody liked. There had been a little mystery about Emily—she just went without any notice. That wasn't like Aunt Margaret. Looking back, Caroline wondered what Emily had done.

Caroline had looked into the drawing room and library. It was what she was opening the dining-room door that she remembered Emily's surname, Rudd. It came to her in one of those quick irrelevant flashes which sometimes show one things which have been forgotten for years.

The dining-room was quite empty. She came to the back door again. The house was empty behind her. Jim wasn't there. She felt very tired.

She switched off her light and stepped out into the dark yard, closing the door of the house behind her.

(Copyright, 1933, J. B. Lippincott Co.) Jim makes a terrible discovery, tomorrow.

FOREST EXPLOITATION ERA DECLARED ENDED

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3.—(AP)—The end of forest exploitation in the United States is foreseen here today

as a check of national and state foresters and representatives of the lumber industries found all groups emphatic in the opinion "that forest perpetuation has been definitely determined upon."

Lumbermen and foresters have found a common ground of action in their pledges to "make sustained production of forest resources a definite part of their operations," thus

ending "the war between lumbermen and foresters."

SALT LAKE CITY, Nov. 3.—(AP)—Stockholders, members and investors of the Western Loan and Building company, scattered over eight western states, have been called to meet here December 15 to vote on a proposed plan for reorganization of the \$25,000,000 concern.

LOCAL HUNTERS HOME WITH FINE ELK TROPHIES

County Assessor J. B. Coleman, Ray Coleman, Oscar Lewis and Dan

Schuss of Jacksonville, returned last week from an elk hunt in the Wallowa mountains near Enterprise and had good luck. J. B. got a five-pointer, Schuss one with seven points on one side and six on the other and Lewis a four pointer. They secured some nice specimens of elk's teeth for watch charms or rings.

Two Killed When Plane Strikes Sea

AVALON, Catalina Island, Cal., Nov. 3.—(AP)—McFarlane Moore, son-in-law of the late Rear-Admiral William A. Moffett, naval aviator, and George Baker, Long Beach, airline copilot, lost their lives today in a hydro-airplane accident offshore from here.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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THE MINUTE THAT SEEMS A YEAR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TENSE MOMENT ON THE GRIDIRON WHEN YOUR MOTHER, WHO SUPPOSES YOU ARE TAKING A MUSIC LESSON, PASSES BY ALONG WITH YOUR DOG

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

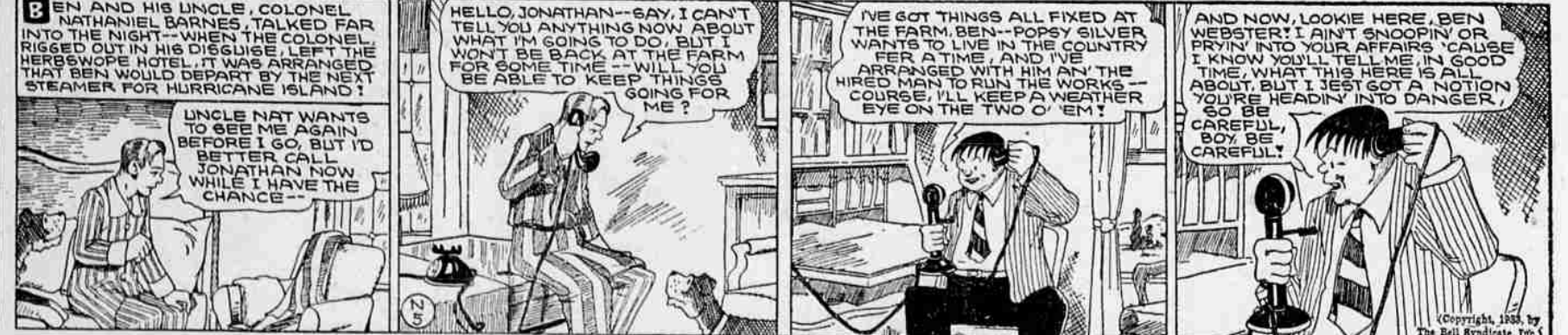
TAILSPIN TOMMY—First Hand Information!



By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

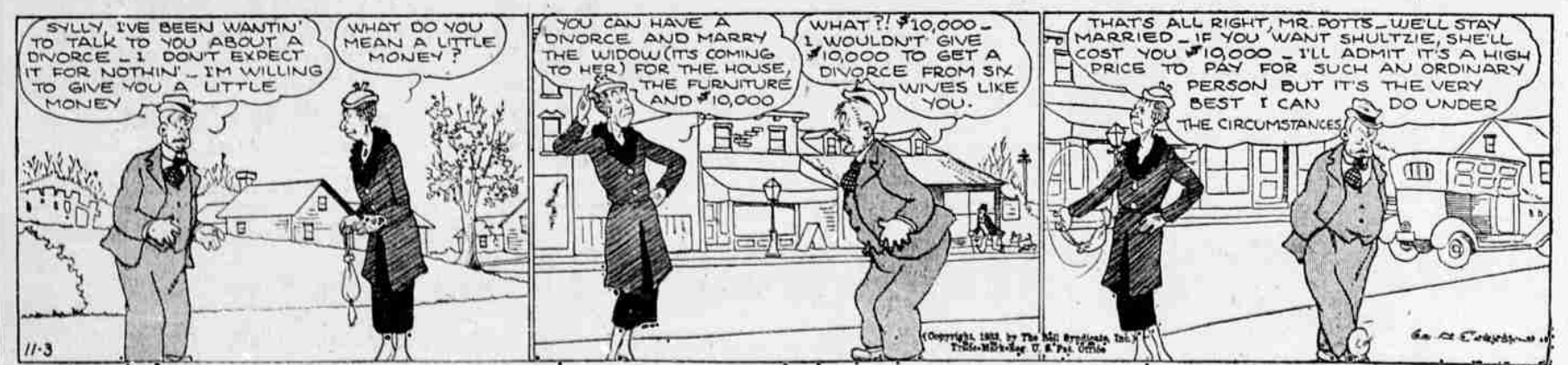
BOUND TO WIN—All's Well At The Farm

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—What Now?

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



Perl Bateman's Welcome Heir
Mr. and Mrs. Perl Bateman of 331 Mary street are the parents of a boy, weighing 8 pounds, 3 ounces, born Wednesday at their home. He has been named Clarence Theodore. Clarence Theodore is the tenth grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Bateman, Sr., who are making plans for forming a football team, they said today. The young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Bateman, will be booked as manager for the team.

Josephine Pays Tax.
SALEM, Nov. 3.—(AP)—Complete second half state taxes for 1933 amounting to \$10,621 were received today from Josephine county, the treasurer's office announced.

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