

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Jim Randall, hiding at Hale Place, his boyhood home, tries to recover his memory of events in the last weeks. He cannot believe he stole the Van Berg emeralds and shot Elmer Van Berg, although the evidence points that way. A flash of memory connects the emeralds with a secret compartment in the Blue Room. He looks there and is horrified to find them. Just then he is attacked, the emeralds snatched from him, and the attacker disappears. Jim tracks the man to the station, but he gets away.

Chapter 20 MISSING TEETH

WELL, he had lost the train. Had he gained anything? He had seen the man's back for a moment as he ran across the platform. The light was poor, and he certainly hadn't seen anything that he could be sure of recognizing—medium height—medium build—some sort of cap on the head—a suit, not an overcoat.

He thought there was something odd about the man's right shoulder as he ran—his shoulder, or his sleeve. He remembered his own left-hand grip, that last wrench when the man bit him and pulled free, and the sound of tearing cloth.

He passed between the posts and took the path across the fields again. He was angry and tired, he had a bump on his head, and a bitten wrist. He had had the emeralds in his grasp and had lost them.

A torn coat and a Leddington train were all he had to go upon. They did not provide him with very much encouragement.

He came back to Hale Place dazed, missing Caroline by a bare five minutes. He had left the door wide open, and he found it closed. So Caroline had come. He thought she might be there still. He called her name. When there was no reply, he went forward into the kitchen and groped for and lit another of the candles she had brought him. He wanted to wash the blood from his face, and to bathe his bitten wrist.

At the scullery sink he let the tap run and put his head under it. Then he took a look at his wrist. It was a good deal bruised, but the skin was only broken in one place. As he held it under the tap and the smear of blood ran off, he gave a start and caught up the candle in his other hand.

The mark of the bite showed plain on both sides of the wrist. On the under side were six indentations, all close together. But on the top of the wrist there were only four—two on one side and two on the other, and a wide gap between.

Here at last was a real clue. The man who had bitten him had lost the two front teeth in the middle of his upper jaw.

IF YOU cannot go back or go forward, you must just make the best of it and go whatever way you can.

Jim walked back across the fields in the early hours of the morning and took the milk train into Leddington. It reached Leddington at ten minutes to seven, which is a cold, uncomfortable hour to arrive anywhere, but especially when you have no fixed destination and very little money.

He had a cup of tea and a sandwich, and put in time in the waiting-room until he could buy a paper. He chose one of the more dramatic dailies, and was immediately confronted by a large picture of Packham Hall and a photograph, described as unique, of Susie Van Berg with the emeralds all across the front of her dress.

It wasn't a very good photograph of Susie, but it was a speaking likeness of the emeralds. Jim wondered whether the burglar would see it, and what he would do if he did see it. If he had a grain of sense, he'd chuck the chain away into the nearest ditch and make himself scarce.

That was assuming that he didn't already know what he had got. But didn't he? What had brought him to Hale Place twice? Would he have come back a second time, and come back to a room which appeared to contain nothing available if he hadn't got wind of the emeralds? The emeralds would provide the motive. A room containing nothing but panelling, two china candlesticks, and an immovable four-post bed frankly would not. It became most urgently necessary to find the burglar.

Jim had a pleasant picture of himself asking the forty thousand odd adult inhabitants of Leddington to show him their front teeth. There didn't seem to be any other way of identifying the burglar.

He left the station at half past eight and walked in the direction of the library. It would not be open until nine o'clock, so he walked down the High Street, through Poulter's Row, and round the Market Square. Jim was passing the statue in Market Square when a girl who had just come down Market Street with a basket on her arm stopped short not a yard away and said "Oh!" in a tone of so much surprise that his attention was arrested.

A moment before, he had not known that there was a girl there, but when she said "Oh!" he saw Min Williams starting at him and recognized her at once. She had on a blue serge coat and skirt and a very neat little dark blue hat which brought out the gold of her hair and the blue of her eyes.

She said "Oh!" again, and her cheeks turned bright pink. It was an embarrassing encounter. There was nothing for it but to make it as ordinary as possible.

He said good morning, asked her why she was out so early, and was about to pass on, when she stopped him.

"ARE you in a hurry?" It was said timidly, hesitatingly. Her color came and went. Only a very hard-hearted person could have admitted to being in a hurry.

Jim said, "Not at all." "Then if we could just walk round the square—"

They began to walk. When they reached the colonnade which embellishes the west side of the square, however, she turned to him with a look of embarrassed appeal.

"Aren't you coming back?" She was brightly flushed. The effort to speak had brought tears into her eyes.

Jim was rather touched. "I don't think so, Min." "I'm not one to interfere—but she's very unhappy."

"Nesta?" She nodded. "I don't think it's on my account." She nodded again, blinking away a tear.

"What makes you think so?" he said. "Min's eyes reproached him. 'You've not been married a month.' 'I'm not admitting I'm married at all.'"

She backed away from him. "You haven't remembered?" "I haven't remembered marrying Nesta."

"Don't you want to remember?" He gave a short laugh. "Not that!"

"It's dreadful for her," she said in a soft, distressed way. "I'm so sorry for Nesta I don't know what to do."

"What makes you think she minds, Min?" "She's so cross," said Min ingenuously. "There isn't nothing right from morning till night."

He got a kind of hard amusement out of that. He wanted Min to go on talking, so he said, "You think she really minds?" "If it was Tom—" said Min, and turned quite pale.

"Tom's a very lucky young man, and I expect he knows it." He wanted her to talk, because an idea was shaping itself in his mind. When he had waked up in her house, it was Min who told him he was Jim Riddell. Now if Min had known him—really known him—as Jim Riddell, and as Nesta's husband before the wreck of the Alice Arden, he wouldn't have to believe her, but he would certainly have to take her account very seriously into account.

Min blushed. "Oh, I don't know about that," she said. "Someone had turned into the colonnade from Poulter's Row. The last thing that Jim wanted was to attract attention. He said, 'We'd better walk.' And then, as they moved, 'Min—I don't know about anything. For instance, I haven't any idea of where I first met you.' Min said 'Oh!' in a startled way."

"If I'm Nesta's husband, I'm your brother-in-law." "That's right." "Then I suppose we're old acquaintances—you've known me for a long time." If she wasn't truthful, she'd say yes to that and land wit, both feet in his trap. The gap in his memory only covered the last six weeks. On the farther side of it were the seven years he had spent overseas. He felt an odd relief when she shook her head "No."

VETERANS ARRIVE FOR PISTOL RIVER

Forty-two veterans from San Francisco arrived in Medford on the Shasta Saturday morning, and left by truck for the Pistol river camp, where they will be located this winter. The contingent was in charge of Lieutenant Ben E. Cordell, sixth coast artillery.

Lieutenant Cordell continued north to Roseburg with eight men, who will be placed in camps in the Eugene district. Ninety-six Illinois men are arriving at Marshfield today from Illinois, and will be sent to Camp Cape Sebastian where the Cape Sebastian state park is located.

Tuesday the 44 men selected in the Skiskiyou forest district will be enrolled by the headquarters, and on Wednesday the men named by the Rogue river forest will be enrolled. All of these men have been selected through relief agencies, headquarters stated.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



11-6-33

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JURY VOTES LIFE TO KIDNAP AIDE

KANSAS CITY, Nov. 6.—(AP)—George McGee, 21, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a jury which convicted him late Saturday of participating in the \$30,000 ransom kidnapping of Miss Mary McElroy, daughter of the city manager.

The state had demanded the death penalty, a verdict voted against McGee's brother, Walter, at a previous trial. The jury deliberated slightly more than three hours.

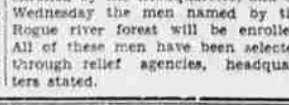
George McGee denied he was involved but he was identified by Miss McElroy and her father, M. F. McElroy, who paid the ransom.

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SELF-DRESSING

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



11-6-33

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Mail Pilot Now Believed Killed

ALTHOUGH THE BOYS AT THREE-POINT HAVE GIVEN UP HOPE OF FINDING BROWNIE ALIVE, EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO FIND THE WRECKAGE OF THE MAIL PLANE WHICH CARRIED A PAY LOAD OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS' W.O.I.D. UNWEIGHTED BOMBERS CONTINUE TO BE BROADCAST LINKING UP ALLEGED MYSTERY PLANES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD WITH THE THREE-POINT SHIP MEANWHILE TOMMY AND SKEETER ARE STILL SEARCHING.

GOSH! I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE SO MANY MYSTERY SHIPS IN THE WORLD. WHAT IN HELL MAKES 'EM SO MYSTERIOUS ANYWAY?

IMAGINATION AND SOME BIRD'S EYE FOR A LITTLE FREE PUBLICITY, I SUPPOSE!

HOW'S THE GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION COMING ALONG?

NOTHING NEW ON IT AS FAR AS I KNOW, SKEETS!

SINCE NONE OF THE SECURITY GUARDS IN BROWNIE'S MAIL LOAD HAVE TURNED UP ROLLINS SEEMS SATISFIED NOW THAT THE SHIP REALLY CRASHED.

THEN WHY DON'T HE TELL THAT TO NEWS PAPERS, TOMMY, AND PUT AN END TO THESE RUMOR-BLINDERS THAT BROWNIE IS A CROOK?

HAL FORREST

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

BOUND TO WIN—Last Minute Plans

I'M ALL READY TO SHOVE OFF UNCLE NAT—I'VE BOUGHT MY TICKET DIRECT TO HURRICANE ISLAND, AND I'LL SAIL ON THE "BETSY DUGAN" AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT.

THAT'S FINE, BEN! NOW HERE'S A LETTER WHICH—

—YOU CAN USE IF YOU HAVE TO—I'VE ADDRESSED IT TO EZRA PARTON—HE'S THE MANAGER OF OUR WAREHOUSES DOWN THERE—I'VE TOLD HIM WHO YOU ARE, AND ALL ABOUT YOU—YOU UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE, THAT IT'S FOR USE ONLY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY—

OH, SURE—I HOPE I NEVER HAVE TO USE IT—YOU SEE UNCLE NAT, I THINK I CAN BE OF THE MOST HELP TO YOU IF I LAND A JOB AT THE WAREHOUSE WITHOUT ANYONE KNOWING WHO I AM—THAT'S WHAT I'M COUNTING ON DOING—IF THERE'S A GANG OF THIEVES OPERATING I WANT—

—TO FIND OUT ABOUT THEM AT FIRST HAND THEN I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I THINK WE OUGHT TO DO—NOW DON'T YOU WORRY, UNCLE NAT, WE'LL CLEAN UP THIS MESS!

OH, BEN, I HOPE SO! BUT DON'T EXPOSE YOURSELF TO ANY DANGER, MY BOY! I'D NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO YOU!

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—Keeping Down Expenses

YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT AMBY IS TRYING TO MAKE A CASH SETTLEMENT WITH SYLVIA SO SHE WILL CONSENT TO A DIVORCE.

SAY RUDY YOU CAN MAKE A DEAL FOR THAT \$5000 WITH SYLVIA FOR OUR DIVORCE. THE HOUSE AND FURNITURE, BUT I WANT MY FINE SMOKE JACKET AND INDIGESTION MEDICINE.

NOT ME. I'M ALL WASHED UP ON YOUR DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES. YOU PADDLE THAT CANOE YOURSELF.

YOU SAID YOU COULD SETTLE THIS FOR \$5000. I WANT TO GET THIS THING FINISHED—AIN'T THAT FELLER BITT EATIN' AND SLEEPIN' OFF N MY MONEY?

WHEN I TOLD YOU I COULD SETTLE IT FOR \$5000 YOU NEARLY CHEWED MY HEAD OFF, AND AS FOR THAT GUY BITT, I'LL ASSUME HIS BILL AND TELL HIM TO GET OUT!

NO, I DON'T WANT YOU TO DO THAT! KEEP HIM AROUND 'TILL I GET MY DIVORCE, BUT WHEN HE ORDERS ANYTHING EXPENSIVE, CAN'T YOU BE OUT OF IT?

By SOL HESS

BRINGING UP FATHER

NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME WHEN YOU COME IN THE PARLOR WITH THE GUESTS DON'T PULL ANY OF THAT FOOT-BALL TALK, NOBODY WANTS TO LISTEN TO THAT PIFFLE.

WELL, I GUESS THAT WILL KEEP HIM OUT OF THE CONVERSATION.

O-U!

WHO MADE THAT FORWARD PASS?

NOW FOR A TOUCH DOWN.

HOLD THAT LINE.

THE BALL IS ON THE TEN-YARD LINE—FIRST DOWN—TEN YARDS TO GO.

By George McManus

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WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT GUM
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5¢
EVERYWHERE WE DO OUR PART

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