

# Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

**SYNOPSIS:** Major Anderson, the Chief Constable, is making inquiries of Caroline about Jim Randall, her cousin who has become tangled in the mystery of the Von Tepp emeralds and the shooting of their owner. Just as Caroline tells the Constable she has heard nothing from Jim, Jim telephones. She makes him understand she will meet him that night without "hitching off." Major Anderson, Caroline knows Jim had nothing to do with taking the emeralds, but until his memory returns, proving it is a difficult matter.

## Chapter 48 TRAILING NESTA

JIM RANDAL went into the library, but he did not stay there long. He did not even ask for the file which he had come there to look at. The past and what had happened in the past was nothing like so important as the present and what was likely to happen in the immediate future.

He sat down on one of the stiff upright chairs, shut his eyes, and went over what Min had told him.

Nesta had come down in the small hours of the morning of a handful of gravel thrown up against her window. She had been away for something over an hour, had come back, and then immediately gone out again as far as the gate, bringing with her something, presumably money.

Min had then heard her say "It's all I've got," and something about keeping money in the house; after which the man said a lot of things she didn't hear, and one that she did. She heard him say, "Don't be late."

What he made of it was this—Nesta had given the fellow all the money she'd got in the house, and was under an agreement to meet him next day with more. If he was right, Nesta would be drawing money out of the bank some time during the day. Some time after that she would meet the fellow. And when that meeting took place, it would be greatly to his own advantage if he could contrive to make an unobtrusive third.

He had to keep an eye on Nesta Riddell's movements. Meanwhile he was going to risk a telephone call to Caroline. From now on she had got to keep right out of the business. She had got to be told that, and that he had left Hale Place.

He crossed over to the north side of the square, went into the post office, and rang up Hazelary West.

When Caroline's voice came to him after that long strange pause, his heart jumped. He said what he had come there to say, and heard Caroline say "Wait." She said it twice. What was the matter? Was it because he had said good-bye that her voice was stiff and dead?

He said, "I mustn't wait. Don't worry."

He was a fool to have said that, because the thought of Caroline worrying filled him with an insensate desire to go to her.

"Where are you ringing up from?" He told her. He said, "I can't stop."

His hand made a movement to replace the receiver, when quick and warm there came to his ear a rush of quite unintelligible words. He wasn't to forget that he was coming to Jenny Ross's treasure hunt. They wouldn't begin while it was light—"so we'd better meet about nine."

He heard her laugh and say, "I can't stop either—I've got a visitor. I'll be at the end of Nesta's road—I can't remember its name—at nine o'clock. Will that be all right?"

He left the post office, reached the High Street by way of Market Street, and walked out to Ledington End.

It was all very well to say that he had got to keep an eye on Nesta Riddell, but how was it going to be done? Sandringham Drive offered about as much cover as a parade ground. There was the Kosy Korner Cafe at the near end of the drive. But the bother was that the beastly road had two ends. If he waited for Nesta at one end, she'd be bound to go out by the other.

It all depended where she was going to meet the fellow. If it was in Ledington, she would pass the Kosy Korner Cafe, but if it was somewhere out in the country, she would come out on to the main road at the lower end of Sandringham Drive.

He passed the War Memorial, and presently the Kosy Korner Cafe. If there was a point on the main road from which he could see both ends of Sandringham Drive, things were going to be a little easier. The drive

wasn't very long, so he had hopes. Another minute more and the hopes were justified. For a distance of five or six yards it was possible to see both turnings. Those five or six yards covered the lower gate and part of the shrubbery of one of those large out-of-date houses which have been abandoned before the encroaching life of bungalows and villas. The drive was green with moss, the garden a mere tangle. Between it and the road ran a low brick wall topped by an unclipped hedge. The whole place had a desolate, unvisited look.

Jim pushed open the gate with some difficulty and walked in. Nothing could have suited him better. There were half a dozen places where laurels, laurustinus, lilac and yew crowded up to the unkempt hedge, and where he could stand and see without being seen.

He had not to wait very long. In about half an hour Nesta Riddell walked briskly past the Kosy Korner and proceeded in the Ledington direction. He had only to keep one turning behind her and follow on. In point of fact she never looked round, but walked briskly into the town, where she entered the London County and Westminster Bank.

Jim went into a tobacco shop on the other side of the High Street, bought a paper, and unfolding it, kept a watch upon the door of the bank.

AFTER about five minutes Nesta came out. She stood for an instant on the pavement, and then gave him the fright of his life by crossing the road.

A newspaper held wide open makes a good screen. There was a moment's suspense, and then he saw from under the lower edge of his paper six inches of bright blue skirt and eight or nine inches of rather light stocking ending in filmy imitation leather shoes go up the two worn steps of the bank shop next door. He was so near that he could hear her rather strident voice asking for milk chocolate.

Removed farther down the street, and presently she came out and walked back along the way by which she had come, and at the same brisk pace. He watched Nesta disappear round the curve of Sandringham Drive and went back to his shrubbery.

The day passed with intolerable slowness. It did not rain, but the clouds hung low and the air was full of damp. In his own mind he felt quite sure that Nesta would not meet the man until it was dark. He could have wished that they were in December instead of August, for even on a gloomy day like this it would not be dark until after nine.

And Caroline was coming here at nine o'clock. He had tried to stop her, and she wouldn't be stopped. He fell into thoughts of Caroline which were angry, impatient, tender, and passionately self-accusing.

He had had no business to let her get mixed up in this affair at all. Even if he were not Nesta Riddell's husband, he was very definitely under suspicion of attempted murder, and beyond all question he had been in possession of stolen property.

He didn't believe that he was Nesta Riddell's husband; he believed it less than ever since his talk with Min. But he could not prove that he was not Jim Riddell unless and until the gap in his memory closed up and gave him back the lost weeks between the first of July and the fifteenth of August.

He might during those weeks have masqueraded as Jim Riddell, and, as Jim Riddell, have married Nesta Williams, but he didn't believe it. It rested on Nesta's word, and, quite frankly, he didn't think Nesta's word was worth a tinker's dam.

On the other hand, the Van Bora affair in some sort corroborated Nesta's statements. That didn't depend on Nesta's word. He himself remembered drinking with Elmer on the night that he was shot. He remembered seeing the emeralds in Elmer's hand.

And, most damning of all, he had found them in his own house in a secret hiding-place known only to Caroline and himself. Men had been hanged on slighter evidence than this. Caroline mustn't come within a thousand miles of it.

He went on thinking about Caroline. (Copyright, 1933, J. E. Lippincott Co.)

Caroline hears, Monday, some words of the greatest importance.

Girl Campus Cops Rule School. NORTON, Mass.—(UP)—Twenty girl "campus cops" equipped with whistles and badges, enforce the "keep off the grass" rule at Wheaton college. Even the faculty members have to obey them.

Negro, Who Hated Horse, Dead. URICHVILLE, O.—(UP)—Recent death of Joseph Smith, 76-year-old negro, recalls the day a quarter century ago when he astonished the sporting blades by running a ten-mile race with a horse—and winning. The race was from Ulrichville to New Philadelphia, and legend has it that the horse was all in a lather at the end of the course, while Smith barely was winded.

Pine Logs Buried 60 Years. WHEATMAN, Mich.—(UP)—White pine logs buried 60 years ago in sand on the beach of a nearby lake were unearthed recently and found to be sound. They will be used for building material.

# AGE LIMIT LIFTED BY CIVIL SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9.—(AP) The prohibition against employing stenographers and typists for government service who are more than 40 years old was lifted today by the civil service commission and the age limit raised to 55.

Federal agencies are to be urged not to discriminate against applicants because of age. In amending the recently adopted rule, the commission extended until November 30 the date for receiving applications from stenographers and typists between 40 and 55.

REVERE, Mass.—(UP)—Charley Anderson, "king" of the Greater Boston beachcombers, earns a comfortable living salvaging coins and jewelry lost by summer bathers.

# NUBIEBER TO MARK RAIL ANNIVERSARY

NUBIEBER, Cal., Nov. 9.—(Sp.)—The second anniversary of driving the golden spike, which connected 212 miles of railroad built by the Great Northern and Western Pacific railroads at the time their lines were extended through northern (Superior) California, will be celebrated at Nubieber, in Lassen county, the night of November 11, at the Northern hotel, by the launching of the new local Nubieber chamber of commerce, with a banquet commemorating this auspicious event. The railroads have brought new development activity to this section of Lassen county. Several prominent officials representing the railroads, the press, county and state officials, industrial and commercial representatives will be present. Fuel Oil delivered the modern way. Call 315. Eads Transfer.

# S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



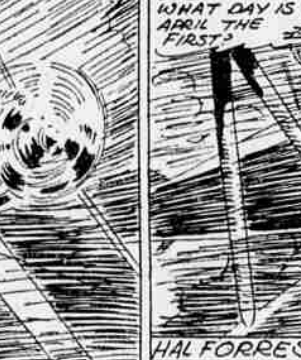
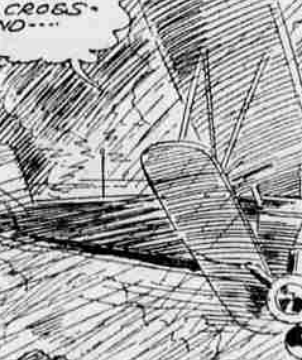
# SNAPSHOTS OF A BOY AVOIDING A TEA PARTY

By GLUTAS WILLIAMS



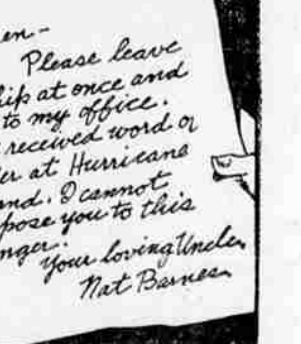
# TAILSPIN TOMMY—It Never Rains But It Pours!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



# BOUND TO WIN—Nothing Doing!

By EDWIN ALGER



# THE NEBBS—Mrs. Shylock

By SOL HESS



# BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



**NOW IS THE TIME TO BUY!**  
WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT GUM  
THE PERFECT GUM  
5¢  
EVERYWHERE  
WE DO OUR PART

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