

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Jim Randall is in a dangerous predicament. He must prove, against such circumstantial evidence, that he did not shoot the Van Berg emeralds and shoot Elmer Van Berg. He has learned that Nests Hildell, who found him in a hospital, his memory gone, and claimed him as husband, is about to take money from the estate. He believes is the real thief. He spends the day watching Nests' house and, on a stormy night, the hour when Caroline Leigh is to join him. He loves Caroline, and intends to demand that she keep out of the affair.

Chapter 48 CAROLINE'S STORY

BY nine o'clock twilight was merging into darkness. Jim frowned in the dark. This dangle of headlights, with its succeeding darkness, was going to make it most frightfully difficult to spot Nests. He turned at the end of his beat and walked in the Ledington direction, and as he did so, a small car came slowly up behind him. In a flash Caroline was out of the car and holding on to him.

"Oh, Jim darling!" she said, and was in his arms.

She put up her face, and he kissed her. They had always kissed one another, but this was a different kiss. They were both trembling.

"Jim," said Caroline. "Oh, Jim darling, do let me help! You see, if you get into the car, we can stand in a good dark place between the lamp-posts in Sandringham Drive and watch the house. You'll miss her if you stay here. It's all quite simple and if you won't do it with me, I shall just go off and do it by myself."

For a moment his grasp tightened. Then he took his hands away and said, "All right—we'd better hurry."

Caroline was still shaking as she started the car. She dimmed the headlights and crawled round the corner into Sandringham Drive.

"I feel like a toy balloon—all floaty! Oh, Jim— isn't it fun?"

Jim took her by the shoulder and shook her.

"Now look here, Caroline—this is a job. You're not to talk nonsense, and you're not to snuggle, and you're not to say 'Jim darling.'"

Caroline sat as far away from him as she could.

Jim went on speaking. "Now I'll tell you what I'm doing here. You'd better be prepared for a bit of a shock. The emeralds were at Hale Place, in the Blue Room. What I want to know is—did you ever tell anyone—anyone,



Caroline clung to him.

Caroline clung to him. After a moment he got hold of himself.

He said, "You mustn't!" and tried to put her away.

She pressed closer.

"Jim—do you love me—really?"

"I haven't got any right to."

A little shaky laugh came from somewhere just under his chin. Her hair rubbed against his cheek.

"I never asked you that." An arm slid round his neck. "Jim—say you love me!"

"My darling, I love you with all my heart and soul. . . I mustn't!"

"Silly!" said Caroline. She stood on tiptoe, dragged his head down, and kissed him shamelessly. "Jim—darling!"

She was lifted, held so close that she could not breathe, and most passionately kissed. Then with her heart thumping and her head spinning, she was set down at arm's length and held there.

"Now you've got to go home," said Jim in an odd hard voice. "No, it's no use—you've got to go. If I get out of this, we'll get married, but until I do you've got to stand clear."

"Oh!" said Caroline rather faintly. Jim's grip was hurting her. His wrists must be like iron; she couldn't move the least fraction of an inch.

mind—about the hiding place behind the shield?"

"No, I didn't," said Caroline.

"Then I must have put the damned things there myself."

"You couldn't have," said Caroline in a deep sure voice.

"Then who did?"

"I don't know. It wasn't you. Now, Jim, listen—because I've seen Susie Van Berg, and I've got to tell you what she said. It's—it's not very good news, Jim."

She told him about Susie. When she had finished, Jim said quietly, "That puts the lid on—doesn't it? I suppose I did it. I can't believe it, but I suppose I did do it."

Caroline caught her breath. She went on quickly.

"There's something else. After I left Susie I lost my way. That frightful storm was right overhead. I blundered into someone's room. There was a screen in front of the door, so they didn't see me."

"Who is 'they'?" said Jim.

"Nests and that cousin of hers who is housekeeper there—Caroline Russell."

He said, "Well?"

"They were doing a sort of magic with a bowl of ink, like crystal gazing. The Russell woman is rather frightening. She picked up the bowl of ink, and put it on her lap and looked into it."

"Well?"

"I hated it! And then of a sudden Nests asked her where the emeralds were, and she described the Blue Room."

"Well, they were there all right," said Jim. "Did she say anything about the shield?"

"No, she didn't. She called out suddenly, 'He's alive! Did you know that he was alive?' And the bowl tilted and all the ink upset. I ran away."

He leaned forward and took her by the wrist.

"Whom were they talking about?"

"I don't know."

Jim let go of her wrist and sat back.

"I don't think she meant me," he said in a slow controlled voice. (Copyright, 1933, J. B. Lippincott Co.)

"CAROLINE, you've got to go home. I'm here on a job, and you mustn't hinder me. I haven't time to tell you about it. I'm waiting to see if Nests comes out. If she does, I've got to follow her. I think she's going to meet the man who's got the emeralds."

"Oh!" said Caroline. This was a different "Oh"—a breath of pure surprise.

"So you must go quickly. I mustn't miss her. You see, I don't know which way she will be going—I've got to watch both ends of the drive."

"And suppose she's got a bicycle—what will you do then?"

"She hasn't got one."

"Isn't there one in the house?"

"Only Tom's motor-bike."

"Suppose she takes that?"

"Then I shall be dished. But it's not likely."

Tomorrow, Caroline and Jim take up the chase in earnest.

RUMANIA WILL PAY SOMETHING ON DEBT

BUCHAREST, Rumania, Nov. 10.—(AP)—The government announced today that Rumania will pay its war debts to the United States December 15 on the same basis as its June 15 payment.

On June 15 the Rumanian government made a "token" payment of 2 per cent of its debt.

Notice.

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DUCKS PREFER A VEGETARIAN DIET

SALEM, Ore.—(UP)—Ducks in Oregon lakes are almost exclusively vegetarians, reports the federal department of agriculture.

Examinations by the biological survey revealed that about 90 per cent of the food of the ducks consisted of vegetation growing in or near the water. Animal food of the birds included mollusks, insects and crustaceans, with an occasional small fish.

Ducks working in shallow water with their heads submerged are sifting the mud for fallen seeds, buried root stocks and tubers. Sometimes they will dive more than 10 feet to grub for food on a sand or mud bottom.

The merganser, or fish duck, frequently found along the Oregon coast, is the only specie which lives on fish.

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acreage of unappropriated public lands, according to the federal land office.

The state has 13,978,285 acres of land available for homesteading. Most of it is in eastern Oregon and of small value without irrigation. Acreage of other states includes Nevada 51,270,277; Utah, 25,012,158; California 16,376,463; Wyoming, 14,327,024; Arizona, 13,203,600; New Mexico, 13,078,285; Idaho, 10,510,421; Colorado, 7,945,733; Montana, 6,176,931; Washington 709,649; South Dakota, 518,680; North Dakota, 146,301.

Dr. J. J. Emmens, now in the east, wishes to state that Dr. Bywater of Giants Pass is in no way connected with his practice. Dr. Emmens does not refer any cases to Dr. Bywater. Dr. Emmens will return shortly.

OREGON SEVENTH FOR UNAPPROPRIATED LAND

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S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Luckie Brownie—Maybe?

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Ben Remains Aboard!

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Well—That's That

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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