

Outrageous Fortune

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: In order to clear himself of suspicion of having stolen the Van Berg emeralds himself, Jim Randall must track down the real thief. With Caroline Leigh's help Jim has tracked the burglar to a ruined priory, and watched the emeralds from his hand. Meanwhile, Caroline, waiting in her little car, hears voices and her name called—with discovery the last thing in the world she would.

Chapter 45

TREASURE HUNTERS

"Hi, Caroline—I spotted you! You were asleep—we jolly nearly ran you down! Whom are you with? Have you got your clue? Because if you have, you might just as well hand it on and save us trekking up to the Tower."

With her first words, Caroline recognized Kitty Lefroy, the daughter of the Hinton doctor. She had just left school, and was a lively tomboy. "Beastly unsporting!" said a boy's voice. "You've got to find your own clue. Besides, it won't be the Tower—I said so all along."

"Of course it's the Tower!" said Kitty. "It is—isn't it, Caroline? You know Jock Anderson, don't you—Major Anderson's nephew?"

"Well, I say it isn't the Tower—it's too easy."

Caroline was leaning out of the window. Her one desire was to get rid of them. If Jenn Ross had fixed on St. Leonard's Tower as one of the clues in her treasure hunt, about two dozen people might be here at any moment.

"I should hurry up if I were you—I think you're the first."

"Well, what about you?"

"I've given up, said Caroline. "I'm not feeling like treasure-hunting. I'm going home."

They ran off, noisy and laughing. Fifty yards up the lane Jock Anderson gripped Kitty by the elbow.

"Was that Caroline Leigh?"

"Yes. Why? Have you fallen for her in the dark? You'll be one of a crowd if you have."

"It looks queer, Kitty, can you keep a secret?"

"Of course I can."

"If I tell you, you swear you won't let on?"

"Yes—truly."

"Well, did you know a man called Jim Randall?"

"When I was a kid. He's Caroline's cousin."

"That's it! Well, they think he did the Van Berg murder."

"How do you know?"

"I heard the inspector talking to my uncle. Now look here—what's she doing in that car? While you were gassing, I went round to the back and put my pocket torch on the number plate, and I'm prepared to swear that's the car that passed us a mile out of Leddington, and when it passed us, there was a man in the car. Where's he got to?"

"Jim Randall was drowned—"

"said Kitty Lefroy in a slow, bewildered voice. "No, he wasn't—he was seen and recognized in Leddington this morning."

"O-oh!" said Kitty in a thrilling whisper.

"And what I thought of was this. We've got to see whom she's waiting for. I've seen this Randall fellow's passport photograph—my uncle's got it. I suppose you wouldn't recognize him?"

"I might," said Kitty. "Caroline has photographs of him all round her room. She's potty about him—always has been."

"Then let's walk up and down. I'm frozen absolutely."

"I thought you'd sprained your ankle!" said Caroline.

The horrid little wretch giggled again.

"You know—with a burst of frankness—I didn't really twist it at all. Jock was such a beast, I wouldn't go with him. Come on and walk, Caroline."

Caroline opened the door and jumped out.

"What rubbish you do talk, Kitty!"

Kitty flung a vigorous arm round her waist and began to dance her along.

"You said that exactly like a school-ma'am. If you're not frightfully careful, you'll get elderly before you know where you are. I do loathe elderly! I think people ought to be poisoned off at twenty-five. Don't you?"

Caroline couldn't help laughing. "That would only give me another three years."

"Do you mean to say you're twenty-two? How grim! And you're not even engaged?"

"I got out of this, we'll get married!"

"Jim's voice and Jim's words came back to pierce her heart. For a moment she couldn't speak. Then she turned back towards the car.

"I'm sorry Kitty, but I don't want to walk any more."

Something in her voice stopped Kitty's flow of talk. They walked back across the darkened field. And then, just as they came up to the car, someone moved between them and the hedge.

"Hi, Jock—is that you?" There was relief in Kitty's tone.

BUT it was Jim Randall's voice that answered.

"I'm afraid I'm not Jock."

As he spoke, he opened the car's farther door and got in.

Caroline got in too. She switched on the lights and leaned sideways to say,

"Why don't you go and sit in your car, Kitty? You'll find it warmer."

She turned back and pressed the starter.

Kitty stood clear. It was really the most frightful jest. She only wished she could see their faces.

"What's the matter?" said Jim. "She won't start."

"She oughtn't to so cold. Shall I fiddle the carburetor?"

"Please."

Kitty was in ecstasies. She came nearer, and inquired in a muffled voice,

"What's up?"

"It's all right—she'll start now."

Caroline pressed the starter again. It whirred, but there was no response from the engine.

HILL SWALLOWED UP BY QUICKSAND

PORT ADAMS, Miss.—(UP)—Quicksand is believed responsible for earth

movements in Wilkinson county that recently sent a hill, 180 feet high and 150 acres in extent, sinking into a hole so deep that the tops of 80-foot trees were 40 feet below the surface.

According to Frank C. Codifer, real estate man, such movements have occurred several times in the past. Negroes were terrified by the recent sinking and they fled their homes, household goods and growing crops in terror and left the country.

Codifer said he had seen similar movements on a smaller scale, always when the nearby Mississippi river was at a low stage. The present sinking began on October 8, when the river was unusually low. He said there undoubtedly was a big stratum of water sand, or quicksand under the ground there. When the river is high the

pressure of river waters, operating on the sand through the banks and by subterranean passages under the banks, holds the quicksand in place.

Study Bees in Glass Hive. ST. LOUIS—(UP)—School pupils here are able to watch honey bees in doing their work inside a glass hive at the Educational Museum of the board of education here. The bees leave their hive through a pipe which leads outside the museum building.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Brownie "Knocked Out!"



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BOUND TO WIN—In The Captain's Cabin



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THE NEBBS—Only Fooling



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BRINGING UP FATHER



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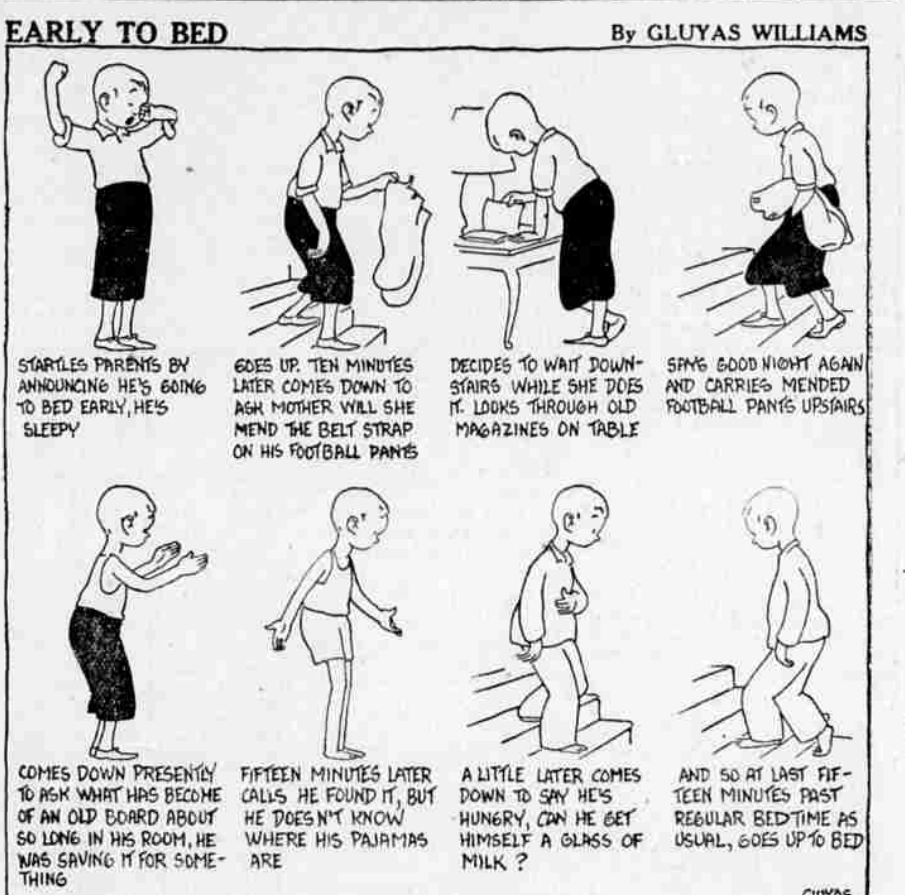
THE FLAVOR LASTS!

"Big Bad Wolf" Busy in Texas. FORT WORTH, Tex.—(UP)—Texas statistics reveal that the "big bad wolf" operated extensively in this state last year, with two per cent of the state's farm and ranch animals falling victim to wolves, coyotes, bob cats and other predatory animals.

Library Ass'n Picks Montreal. MONTREAL—(UP)—The American Library association, which includes members in Canada as well as the United States, has selected Montreal for the 56th annual convention. It is announced. The convention will be held in June, 1934.

Tomorrow, Jim carries the battle into the enemy's quarter.

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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