

# Judith Lane

by JEANNE BOWMAN



**SYNOPSIS:** Judith Lane's employer, Big Tom Bevins, just has turned over to her the job of completing the Rio Diablo dam, which Bevins has undertaken chiefly for the relief of hundreds of farmers in that parched land. Judith is engaged to Norman Dale, law partner of Morton Lampere, and Lampere is trying to queer the Rio Diablo dam. Tom Bevins' daughter Mathie is trying to take Norman from Judith. Judith and Big Tom are together in the latter's office, going over the details of the plan.

## Chapter II INSTRUCTIONS

JUDITH turned to Tom Bevins, bewildered in her grey eyes. He wasn't joking. She had never seen him as serious.

"Big Tom," she asked, "are you planning another trip to Washington, or abroad?"

"No, Judy," he answered quietly. "A longer trip than either. This morning after I had learned what Lampere was contemplating; what he had tried to do, something snapped inside. The doctor called it a stroke. I know better. He gives me no hope. I may die at any moment. Is it going to be too much for me to ask you to carry on?"

Judith had been trained in a school. Because of this she accepted Tom Bevins' statement that he might die at any moment, with no more emotion than a grave smile.

"I understand what you mean now, Big Tom. I'll be proud to carry on for you. If it will make you any happier I'll relieve you of every detail right now. Not that I believe your doctor, because," she said brightly, "I think he was just trying to frighten you into taking a rest."

"He did suggest a rest," Tom Bevins admitted. "He said if I had the sense of a jack rabbit, I'd board the Naïad, cruise around and live to be a hundred. And then he said in fairness to Mrs. Bevins, Ma'teel and my firm, I should arrange my estate so my sudden passing would not make them suffer more than grief."

"Why don't you take his advice? If you trust me as much as you say you do, I could come here—"

"It's not that I don't trust you, Judy, but I don't intend shifting my burdens while I can carry my load. There's going to be a big battle over the Rio Diablo and if I have to die, I'll die fighting that battle. Oh, and Judy, nothing about this agreement of ours, to Norman."

"I was just going to ask you if you didn't want me to delay my marriage."

"No, indeed, hurry it along."

"I don't understand, you ask me not to tell him—"

"Judith, Norman is junior member of Dale, Lampere and Morrison. He is working with two brilliant, successful men, men whom his father admired tremendously. We can't expect Norman to accept our condemnation of Lampere. He's the kind who must find out for himself. You'll have to be patient with him, Judy, he's slow, but he's sure... now to work."

Judith, looking back, thought of that night as a fantastic dream. From time to time she would straighten from her task, walk to the water cooler and pause at the window to look out on the darkened city. Each time the lights in the windows of other buildings were fewer, alternate street lights were turned off, display signs darkened.

At one o'clock, remembering she had had no dinner and feeling sure Bevins had completely forgotten food, she telephoned the Rice grill.

Standing beside the window waiting for the messenger, she saw a late moon leering drunkenly over the Texas building, and thought of other moons she had seen on engineering trips with her father, the white shaft of frozen light over the snow crusted Wasatch range, the slow ambulating sphere with its silhouette of black fire, working up from the Cascades.

Piping hot oyster stew revived the spirits of Big Tom, and he interspersed the rest of their work with anecdotes of early expeditions he had made.

And then, gradually, the buildings outside their window became black blocks piled up by a careful hand against a grey curtain.

Shortly after the first sunlight slanted across Tom Bevins' desk, he announced himself as satisfied, telephoned someone at the Rice, then sat back to await the messenger he had called.

"I'm sending these deeds down to Rio Mar by air. This young fellow I telephoned can be trusted; he has his own ship too. This pile, Judith, goes into a safety deposit box, here. Drop in the bank sometime tomorrow."

row, give them your signature and get your keys."

Judith nodded wearily, then went to the door to admit a tall young Texan in the nondescript attire of a commercial airman.

"Judith, Miss Lane, this is Slim Sanford."

At the name Judith looked up and smiled—"You're Cila's brother."

"And you're small Jude. I can see all the way from China to meet you and found you down in the Devil river country. Now that you're here I have to go down there... never mind, I'll catch up with you some day."

"I hope you do," she returned sincerely. She did hope so, if he were half as fascinating as his sister thought him, he would make an ideal guest for her home... here and Norman's... she'd almost forgotten Norman during the previous hours of work.

She found herself recalling what Cila had told her of him, as he talked with her chief. Breath-taking adventures mostly. Cila was always expecting a wire telling her he had cracked up in Timbuktu. He had spent a week on an arctic ice floe while Cila haunted the telegraph room awaiting word, and there was another time when he had come down inside some Chinese province to be captured by a doughty young war lord, who had later released him.

"Slim" Sanford looked up at her and smiled. No wonder the war lord had been lenient, thought Judith at his dash of white teeth and nice blue eyes, intensely blue.

SHE thought of him again when she reached her apartment, found her food closet bare (she'd had no time to shop since reaching town), the refrigerator turned off. As far as anything edible was concerned, it was a desert island, and then the telephone rang.

"Judy... good morning, Norman speaking, say dear, I've got things all fixed up with the architect. Can you have lunch with me, then go to his office?"

Architect, thought Judith? Oh yes, there had been talk of a house on a hill, oaks behind it, terraced lawn.

"Judy... what's wrong?"

"Forgive me, Norman, I just got in from the office and I'm so tired I'm stupid, could you make that late afternoon?"

"Make it tomorrow, you poor youngster, had your breakfast?"

"No, I'm going right to bed. I'm sorry about the architect; it isn't that I'm not interested—"

"Don't worry about that, dear, call me later."

Judith nodded at the mouthpiece, laughed at her sleepy stupidity, said goodbye and went to her bed. Too tired to sleep, she tossed and turned, thought of Big Tom and his peculiar request, thought of Norman and his kindness.

There came a rap on the door and going to it she found Lisa, with a tray in his hand—"Mo'nat, Miss Lane, Ma's Norman he sent some breakfast Delphy fix up. An' Delphy she say you is to eat every bite."

Judith surveyed the tray, steaming cereal with plump dates poking their heads from the clotted cream, golden peaches, faked with sugar, thickly buttered toast and a pot of chocolate. Delphy had boasted she'd "fatten that child."

Overwhelmed with Norman's thoughtfulness, Judy sat eating and thinking. Some men would have resented her lack of interest in her future home; resented her lack of responsiveness, but not Norman.

Had she the right to marry such a person while under bondage to Big Tom? Suppose he died right away... foolish thought, the doctor was probably trying to frighten him into taking a rest.

That trip with its intense heat had been trying on them all... she'd call Dr. Kelly and make sure, out of fairness to Norman. She reached for the telephone, called the number, talked to his office girl and then to him.

"Miss Lane? Oh, yes, Big Tom's secretary. I've just come from there, Miss Lane, they called me to his office."

Judith listened to Tom Bevins' physician in alarm—"Did you say you were called to his office? Is he ill?" she cried.

"He's all right now, but why did you let him work all night? My goodness, Miss Lane, you should know better."

"Why did I... let him?" gasped Judith. "Doctor Kelly, do you think he'd mind me any quicker than he minded you?"

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Tomorrow, Judith learns more about Tom Bevins.

# DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WAR GASES A SLOW PROCESS

## Foremost British Chemical Experts Deny Horrible Possibilities Pictured by 'G. B. S.' and Others

By LEE WILSON  
United Press Staff Correspondent  
LONDON.—(UP)—War mongers and pacifists are spreading the fear of future aerial gas attacks. They draw horrible pictures of civilian populations wiped out by vaporized poison dropped from the skies.

Bernard Shaw, in a recent radio broadcast, said that the next war would result in massed bombing attacks on the capitals of the warring nations, and that each of the capitals will surrender. He urged scientists to invent a more deadly and surer gas which would kill instantly and humanely.

Experts Deny Progress  
In answer to all this, one of the foremost British chemical experts flatly denied the possibility of any great mortality among civilians or soldiers from aerial gas bombs. And in response to Shaw's plea for a more deadly gas, he said that there had been practically no advance along that line since the world war.

chemist of the Imperial Chemical Industries, and the man who mainly was responsible for the development of large-scale production of high explosives during the war. By his success in evolving a method of producing T. N. T. in tons instead of pounds Major Freeth is said literally to have saved the allied forces.

Mustard gas was considered the most efficient gas used during the war. But the percentage of deaths from this gas to casualties was well under four, Dr. Freeth pointed out.

Chlorine Gas  
Chlorine gas, which was used first in the war, is fairly deadly, Dr. Freeth admitted. But its deadliness is dependent upon perfect atmospheric conditions. Its effects were exaggerated because its original use had so struck the world's imagination.

# GIVE IT A WHIRL by Hatlo



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# SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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# 'MATTER POP—



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# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Louie Is Interested



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# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Behind The Barricade



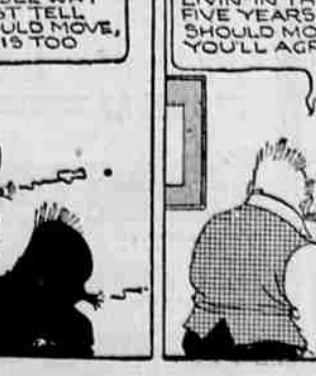
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# THE NEBBS—I'm Listening



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# BRINGING UP FATHER



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**THE FLAVOR L-A-S-T-S**

**WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT**  
THE PERFECT GUM

5¢ EVERYWHERE

**Raffle Didn't Help Him**  
FALL RIVER, Mass.—(UP)—Fined \$20 for drunken driving after his automobile had hit a traffic stand, injuring a policeman, Stanley Hughes raffled off his automobile among his friends and the tickets netted him \$23. Then, before he could pay his fine, somebody stole the money.

**Buckeye Photographer 60 Years**  
MARION, Ohio.—(UP) James Wark, 67, believed to have been the oldest active photographer in the United States when he retired from business last November 17, died here recently. He had been a photographer in Marion for more than 40 years and for 20 years before coming here.