

Judith Lane

by JEANNE BOWMAN

SYNOPSIS: Judith Dale is to build the Rio Diablo dam with the 4 million dollars Big Tom Bevin left in his will for the purpose has been complicated by the discovery that Morton Lamper, attorney for the Bevin heirs in a suit to breach the will, has begun mysterious activities along the river. Then she gets a letter from her husband, who sides with the heirs against her, saying that he intends to give up their home.

Chapter 33 THE ANSWER

JUDITH DALE wrote an answer to her husband's letter at top speed, then raced down the hill to the Big Tom post-office and mailed it before she had time to change her mind.

In bed she tried to remember certain portions of her answer. She had written, "I'd as soon consider cutting the house into small bits and keeping those parts as I would taking part of the furnishings for myself. Hillendale is an entity. To have a part of it would only remind me of what I love lost."

Maybe seeing him with Mathilde would cure her of her obsession, for surely a love which could call forth the acute emotional agony she was suffering was an obsession.

She turned her face into the pillows and tried to muffle the sobs which shook her entire body, dimly conscious that her physical being from the tips of her toes to the dreadful pain in her head was like a sensitive machine racked by a power beyond her control.

The springs of Delphy's bed creaked and caused her to catch her breath and lie quiet a moment. Footsteps shuffled in the kitchen, there was the click of metal on metal and a low-voiced monologue on a "danged contraption that'll cause ma soul to suffer for a cursin' it!"

Delphy was heating chocolate. The sobs of her mistress turned to hysterical laughter, and when the old woman shuffled in a few moments later she found Judith laughing and crying in the same breath.

"There, there, honey lamb; juss you shut yo' mouth an' drink this chocolate."

"How can I shut my mouth 'n' drink?" inquired Judith, with a hysterical giggle.

"I'll rub yo' back down soon's you finish it. Wrought up you are, wrought up, with that dam bulldin', ghosts an' flyin' up where man's never sposed to be you're all a quiver."

When Judith had finished the "chocolate," Delphy, ignoring her protests, rubbed some home-made concoction of menthol on the back of her neck and began massaging her neck, her shoulders, her back.

When she awakened the next morning she felt that something dreadful had happened. Delphy served her breakfast, relating some choice town gossip as she hovered about the table, and Judith, remembering her unselfish devotion, pretended to enjoy the flaky biscuits and to laugh at the gossip.

The change in her personal affairs made Delphy a fresh problem. She should send her back to Norman or Mrs. Dale. She belonged to them, but somehow, having her made it seem she still retained some hold on her husband. She would let Delphy make the decision.

SHE did that evening. The growing heat of the desert spring had driven them to the little porch in front, and Delphy, silent for the moment, was watching the approach of the work train, crawling along like a black snake.

She explained things briefly, then waited for the old woman to answer. "Miss Judy, d'you mean you don't want me no mo'?" she asked plaintively.

"No, Delphy; not at all. But, as Miss Bevin said in Lige's letter, you've always been with the Dales."

"Miss Judy, none a the rest of the Dales needs me 'ceptin' you; and, Miss Judy, I just got to be needed."

Tears smarted in Judith's eyes at the hunger in the old woman's voice. "You're right, Delphy, and I do need you... you know that, don't you?"

The train was in, the mail courier coming up the hill. Judith's heart beat like a tom-tom in spite of her stern efforts to control a hope she knew to be futile. Letters for her... she scanned the handwriting. Cilia's square. She tore open the envelope, pulled out the rough copy paper, and out of the mass of lettering one line seemed to stand illumined.

"Norman has quit the firm of Dale, Lamper and Morrison." Judith read on breathlessly.

"The other day in court, someone informed me that Norman Dale's name had disappeared from the docket of the firm's office. I telephoned them and the girl told me Norman was out of town."

"When I asked where I could reach him, he said he had asked that his address be kept secret. Nor did she know when he could return, nor when that address would be available."

"(Wait—'till I take a story over the phone... just a most, okay, ready to go again.)"

"I asked to talk to Lamper. He was as smooth as silk, or as usual, and said Norman had left town to rest. I asked why his resting made it necessary for his name to be removed and he said Norman had thought it advisable as he was liable to remain away for several years, might never return, that due to his late embarrassment (meaning you and the Bevin money), he might remain away permanently, even taking bar examinations in some other state."

"I said, bologna, and he said, wait, and I repeated, how interesting, may I use this in a news story. At that he nearly jumped through the telephone screen."

"However, Judy-girl, in case you don't all ready know it, your husband is no longer associated with Morton Lamper."

"Mathilde had ceased arriving in Galveston since Norman won his case and returned here. She evidently found she could grieve here as effectively as there and appears now and then in public places, dressed in devastating mourning (how that girl can take clothes speak for her, I almost smiled at her, the other day, on Texas and Main, just because of the hat she wore)."

"And that reminds me. She framed Norman into a picture Lamper's sheet used in their rotogravure. So Mrs. Dale and some other woman won that fool bridge tournament. Frost of the Union went down in the picture. Norman was with his mother and went out on the terrace with her, they said down in a chair to study some papers he happened to be working on."

"Mathilde, Mrs. Dale's shadow, was not far away. She gracefully effaced herself from Mrs. Dale's side so she wouldn't interfere with the picture, and sat down close to Norman. Frost, having received his orders, took them in the cozy two-seater, then turned his attention to the other woman."

"Norman was so absorbed in his work he didn't know what had happened until he saw the paper. Was he mad? If Lamper hadn't held him down he'd have wrecked the Union. Frost and I were wondering if your innocent Scotchman lent getting onto the fact that he was using this stuff to psychologize the public and get future jurors into believing that Norman is the man behind the Bevin women's fight for your money."

JUDITH laid the letter aside for a moment. So that was how that picture was taken, and Norman hadn't known, and Norman hadn't left the firm his grandfather had founded... that meant either a tremendous concession or a tremendous disillusionment... and that was why he hadn't been able to keep Hillendale.

Poor Norman. She could see the small-boy look of bewildered pain on his face. He was too fine to understand the motives behind the others. "So straight his head touches his heels at times," Cilia had said.

With maternal fear, she wondered what this cataclysm would do to him, embitter him or send his stubborn chin flitting forward for fressa battle? If only she could be with him... at least she could write with veiled encouragement.

There were other pages of gossip and other letters, but the sight of Cunard coming up hill waving telegrams erased them from her mind.

"We've won this far," he greeted. "They're sending an injunction from the State commission, with rangers to follow. I'll leave in the morning for Austin, and arrange to meet Scatborne informally, then if necessary, we'll have a hearing."

Cunard left Big Tom Town the following morning. "Not that we've won yet, Judy," he admonished. These fellows are too slippery to be trusted. Keep your eyes and ears open and whenever Slim comes down have him take you for an air cruise over Scatborne's holdings. I'll have a list of his holdings sent up from Del Mar."

A few days later she received word that Scatborne had agreed to abandon his dam. "He agreed too readily," wrote Cunard. "I think he has something else up his sleeve. Watch for it."

Slowly the days passed. Judith watched the mails eagerly and after a lapse of time was surprised to find her last letter to Norman returned unopened. A post office stamp informed her that the "addressee has moved, left no forwarding address."

The same mail brought word from Lige which stilled the fear in Judith's heart. "Ma's Norman had dress in his hawk clothes an' gone huntin'."

"Mrs. Dale, she say she don't know where he gone, but she ain't worryin' none so I guess she know. She's lookin' after Hill and Dell, which is been lease to Miz and Mister De Mao, from Boston. They is French and Boston which is same as United States and they sure is nice. Rose she like them fine. They think this house sure is pretty and didn't make no change what-all."

Judith gave a deep sigh of relief. (Copyright, 1934, by Jeanne Bowman)

Judith, tomorrow, is given a new reason to worry.

CROSSED EYES YIELD TO INSTRUMENT MADE BY CALIFORNIA PROF.

BERKELEY, Cal.—(UP)—Straightening of crossed eyes, once considered impossible, was being accomplished in the University of California optometry clinic through use of an instrument perfected by Prof. Frederick Mason, lecturer in optometry.

The device, which operates by means of light projected directly into the retina, trains and re-educates crossed eyes to act simultaneously and correctly.

Stimulation of the brain functions, which make two eyes see as one is the principle upon which the instrument works. Dr. Mason revealed. Two small "targets" viewed through lenses and magnified by them, serve to focus the eyes, the first and most important step in the process. The targets are enclosed in optical systems which can be fixed before each eye.

Mason further explained that these systems are operated by means of a motor, so that the targets viewed by the eyes move to and fro along a horizontal line forcing the eyes to follow them simultaneously, regardless of the state of crossing.

At first the systems are so adjusted that light is poured through the pupil of the eye in spite of its direction. As the patient "works" on the machine, the eyes gradually are moved more and more toward a normal point until the eyes are "educated" to act properly.

"All eyes cannot be straightened," Dr. Mason explained. "Treatment is useless unless it is possible to stimu-

REVENUE MEASURE IS RETURNED TO HOUSE

WASHINGTON, April 18.—(AP) In a more foreshadowing the possible veto of the \$480,000,000 revenue bill, the senate today returned the measure to the house without seeking reconsideration.

PHILIPPINE COCONUT OIL OPPOSED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

President Roosevelt has indicated he would veto the legislation if the coconut oil levies are retained. He maintains that action violated the Philippine independence act.

ROME, Italy, April 18.—(AP)—Wheat acreage reduction on a worldwide scale was outlined this afternoon by the world wheat advisory commission. Just at a moment when its labors were about to end, it found itself faced with what is perhaps the most important subject of its meeting.

GIVE IT A WHIRL by Hatlo



PATERNAL FEEDING



SMATTER POP—



By C. M. Payne

TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Doctor Is Doubtful!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Uncle Nat's Plea

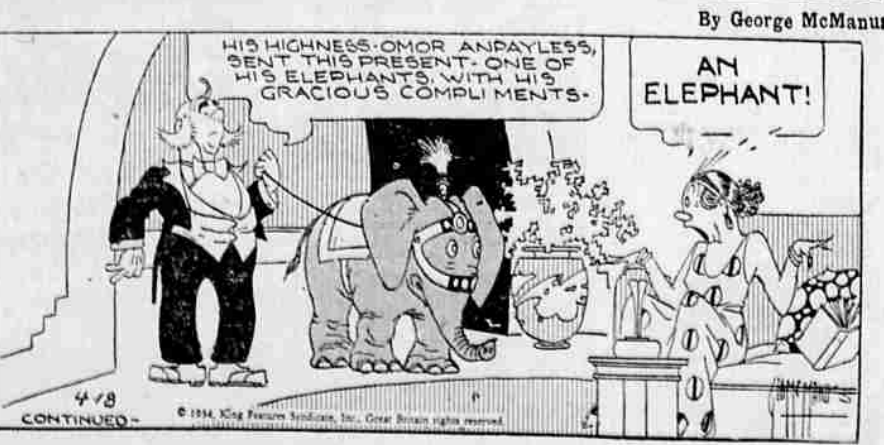


By Edwin Alger

THE NEBBS—I'm Sorry



BRINGING UP FATHER



SILVER ADVOCATES TO CONFER WITH PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON, April 18.—(AP)—Senator King (D., Utah) said today he had arranged for congressional leaders of the move to remonetize silver to confer with President Roosevelt Thursday.