

Judith Lane

by JEANNE BOWMAN



The report that oil is being drilled for up stream a short way threatens to disrupt Judith Lane's effort to build the Rio Diablo dam according to Tom Bevin's plan and with the five million dollars left her by Bevin for the purpose. She fears it is a hint to annoy her engineer by Horton Lumiere, who is trying to break the Bevin will in favor of Mrs. Bevin and her daughter. She fears too that a visit from Scoggins, who holds a new piece of land, may mean trouble. He talks about his wife's desire for pretty things.

Chapter 35 PACIFYING SCOGGINS

"Well, sir, then we looked in a store window and there was a dress all shimmerin' like it had fish scales on it." Scoggins went on.

"Sequins, they're called," said Judith, "little metal things that dovetail into each other."

"Well this one was a green one and Mamie she looked at it and then she looked at me and her eyes were chock-full of tears, just bein' nappy. 'Ain't it grand?' she says.

"Next mornin' I made like I was goin' up to buy me a cigar and I went to that store aimin' to buy that dress for Mamie if it took my roll. Whatcha think they asked for it? Two hundred and fifty dollars. I didn't get it."

Judith appeared to be as shocked as Scoggins had hoped she would be, but beneath her sympathetic expression was worry. What in the name of goodness was the man leading up to?

"Miss Judith, I got a chance to get them things for Mamie, an git Tommy a car and send him to college, without waitin' for trees to grow and him too old to go and Mamie too old to enjoy things. I got a chance right now.

"You know that piece of land I got that juts into your flood basin? There's oil there and I'm here to tell you, you can't use it for water."

One trick that Judith had learned during her years as secretary to Big Tom Bevin was to maintain silence in a crisis, to let the other person speak first.

Judith felt that the fate of the Rio Diablo Dam hung in precarious balance as she sat watching Scoggins. Without his land there could be no dam, it formed a queer shaped snake's figure jutting far out into the flood basin.

Big Tom's faith in Scoggins had been so complete he had neglected to gain his consent to its use in writing. Judith remembered calling his attention to it the night of their first vigil, but he had insisted such a procedure would be jeopardizing Scoggins' trust in him, after Scoggins had refused such a big price for his land.

"Don't reckon you understood, Miss Judy," he began again, troubled shame in his voice. "I'm going to git oil on my land and I can't get it's flooded, see?"

"What makes you think there is oil on your land?" she inquired, with nothing but sympathetic interest in her voice.

"THERE'S been a man there with a divinin' rod working about the place. To tell you th' truth, Miss Judy," he leaned close and half whispered, "there's a great lake of oil underneath this here valley, yes sir, just like they've got up to Longview."

"Strange the man didn't want to purchase it from you," she mused.

"He did," was the quiet answer, then loyally, "but I promised Big Tom I wouldn't sell to nobody! Judith repressed a smile at the unintentioned satire of his remark—"and then what did he say?"

"That he'd sink a test well and take a percentage for the sinkin' if I'd see the place didn't get flooded."

"And how was that to be brought about?"

"He said he'd go to court for me and git an in-an-in—"

"Injunction," offered Judith to whom the word was fast becoming a nemesis.

"Yes that's it, a court order he explained, keepin' you from going ahead with your work until we could prove there's oil there."

"Is he going to do that?" Judith asked, as calmly as she could.

"Not unless he has to."

"But Mr. Scoggins you know as well as I do that the construction of the dam as it is going along now, won't harm your land. The gates will be kept open for the very sake of the dam until it is completed. There isn't much chance of having a flood like you had here last year and if you did your oil land would be flooded anyway, wouldn't it?"

"Yeh, but he says once you get it built we can't stop you, if we're goin' to do anything we got to do it now."

"Then what did you mean he wouldn't get out an injunction unless he had to?"

"Unless you'd agree to quit work without it."

Judith sat a few moments in silence. A crisis like this needed a man like Big Tom; not Justin Cunard, Judge Morgan nor any man she knew could handle it.

She was Big Tom's stenographer, she repeated to herself and she was going to act as she had acted in his office when things came up she couldn't handle during his absence. She would pretend he was temporarily absent.

"Mr. Scoggins, have you signed any papers?" she asked.

"No, Miss Judith, they was eggin me on to do it, this man and Mamie, but I says no, I'm not signin' nothing."

"That's fine, Mr. Scoggins. I tried to talk Big Tom into getting you to sign an agreement for our use of your land in the flood basin and he wouldn't do it. He said he would back everything he had on your word."

"He said that?" came the pleased, incredulous question.

"Yes."

"Miss Judy, I . . . I . . . I don't want to do this. It's just Tommy and Mamie and being able to give them things. I've got to Miss Judy, I love it to them, that fish-scale dress and a car for Tommy—"

"I KNOW," Judith, like Big Tom, was putting her trust in the man as she spoke. "I do understand how you feel, but I'm going to ask you to do something for Big Tom. No, not give up your oil. Mr. Bevin would never have asked you to sacrifice yourself for him, would he? And you could have depended upon him to play fair with you, always, couldn't you?"

"Yes, indeed, Miss Judith."

"Well, Mr. Scoggins, I'm acting as his secretary now and I'm going to carry out his orders, so think of yourself as dealing with him. Give me a few days to think this over. I want to explore an angle I've just thought about, and then I'll meet you and give you my decision. Is that fair?"

"Yes it is."

"And you will give me your word that you will not sign anything until after I've talked with you, nor go ahead with any of the plans this man offers?"

"Supposin' he won't wait?"

"If he's honest and there is oil on your land, he will wait."

"Of course . . . yes, of course he will, won't he?"

Their shook hands. Scoggins started to go but Judith had motioned Delphy and the old woman appeared with a coffee pot and a frosted cake. They talked of everything excepting oil and dams and when Scoggins left he had forgotten his dogged, half-ahamed manner of the earlier evening.

After he had left, Judith slipped a light sweater over her head and trudged up to the "Ship Rock".

Wearily she stretched out on the rock and looked out on the plains, a blue-black bowl topped by a blue-black sky.

Was it worth the heartache and worry, this building of Diablo Dam? Surely it seemed that el diablo was at the bottom of it, something devilish seemed to dog her footsteps as she sought to carry out her instructions.

She had sacrificed her husband, her home, herself on the altar of Big Tom's ideal and for what? He had been building for the people and now they didn't want the project that had indirectly robbed him of his life.

She laughed, a broken catch in her voice as she realized it was memory of Scoggins' house being swept from its foundations in the storm, that had sent her away from Norman in the moment of her decision. And now Scoggins—she heard a noise and looked up. A huge figure was silhouetted against the milky glow of a million stars.

"Delphy," she cried, startled.

"Yassam," came the plaintive reply.

"What are you doing up here? I thought you were in bed."

"None."

Without words they went back to the house, Judith meekly accepting her bed-time drink and massage, which she suffered in an effort to repay Delphy for her devotion.

Morning brought Slim Sanford, and with him one of the foremost geologists of the country.

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Judith and Slim go, tomorrow, on a scouting trip.

Thirty-two different pamphlets were printed this year ranging from one of 108 pages to Multnomah county to 32 pages to smaller counties. The pamphlets contain both candidates' statements and arguments on measures.

RIGA, Latvia, April 20.—(UP)—Blonde Laura La Plante, St. Louis motion picture comedienne, was granted a divorce today from William A. Seltzer, Hollywood director.

EXCESS WATERING INJURES GARDENS, LAWNS, IS CLAIM

According to a Water Superintendent Robert A. Duff, many water users in this city ruin their lawns and permanently injure garden soil by excessive use of water during the summer months. The quantities of soil essential to produce an excellent lawn do not always exist and flooding the entire premises and allowing water to run down over curbs will not improve any lawn.

No lawn can be produced by water alone, and if proper attention has been paid to placing food by fertilizing the soil far less water is necessary for the making of a rich and velvety lawn. It should not be expected that grass, which is naturally a deep-rooted plant will thrive and grow luxuriantly upon water and a few inches of soil. Use of fertilizers will supply your lawn with plant food that all the water in creation cannot supply. A thorough watering twice a week is all that is needed. Among the evils of over-watering may be listed with the following:

Keeps the plant roots in cold water a considerable portion of the day.

Washes the soil from the roots and exposes them to the air.

Soaks the soil bed.

Subjects the grass plants to a vast change in temperature from 90 degrees under the summer sun, to the chill of the water at 50 degrees.

Forms a surface crust of baked soil.

Where the soil is deep over-watering has a tendency to "leach" the soil of

the very plant food which should be carefully retained. Study intelligently the results of your treatment of your own lawn and avoid gauging the quantity of water you use by the amount used by your neighbor.

DEVERS GRANTED LEAVE TO CONDUCT CAMPAIGN

SALEM, April 20.—(AP)—J. M. Devera, attorney for the state highway commission today was granted a leave of absence, effective Monday.

Devera said he would start his campaign at that time for the republican

Oregon's Apoplexy Toll Increasing

SALEM, Ore.—(UP)—In 1926 there were 999 Oregonians who died from apoplexy, the state health board reported today. In 1932 there were 1,128.

Apoplexy is caused principally by hardening of the arteries. Best preventative is fresh air, wholesome food, plenty of sleep and regular exercise.

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



WHEN THE LAMP AT THE CORNER GOT BROKEN, FRED PERLEY WAS THE FIRST ON THE SCENE AND HAD JUST PICKED UP THE BASEBALL WHEN THE CROWD GATHERED. HE TRIED TO EXPLAIN HIS INNOCENCE, BUT THE ONLOOKERS WERE SKEPTICAL, ESPECIALLY AS THERE WASN'T A KID IN SIGHT

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'MATTER POP

By C. M. Payne



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Knows His 'Part'

By Hal Forrest



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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Armistice!

By Edwin Alger



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THE NEBBS—It Looks Bad

By Sol Hess



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BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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VOTERS PAMPHLETS GOING INTO MAILS

SALEM, April 20.—(AP)—The actual mailing of the voters' pamphlets got under way today when 425,000 of the leaflets were placed in the mails.

WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT GUM
THE PERFECT GUM
SWEETENS THE BREATH

keeps the taste in tune