Judith Lane

by JEANNE BOWMAN

SYNOPSIS: Judith Dale has returned to Houston from the Rio Diablo dam. She is building the dam with Tom Bevins' money, left her for the purpose. And she is in Houston to fight the will contest brought by Morton Lampere for Mrs. Bevins and Mathile, her daughter. She has slipped out to her old home Hillendale, early in the morning, and has seen someone she thinks might be her husband Norman, who, after siding against her and with the Bevins heirs, has disappeared.

Chapter 41

SURPRISE

JUDITH was delighted to see Clia, but wondered at her early call, since it was barely eight o'clock. Then she was surprised to see Judge Morgan being admitted.

Clia kept conversation clipping along at a lively rate until breakfast was over, then accompanied Cunard, Morgan and Judith into Cunard's study.

"We want to discuss the coming contest," explained the Judge. "I don't want you to go to the witness stand unprepared."

"Oh, by the way, when does the case open?"

"This morning, at ten o'clock."

"This morning," gasped Judith. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Didn't want you to develop any nerves waiting for the ordeal. And Miss Judith, it's apt to be that. Lampere isn't a pleasant person to have on the opposing side."

"But aren't there things I should know, should do? And why didn't yesterday's newspapers say anything about it, or am I no longer news?"

"You're news," Clia contributed, "but thanks to Canfill's desire to murder his wife, the rest of the sheets overlooked the date. We are carrying a story this morning."

"As for you knowing things and doing things," said Judge Morgan, "all you need to do is act natural and you know all that is necessary for you to know."

"About all you'll need to do," offered Cunard, "is hang onto your temper with both hands. And now if you'll dress and tell Mrs. Cunard we're ready, she'll stay with you during the trial as Clia is one of our important witnesses and can't be present until after she's testified—"

"And if you think that isn't being a martyr," interposed Clia, "you don't know nothin' no-how. Imagine me, Clia Sanford, sitting in an anteroom when Lampere's in action."

Judith laughed and with her friend went to her room. She asked Delphy to bring a smart street frock she had purchased before leaving town the previous spring.

"Don't you do it, Delphy, bring that outfit I picked out this morning, and bring in those hats I had sent out yesterday." Then to Judith, "Listen, girl friend, look at me, the veteran of a thousand court wars. You've got to look like the forgotten woman and not like a hosiery ad."

Lampere will probably try to make them believe Mathile got that head of platinum hair for nothing . . . turned grey with the shock of her father's death. They'll be feeling sorry for her and they won't be able to feel sorry for you if you appear looking like the five million you're supposed to have."

Clia had been working as she talked and by the time she had finished, with Delphy's assistance, had Judith dressed to her satisfaction.

"Now take a look," she said and spun Judith around to a mirror.

THE ensemble Clia had chosen was a dark blue sheer one. Clia had added a vest of white cambric, a turned-down collar, and turned back cuffs of the same material.

"I do look efficient," proclaimed Judith, not displeased, for business clothes had been her armor against the world before.

Clia wavered between two hats. One drooped, hiding her eyes and giving her a demure, childish look, the other sat trimly on her boyish bob, giving her a business-like air.

"Efficiency wins," decided Clia with a sigh, "and now to war."

Driving into town Judith, silent for the most part, asked her friend one question—"How did it happen that you didn't frighten Lampere out of handling the case at all?"

"Couldn't. Didn't dare interfere with the 'pursuance of justice' and he knew it. He also knew that I was the only one who had overheard his talk with Maritellan, and it would take real proof to convict either one of anything; proof I wasn't ready to produce."

They reached the courthouse. Judith looked up at the grey stone building. Thought of how many times she had gone with Clia to "sit-in" on a case. It had been interesting, more fascinating than any theater.

Judith heard the whispers, they burned into her ears and she wondered if they weren't seared on her heart as well.

"There she goes . . . that's her, the millionaire stenographer."

A flock of news-photographers descended on them—"Clia, will she pose, Mrs. Dale, do you mind?"

"Of course she'll pose, and you, Mrs. Cunard?" asked Clia, "do you mind?"

"I do mind," answered Mrs. Cunard, with a tiny frown which vanished in a smile, "but under the circumstances I'll be proud to pose wi her."

"Don't make her smile," barked Clia at one enterprising young man, "we don't want folks to think she's enjoying this. Now that's enough. You've all had good shots . . . come on folks."

Judge Morgan and Justin Cunard, who had driven in behind them, came up and escorted them to the room in which the will contest was to be held. They needed an escort, the hall was crowded.

Judith looked upon the court room with new vision. It was no longer an amphitheater for comedy or tragedy. It was a room in which Judith Lane-Dale was to face twelve men and make them know that the Rio Diablo Dam was not a crazy man's dream, but a reality which provided labor for three hundred men and would provide a controlled water supply for rich lands where citrus groves would flourish.

She felt the responsibility keenly as she took her seat. Judge Morgan and Cunard were talking with some of the strange men who seemed to mill about by the dozen. Clia deserted her for a moment to stop at the press table, buzzing with voices.

THE buzzing changed its location as Clia started back, for the crowd followed her to Judith's chair. "Interviews, gladly at the first recess," she said and sent them back satisfied.

"What you going to tell them?" questioned Clia, uneasily, "now go—"

"I'm going to tell them," interrupted Judith, "all about Rio Diablo Dam, about Tommy Scoggins and Timothy Scofield, about the lovelorn vaquero who keeps me awake at night trying to entertain Maria Consuelo Diago, with his love songs."

"You're not so dumb," was Clia's wry comment, then "sh, after a while turn around, not now, they've seen me looking at them. . . . Mrs. Bevins and Mathile just came in bearing down on Lampere so hard it's a wonder he could support them. Ye gods and small surf fish, look at the weeds."

Judith didn't look around. She wouldn't, she would not . . . involuntarily she turned, met the blazing hatred in the eyes of Mathile Bevins, ignored it and looked on, past Mrs. Bevins' frigid poise, to Lampere. He was debonair, smart in a meticulously tailored suit, conscious of the power which had come flowing in through the wells in Scathborne's field. He seemed to personify success.

He had been talking to Mrs. Bevins. Now he stood looking over the men who had been called on the jury panel.

A reporter came up and he leaned over to speak to him with just the right degree of affability and seriousness.

Judith looked at Judge Morgan, a bit fat, a bit careless about the press of his clothes, gold-rimmed spectacles balanced unsteadily on his long nose. What chance had he against Lampere?

Clia Sanford was motioned into another room and a moment later came a warning hush, the Judge came out of his chambers and ascended the bench. Not Maritellan, a visiting judge from another county.

The will contest was on. Drearily it dragged its way as the prospective jury men were called, questioned and excused, called, questioned and challenged, called, questioned and accepted. Judith talked to the reporters during the first recess, went to lunch with her counsel at noon, and came back to the courtroom for further tedious work.

As Judith listened to the questions she was glad she was in the south where women on a jury were not favored. No woman could have looked with unprejudiced eyes at "the other woman," as Judith was to be called.

At four-thirty the twelve men tried and true were impanelled and the alternative chosen. Judith studied them intently.

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Tomorrow, the trial gets under way.

BRITISH WOULD TRY 'ALL IN' WRESTLING AS YANKS ENJOY IT

By ALAN GOULD
(Associated Press Sports Editor.)

It seems that the British have been persuaded to try "all-in-wrestling," which presumably is native for catch-as-catch-can grunting and groaning. The Sporting Searchlight of London deplores an apparent skepticism, pointing out that "during the past few months more than 100,000 people have witnesses all-in wrestling bouts in New York" and that "100,000 Americans can't be wrong."

For the benefit of the doubting Tommies, the Searchlight visualizes the scenes connected with the business in America as follows:

"Crowds are swarming 'round Madison Square Garden every week. And every week the crowd is getting bigger. Picture the scene. Row upon row of flushed, eager faces surrounding the flood-lit ring. Every eye focused on two giants, sweating, straining, battling for physical supremacy . . . At the close of the entertainment a well-satisfied multitude leave the building . . . There are no fiascos, no one-punch winners as in boxing.

"Over here,' continues the Searchlight, "the sport is still in its infancy. And it is no secret that a section of the Press still views all-in wrestling with rather dubious eyes. Their attitude is characteristic of our race. We always dislike the new. We distrust that which threatens to upset our ideas on sport."

Perish the distrustful thought and let 'em have their fun!

STRICT SMUT RULE WILL BE LIGHTENED

PORTLAND, Ore., April 27.—(AP)—A telegram was received here today by the Merchants' exchange from Congressman Walter M. Pierce of Oregon, stating that Secretary of Agriculture Wallace will amend a previous order imposing more strict smut regulations on wheat.

"Please notify all concerned that Secretary Wallace is signing an amendment to the previous order making the former practice effective as a rule, allowing 14 smut balls instead of ten," the message said.

Taffeta Choice Evening Frocks

PARIS (AP)—The Comtesse de Vallombrosa is one of a number of smart Parisians who are wearing bright taffeta evening frocks this spring. She wears a gown of the crisp silk in red, yellow and green checks. With it she wears an evening wrap of bottle green velvet lined with pink silk.

GIVE IT A WHIRL — by Hatlo

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS — By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

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FIGURING, FROM THE CARS PARKED IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE, THAT HIS WIFE WAS HAVING A TEA PARTY AND NOT WANTING TO GO HOME UNTIL THE WOMEN HAD ALL GONE, FRED PERLEY HUNG AROUND THE CORNER FOR BETTER THAN AN HOUR, BEFORE HE DISCOVERED THAT THE PARTY WAS ACROSS THE STREET BUT THE GUESTS COULDN'T PARK THERE BECAUSE WORKMEN HAD BEEN DIGGING UP PIPES

4-27 GLUYAS WILLIAMS

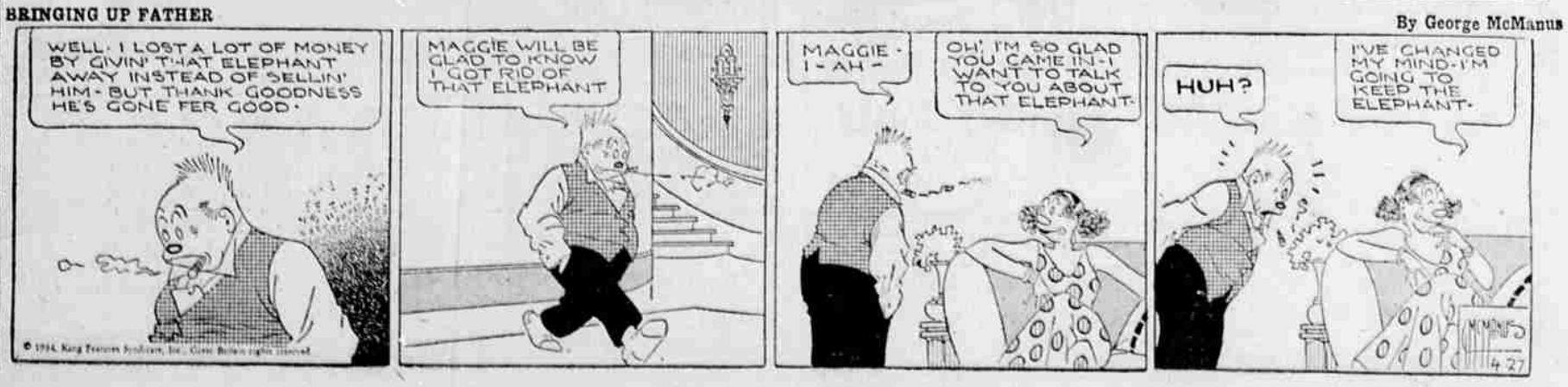
S'MATTER POP— By C. M. Payne

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tight Place For The Boys — By Hal Forrest

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Cap'n Ike's Amazement! — By Edwin Alger

THE NEBBS—A Chip Off The Old Block — By Sol Hess

BRINGING UP FATHER — By George McManus



Bonneville House Bids Are Opened

PORTLAND, April 27.—(AP)—With a bid of $161,688, the George H. Wale company of Portland here low when proposals were opened here Wednesday for construction of 20 permanent houses at Bonneville dam, as quarters for attendants.

The houses, each of two-story construction, will be of the English type. Each building will be different.

Be correctly corseted in an Artist Model by Ethelwyn B Hoffmann.