

Montana Rides Again

A RAPID-FIRE ROMANCE BY EVAN EVANS

SYNOPSIS: Montana has taken the crown of the evergreen crown of Our Lady in place of the bishop from the school church it had been stolen by General Estrada. But the other half is with Mateo Sabre, and Mateo has been captured by Estrada and tortured, and is about to be sent to the Valley of the Dead. Montana does not know the whereabouts of Sabre, but he does know that he must look for them.

Chapter 29 THE BLESSING

MONTANA knew the way—Brother Pascual had told him—so he turned right in at the open door of the Bishop's room and found that good little man at the window.

When the Bishop heard Montana's light laugh behind him, he turned a trifle.

"Hush," he said. "Why are you here?"

"I've come to ask you where I can find a friend of mine, and to give you a little token you've been missing."

"A token?" asked the bishop.

As the youth came closer to him, Bishop Emiliano lifted his gleaming bald head higher and higher until he was staring up into the masked face.

"I beg your pardon," said the kid. "Of course I know that there's no harm can come from you. He took off his mask."

"But who are you, my son?" said the bishop.

"Perhaps you'll find my name engraved somewhere on this?" said Montana.

And he put the trinket in the chamols wrapping into the hands of the bishop. The latter, unwrapping the thing slowly, still kept his grave, gentle eyes fixed on the stranger until something that his fingers touched made him look down quickly.

Then he saw that sacred glimmer of gold and green and he clasped the treasure in both hands against his breast.

"You are El Keed!" he said. "Ah, where is Pascual? He knew that you would come back and bring this. He was sure of it. He gave me his oath that there was no evil in you, my son."

"Oh, there's trouble enough in me!" said the kid.

"What shall I do for you?" asked the bishop, making a helpless gesture. "How shall I make you a reward? You are not of our faith, my son?"

"No," said the kid. "Never mind about the rewards. Give them to Rubra. Give them to Mateo. A few Aves will make him feel richer than a king."

Then he saw something in the face of the priest and went a bit closer to him.

"There's one thing that I could use," he said. "It's never happened to me before, and perhaps it might as well happen now. Give me your blessing, if you will."

He knelt down suddenly. The good bishop was taken aback for an instant, and he peered down at the kid as though he suspected, for a moment, that there might be a bit of sacrilegious mockery in this gesture, but the strong, clean features of the kid were no longer smiling.

At that, Bishop Emiliano put both hands on the head of Montana.

"Our Father in Heaven," he said, "give faith and love to this young man, we pray you."

"Is that all?" asked Montana.

"If you will wait there a little longer, I'll kneel and pray with you, my dear lad," said the bishop.

"No," answered the kid, rising. "The floor's hard and my knees are soft. Where shall I find Pascual?"

"Somewhere along the street, watching the procession, I suppose," said the bishop. "His heart is not half a step away from the heart of a child. Perhaps that is why he is such a foolish man and such a good one."

"Tell me about him," begged Montana. "There's a fellow I want to know more about."

BUT just then he heard, out of the singing and the laughing and the shouting and the aimless chattering of the crowd in the street, the voice of one girl singing above the rest.

The sweetness of it ran into his soul even before his mind understood the meaning of the words.

She was singing:

"Love is not happiness.
A horse under heel;
A sword under hand;
And red wine for the belly;
But love is not happiness."

At that, he only paused to pull the mask again over his face before he leaned from the window of the bishop's palace and sent his voice

ringing down in the second verse of that old Spanish song:

"Love is not happiness.
Seeing is longer;
Winning is doubting;
Seeing is doubting;
But love is not happiness."

"My son, is it proper that love songs should come out of the window of a clergyman?" said the bishop. But he was laughing till he remembered another thing: "And the whole town filled with Rurales and soldiers ready to seize you, El Keed! But I'll show you a back stairs to take you out behind the house."

"With such a new blessing, how could I come into old trouble?" asked Montana. "Besides, she's answering me—she's waiting there in the street for me—that beautiful, laughing, singing, dancing devil, that traitor, Rosita."

He was fleeing from the room as he spoke. The bishop heard the feet thump hardy three times on the stairs, and then he saw the bounding figure issue out into the crowd.

The bishop also saw the carriage of General Estrada, drawn by four horses, plowing through the crowd, which scattered rapidly back on either hand, because on the back of the near leader of the team there rode a cruel devil with a black snake, and he knew exactly how to flop people out of his way.

Lolling back in the carriage was the general himself, leaning one hand on the hilt of a great, glided sword and smoking one of his big cigars. Passing the palace of the bishop, he stood up, enormous in his carriage, spreading his feet to keep his balance against the jolting, and slowly, deliberately saluted.

THE bishop, shocked by that insolence, drew back from the window a little and raised his eyes to that stary heaven which permits so many monsters to stalk the earth in triumph.

Then he took out of his pouch at his girdle a folded paper which he opened and read by the dim flicker of the candles easily and swiftly, because it was a document which he had scanned more than once before.

It announced in great letters, at the top, a reward of ten thousand pesos for the apprehension of a man, dead or alive!

Ten thousand pesos—in this country where a thousand would seem a great fortune to many a starved, lean, dangerous mountaineer—men who shot straight because they could not afford to waste ammunition!

An American who speaks like a native Mexican. He has black hair, but his eyes are blue. He is tall, with wide shoulders. His walk is graceful, his movements are slow. He smiles very often. He will come to a pretty woman as a wild horse comes to water. Look for tall, handsome man with blue eyes. Ten thousand pesos reward. El Keed—dead or alive—El Keed.

That was the last line of the poster, in the largest lettering of all.

The bishop dropped the paper to the floor and leaned from his window again, breathless. He should have told the kringo about that published notice. But why should he tell such news to a man who surely knew all about what was happening?

And now he was down there in the crowd! And if he, with dim eyes and from a distance, could distinguish the prey in the throng, why did not those about him know the man instantly?

Because the eyes of the bishop had been opened, and the eyes of the crowd were closed by the brazen daring of the American. The last thing the men of Duraya expected was to find El Keed among them so soon after the foray upon the fort.

The carriage of the governor stopped. The governor himself stepped down. He approached a girl who was singing with a guttural. That was the daughter of the one-legged Miguel Santos.

There stood the governor, holding out a hand to her, gesturing towards his carriage.

Hot anger stood up in the heart of the bishop, and then he saw that the girl was refusing. She was shaking her head. She was still singing her song.

The governor, turning suddenly, strode back into his carriage and flung himself back into his former seat, and all the crowd thronged about him and chattered his dress.

The bishop was agape. He could not believe the thing that he had seen. The girl of the inn had refused the governor.

Tomorrow, Montana learns the fate of a friend.

APPLEGATE DAM DATA PREPARED FOR PWA CHIEF

An important meeting of the improvement and irrigation project committee of the Applegate valley was held recently with approximately one hundred attending. Miles Cantrall reports.

Mr. Pierce, water master of Josephine county, was guest speaker and outlined briefly the possibilities of a series of dams at the head of Williams creek.

Citizens of the Applegate district believe that if a damsite is located at a point about one-half mile below the confluence of the Applegate river and Squaw creek it will be of inestimable value to the Applegate valley farmers.

Applegate River valley is in dire need of stored flood water to augment the irrigation of lands now having decreed water rights and to allow irrigation of marginal arid areas otherwise arable.

Mr. Cantrall and his committee presented this project to C. C. Hockley, state engineer of the public works administration, recently along with other projects submitted by this county. He further states that it is in keeping with the program of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce to provide more water for Jackson county land. The project, which has been developed by citizens of the Applegate River valley, has been perfected during a period of

NO ITALO-ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENT IN SIGHT

ROME, Feb. 26.—(AP)—No possibility of an Italo-Ethiopian agreement is in sight, a government spokesman said today, as four more Italian transports prepared to sail for east Africa.

The troop ships, three docked at Naples and one at Messina, were being loaded with several thousand more soldiers and hundreds of tons of war materials.

"There's no indication of the emperor's part," the spokesman said. "That he is ready to give in on his determination to take no blame for Ethiopian aggression on the Somaliland frontier and to pay no indemnity for the Italian troops killed in attacks at Ualul and Afduh."

SEATTLE, Wash., Feb. 26.—(AP)—Alvin Henrich, 65, president of the Apex Brewing company, died at a hospital here today from complications which developed after he slipped on icy pavement and broke his ankle several weeks ago.

OREGON CITY, Feb. 26.—(AP)—William J. Henderson, 72, of Canemah was killed last night when he was struck by a Southern Pacific freight train as he was walking along the tracks.

Home portraits of family groups and children at Special Prices. Shangie Studio. Phone 1398.

SKULL DISCOVERY PUZZLES SAVANTS

WASHINGTON (I. —) Discovery of the skull of a Titanotherium in Death Valley has proved that scientists may be wrong.

Noted scientists had predicted that no fossils ever would be found in the valley. The Titanotherium, a gigantic rhinoceros-like animal apparently belonged to the eocene or oligocene period.

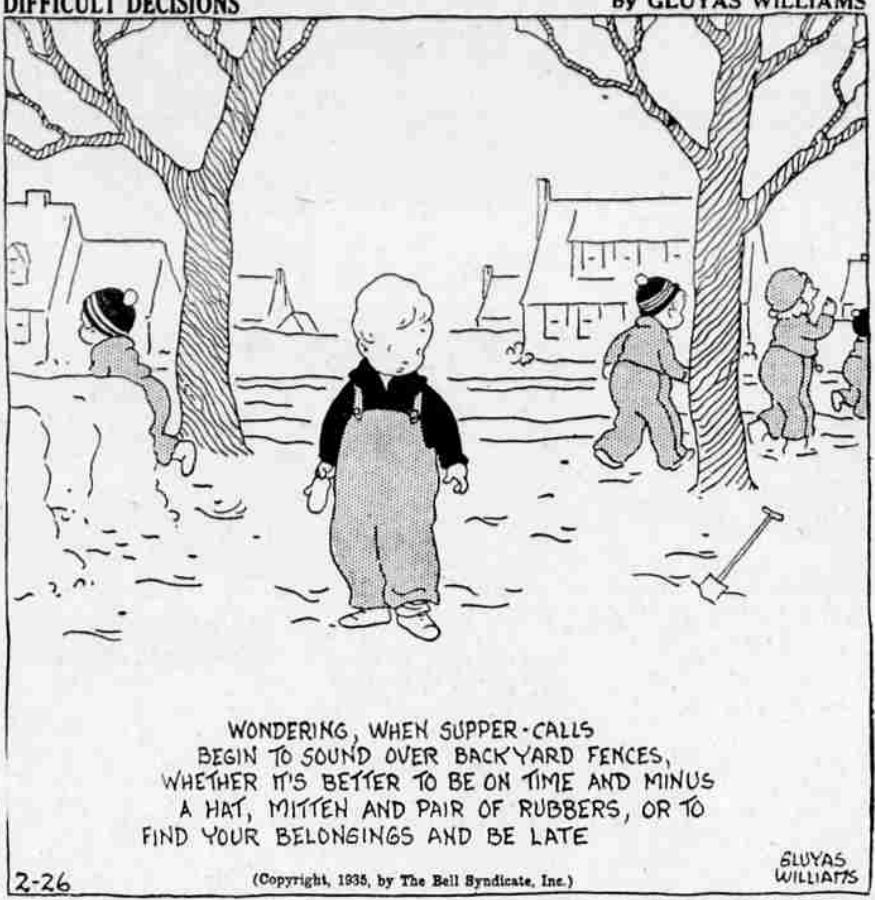
Members of the Death Valley National Monument made the discovery. Shortly afterward, a group of scientists from the California Institute of Technology unearthed another skull of the same type of mammal.

It marked the first time that the skull of a Titanotherium had been found west of the Rockies. In addition, but once previously had any fossil of this family of mammals been discovered in the region.

Attention
Woodmen of World—All members of Camp No. 90 now make payments to Leland J. Knox, clerk, Room 803, Medford National Bank Bldg. Managers Camp No. 90, Woodmen of World.

WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass and will replace your broken windows reasonably. Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

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WONDERING, WHEN SUPPER-CALLS BEGIN TO SOUND OVER BACK-YARD FENCES, WHETHER IT'S BETTER TO BE ON TIME AND MINUS A HAT, MITTEN AND PAIR OF RUBBERS, OR TO FIND YOUR BELONGINGS AND BE LATE
GLUYAS WILLIAMS
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SMATTER POP



TAILSPIN TO THE NEWS



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—A Warning



THE NEBBS—The Migaty Has Pouch



BRINGING UP FATHER



MERRIAM'S PARK ADMINISTRATOR

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26.—(AP) The national park service today replaced the existing five districts supervising state park emergency work camps with eight regional administrations. Appointment of administrators was announced at the opening session of a four-day conference of state park authorities with Secretary Ickes. Conrad L. Wirth, assistant national park director, said the change was to better co-ordinate the increasing amount of state park improvements carried on by the CCC.

ROOSEVELT EYES RELIEF REACTION

HYDE PARK, N. Y., Feb. 26.—(AP) President Roosevelt watched intently but silently today the reaction of the country to the senate's vote against his work relief program. With the \$1,580,000 work bill back in the senate appropriations committee, it appears likely that Mr. Roosevelt will suggest its reconsideration by the senate once the measure of public reaction has been recorded. However, he carefully refrained from any comment today on this or other public issues.

Members of the presidential staff have reflected some concern at the effect on congress of messages from organized groups and they are also watching closely and silently the result of the move by senate leaders to cause general public sentiment.