

Montana Rides Again

A RAPID-FIRE ROMANCE BY EVAN EVANS

SYNOPSIS: The Montana and Mateo Rubriz have entered a governor's apartment at Durango recovered the emerald crown of the Lady which the governor stole from the church, and Montana has returned his half of the crown to the Bishop. But Mateo has been caught, tortured, and is to be sent to the Valley of the Dead. Rubriz, who betrayed Montana and Mateo to the governor, just has snatched the governor on the street. Montana is following Rubriz.

Chapter 30 PASCUAL'S STORY

THE rage of the governor at this public thwarting had come to a white heat. The others of the crowd could see the girl refuse the immense honor he offered, to make her the queen of the festival by placing her at his side in the carriage, the humbling of Ignacio Estrada by making such an offer to a girl in the street—but none of them could have heard the murmur which she placed between two lines of her song.

"Blood-drinker! Man-eating swine!"

She had said it for his ear only, and still smiling.

The madness that entered his brain kept it whirling like black smoke.

But through the crowd that came laughing around the girl, congratulating her, wondering over her, the taller figure of the Kid stepped with a singular ease. He never seemed to jostle man or woman, but, as though he knew magic spots where his feet should rest, he glided through the press and came to her.

There was something about this man, dressed like themselves, masked like themselves, that made the other youths lose heart, and they gave back a trifle from around him as though they wanted to hear him and see him better.

For he had begun to sing in a good, rich, ringing baritone, that fantastic old Castilian song, "Weave Me a Mantle." With the very first strains, the girl struck up the accompaniment on her guitar and gave the song her own voice, so that they walked on slowly, surrounded by their own music as by a wall of quiet, leaning their heads a little to one another.

So long as the song continued, the crowd kept its distance, moving slowly with the slow pace of the singers, but as the song ended the tide of the festival rushed over the place and the level-streaming heads began to bob irregularly up and down again.

So, in a moment, the girl and Montana were more alone, more private in that crowd, than they would have been in the most secret of gardens.

She caught at his arm so that she walked close to his side, but she said, with her face upturned to him: "If you knew me—if you knew what I have done—"

"I saw Estrada pull his hat over his eyes."

"But before—long before—there is a thing I have done—"

"Look!" said the Kid.

He held a gold piece in his hand.

"This is the past," said he. "Watch it!"

And he tossed the coin high over his head, so that it winked in the light of the lanterns.

SHE, over her shoulder, saw the gold flicker, arch up, fall, and the slim hands of a girl flashed up and caught it.

Rosita laughed. She had no envy for that lucky finder!

"That's the past—and let it go!" said Montana.

"Do you know?" she asked.

"Enough to make it worth the forgetting," said Montana.

"Governors come and governors go, but Montana rides forever," said the girl.

They began to laugh together until he cried out: "There's Brother Pascual grinning his big grin over the heads of the people! What a man that is, Rosita! Let's go to him, because he can tell me about Rubriz!"

She made the Kid pause.

"You don't know about Rubriz?" she gasped.

She began to read his face from side to side, up and down, as though somewhere in it she must find the knowledge.

"I don't know. What is it?"

"God forgive me!" cried the girl. "I can't tell you. No one dares to speak of it, but everyone knows—Brother Pascual—he can tell you."

"Rubriz?" said Montana. "Has something happened to him? Mateo?"

He looked down at the agony in the eyes of the girl and then he went

boldly, cutting through the crowd of strength and adroitness, drawing the girl through the easy safety of his wake.

When he came up to the friar he said two words at the shoulder of the giant, whose eyes were so filled with the noise and laughter of the crowd that they overflowed with a sort of blind brightness. Every honest happiness that came to his fellow men was as two happinesses to that good fellow.

But at the voice of Montana he turned suddenly and threw up his hand as though to defend himself from an attack. Afterwards he crushed the wrist of the Kid with a terrible grasp.

"El Keel!" he whispered.

"Be quiet—people are staring, brother," cautioned the girl.

"Rubriz—tell me about Mateo!" urged Montana.

Behind the town, in that little sandy hollow where Montana had left the red mare, the three stood while Brother Pascual told to Montana a tale that curdled his blood.

Not everything was known. Men only knew how the great Rubriz had fallen to numbers and chance; how he had lain in the hands of the governor for a single day; and how he had been brought out of the fort during the middle of the next night a changed, perhaps a ruined, man.

He had been placed in a carriage. Few had seen. But there had been a glimpse of a limply sagging form, arms and legs over which there was no control, the head hanging weakly over to the side.

Like a body newly dead, except that the eyes were living.

THAT was how the girl repeated the words she had heard. And then the closed carriage had sped away on the southern trail.

"Where?" groaned Montana.

"Where could they have taken him? What have they done with him, Pascual?"

"They have taken him where I am going to follow," said the friar, quietly, "but where it would be foolish for you to go, my friend. Foolish for me, also, but since Rubriz is dying for the sake of the church, I must go to join him."

"Dying?" echoed Montana.

"Don't you see?" put in the girl. "There's only one place that a devil like Estrada would send him. To the Valley of the Dead."

The name came over Montana like a horrible nightmare out of an almost forgotten sleep. He had heard of it before. All men in Mexico had heard of it, but it was a thing not to be whispered, not to be thought.

"We go together!" said Montana. But he hardly heard his own voice or believed that he had spoken.

"Pascual!" moaned the girl. "I told you what he would say! I told you that he would go. And I shall go also, then!"

"Hush!" said the friar. "You are a child. And what could you do?"

They went south through the mountains, over the green plains, into a stricken land where running water was no longer found. Instead, there were standing pools or "tanks" of water that was foul with scum, filled with twisting, jerking forms of insect life.

They had to dig shallow trenches a yard from the margin of these stink-bolls and let the water seep in, purified a little by the filter through which it had run. But even when it had been strained in this slow and careful manner, that water would grow unbearably foul in half a day's ride under the southern sun.

It was the sun that possessed the world, and no one who had journeyed through that country could love the great bright disk again, not even if he found himself again in the cold north where it is a friend.

Here it filled the entire sky with intolerable light and it blazed up again from the pale soil and the hot rocks. Even the cactus was burned brown at the edges and all the thorns were black, tempered iron. The only other growth lay on the ground like gray smoke.

There was no life for the eye and there was no sound for the ear. All was furnace by day, and, in the night, a black pit with the stars burning thin and far away through the dusty air. They had the feeling that they were not on a surface, but inside something.

After a day or two, not even Montana was capable of much speech and the songs with which he had cheered the first part of the journey ended.

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Montana learns the horrible story of the Valley of Death, tomorrow.

PORTLANDERS KIM LOSE BATTLE FOR SHARE OF ESTATE

SALEM, Feb. 27.—(AP)—Validity of the will of Anton Knutson, deceased Portland resident, in which the entire estate valued at \$38,000 was bequeathed to his niece, Thelma Knutson, was upheld by the Oregon supreme court yesterday in an opinion handed down by Justice George Rossmann.

The opinion held that contestants of the will, other relatives of Knutson, were not entitled to any of the estate and the court held no evidence was given that Knutson lacked sufficient mental capacity to make such a will and that undue influence was used by the niece. The opinion held further that the niece, a school teacher, took care of Knutson without any offers from other relatives.

Mrs. Lyllis F. Price was unsuccessful in her suit for a divorce against Oscar E. Price, prominent business man of Salem. The supreme court in an opinion by Chief Justice Campbell, affirmed the decree of Judge L. G. Lewelling.

The brief opinion concluded with the following paragraph: "We have diligently read through the 407 typewritten pages of oral testimony given on the trial and have carefully examined the 28 exhibits introduced in evidence. We have also attentively considered the masterful briefs of counsel as well as their able oral argument in this court. But yet we lay over to the side."

MRS. GOULD REGISTERS INDIGNANT DENIAL SHE WOULD WED SIR BAZIL

NEW YORK, Feb. 27.—(AP)—Mrs. Wilma E. Gould admitted under cross examination today in her \$500,000 damage suit against relatives of her husband, that she had known Sir Basil Zaharoff—mystery man of Monte Carlo—"intimately" but indignantly denied she planned to divorce Edward B. Gould so that she might marry him.

Mrs. Gould charges that the relatives of her husband whose home is in Seneca Falls, N. Y., conspired to get evidence on which Gould might base a divorce action.

Harry Gerguson—Prince "Mike" Romanoff to Broadway and Park Ave. alike—is named in her suit as being hired to take her to his apartment in New York.

Mrs. Gould, in answer to questions, said that she had dined with the multi-millionaire munitions manufacturer at Monte Carlo several times in the presence of his daughter.

"Were you ever with Sir Basil alone?" she was asked.

Henry A. Uterhart, attorney for Mrs. Gould, objected, saying: "Why he's 85 years old!" The court room went into an uproar.

PARIS, Feb. 26.—(AP)—Violent storms continued today to batter France's Atlantic seaboard. At least six ships were reported in distress off the west coast, many fishermen were lost and damage estimates mounted ashore.

Ship 542, 'Well haul away your refuse, City Sanitary Service.



INTERSECTION

APPROACHES INTERSECTION, WIFE REMARKING THERE'S A CAR COMING ON HIS LEFT

SEES THAT THE OTHER CAR HAS ALSO STOPPED TO LET HIM PASS

AT SAME INSTANT OTHER CAR ALSO STARTS ACROSS. BOTH STOP WITH SCREAMING BRAKES

MUTTERS WELL SOMEBODY'S GOT TO MAKE UP HIS MIND, PUTS CAR INTO GEAR AND DISCOVERS HE HAS STALLED THE ENGINE

STOPS TO LET CAR CROSS, REMARKING IT DOESN'T HURRY TO BE POLITE AND GIVE THE OTHER FELLOW THE RIGHT OF WAY

WIFE SAYS SHE THINKS THE OTHER MAN WANTS HIM TO GO FIRST. STARTS ACROSS

OCCUPANTS OF BOTH CARS SIT MOTIONING TO OTHER CAR TO GO AHEAD. CARS IN THE REAR BEGIN TO HONK FOR ACTION

GETS IT STARTED AT LAST AND SHOOT'S ACROSS, WITH VERY BAD FEELING ON ALL SIDES

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S MATTER POP



TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Nazilian Air Corps!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—In the Lion's Den



THE NEBBES—Flies



BRINGING UP FATHER



MORE DELAY FOR CHILD LABOR BAN

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27.—(AP)—Hope for ratification of the child labor amendment this year by all the required 36 states virtually has been abandoned by some of its chief sponsors.

Twenty four states have ratified the measure.

"I don't think it will be possible to get ratifications in 12 more states this winter," Miss Katherine F. Lenroot, head of the children's bureau of the labor department said today.

Wyoming, Idaho, Utah and Indiana ratified the amendment this winter.

Rejections were voted by Kansas, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Mexico, Tennessee and Texas.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

RYNNING LEAVES FOR ROAD MEET

Paul B. Rynning, county engineer, left today for Portland to attend a meeting Thursday of the state highway commission. Rynning, representing the Pacific highway association, will make the trip in place of A. S. V. Carpenter, who is in Pasadena.

Allocation of funds for highway projects in southern Oregon will be made at the meeting, and Rynning will combine with other representatives of the Pacific highway association in behalf of the highway project. The Pacific highway route project is composed of representatives from this city, Ashland, Grants Pass, Roseburg and Eugene.

Home interests of family group and children at special Price Shangri Studio, Phone 1308.



WHOOPIE!



HERE'S WHERE I CASH IN



HELLO! HELLO!



GET OUT OF THAT BED



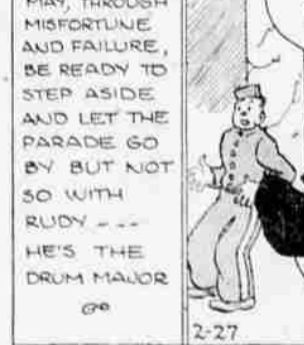
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND



DID YOU WAKE ME UP



THE NEBBES—Flies



BRINGING UP FATHER



MORE DELAY FOR CHILD LABOR BAN



RYNNING LEAVES FOR ROAD MEET



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