

Montana Rides Again

A RAPID-FIRE ROMANCE BY EVAN EVANS

SYNOPSIS: The Montana Kid and brother Pascual supposedly have allowed the guards of Juan-Silva, terrible master of the terrible Valley of the Dead to capture them. They hope to be made to return to the valley by General Estrada. But the Kid, who betrayed Mateo and the Kid in Estrada, waits outside the valley for the return of the expedition—a new train, repeat.

Chapter 36
JUAN-SILVA

TWO BARRICADED buildings stood in the center of the valley. One for the women, said a guard, and another for the men.

"But there are hundreds in here—and how can they be crowded into places of that size?" asked Montana.

"By sleeping in them five high," grinned the guard, "and there isn't room to lie down, they stand."

The thing spread itself in a misty before the eyes of Montana—the thick of the gloom lighted by one or two dull lamps, and the groaning of the sick and the despairing, and the horrible steam and stench of close-packed humanity.

But somewhere within the walls of this valley was Mateo Rubitz. Perhaps his chains were jangling in one of the nearby rows of bores as he drove the blade of his boe inches deeper than the rest. And the thought of him transformed the place for the Kid. The strangeness of their past swept over him, and a feeling that there must be a future for them both.

They came, now, towards a building with a very long, low front.

"There's your master, there's Juan-Silva—and may God help you!" said one of the guard.

To which the captives answered, chuckling: "God can't look in here. The steam's too thick."

And once more they all laughed at this.

In front of the place they were halted. In place of the lariat, they were tied with short cords, even their feet being hobbled; afterwards, they were led through an entrance door down a naked hall, and so into the brightness of an open court.

Here sat Juan-Silva under an awning of the brightest old Mexican featherwork. He was cross-legged, like an Indian, on a mat of woven dyed grass, and he sat at the verge of a shallow run of water whose swift ripples threw up a continual play of reflected light on the face of the despot of the Valley of the Dead.

He wore, like the lowest of his laborers, only a loin cloth, so that Montana could see the withered limbs and the sagging paunch of an old man of eighty, at least. His head was bald as an egg. It was strangely shaped, with a dividing crease in the center between the big front and back lobes.

From his face the spare flesh had melted away by time, but the skin had not shrunk to a tight fit. Over the jaws, below the mouth and hanging under the chin, were almost rigid folds of the old, tough hide.

He had once been a tall man with wide shoulders and a still man with bowed, but the years had turned him into a mummy. And, as in a mummy of a young man, his sunken cheeks were drawn out lean and hard because he still possessed a full set of teeth. When he spoke, his lips first curled back over the teeth, which then parted before utterance came.

THIS curious contortion had the effect of a smile, at first, and afterwards it was as though he wanted to get his lips away, carefully, from teeth that might cut them. The voice itself was low-pitched and the vibrations could almost be counted. One would have called him a dying man, but Montana had the conviction that death would still be postponed for many years.

How did he manage to retain his place? Every year, according to rule, the tax inspectors, at least, journeyed into the Valley of the Dead, and every year they came out again without registering a claim against the monstrous rule of this evil old man. Well, money can close most mouths, even a little of it.

Juan-Silva was saying: "Have we visitors? Have we really visitors at last? What do you mean, my friends, by trying up their hands and hobbling their feet? Is that treatment for a guest?"

The skeleton-headed captain of the guard—compared with Juan-Silva he looked like a young man—answered: "They came into the Valley, señor, and so we brought them here safe. Francisco and Felipe, who went out to bring in the new gang of prisoners, have killed the other gang at the mouth of the valley—and these two say that they've come to take up the room that Francisco and Felipe have left."

It was a clear enough statement. Juan-Silva pondered it for a moment. Then he said: "Take the friar into my own room and leave him there. Only watch—in case he should need anything. I am glad that the Church is smiling on the Valley of the Dead. But this other one, he is different. Let me talk with him, my friends."

Poor Brother Pascual, when he knew that he was to be parted from his friend, cast one glance of longing towards Montana, and then went away surrounded by several of the guards. Others remained with the Kid. And he felt those amazingly young eyes, brighter than youth in the dead setting of that face, scanning him, probing at him.

"You have a name, señor?" asked Juan-Silva.

"Several," said the Kid, smiling. "Some people call me Arizona, and some call me El Keed. And some simply call me El Keed. That is south, here, in Mexico."

He wondered, vaguely if the knowledge of that name had penetrated as far as the Valley of the Dead, even? The death's-head who faced him showed no sign of recognition, but the others instantly shifted and stirred a little. At this, Juan-Silva lifted a bony finger and pointed to one.

"YOU know something," he said. "What is it you know?"

"A Rural told me," said the man. "One of the Rurales who were bringing up new prisoners to the valley entrance. He told me about El Keed."

"And he said?" went on the ancient man.

"He said, señor, that he would give the halo from his hope of sainthood and his good right hand, also, if only he could become the captor of El Keed."

"Tell me in one word—is there a price on the head of this gringo?"

"There is a price—ten thousand pesos—on the head of this gringo!"

This informant was a good, broad chunk of a man with the top of his nose bashed in, perhaps by the kick of a horse or a mule, and with his nostrils correspondingly flaring wide so that he always seemed to be out of breath, or in a passion.

"Ten thousand pesos?" said Juan-Silva. "Well, that is money, too! He rubbed his hand together and Montana heard the chafing of the dry skin. "But ten thousand pesos, why, my friend? Is this a great man-killer and robber? This gringo? But is he really a gringo?"

"I am an American," admitted the Kid.

"I have known a few," said the rasping, but subdued voice of Juan-Silva, "but I have never known any good to come out of them. Go on—you!—and tell me why they want to pay so much money for El Keed—dead or alive?"

"Yes, dead or alive. That is how the poster reads."

"Well, we have never made much money out of dead men, but we may begin to expect them," said Juan-Silva. He pushed out his tongue and ran it slowly over his lips, as though his mouth were sore and needed comfort. "But you still have a story to tell."

"Why, this is the man," said the informant, "who has ridden from one end of Mexico to the other, with the Rurales to catch him and always missing, just missing, and leaving behind them a good many wounded and a good many dead and dying."

Juan-Silva looked straight at Montana.

"Have you killed some of the brave Rurales?" he asked.

"I have," said Montana.

"Ha! And you boast of it?"

Suddenly Juan-Silva felt that it would be far wiser to tell of the truth to this terrible old man. Therefore he broke out, speaking truth from the bottom of his heart. "I never saw a Rural I would not have put bullets through if I could!"

"Ah," said Juan-Silva. "That's the truth of it, is it?" He began to nod his head, wagging it far up and down. At last he said: "I also, I never have seen a Rural I did not wish dead!"

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Montana, tomorrow, has a shooting match with Death.

SIX ARRESTED IN 'FRISCO CLEANERS LABOR DISORDERS

SAN FRANCISCO, Mar. 6.—(UP)—Labor authorities today moved to check growing disorders in a tie-up of the \$5,000,000 San Francisco cleaning and dyeing industry after union pickets had engaged in fights, smashed cut-rate signs, and stoned independent establishments.

Six men were arrested during the day for participation in minor demonstrations. Mrs. Olga Blanton was injured when hit by a flying rock during one riot.

Dozens of patrol cars and extra policemen were hurried to the various districts in which disorders occurred.

Approximately 1400 dyeing and cleaning establishments, employing 10,000 persons were closed by mutual agreement of workers and owners as a mass demonstration against alleged "chickens" and violators of NIRA code agreements.

Union employees and their employers asserted the price cutting activities of various independent establishments threatened to bring a 30 per cent cut in workers' wages, and to plunge the entire industry into disastrous price wars.

Dozens of major independent establishments were picketed during the day, with more than 2000 demonstrators milling in front of one. Signs advising cleaning and pressing of suits at less than the 75 cent figure demanded by the strikers were torn

Central Pt. W. R. C. Initiates Two At Interesting Meet

CENTRAL POINT, March 6.—(Sp.) An interesting meeting of the Women's Relief Corps was held Saturday afternoon, with an attendance of 29 members. Business session was followed by the initiation of two new members. Mrs. Virginia Powell and Mrs. Edna Rae Marine, after which the quarterly birthday party was enjoyed. A puzzle game was tried out with Mrs. Faber being declared the winner.

The motif selected for the table decorations was in honor of St. Patrick's day, with streamers of green from the light fixtures to the table corners. Candles of green and place cards of shamrocks added to the beauty of the white naper. The beautiful birthday cake was made by Mrs. Emma Gleason.

Honor guests who surrounded the

PARALLEL FOOT PATHS FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

PORTLAND, March 6.—(AP)—All new highway construction in or near town and cities must have provision for parallel footpaths if the federal government extends financial help in the building of roads.

This announcement was made today by W. H. Lynch, district engineer. The move is in the direction of public safety, he said.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

INDOORS PLAY

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

SUGGESTS TO JUNIOR THAT SINCE IT'S SO COLD OUT HE BRING ALL HIS FRIENDS INTO THE HOUSE TO PLAY

RETURNS TO HER SEWING UNTIL WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE BEGINS TO SHAKE JUNIOR'S ROOM UPSTAIRS

RUSHES INTO HALL, JUNIOR REPORTING THAT THEY'RE JUST WRESTLING UNTIL THEY DECIDE WHAT TO DO

HER SUGGESTION THAT THEY PLAY WITH HIS TRAP MEETING WITH APPROVAL SHE RETURNS TO HER CHAIR

EARTHQUAKE SUDDENLY RESUMES, FINDS THEY ARE WRESTLING TO DECIDE WHO SHALL RUN THE TRAIN

FEELS THEY NEED AN ACTIVE PASTIME AND STARTS THEM DOWN CELLAR TO BUILD SOMETHING

RUSHES TO LEARN CAUSE OF SOUNDS OF COMBAT IN CELLAR, AND FINDS THEY'RE JUST DECIDING WHAT TO BUILD

FEELS THAT IT'S GOT MUCH WARMER OUT AND THAT THEY'D BETTER PLAY OUT-OF-DOORS

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A GLOBE OF FLAVOR

WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT

SWEETENS THE BREATH

S-MATTER POP—

SURE, MAW! GOOD MAPLE SYRUP IS MADE OUT OF DOORS, ALWAYS

?

WHATCHA DOIN', YASTIN' THAT?

?

SMATTER?

?

BEATCHA THEY'D NEVER MAKE ANY MAPLE THYRUP OUT OF THIR DOOR

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The War Ace

AN AGENT OF THE NAZIAN GOVERNMENT IS IN THE NEIGHBORING ISLAND REPUBLIC OF BOSANADA WITH THE PURPOSE OF PURCHASING A GREAT ARMY OF AIRPLANES! HE IS ABLE TO SECURE THE PLANES—BUT HE IS TROUBLED OVER A PROBLEM OF—WHO WILL FLY THESE PLANES—

2122

THAT IS A SPLENDID PLANE, SENOR WHO IS IT THAT FLIES IT?

ESPERE!—IT IS MOST APURTUNADO! YOU SAY YOU WISH PILOTS FOR YOUR AERIAL ARMY—

THAT IS EL CORONEL KOCH, THE GREAT WORLD WAR ACE—SI, HE IS JUST THE HOMBRE!

DO YOU THINK HE WOULD—ERR—LIKE ANOTHER TASTE OF WAR?

SI! WHY DID I NOT THINK OF HIM BEFORE—HE HAS BEEN IN BOSANADA FOR MANY WEEKS SEEKING A TRABAJO THAT MAY FURNISH EXCITEMENT!

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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Swan Song

AND NOW, UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS AND WHILE THERE IS GREAT REJOICING ABOARD THE SHOWBOAT, WE MUST RETRACE OUR STEPS TO THE TICKET WAGON WHERE CHESTER CHEETS SITS ALONE!

HERE'S THE PAPER CHIRP SIGNED—I'LL LEAVE IT HERE— BUT THAT ISN'T ALL I'LL LEAVE—

HERE'S FURTHER PROOF THAT CHIRP IS THE NEW AND ONLY OWNER OF THE SHOW-CHIRP AND THAT YOUNG SQUIRT OF A WEBSTER MAY EASE ME OUT OF THIS CIRCUS—

— BUT TOMORROW, WHEN THE PARADE IS ON, THEY'LL REGRET TO THEIR DYING DAYS, THAT THEY EASED THEMSELVES IN!

... I HAVE UNTIL THE PARADE TOMORROW—WELL, THAT'S TIME ENOUGH—

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THE NEBBS—No—A Thousand Times No

NEBBS IS STILL HIDING FROM THAT GUY, WEST. HE'S TRYING TO SAVE THAT \$500 LOAN WHICH HE IS NOT SO SURE HE CAN REFUSE

I WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER THAT BABY IS GOING TO STAY IN NORTHVILLE? IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE TOWN

LISTEN, NEBBS, YOU'VE BEEN DOODGING ME LONG ENOUGH— YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF— GIVE ME THAT CHECK FOR \$500

DODGING ME? I DON'T OWE YOU ANYTHING, YOU TOUT— CARBONATED BEVERAGES I'D WOULD LOST ON YOU MAKE IT GOOD? NO! AND BESIDES YOU KNOW WHAT A LOAN OF \$500 TO YOU WOULD MEAN— I'VE GOT AN UNPLEASANT MEMORY TO ME!

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Central Pt. Church Workers Win Honor At State Conclave

CENTRAL POINT, March 6.—(Sp.)—The Triangles and Circles of the Christian churches of Oregon held their annual convention February 22, 23, 24 in Portland, Miss Laurine Huger, president of the local Triangles, secretary of the state convention, reports attendance of around one hundred young people from various churches in the state.

A missionary book was awarded for the best report, and for the second time in succession was won by the Central Point Triangle. The local secretary, Jerry Hermanson, had the honor of reading this report.

The topic, "Looking Upward," assigned to Grace Hermanson, was ably handled and well received. Grace was appointed chairman of the future works committee for the ensuing year.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Hendricks returned missionaries from Japan, and Miss Gladie Wells, on furlough from Africa, were among the speak-

BRINGING UP FATHER

MAGGIE—THERE AIN'T NO SENSE IN TAKIN' AN OCEAN VAKIN— THERE'S SO MUCH TO SEE RIGHT HERE—

I KNOW, BUT THE SEA IS SO ROMANTIC—

BESIDES THE BOAT'S ARE ALL CROWDED, I DOUBT IF WE CAN GET ANY ACCOMMODATIONS ON ANY SHIP—

OH, DEAR! I NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT—

WELL— I GUESS I HAVE JUST ABOUT DISCOURAGED MAGGIE FROM TAKIN' AN OCEAN VAKIN—

WELL— I JUST GOT A GRAND IDEA— YOU ARE RIGHT ABOUT THE BIG LINERS BEING CROWDED, SO I HAVE DECIDED THAT WE WILL BUY A YACHT—

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By O. M. Payne

By Hal Forrest

By Edwin Alger

By Sol Hess

By George McManus