

Montana Kides Again

Chapter 43
BAGS OF GOLD

ESTRADA put out his hand flat on the table, the palm turned up, in the attitude of one who is about to make a great offer.

He said: "We should have met before. El Keed and Estrada have things to talk about. And, to be quick and short, Rubriz was carrying away from a place we know about, one-half of a thing which we both had seen."

As he said this, he put his other hand, in an unconscious gesture, over his heart.

"Now, then," said the general, "what Rubriz was taking was restored—to a man who better knew how to use it. What I want to talk to you about is the second half! You can tell me where it is!"

"Not yet!" exclaimed Juan-Silva. "Not a word more to him, my son. I've named my price and I expect my money."

He began his cackling, husky laughter.

"Twenty thousand—twenty thousand, and every penny of it back unless he talks. Twenty thousand is a fortune, Juan-Silva."

"Thirty thousand," insisted Juan-Silva. "Thirty thousand, and not a peso less. Thirty is what I need and what I must have. It rounds out—it completes everything—it makes me a free man!"

The general glared at him, his mustaches spreading and closing like the whiskers of a walrus.

Still with his glance of hate fixed on the old man, Estrada said: "You have the money, Alvarez, and you have another part, Lascar. Put it on the table."

Each of them picked up from the floor very heavy bags. When they were dropped on the table the heavy wood was shaken by the impact.

"It is here—it is true!" said Juan-Silva. "It need not be counted. I trust you, gentlemen. I trust you perfectly. Maria—old fool—witch—tie up the bags again. Thirty thousand pesos! Thirty thousand—"

"And every coin of it back," said the general, "unless El Keed talks to us!"

"Ah, but he'll talk," said Juan-Silva. "El Keed has seen my little ways in the valley. He knows that I could persuade him to talk!"

"Do you think so?" said Montana, deliberately. He pointed at the other three. "You think, Juan-Silva, that I'll talk to them and tell them what I know about the other half of the emerald crown? Juan-Silva, you think that I'll talk and let them take me away, afterwards, to make sure that what I've told them is the truth?"

The old man held out his two hands.

"You," he said, "are children. Perhaps there is no other person in the world who understands how to move the minds of men—and their tongues—as I do. But—we try the soft way first. Shall I talk with him?"

"Alone," said the Kid. "I could make an agreement with you—but alone, Juan-Silva."

"BE CAREFUL OF him," broke in the general. "This sort of a gringo devil, if he's cornered, would have the pleasure of killing you before he was killed himself."

But the old man held up his hand and smiled at them.

"Go into the other room. Show them the way, Maria. Give them drinks. My friend, El Keed, will talk with me alone. Perhaps we shall persuade one, another to something worth while."

The general, nervous, glancing over his shoulder, left the room, shaking his head as he went. Maria passed it with them and closed the door, her tray of drinks shivering with a musical tinkling.

"Now," said Juan-Silva, waiting. "If I go with them," said Montana. "I go to my death. I want a price for that, just as you want a price for my talking."

"What price do you ask?" inquired the old man.

"Rubriz and Brother Pascual."

Juan-Silva smiled. "El Keed is a good friend," said he. "And if they are set free—if they are sent out of the Valley of the Dead—what will men say of me?"

"You are leaving, yourself," answered Montana. "You have the money there that rounds out your fortune."

"True," said the old man. "But the valley remains as the source and the back log of my fortune. It must

always be cared for tenderly—by me while I'm here, and by my lieutenants after me. But if Rubriz and the friar are set free—then you talk!"

"After that I can say a few more words to you—and perhaps then I can talk with Estrada. I can tell him exactly where to find the thing he wants."

"Good," murmured Juan-Silva. "Maria had come into the room. 'Call Emilio,' said Juan-Silva. She brought a guard instantly to his father's door."

"Get Rubriz and the friar," commanded Juan-Silva. "Knock off their chains and their steel collars, and bring them here."

The guard opened his eyes, backed through the doorway, and was gone. After that, for a long moment, Juan-Silva fingered the fat sides of the bags of gold. In his bright eyes there was more life than ever.

After this long pause there was a tapping at a door, and a guard appeared to announce: "They are put in the next room, señor. Both of them are there."

The Kid stood up from the table. "I've heard that they're in the next room. Let me see them first, to make sure. Then I'll tell you the rest, Juan-Silva."

HE HAD turned his back while he was still speaking, when he heard behind him a rushing and a flopping noise, like the beating of wings, and a little rattling like the sound of dice in a box.

He whirled to see Maria with her hands fastened in the throat of old Juan-Silva. He was vainly beating at her face, tearing at her wrists with his claws, while as she shook him the teeth rattled together in his gnapping mouth.

The Kid ran for the struggling pair, but before he reached the spot, Maria had jumped back and run from the room, leaving the old man with his head fallen on his neck and a bloody froth on his lips.

He crumpled, small as the body of a child, his head resting across his arms on the table.

The Kid was certain that this was death, but as he leaned over the body he heard a last faint whisper: "And the damned shepherds freeze their feet in the frost outside—"

The last thought of Juan-Silva was, in his grim way, a happy one. He began to slip sideways in his chair, and when the Kid straightened the body again, the head fell loosely and dead, dim eyes looked up at Montana with an abstracted amusement.

And then the Kid thought of two things—the carriage which waited in the patio with the four steaming white horses, and that singular gesture of Estrada towards his heart when he spoke of the lost emeralds of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

He was instantly at the door in the corner, and, wrenching it open, he looked in on Brother Pascual and Mateo Rubriz. They leaped up at the sight of him.

"I know!" cried the friar. "I told Mateo that it was your work. I knew—"

"Peace, peace, Pascual!" exclaimed Rubriz, and he raised his hand to command the silence, and waited for the words of the Kid.

"Juan-Silva sits dead in the next room—a woman was the flash of him," said the Kid. "In the room beyond that sits Estrada, and Lascar and Major Alvarez beside him."

"God," murmured Rubriz, "has consented to fill my hands! I shall die happy, today!"

"Follow me," said Montana. "If I have half the wit of a child, I know that the second half of the crown of emeralds is under the coat of Estrada, near his heart. We must have it before we leave. Do you hear me, Mateo? Wipe the killing out of your mind. Think, man!"

"Estrada only!" groaned Rubriz through his set teeth. "Let the others live, but give me Estrada."

"Keep him back, Pascual," said the Kid—"he's turned into a wild beast—and I'll go forward with this myself, alone."

"Not!" exclaimed Rubriz. "I shall be as a child in your hands. Do as you wish. Give commands and I obey them!"

They entered again that big room, "I am opening the door yonder," said Montana. "I shall ask Estrada to come in alone. Stand one of you on each side of the door. Mind, the others must hear nothing, neither Alvarez nor Jack Lascar. But as Estrada comes through, make him speeches."

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Tomorrow, Montana begins his daring schemes.

REYNOLDS' WIDOW DECLARES DIVORCE GAINED ILLEGALLY

WINSTON-SALEM, N. C., March 13.—(AP)—Mrs. Anne Cannon Reynolds Smith in an affidavit filed in Forsyth superior court today swore she did not sign her name to a deposition used in obtaining her divorce from Smith Reynolds in Reno, Nev., on November 23, 1931.

The affidavit was made a part of the record in the hearing before Superior Court Judge Clayton Moore on the distribution of Reynolds' \$30,000,000 trust estate.

It was offered in rebuttal to one filed yesterday by Albert D. Ayers, her Reno attorney, in which he said he took care to see that his client was in full possession of her mental faculties when she made the deposition and discussed with her before hand the answers she was to make.

Mrs. Smith's claim for the entire fortune for her small daughter, Anne Cannon Reynolds, second, is based on the contention that her divorce was illegal. She is seeking to exclude Libby Holman, Broadway actress and Reynolds' second wife, and Christopher Smith Reynolds, child by the second marriage, from sharing in the fortune.

The Reynolds family's proposal would give baby Anne 37 1/2 per cent of the trust estate, Christopher 25 per cent, less \$750,000 and the remainder to a charitable trust in memory of Smith Reynolds.

Annette Dionne First Quintuplet To Boast Tooth

CALLENDER, Ont., March 13.—(AP)—Annette Dionne, who, with her four sisters was nine months and twelve days old at 4:30 a. m., produced her first tooth today.

The tooth came through her lower gum overnight and was discovered when the nurses at the quintuplets' private hospital made their first inspection of the morning.

Annette, who ranks third in weight of the five girls, is the first to have a tooth.

Tide Blocks Road.

PORTLAND, March 13.—(AP)—A combination nor high tide and heavy rains blocked the Oregon coast highway at the Glicks river just north of Tillamook late yesterday. The road was to be reopened early this morning. The highway department said.

OF FLAVOR
WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT
SWEETENS THE BREATH

CRITICAL WHEAT SITUATION SEEN

PORTLAND, March 13.—(AP)—A picture of critical wheat surplus conditions throughout the Pacific northwest was painted by a score or more farmer and dealer witnesses before the AAA hearing board which opened sessions today on proposed amendments to the present marketing agreement held by the North Pacific Emergency Export association.

Velled charges of either bad faith or poor judgment on the part of the United States department of agriculture in halting the functioning of the export association some six months ago were frequently heard, while frank criticism was expressed at allowing heavy imports of Canadian and other foreign imports of wheat, corn and oats when northwest surpluses were bulging without markets.

ENTANGLEMENTS

TAKES JUNIOR FIRMLY BY THE HAND AND SEES OUT ALONG CROWDED STREET

JUNIOR, GETTING INTERESTED IN DOG ACROSS THE WAY, BEGINS TO SLOW THINGS UP BY WALKING SIDEWISE

STILL WATCHING DOG, TRIES TO WALK BACKWARDS UNTIL TOLD FOR PITY'S SAKE TO TURN AROUND

DOES SO, BUT GETS MATTERS RATHER COMPLICATED BY WALKING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF FATHER, NEARER THE SHOP WINDOWS

FATHER STOPS, DISEMANGLES HIM, AND MOVES BUNDLES TO OTHER ARM, SO HE CAN TAKE JUNIOR'S RIGHT HAND

STARTS ON, JUNIOR PROMPTLY SWITCHING TO OTHER SIDE OF FATHER, WHO DECIDES IT WILL BE EASIER TO CARRY HIM

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S-MATTER POP—

THAT'S MY NICKEL!

BUT I'VE GOT IT NOW!

I FOUND IT DIDN'T I?

YEH, BUT...

YOU GO FIND ANOTHER ONE THEN YOU WILL HAVE ONE!

YOTTA BE GLAD I KNOW HOW TO FIX YA UP!

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Conspiracy!

CAPTAIN JUAN ORTEGA, CHIEF OF THE NAZILIAN SECRET SERVICE FLEW TO THE CASTLE PLANTATION TO TELL INEZ THAT HE MUST LEAD HIS MEN IN BATTLE TOMORROW AGAINST THE REBELS—THEY WERE STARTLED BY A SOUND AND JUAN LEAVES HURRIEDLY

2128

HERE ARE THE FORTIFICATION PLANS OF THE BARRISON AT DEL SEGUNDO

THE INTELLIGENCIA DEPARTAMENTO WAS RIGHT—MY POOR INEZ, YOUR PADRE IS INDEED A TRAITOR—

GUARD THEM WELL, PEDRO, AND SEE THAT THEY REACH EL LIBERATOR AT DAWN—

GO QUICKLY! POR LIBERTAD Y PATRIA!

HAL FOREST—

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Safe

LOOK! WHO'S THAT?

THAT'S ZEPPU, THE WILD ANIMAL TRAINER!

DON'T! PLIZ DON'T! HE IS MY KITTEN—DON'T SHOT HIM! WAIT! I SHOW YOU!

UP, BABY! UP! YOU FOLLOW ZEPPU!

COME, MY KITTEN, JUMP IN!

THE NEBBS—A Wise Kid

DONNA DEEN, EXPENSIVELY GARBED BUT PENNILESS, ARRIVES AT THE HOTEL AND INSISTS ON NEBB GIVING HER A JOB.

WELL, MR. NEBB, I'M READY TO START WORK—WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

LISTEN, GIRL, I'M NOT GOING TO CHARGE YOU FOR YOUR LODGING LAST NIGHT OR A COUPLE MORE NIGHTS IF NECESSARY BUT I WANT YOU TO HAVE A JOB OPEN.

LISTEN, MR. NEBB, I NEED WORK AND I'M LEAVING EVERYTHING UP TO YOU—KIND OF WORK, MONEY AND EVERYTHING BUT I MUST HAVE WORK.

AND I'M TO GUESS WHAT YOU CAN DO AND GUESS HOW MUCH MONEY YOU WANT—YOU COME HERE WRAPPED UP IN A THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF FURS LOOKING FOR A JOB.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE—WHERE YOU ARE—WHERE YOU CAME FROM—I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME AND YOU EXPECT ME TO GIVE YOU WORK!

MY NAME IS DONNA DEEN AND I CAN GIVE YOU THIS RECOMMENDATION—THAT I'M A GOOD HONEST GIRL. THAT'S AS MUCH AS I CAN TELL YOU OF MY PAST—MY FUTURE IS THAT I'M GOING TO WORK FOR YOU AND YOU'LL WONDER HOW YOU GOT ALONG SO LONG WITHOUT ME!

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BRINGING UP FATHER

FER GOODNESS SAKE! DO I HAVE TO HIRE YOU AS CAPTAIN OF THE YACHT THAT ME WIFE IS GOIN TO RENT FOR THE SEASON?

CERTAINLY! WHO DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO GIVE ORDERS TO THE FIRST AND SECOND OFFICERS?

AN WHAT ARE THE TWO OFFICERS SUPPOSED TO DO?

THEY GIVE ORDERS TO THE CREW.

CREW? AN WHO IS THE CREW?

OH! ABOUT TWENTY MEN AROUND THE BOAT—

HUH! I THINK MAGGIE HAS RENTED A NAVY—

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TIMBER BILL EVILS SEEN BY DOUGLAS

ROSEBURG, Ore., March 13.—(AP)—Plans for a referendum on the timber bill, passed yesterday by the Oregon legislature, authorizing the Oregon government to acquire privately owned timber lands in Oregon and to withdraw such lands from taxation, are under consideration today by the Douglas county court. It is planned to immediately contact courts in other land grant counties, with the purpose of circulating petitions to secure a referendum on the measure.

Hickman Captor Weds. PROSSER, Wash., March 13.—(AP)—Gus Horner of Irrigon, Ore., and Tom B. Gurdane of Pendleton, Ore., one of the captors of William Hickman several years ago, were married here Tuesday by a justice of the peace.

NAVAL CONSTRUCTION URGED FOR FRANCE

PARIS, March 13.—(AP)—Francis Pietri, naval minister, presented to the chamber of deputies today a bill calling for the building of a giant 38,000-ton battleship and two destroyers, in answer to the building program of Italy.

Deaths in Ambulance. ALBANY, March 13.—(AP)—Mrs. Burga McInee of Eugene died in an ambulance en route to Albany Tuesday from injuries suffered in an automobile accident near Jefferson. Two other women in the car were injured and Clara Hamilton of Jefferson, driver of the other automobile, suffered chest injuries.