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by David Garth

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SYNOPSIS: Terry Willett has come down the yellow Paiva River to Propiomore to get action on a much needed shipment of equipment for his engineering project upstream. His father is staying with the job, fighting fever and moody natives. Terry suspects double dealing on the part of the unstable native government. Now he is killing time in the "Coliseo," waiting for the Dutch tramp steamer which will take him to the capital. He sees a man get slapped.

Chapter Three

FAST FIGHT

WILLETT jumped off the bar. He knew how Portuguese fought. And that other man had looked positively sick, too woozy to do anything about it except help himself get killed. Besides, he was a white man.

Enough of an excuse for Willett anytime to get moving.

"Uh uh," he said quietly, stepping between them. He turned from the Portuguese. "Beat it, kid."

That was a hot one—calling that fellow "kid." He didn't look like a kid and yet the impression remained. Perhaps it was the trembling of his lips.

The other passed a shaking hand across his brow.

"I want to see it through."

"Yeah?" said Terry. "Beat it like I told you before it's too late."

Instinct and action were twins of his brain.

"Look out!" yelled the other.

He needn't have worried. Terry may not have been looking at the Portuguese, but he had kept his shadow in the corner of his eye. He didn't bother to waste time turning his head. Instinct and action were twins of his brain. He ducked immediately and the fist of the Portuguese grazed the top of his head.

He spun around, jaw set in ridges. His fist connected with the point of a chin. There were yells. There were oaths. There was a man going down. When Willett hit that was usually the next thing to happen.

A crowd surged around them. The reputation of the Coliseo was that the first knife wins. The Portuguese was being jabbered at by his mates. He got up and Terry, waiting for him with a tight little curve to his lips, knocked him kicking again.

He knew what was next. He knew it as his foe got up on one knee, wiping his bloody mouth with one hand, the other creeping inside his coat, and Willett didn't wait. Hurling the table to one side, he seized a chair and jumped forward.

The man whose fight had been taken right out of his hands watched, his teeth gnawing his knuckles. There was a crash, a scream, and Terry stepped back.

Quickly he surveyed the crowd, then grabbing him by the elbow, he hurried the white man through the milling throng and out into the cool night air. The man leaned back against the wall and stared at him.

"You killed him," he nearly whispered.

"Doubt it," said Terry shortly. "Just draped his thick skull with a few inconscious thoughts. If you think I'm going to be an assistant in a knife-throwing act, you're crazy."

The other was still staring at him, his eyes slowly widening.

"Willett! Aren't you Willett?" The exclamation was vibrant with sudden recognition.

Terry regarded him thoughtfully. "Would you mind telling me just who the hell you are?" he demanded "I nearly got my throat cut trying to find out."

"Speede—Tommy Speede. How you, Willett? For God's sake, sit me down some place."

"SORRY to have been so much bother," Speede said. "Too much kana—lousy stuff, Willett—makes absinthe seem like carbonated water. How you, Willett?"

Terry clasped his hands across his stomach and leaned back in his chair, staring at Speede intently.

Kana, eh? Getting drunk for three cents on that "white eyed" poison. Speede must be breaking up.

Must be? As he sat here in the comparative privacy of the Santini Hotel bar, Terry could understand why he hadn't recognized Tommy Speede immediately. The grin alone hadn't changed.

"How'd you happen to land in the Coliseo?" he demanded.

"Just walkin' the streets," Speede said dreamily. "Walkin' around and bumped into the door. Hell of a place, isn't it? The whole country is a hell of a place. Have a drink?"

"Why don't you get out of these parts?" Terry asked steadily. "Haven't you had enough?"

Speede suddenly laughed.

"Enough? More than enough. I hate every lousy tree in this country. And as for rocks—say, Willett, have you ever thought about rocks? You blast and sweat and strain to pulverize a rock and then what have you got? A nice big hole. And then you blast and sweat and strain some more to fill in the hole with—what do you think?—rocks! Rocks!"

He laughed again and waved an arm at the waiter.

WILLETT bit his lip. Seeing Tommy Speede brought back memories of Bucky Corrigan, Spider Hance, Jack Curlee, and others. He remembered now the Tommy Speede of those days two years ago who had been sent down by a big American engineering firm as "rock" man to join the construction outfit blasting a road from Pontecilles to Jaurez.

That Jaurez job had been a tough one and Speede with his fresh cheeks, his Irish grin, and college degree had certainly received a baptism of fire.

He was still seared. He wasn't coming out of it. Why didn't he get out of the country before it was too late? He was a sick man; they're all sick when they dose themselves with kana.

"Easy," Terry advised. "Take it slow."

Speede abruptly pulled himself together and the uncontrolled tone in his voice was lacking when he spoke again.

"Surprised to see you, Terry," he said. "What are you doing around here?"

Terry lit a cigaret.

"Working up the river," he said non-committally. "Dad's with me on the job."

"Your old man still in harness, eh?" Speede queried. "Swell gent, your old man. Living proof that engineers can be white men. I don't see how he keeps on beating this game. I can't and you can't either—you'll see."

"Never mind about me," said Willett. "How about you? Why don't you drag out? They ought to give you a leave of absence."

"They?" Speede repeated tonelessly. "There isn't any 'they.' I resigned after the Jaurez job. And my mother back in the States wants me to come along home. She's an old lady, Willett—I don't think I'll see her again if I don't go now."

(Copyright 1935 by David Garth)

Tomorrow, a Fox named George is introduced.

FORESTRY GROUP FOR FEDERAL AID

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 14.—(AP)—The Western Forestry and Conservation association, after re-electing its officers and hearing appeals for less governmental interference in the lumber and logging industry, turned its attention today to roundtable discussions of forest protection problems.

Chief among the developments at the final general conferences yesterday were proposals that the federal government grant or loan funds to aid the industry.

S. R. Black of San Francisco, representing the California Protective association, said: "The government has money for relief; this is a worthy cause too."

Speakers said the lumber industry faced a crisis if more land is removed from tax rolls and taxation thereby increased.

BICYCLES—New and used. We have the most complete stock in Medford. Time payments. Sims Bros., 28 N Pir St.

Salem Disposes Of School Bonds

SALEM, Dec. 14—(AP)—The Salem school board last night easily disposed of its $675,000 school building project bond sale, accepting bids from one and a half to two percent lower than ever obtained for school bonds here.

Blyth & Company purchased the $650,000 issue at 3¼ to 3½ per cent on a $100.7 basis, and the remaining $25,000 went to Ladd & Bush bank at 3 per cent at par.

GUNSMITH. Repairs for all makes of guns. Sims Bros. 28 N Pir.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

The strange eclipse of the sun in February, 1934, began east of the international date line on February 14. As the eclipse progressed, it crossed over the date line, where the calendar steps back a full day, and there it ended February 13, out on the Pacific.

The period of totality was two minutes and five seconds, and was observed by a party of Japanese and American scientists from Losap Island, 1875 miles southeast of Japan in the Caroline group.

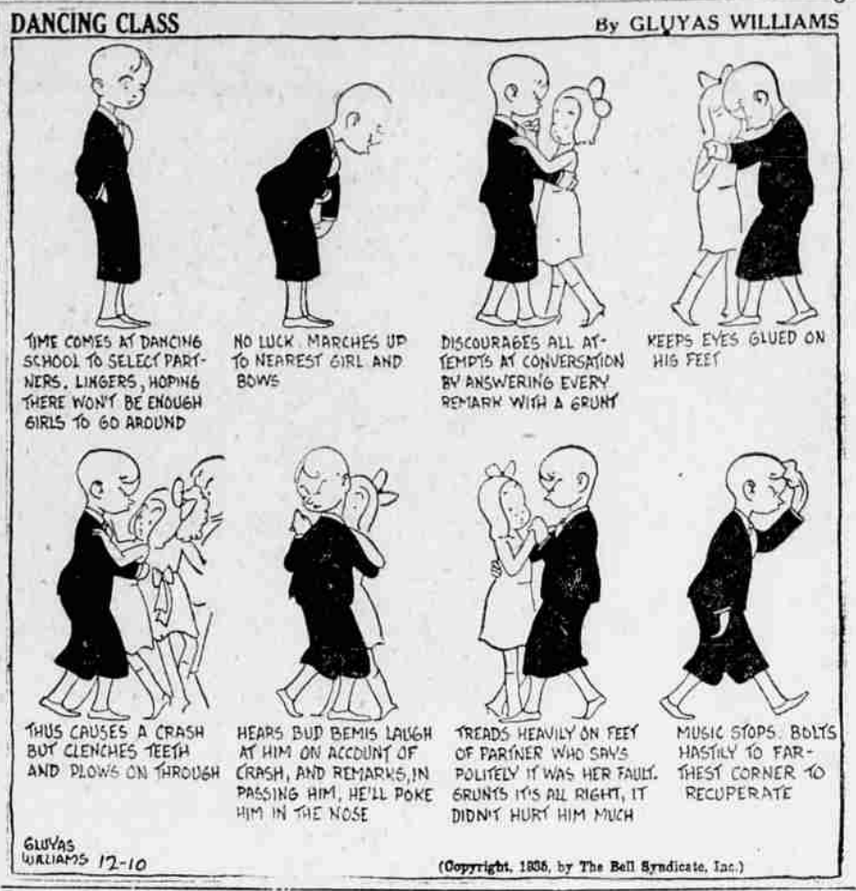
Few great musicians live out their natural span of life. The tragedy of early death seems to beset composers of importance—Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Weber, Harold and Bellini all died in their thirties. Hoffman, Cimarosa, Paganini, Schumann and many others died in their prime.

Strange as it seems, however, Liszt overcame a childhood of ill health to live to the ripe old age of 75 years. As a child there was little hope that he could survive to manhood, and twice at least he was given up for dead. The village carpenter actually started building his coffin—but Liszt rallied and recovered. Later he was again stricken ill and again given up for dead, but again he recovered.

Tomorrow: Toy Trains . . . and Real Ones.

DANCING CLASS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POP—

By C M PAYNE

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Heading for a Dangerous Landing!

By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Developments A' Plenty

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—Eating Themselves Even

By SOL HESS

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"First Citizen" Is Named in Portland

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 14.—(AP)—The Portland realty board named Edward C. Simmons, vice-president of the Iron Firemen Manufacturing company, "first citizen" of Portland for 1935 today.

Each year the Portlander who comes nearest achieving perfection in civic service and outstanding accomplishment wins the award.

Portland Puts On Extra Mail Clerks

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 14.—(AP)—The advance guard of extra postal workers for the Christmas rush in Portland were on duty today as the mail volume increased. Three hundred extra workers will be employed.

The Portland system is manned by 926 carriers, 319 clerks and a number of regular substitutes.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

$10 Flax Subsidy Hope Of McNary

SALEM, Dec. 14.—(AP)—Senator Charles L. McNary, in a telegram to L. L. Laws, head of the state flax industry, indicated there was a chance that Oregon growers might receive a direct subsidy of $10 a ton on all flax grown here.

McNary said he found the AAA administrator and advisers much interested, and that they had promised to assemble a facts docket and present the matter to the secretary of agriculture for final action.

13 His Number

MARYSVILLE, Kas., Dec. 14.—(AP)—W. M. Griffes, county clerk, was born on the 13th, married in 1913, lives on 13th street, and was given motor car license No. 20-1313.

ALBANY, Ore., Dec. 13.—(AP)—Albany's new chief of police is former Night Officer R. L. Chandler, promoted by the council to succeed the late J. Q. Rodgers.