NEVER MIND THE LADY
by David Garth

SYNOPSIS: Allaire West, helping Terry Willett in a quarrel with Hildes, loading boss who is substituting worthless packing cases for the equipment Terry needs up river, is forced to shoot Hildes. And now Terry and George Fox, attaché at the American embassy, are doing their best to figure out a way to keep Allaire out of the affair. To complicate the situation, the country is on the verge of revolution, and nobody, not even the bystanders, is really safe.

Chapter 11

ON THE CARPET

"SHE'S a swell girl, Terry," said Fox. "They mustn't pick up her trail. God, this is a mess. What are you going to do?"

Willett flicked his cigaret out into the street.

"Me?" he repeated. "I'm sailing on the 'Parajaibo' tomorrow. I know plenty about that ship—her crew won't stop me, that's a cinch."

"Oh—" said the attaché uncertainly. He took a brief pull at his cigaret and then threw it away. "Yes, I guess you'd better. Wouldn't be surprised to see things break wide open any day now. Coastwise trade will be stopped—you'd better cut your stick for your camp." He hesitated. "Only—"

Willett looked at him.

"I have a job to finish." His voice was flatly final. "Can't muff this chance of getting away."

"No," agreed Fox, "you can't—God, this is a mess."

Willett gestured at the car.

"Better park it out of sight for a few days. Somebody might be watching for it. So long, George."

Fox said something. Willett walked away. He looked back over his shoulder and saw the attaché still standing by the car.

Yes, Fox was covering that girl. Hell, wasn't that what the American Foreign Service was for?

Rule One: "Protecting and—"

He suddenly remembered he needed a drink.

THE American Ambassador called his staff to the Embassy study shortly before noon the next day.

"Everyone is to stand by today regardless of previous engagements," he told them. "The latest word from the President's palace is that the new tax bill will be signed in its entirety, not excluding the coffee industry."

He regarded his staff searchingly, eyes moving from face to face. "You know what that means, gentlemen. It is all the Propionoire crowd has been waiting for. I'm afraid we're in for a little trouble."

He paused and looked at George Fox. That young man's mind seemed to be wandering in the highways and byways of something distinctly alien to the President's latest tax on the smouldering coffee country.

His Excellency frowned slightly. A revolution camping down around their ears and a certain attaché clasped his hands on his chest and stared vacantly at the ceiling.

"Mr. Fox," he rumbled, "I should like to see you privately a moment. All right, gentlemen, that is all for the present."

Dent and the others withdrew. Fox stood up and went over before the heavy mahogany desk.

"Yes, sir?"

The Old Man thought quite highly of his attaché, but he bent a rather severe glance on him now.

"I understand perfectly that Legation Club parties and like affairs are in the line of your duty," he remarked. "But you really don't have to go to sleep right under my nose, Mr. Fox. Tell me—have you been to bed?"

Fox hadn't. And there was a receptacle crammed with cigaret stubs in his rooms that would have been more in place at an Elk's smoker. But under the Old Man's searching eyes he hastily jumped back on the diplomatic bandwagon.

"I'm sorry, sir," he apologized rapidly. "I've been thinking. About that polo party."

"So have I," nodded the Ambassador. "They can't [illegible] for a week."

"I've looked up sailing schedules," Fox said clearly. "They don't have to wait a week. There's a ship from here for Vera Cruz day after tomorrow and there they can be picked up almost immediately by a [illegible] ship on her way to New York."

"You seem to have done some [illegible]." The Old Man rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Not a bad idea, either. Better that way than possibly having to send them off on [illegible]. The sooner we get all transient Americans out of here the less we'll have to worry about. Sure of your dates, Mr. Fox?"

"Absolutely positive, sir." Fox couldn't have been more emphatic if he'd thumped the desk.

"Well," the Ambassador continued [illegible]

ed dryly, "you don't need to get so all-fired excited about it. I'll talk with Mr. West today and you be on hand if I should want you. And for Heaven's sake, boy, start catching up on your sleep. Every time I look at you I feel like taking a nap."

Fox left the study and returned to his desk. Captain Dent grinned sympathetically.

"What's the matter, George?" he inquired. "Didn't you dance with one of the fat wives of the War Department or something? Well, I guess that's all over for a while. We'll be ducking Washington despatches and hauling errant fellow-citizens out of harm's way from now on."

He sighed.

"I'd planned on going out to Decermo to see Allaire West take off today. Be interesting, that. I imagine flying for the first time after a terrible crack-up is a lot like going swimming right after you nearly drowned.

"And," he mused reflectively, "I know that feeling. Not sure of yourself and your ability to stay up. All you can think of is what will happen if you should get a sudden cramp or swallow too much water."

George Fox heard him rather indistinctly. He'd completely forgotten this was the day when Allaire took the controls and she dreaded it. "You don't think, you don't breathe—you just wait." And last night—

Stand by, the Ambassador had said. Fox went out of the Embassy and looked around for his car. It dawned on him after several minutes that he had carefully stored it away for the time being. He went to the Alvio in a taxi.

ALLAIRE lived far more exclusively than her parents. Her private suite was high, fronted the harbor, and was accessible only by a flight of steps from the last lift exit. Her maid took him out on the terrace and withdrew.

She was dressed in white and had a corsage of the country's famous wild orchids pinned on her shoulder. The attaché sat down beside her and impulsively took one cool hand in both of his.

"I know everything, Allaire," he said. "Willett told me. I phoned you early this morning, but you couldn't be located."

"I went swimming."

He looked at her uncertainly.

"Swimming?"

"Swimming, George. The water was cold as the devil, but the sunrise was beautiful."

There was something strange about her. She seemed so perfectly composed that he felt it was useless to advise her not to worry, but he did anyhow for want of something better to say.

"I'm not worrying." She smiled at him. "Sat up all night looking at the lights of the harbor and wondering what makes the world go round. I suppose you'll think me absolutely hoppy, but for some strange reason I felt as though everything had been taken out of my hands. Nice comfortable feeling like that of somebody taking orders and liking it."

Fox began to feel slightly dizzy. Allaire taking orders? — From whom? Not from her father, that was sure. She would have told him where to head in if he'd dared to try it.

"What made you run off last night?"

She shrugged.

"Oh, one of those things. Somebody was going somewhere and not afraid of anything he might find along the way. I went along for the ride."

"Ride is right," he agreed fervently. "As an engineer Willett is one of the best, but as a companion he's dynamite. He doesn't care what he does or where he does it. Just as well, I guess, that he's cleared the city."

There was a sudden breathless silence. He was astonished to find her looking at him as though he had said something profane.

"What did you say?"

"Say? Why, I said Willett has left the city. He's on the 'Parajaibo'."

"Really! How do you know?" Her tone was almost imperious.

"He told me last night he was sailing."

The girl leaned back with a strange smile curving her lips.

"So that's it," she commented. "Every man for himself."

Her maid appeared with word that Major Herrera's car was ready to take her to the Decermo flying field. Allaire didn't even look at her and Fox took it upon himself to send a message.

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Terry Willett takes a course he had not planned, tomorrow.

MANY COURSES AWAIT STUDENTS ENTERING OREGON UNIVERSITY

UNIVERITY OF OREGON, Eugene, Dec. 24.—(Spl.)—Students who wish to enter the University of Oregon for the first time, or those who wish to re-enter after being out a term or more, will find a wide variety of courses available when the winter term opens January 2, it was announced here today by Dr. C. V. Boyer, university president.

Courses for entering students will be offered in practically every department, as will courses for students in other classes who have missed the fall term. The term missed can often be made up later during the regular session, or by attending summer school, and many students entering a term or more late have been able to graduate on schedule with their classes, it is pointed out.

The lower division organization at the university, which provides a broad general background for specialization during the last two years, is especially advantageous to the student who enters at the winter term, or who is forced to drop out temporarily, it is stated. Every provision to aid entering students, through the personnel division and other agencies, will be offered, Dr. Boyer said. Full information may be obtained by writing to the registrar of the university.

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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 diamond is the hardest substance on earth. Precious as gems and useful in manufacturing processes, diamonds owe their value in part at least to their hardness. Yet, strange as it seems, at the other end of the scale of hardness for precious stones is the emerald—and the best emeralds are on the same price level with diamonds.

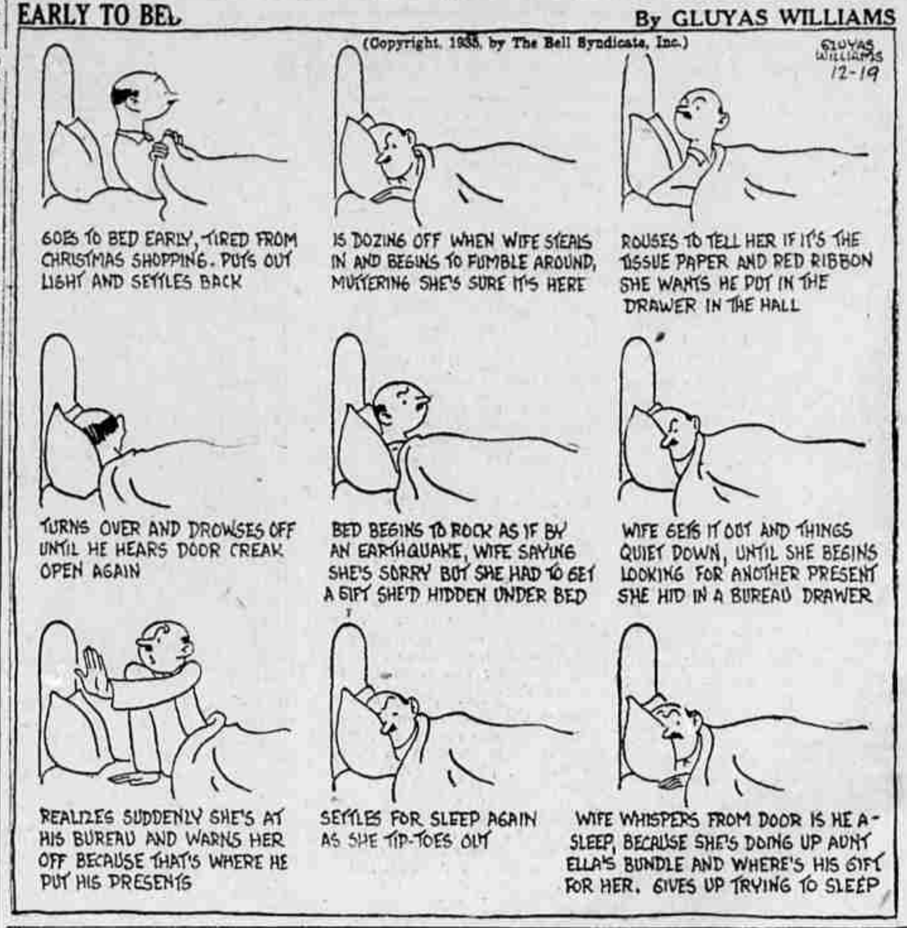
The emerald is the green gem variety of the mineral beryl. It contains several elements, among them aluminum, silicon, oxygen, calcium, iron and chromium. The diamond contains but one element—carbon. Chemically it is the same as graphite or coal soot, but it is in the crystalline form.

The emerald was a good luck charm of the ancients; the diamond has been prized since the dawn of history. Romans and Aztecs alike cut exquisite works of art from the emerald. Nero wore an emerald monocle. Charlamagne carried an emerald good luck charm—the same one that Napoleon carried centuries later on the battlefield at Austerlitz where he won his most glorious victory. Emeralds fashioned into amazing forms by Aztec artisans were found by Cortes. In ancient medicine the emerald was believed to be a cure for all diseases of the eye.

Diamonds, the symbol of wealth, royalty and love, are likewise notable in history. Among the most famous are the Great Mogul, once owned by Shah Jehan, who built the Taj Mahal; the Orloff, bought by Prince Orloff for Catherine II of Russia; the Kohinoor, now in the English crown collection after a history centuries long in India; the Star of the South, from Brazil; the Cullinan, largest diamond ever found.

Tomorrow: Other Christmastides.

EARLY TO BED By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



S'MATTER POP— By C. M. PAYNE

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Weird Music! By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Jeb Morgan By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—The Representatives By SOL HESS

NEEDY TEACHERS WILL HAVE WORK

SALEM, Dec. 24.—(AP)—[illegible] C. A. Howard of the state public school system today announced plans for the employment of approximately [illegible] needy teachers for adult classes [illegible] WPA [illegible] project.

Under the project 20 nursery schools for children of ages from two to four from relief families will also be organized in the larger cities, with two teachers and a cook to each school.

City and county school superintendents will have general charge of the selection of teachers and the organization of adult classes in their respective districts.

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CALLES TO STAY DESPITE ENEMIES

MEXICO CITY, Dec. 24.—(AP)—Gen. Plutarco Elias Calles reiterated today his decision to remain in Mexico, despite the massing of 80,000 workers who paraded before the national palace yesterday and demanded his expulsion.

The one-time "strong man" and former president described the address of President Lazaro Cardenas to the workers as that of "any communist," and said it was "filled with political passion."

The president in turn announced he received hundreds of new messages of adhesion after his speech, which was broadcast throughout the nation, denouncing friends of Calles as traitors and revolutionaries.

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