FLAME TRAIL

BY MARIE DE NERVAUD

SYNOPSIS: Kay Crandon, who runs her own ranch, is stretched out on a mountain ledge when, far below, she spots a man suspiciously piling brush against a dead pine. She recalls the firebug the county has been hunting and hurries down quietly to catch him. Pulling her gun, she orders him to "Throw 'em up!" Desperate and defeated, he explains he hoped to get a job fire fighting to buy food for his mother and sister. Kay believes him when he says it is his first attempt to set a fire. On impulse, she slips her gun back into its holster.

Chapter Two

Quick Thinking

AN INCREDULOUS look of surprise flashed over the man's face before he turned it away from her. Then, after a moment's tense silence, he said, in a muffled voice, still with his back to her, "Why did you do that?"

"Because I believe you," Kay answered, "and perhaps I can help you to find some other way."

With a rush of words, the man's story poured out.

"They've foreclosed on me," he explained, "and we've got to get out next week. I've got a blind sister and an invalid mother. I'm not married, thank God!" Kay shuddered at his bitter tone. "I've sold everything we have, even my gun. I figured a week's fire fighting pay would get us away—" he broke off with a despairing shrug.

Kay had inherited her father's quality of quick decision, and of standing by that decision once it was taken. Something about this man had stirred her sympathy and made her believe in him. Now, as she listened to his story, she felt her original intuition confirmed. By the time he broke off, her resolution was taken.

"It's a rotten trick to foreclose on anyone at a time like this," she tactfully let indignation take the place of sympathy in her tone, "but I tell you what you can do. There's a couple of cabins on our ranch, and you can move your family there, if you'd like to join our outfit. I can't pay much, but you won't go hungry."

'You Won't Be Sorry'

WHEN the man's answer finally came, after a long silence, it had a husky break in it.

"You're square all right," he managed to get out. "You won't be sorry, either. I—"

"That's settled, then," Kay veered away from his thanks. "What's your name? And where are you living now?"

"Ted Gaynor's my name, and I'm living over by Blackfoot creek."

"And I'm Kay Crandon, of the Lazy Nine." Kay held out her hand.

"You won't be sorry," Ted Gaynor repeated, as he gave it a mighty grip.

"I know I won't." Kay cut back through the woods to the trail, with the new member of her outfit beside her. "You'd better come on now, and have a look at the ranch," she suggested, "then you'll know what you're getting in to."

She laughed to relieve the tension, and was amazed at the difference his slow answering smile made in his drawn face. Why, he was almost good looking, and much younger than she had taken him to be at first! He couldn't be more than 25 at the most, she decided.

"I left my horse off the trail a half a mile or so farther down," he said as they came out on the trail and he glanced up to where Flicker was patiently waiting. "I'll join you down there."

As he finished speaking, he suddenly stiffened, and following his gaze, Kay saw a lone rider at the head of the trail. He passed Flicker, and made swiftly for them at a quickened pace.

Kay noted that he had black hair and eyes like her companion, but here the likeness ended. The newcomer had a stalwart rangy figure, with broad shoulders in marked contrast to his slim hips. A healthy color glowed under his tan, and his bearing had all the assurance of success and self-confidence.

As he neared them, his gaze rested on Kay with frank admiration and approval. Then, as he glanced at her companion and took in his gaunt face and general shabbiness, a look of surprise and uncertainty flashed into his eyes.

He touched his hat to Kay as he pulled up beside them.

I didn't expect to run into company up here," he began genially. "I'm Tom Runyon, the new fire patrol for this area."

Kay felt the man beside her stiffen as she answered the unspoken question behind the newcomer's words.

"My name's Kay Crandon." She felt the color flooding her cheeks in spite of herself at his searching look, and her mind flew from one idea to another for a plausible explanation of Ted Gaynor's presence. The fact that his horse was hidden off the trail made it all the more suspicious and complicated, in case Tom Runyon should elect to go along with them.

She knew very well that if suspicion were fastened on Ted Gaynor everyone would be sure he was guilty of the other fires that had taken place. Believing, as she did, that this was his first attempt, and that he would never make another, she was determined to save him, now that she had undertaken the job.

Her mind raced, seeking a plausible explanation of Ted Gaynor's presence.

Telltale Brush Pile

A SUDDEN inspiration flashed in her mind, and she added, without perceptible hesitation, "I'm thinking of taking up some timber land up here, and Ted Gaynor has been looking over it for me."

Without looking round, she could feel the taut figure at her side relax.

"Oh, I see." Tom Runyon focussed his attention on her again, to her great relief. "You're the owner of the Lazy Nine," he went on, smiling at the picture Kay made with her brilliant coloring set off against the dark background of pines. "I've heard about you. But why don't you wait another month before you take up any timber land? You're liable to buy up a forest fire, if you get it now."

"Not with you for fire patrol!" Kay looked up demurely from under her long dark lashes. The more she could keep his attention centered on her the better, in this danger spot.

He gave an appreciative chuckle. "You've said it! Firebugs aren't going to have the cinch they've been having any more." Suddenly his eyes wandered past her, and he stiffened in his saddle, as he peered through the woods. "Hullo! What's that?"

"What? I don't see anything."

"Looks to me like a pile of brush." He swung off his horse as he spoke. "Just wait a minute until I investigate."

Tom Runyon strode off through the woods.

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Tomorrow, Kay outwits Tom Runyon of the fire patrol

PROFITS OF GODLINESS REVIEWED BY PASTOR IN NAZARENE SERMON

Using as his topic Sunday morning, "Viewing the Profits of Godliness," in speaking at the Church of the Nazarene, Fred M. Weatherford, pastor-evangelist, took his text from 1st Timothy, 4:8 "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." An excerpt of the message follows:

"Godliness is the state of the person transformed into the image of God. It includes the new birth and the cleansing sanctifying power of God.

"Godliness is an inward happiness, altogether independent of outward circumstances. It is more valuable than wealth, dearer than health, and incomparable to fame. It is a libel on the redemptive work of God through Jesus Christ to represent Christianity as a gloomy affair; to think of an individual having recovered to himself through the redeeming sacrifice of Christ a liberation and an absolution of all that sin had done to his life is sufficient to put him on the committee of perpetual gratitude for the remainder of his days.

"The ungodly have no guarantee of the present except the guarantee of death which carries with it the stamp of eternity. The condemned man is reckoned as good as dead while he lives, for it is only a matter of time until the hand of execution falls. One cannot violate the law and long evade the captor; whether the law be civil or of divine origin."

MAXIMUM SENTENCE FOR CLERIC SLAYER

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo., July 7.—(AP)—The Rev. Harry S. Ashley, convicted of voluntary manslaughter in the slaying of his girl-wife last January, was sentenced today to from seven years and eleven months to eight years in the state penitentiary. The sentence was the maximum.

Judge John Meikle said: "I consider the sentence inadequate, but it is not for me but for the legislature to make any changes in the law."

Ashley based his defense on insanity.

Dies at Wheel.

HILLSBORO, Ore., July 7.—(AP)—Harvey B. Jordan, 65, of Everett, Wn., died at the wheel of his automobile, apparently from a heart attack, near Cornelius Monday, Coroner F. J. Sewell reported. Mrs. Jordan, who was returning to Everett with her husband from Forest Grove, brought the car to a halt when he collapsed.

Rites Held for Nosler.

HILLSBORO, July 7.—(AP)—Funeral services will be held this afternoon for Claude Herbert Nosler, 62, grade school superintendent here, who died of a heart attack Monday. Survivors include his widow, two sons, Lyle of Portland, and Bruce of Grants Pass, and a daughter, Mrs. Carl Rickcon, Taft.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

Leapfrog on the Race Track.

Like little bugs on wheels, midget racers spun around a Detroit track one day in 1935, hitting speeds from 80 to 100 miles an hour. Curley Mills of Los Angeles at the wheel of car No 18 was riding high. Weaving in and out, he was doing about eighty when he hit a turn, skidded, and felt his car leap from the track. Alongside was car No. 43 with Jimmy Prock of Detroit at the wheel. Up and over Prock and his racer soared aerial-minded Miller's car, down on the track it bounced, then continued onward as though nothing had happened.

Strange as it seems, neither of the cars were disabled by the "leapfrog" incident. Prock had to withdraw from the race a few laps later when his car developed some trouble, but Miller continued blithely onward to the end of the hundred-mile race.

Lovesick Nelson.

Had it not been for the level head and persuasive ability of one of Horatio Nelson's brother officers, the English navy would have lost its greatest figure, the hero of Trafalgar.

On leave in Quebec in 1782, Nelson visited an inn where he met and fell in love with a girl named Simpson, a name peculiarly fated to affect English history about a century and a half later in amazingly similar circumstances. With his ship ready to sail, Nelson made up his mind to desert rather than leave his love behind. A brother officer in whom he confided his plans managed to argue him out of it and Nelson gave up his "Maid of the Inn" to sail on to his glorious destiny.

White House Bride.

Daughter of Grover Cleveland's law partner, Oscar Folsom, Francis Folsom married the president in the White House at 22. She was the first White House bride of a president. In 1908 her husband died and five years later Mrs. Cleveland married Thomas J. Preston, Jr., marking the only instance in U. S. history when a president's widow remarried.

Tomorrow: 18 Holes in One.

BUNDLES AND SCREEN DOORS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

S'MATTER POP

By C. M. PAYNE

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Josef Is Cautious!

By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—"Conference"

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—The Fighting Rabbit

By SOL HESS