

# FLAME TRAIL

BY MARIE DE SERVAUD

**SYNOPSIS:** When Kay Grandson's Lazy Nine ranch house and barn burn, Josh Hastings—who wants to buy the ranch and marry Kay—invites her to the Flying Six. She refuses, distrusting him. Kay goes to the insurance money but young sister Babe and Aunt Kate go. The insurance money has to go to the mortgage, jolting Kay's plan to rebuild. Ted Gannon, a puncher Kay hired impulsively, stirs the outfit to cut its own lumber and rebuild without pay. She is on her way to buy the only available timberland when Scrap Johnson, a Hastings puncher, lassoes her, leaving her roped on the men. Meanwhile Ted gets an option on the land for Kay.

## Chapter 15 Rescue With Fury

RESOLVING to get up on the open range, bonds or no bonds, Kay managed to edge painfully up the slope, using her elbows and knees to pull herself along.

The distance, which could have been covered in a few strides on foot, seemed endless when negotiated in this painful fashion. At last she reached the top and sank back, faint with exhaustion.

Opening her eyes, she could see the range stretching out in undulating waves to the horizon on the south and east; while to the north and west the mountains rose to intercept its view sweep. There was not a sign of life. In a kind of stupor, Kay watched the flickering waves of heat that made the air seem to vibrate against the blue sky.

A merciful oblivion was stealing over her when suddenly against the sky on the horizon to the south she saw outlined the silhouette of a horseman.

The first sickening dread that it might be Scrap Johnson passed with the realization that he wouldn't be riding so far to the south. Resolving that whoever the rider was, she would rather trust herself to him than to Johnson, Kay took fresh courage.

Strengthened by new hope, she struggled to her knees, gazing intently at the distant apparition. Unless she could stand up, there wasn't a chance that he could see her.

She edged her way over to a smooth boulder and, bracing herself against it, managed to pull herself up on her feet. As she wavered uncertainly on the one foot that was in a position to take a solid stand, her heart gave a great leap and a strangled cry beat against the muffling bandanna.

The horseman had come to a standstill. Speck as he was in the distance, Kay knew he was looking her way.

In an instinctive impulsive effort to jerk up her arms and signal to him, she lost her balance and slumped to the ground. Straining and panting, she tried again to get up. Her eyes never left the silhouetted figure.

She groaned with desperation as she saw him resume his way. Then her courage forsook her, and she gave in to the rushing blackness that enveloped her.

**The Thud of Hoofbeats**

"SLEEPING beauty, eh?"

Kay came to realize that Scrap Johnson was standing over her. She kept her eyes closed as she summoned all her courage to meet the ordeal ahead. If she kept her wits about her, there might yet be some way out. The man must have some decency she could appeal to! But she mustn't show any fear!

He gave a low whistle. "I'll say you've done some traveling!" he observed. "Kind of hard going, what?"

He stooped down and loosened her gag. "No point in covering up those red lips, any longer," he laughed mockingly as he straightened up again. "Come on, Cutie. I know you're shaming! Open up those brown eyes of yours! I like to see 'em snap!"

Kay opened her eyes and looked straight at him, without moving. All her will power was shining in their hypnotic depths, and, in spite of himself, Scrap Johnson gave an embarrassed laugh, and took a backward step.

"If you'll cut these bonds and ride away from here," Kay's voice was low and intent, as she held him with her gaze, "I'll agree to keep still about what's happened. That's your only chance to stay on this range and live."

For a moment he wavered. Then, with a hoarse laugh, he stooped down beside her, and put his arm around her.

"A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush," he gloated, breathing heavily. His eyes avoided her and focused on her lips, and Kay felt a sick rush of terror.

In their absorption, neither had heard the thud of distant hoofbeats, but now, at the same moment, they both became aware of them.

Scrap Johnson dropped Kay with an oath, sprang to his feet and seized his gun.

In the same instant, Kay kicked out fiercely against his shins, her

bound feet catching him unawares and throwing him off his balance. He crashed to the ground, his gun exploding harmlessly in the air.

Through waves of blackness, Kay heard the pounding of hoofs and Ted Gannon's voice calling, "Lie still! If you move, you're a goner!"

Galvanized to life again by the miracle of hearing Ted's voice, Kay shrank away from the prone figure in her fear that suddenly ceased struggling at the deadly threat behind Ted's command. With her heart in her throat, she turned and gazed at the oncoming figure of her rescuer.

Taking in the situation at a glance, Ted pulled his mount to a sliding stop and slipped off. His eyes were fixed on Scrap Johnson, whom he kept covered with the gun Kay had given him.

A foot or two away from Scrap Johnson, his gun lay where it had fallen, just out of reach. Shifting his aim for one fraction of a second, Ted fired, shattering the gun to bits. Then he covered the man on the ground again, before he had a chance to move.

"Get out of his reach, Kay," Ted called, without once taking his eyes off his victim. "I don't aim to have him try to use you as a shield!"

Kay obeyed without a word, dragging herself to one side.

"Now, get up, you!"

It seemed to Kay that she had never heard such controlled fury in any human voice.

After a moment's hesitation, the Flying Six puncher rose to his feet.

"Pitch 'em, and keep 'em there!" With a snarl, he obeyed. Kay glanced fearfully from one man to the other.

"Turn around!" Ted's voice rang out again. As his prisoner obeyed, he reached with his free hand for the rope on the pommel of his saddle. Stepping swiftly over to Scrap Johnson, he pressed his gun into his back, at the same time putting a loop around his raised hands. Jerking them down, he expertly trussed his arms to his sides, then tripped him and finished the job of hog-tieing him.

**'A Second Lesson'**

LEAVING him where he had L dropped, Ted strode over to Kay and, with quick, clean cuts of his knife, severed the ropes that bound her.

"Are you all right?" His breath came quickly, as he gazed anxiously into Kay's eyes.

She nodded, a tremulous, reassuring smile on her lips. "Yes, thanks to you."

Ted handed her her father's gun. "Take this, and if anything happens to me, you can protect yourself. But nothing will happen." His voice still vibrated with the same deadly fury.

"What are you going to do?" Kay demanded.

"Much as I'd like to, I can't kill this cowardly coyote in cold blood if he hasn't harmed you; and I'm not going to drag him to the sheriff to have his noised about the range. So, I'm going to give him a second lesson he won't forget, and if he ever shows up on the range again, I'll kill him!"

"No—no!" Kay cried in a terror-stricken voice. "Leave him bound and let's go!"

Without appearing to hear her, Ted stepped swiftly away, and called contemptuously to Scrap Johnson. "That's only a slip noose. Get yourself free and come take your lesson."

A look of mingled surprise and elation gleamed in Scrap Johnson's eyes as he strained against the ropes and felt them give. Shaking himself loose, he crouched for a moment, then made a rush for Ted, all the rage of his former defeat in his attack.

It seemed to Kay that it was hours instead of seconds that, heart in her mouth, she watched the struggle. Both men were slight in build, though Scrap Johnson had a decided advantage in weight and general physical fitness.

The indignity that Kay had suffered, however, added an invincible fury to Ted's attack that far outweighed any mere physical advantage.

Sidestepping his opponent's fast-swinging rush, he tore back at him with a blow that sent him staggering backwards. Recovering his balance, Scrap Johnson lowered his head with a roar of rage and butted into Ted's stomach like a battering ram. But Ted countered with a swinging uppercut that found its mark.

Following up his advantage like one possessed, he landed one terrific punch after another, finally forcing his antagonist to his knees. Panting and blinking the sweat out of his eyes, Ted drew back and let the groggy puncher struggle to his feet.

Then Scrap Johnson put all he had left in a wild lunge. Ted saw his opportunity and drove a knockout blow to his chin.

Scrap's head snapped back with a sickening twist. Groaning, he toppled to the ground and lay still.

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Tom Runyon shows up at the Lazy Nine to make some queries. Tomorrow: "Jinx" of the Presidents!

**PAROLED FORGER SENT BACK FOR NEW TITCH**

ROSEBURG, Ore., July 22.—(AP)—Thomas Charles Martin, alias Charles Moore, paroled a year ago from a check charge in Marion county, was sentenced in circuit court here today to three years in the state penitentiary when he pleaded guilty to issuing a worthless check. The crime with which he was charged occurred at Canyonville, where he passed a \$25 check on Mrs. M. E. Manley, innkeeper. District Attorney J. V. Long told the court.

Shatter-proof glass would be obligatory in all automobile vehicles used for public conveyances in Buenos Aires under the terms of a proposed ordinance.

**GRAY BROWN SLIME POLAR OCEAN FLOOR**

MOSCOW, July 22.—(AP)—The Soviet Polar weather camp reported today that a gray-brown slime found the ocean floor beneath the North Pole.

The explorers sounded bottom at about 14,400 feet.

**PROSPECTOR FINDS MILLIONS IN GOLD**

PANAMA CITY, Panama, July 22.—(AP)—An investigating committee headed by the governor of Chiriqui province today confirmed the discovery of a \$3,000,000 treasure in gold which had been hidden for centuries in tunnels along the Piedra Candela river.

Gaston Johannes Van Steek, a French prospector, reported the discovery July 7 of two tunnels deep in the right bank of the river. In the tunnels were stored approximately 80 ingots of gold each weighing 50 pounds.

Van Steek ceded half the value of his find to the central government, as Panama laws require.

**KLAMATH WILL LAUNCH POTATO ADVERTISING**

KLAMATH FALLS, July 22.—(AP)—The Klamath county chamber of commerce today launched a program of advertising for Klamath basin potatoes.

An initial appropriation of \$300 for the purpose was voted by the chamber's directors.

Although 90 years old, Mrs. August Klammer of Jindera, Australia, seized a gun and killed a snake near her home with one shot.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

**"IRON MAN" JOE MCGINNITY PITCHED THE DUBUQUE, IOWA, TEAM TO A PENNANT AT THE AGE OF 52... -1923-**

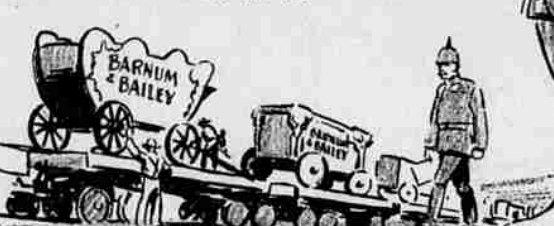


**DOCTOR OF THE TOP OF THE WORLD**

**DR. JAMES A. URQUHART HAS A PRACTICE EXTENDING OVER 900,000 SQUARE MILES! HIS PATIENTS ARE THE ESKIMOS IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC AREA...**

**THE ARMY THAT COPIED A CIRCUS!**

**THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM USED BY THE GERMAN ARMY DURING THE WORLD WAR WAS COPIED FROM THAT OF AN AMERICAN CIRCUS WHICH TOURED GERMANY IN 1901...**



**Circus Lessons**

Told of the efficiency and speed in transportation methods displayed by the Barnum & Bailey circus in their 1901 tour of Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm sought and received permission for several German officers to accompany the show as observers. The observations of these officers resulted in the adoption by the German army of the circus' system of train loading.

Under the old method, the army loaded its artillery and livestock from the sides of the individual cars. The much speedier and more efficient circus method was to connect each car with a platform and then to move whatever was to be loaded from the end of each car through the train to the proper car. The change in German army field kitchens, wherein the old type that required the building of a fire in the open after being brought up to the troops was discarded in favor of cooking wagons with boilers previously heated, was also borrowed from the circus system.

**Doctor of the Arctic**

So vast is the territory over which Dr. James A. Urquhart practices that much of his "round of calls" is made by means of airplane, coupled with dog team and boat. It includes about 900,000 square miles, extending from Demarcation Point on the Canadian coast at the junction of Alaska and Canada to King William Island and from Normin on the Mackenzie river to Cameron Bay on Great Bear Lake.

**TAILOPIN TOMMY—A Crash Is Inevitable**

**FORCED TO TAKE OFF WITH A COLD MOTOR, BECAUSE HE HAD OBTAINED THE PLANE WITHOUT THE OWNER'S CONSENT, TO FLY JUSTINA AND SERG TO HIS PAL, TOMMY, SKETTS REALIZES THAT A CRASH IS INEVITABLE AS THE ENGINE SPLUTTERS JUST AS THE SHIP IS ABOUT TO CLEAR THE LAST BARRIER.**



**BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Disturbing News!**

**GO YOU'RE THE BENWEBSTER AND I'M THE WHOLE TOWN GAYS IS GLAD TO WORKING WONDERS DOWN KNOW YOU, AT HIGGING, EH? GLAD TO KNOW YOU, SON-**

**-THOUGHT I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE MORTGAGE MRS. HIGGING SAYS YOU HOLD ON THE STORE BUILDING—GUESS WERE A LITTLE BEHIND IN OUR INTEREST-**

**WHY, MMM, ER, ER, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE INTEREST, BEN—I KNOW HETTY HIGGING WILL PAY WHAT'S OWING ME, BUT-**

**THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS I DON'T OWN THAT MORTGAGE ANY MORE—I WAS A LITTLE GUY OF CASH A MONTH OR GO BACK, AND I SOLD IT—**

**WHAT!?**

**THE NEBBS—Nothing Doing**

**MARGARET ALNE, VERMILLION, SD., WRITES EMMA SHOULD MARRY MAX HER FINE LOVE**

**EMMA'S MINDEN, LONG BEACH, CALIF. WRITES IN MY OPINION, MAX IS THE MAN!**

**HEVIN I LAIERCK, CLEVELAND, OHIO THANKS EMMA SHOULD MARRY MAX**

**MIRANO MRS. RAYMOND ALLES, MUSKOGEE, MISS. BOTH VOTE FOR MAX**



# THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEAGUE By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



**WITHOUT MAKING A HIT OR A RUN SHRIMP MCGEE WAS THE HERO OF THE GAME BECAUSE IN THE THIRD INNING, WITH THE OPPONENTS LEADING 38-2, HE KNOCKED FOUR FOULS IRRETRIEVABLY INTO THE UNDERBRUSH, WHICH EXHAUSTED THE SUPPLY OF BALLS AND IT HAD TO BE DECLARED 'NO CONTEST'**

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# S'MATTER POP By C. M. PAYNE



**I'VE BEEN EXERCISIN' WITH APPARATUS**

**I'M HARD AS NAILS**



**TSONG**

**LET'S SEE**

**TBAW-W**

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# By HAL FORREEST



**GET AWAY FROM THE BACK OF MY CHAIR, YOU DUMMY!**

**IF TH' MOTOR CRASHES BACK I DON'T WANT YOU TO PUSH ME INTO IT!**

**AN... IF YOU CRASHES NOW, SAY 'EM NOW!**

# By EDWIN ALGER



**GO YOU'RE THE BENWEBSTER AND I'M THE WHOLE TOWN GAYS IS GLAD TO WORKING WONDERS DOWN KNOW YOU, AT HIGGING, EH? GLAD TO KNOW YOU, SON-**

**-THOUGHT I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE MORTGAGE MRS. HIGGING SAYS YOU HOLD ON THE STORE BUILDING—GUESS WERE A LITTLE BEHIND IN OUR INTEREST-**

**WHY, MMM, ER, ER, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE INTEREST, BEN—I KNOW HETTY HIGGING WILL PAY WHAT'S OWING ME, BUT-**

**THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS I DON'T OWN THAT MORTGAGE ANY MORE—I WAS A LITTLE GUY OF CASH A MONTH OR GO BACK, AND I SOLD IT—**

**WHAT!?**

# By SOL HESS



**IF GREGORY, THE COP SAYS IF WE FIGHT IN TOWN, HIS UNCLE THE MAYOR TOLD HIM HE'LL HAVE TO STOP IT**

**I WAS THINKIN' THIS FIGHT MATTER OVER—THERE AINT NO USE 'GON' AWAY OVER TO SCHAEFFER'S WOODS TO HAVE THIS FIGHT—I'LL HAVE IT RIGHT IN FRONT OF LUTHER'S HOUSE— THEN THEY WON'T HAVE FAR TO CARRY HIM**

**TAKE THAT OUT OF YOUR MOUTH**

**I SHOULD SAY NOT—THE AUTHORITIES WOULD HAVE TO STOP IT AND IT'S ONE FIGHT WERE GOING THROUGH WITH—NO ONE'S GOING TO INSULT US WITHOUT PAYING PENALTY**

**WITH THAT YOU GO WITH THAT US STUFF AGAIN—EVER SINCE I KNEWED YOU, YOU'VE BEEN FIGURIN' TROUBLE FOR US—YOU FIGURE IT AND I GET IT!**