

# FLAME TRAIL

BY MARIE DE SERVAUD

**SYNOPSIS:** Just as Ted Gaynor is desperately about to set a forest fire to get a job, Kay Cranston stops him, likes his looks, gives him a place at the Lazy Nine. Josh Hastings, owner of the Flying Six, tries to buy the Lazy Nine and marry Kay after her ranch house and barn burn. She hates him and is determined to keep her ranch and rebuild. Ted stirs the outfit to cut its own timber and rebuild without pay. Hastings tries to tie up the only available timber land, but Ted wins the race for an option, then whips a Hastings puncher for molesting Kay. Tom Runyon, the fire patrol, shows up at the Lazy Nine.

## Chapter 17 Seth Makes A Slip

KAY felt all her first suspicions about the ranch fire revive, but she remembered Dan Steele's warning and held her peace. While this Tom Runyon seemed all right, and a kindly and genial enough person, she didn't really know anything about him, so it would pay to go slow.

If he wanted to go ahead investigating on his own initiative, he might unearth something that would give some foundation for her suspicion of Josh Hastings. But while she must be very careful not to voice the direction in which her suspicions lay, there was one point on which she must set him straight right away.

"I am absolutely certain that Seth and our outfit are above suspicion," she stated positively, "so if you're looking for foul play, you can count them out from the start."

"Maybe," he nodded his approval of her loyalty. "But when you're starting out to look for clues you can't be handicapped by any foregone conclusions. You just leave the investigating to me. All I want you to do is to answer a few questions."

"Gladly—but let's wait until after supper," Kay leaned against the side of the cabin for a second, overcome by a sudden weary faintness.

Tom Runyon sprang to put a steady hand on her arm. "What's the matter, he inquired anxiously. 'You look unwell.'"

"Nothing," Kay straightened up and smiled at him. "I'm just a little tired, I guess. I'll be all right as soon as I get something to eat! You go on up to the bunk house and I'll join you in a minute. I'm eating with the boys, until I can get my own housekeeper's arrangements rigged up. You'll stay for supper, of course?" she added, as he hesitated a moment.

"That's mighty good of you. I'd be glad to. Only, look here! Who was that you were riding in with?"

Kay paused at the cabin door, her eyebrows raised in surprise. A slight flush came into her cheeks as she answered his question. After all, there was no point in making a mystery about being with Ted.

"That was Ted Gaynor, the man I was with up on the ridge." To her annoyance, she flushed still more, as she caught Tom Runyon's keen, speculative look at her heightened color.

"Oh, yes. Well, he's just the one I wanted to ask you about. But we'll wait until after supper."

Before Kay could answer, he turned and made for the bunk house.

As she washed her face and hands, she tried to reason herself out of the queer, panicky feeling that suddenly took possession of her. The dark premonition that she had had when she said goodby to Ted swept over her again.

"Don't be a fool!" she scolded her image in the mirror as she ruthlessly tugged a comb through her tangled curls. "You're just letting your nerves run away with you. What could possibly happen to him? Especially if you keep your head, and don't let Tom Runyon's first suspicions start up again!"

**Supper Conversation**  
BRACED by the thought that it was up to her to protect Ted, Kay walked slowly up to the bunk house, planning what she would say.

Any thoughts were welcome, as long as they pushed into the background her horrible experience of the afternoon. Instead of allowing herself to dwell on that, she concentrated on the memory of the magnificent way Ted had come to her rescue.

If her first intuitive judgment of him, in spite of the driving condition of their meeting, had needed any bolstering, she certainly had had it there.

She understood exactly how desperation for those he loved had driven him to feel justified in destroying some timber for the sake of saving human lives. He had been perfectly right in saying that in burning off the ridge he had chosen he would have done no actual damage to any one. It would have destroyed a second scrub growth of timber, but could easily have been kept under control.

You couldn't expect any more it as she did, though. Kay sized, as she heard the bunk house, and saw Tom Runyon standing talking with Seth while they waited for the call to supper. Especially not a man of Tom Runyon's type, who was obsessed with the idea of his own importance, and would be ready to jump to any conclusion that would reflect glory on him. And the demand of the community for some action in running down the firebug, whoever he was, would make Runyon all the more eager to pin the blame for all the fires on Ted, if he suspected that one mad act of his.

The supper bell rang just as Kay joined the two men, and in the general conversation at the table, there was no chance for Runyon to ask her the questions she was prepared to parry as skillfully as she could.

Talk turned on the new scheme for building the ranch house, and everyone was full of ideas and suggestions.

"By the way," Seth broke in suddenly, "isn't it about time Ted Gaynor was getting back?"

"Oh, I meant to tell you, and I forgot!" Kay felt Tom Runyon's eyes on her as she turned apologetically to Seth. "I mentioned the mesa, and he gave me the option he got from Old Man Warren. It was terribly good of you and the boys to lend that money, so he could clinch the bargain!"

She smiled at them, a sudden catch in her throat and mist in her eyes at this proof of their loyalty.

"Why didn't he come in?" Seth demanded. "I wanted to get all the dope on it."

"He thought he'd better be getting on," again Kay felt the slow color come into her cheeks, at the insistence of Tom Runyon's look.

"He told me to tell you all about it," she launched into the account Ted had given her of his interview with Old Man Warren, hoping to divert attention from herself.

**Flattery For Runyon**  
"I LIKE that Gaynor fellow," Seth observed when she had finished. "Just where did you say you picked him up?"

Kay gave a gasp at this bad break. Seth evidently had forgotten the things she had told him to say to Tom Runyon about Ted. He couldn't have put his foot in it any worse if he had deliberately tried.

She could see Tom Runyon's ears prick up to catch her answer, although he pretended to be engrossed in conversation with one of the boys. Managing to change her gasp into a cough, Kay fixed her eyes firmly on Seth as she answered.

"Why, I've told you about him before, Seth! You don't pay attention to what I say half the time! Under her teasing tone, her voice held a significant reminder.

"He's the one who has been helping me out on some of the timber land I've been wanting to buy—even before the house burned down." She turned to Tom Runyon with a politely explanatory air. "I've been thinking we ought to add some more timber land to the ranch."

"There's nothing much but scrub growth on that ridge where I met you," he observed.

"That's just the conclusion Ted arrived at," Kay looked up at Tom Runyon with flattery admiration. "I'm sorry he isn't here. You and he would enjoy talking together."

"Where's he gone?"

"Just yesterday, he decided to really join up with the outfit," Kay explained, "and he's gone back to bring his mother and sister to the other little cabin like mine."

"I see," Tom Runyon's black eyes fastened themselves speculatively on Kay.

"He's the one who has got us started with this idea of building the ranch house and barn ourselves," she rattled on nervously. "So it's lucky he is a regular member of the outfit now."

"Sure is," Seth agreed heartily, pushing back his chair and rising to his feet. "Well, need all the hands we can get on this job."

There was a scraping of chairs as the others followed suit.

"How about taking me on?" Tom Runyon suggested, with a flattering eye bent on Kay.

# 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 AFRICAN ELEPHANT'S EARS ARE 3 TIMES AS LONG AS THE INDIAN ELEPHANT'S**



**JOHN P. MCINNIS, Boston-Cleveland, A.L., first baseman, played in 140 consecutive games, accepting 1025 fielding chances, without making a single error, 1921-22.**

**THE ONLY INDOOR AIRPLANE FLIGHT WAS MADE IN 1915! LINCOLN BEACHY TOOK OFF AND LANDED WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE 900-FOOT LONG PALACE OF MACHINERY AT THE PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION, SAN FRANCISCO**

**Indoor Flight**  
Pilots have taken off from the interiors of hangars and, on occasions, even flown through them, but Lincoln Beachy's take-off, flight, and landing within the four walls of the Palace of Machinery in San Francisco in 1915 is the only completely indoor flight ever recorded.

Considering the undeveloped state of aviation in his day, Beachy might well be rated as the greatest daredevil ever to take to the air. In 1911 he set a world's airplane altitude by fulfilling his previously declared intention of filling his ship with gas, taking off and keeping the plane's nose up till he ran out of fuel. An altitude of 11,600 feet was reached before the last drop of gas was used, whereupon the pilot headed downward at a terrific speed, looping and stunting all the way back to the ground for a perfect landing.

Beachy was the first man to fly through the dangerous air currents over Niagara falls and was also the first to fly under the suspension bridge. In 1913, the "Madman of the Air" made the first loop in the United States and a while later did it in rapid succession. The daring pilot was killed shortly after his indoor flight in San Francisco when a wing on his ship collapsed over the exposition grounds.



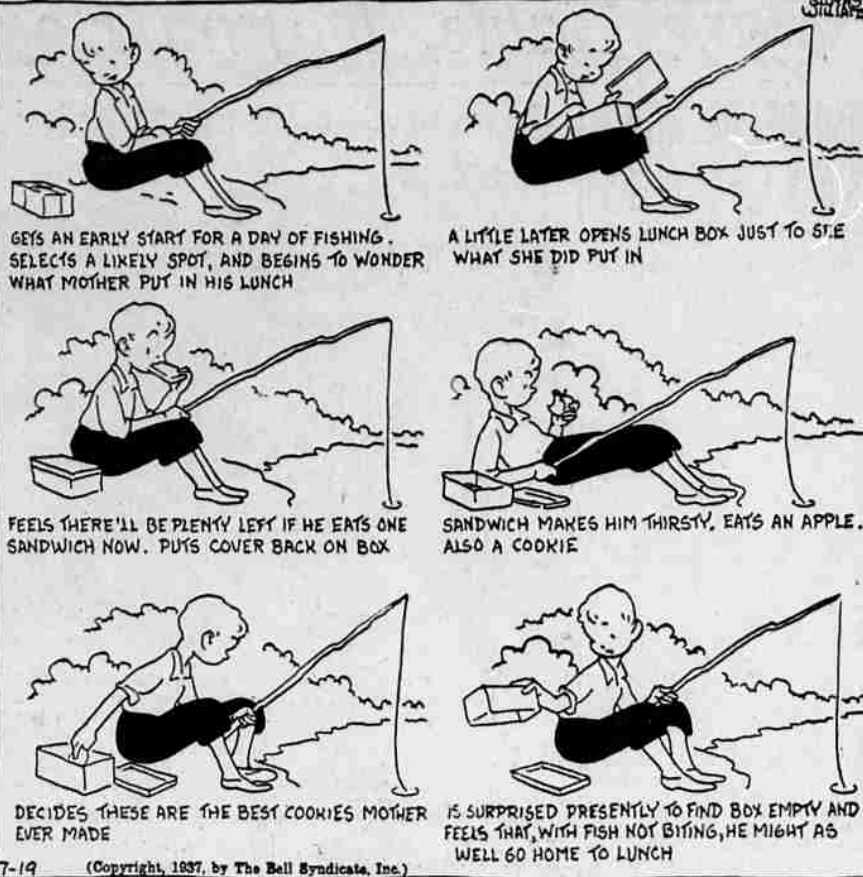
**FISH ARE CAUGHT BY DRUGGING THEM IN INDIA—NATIVES THROW NARCOTIC-CONTAINING FRUIT (FISHBERRIES) INTO THE WATER TO STUPIFY THE FISH—THEN CATCH THEM BY HAND.**

**Drugging Fish**  
Fishberries, the fruit of the East Indian climbing plant botanically known as Anamirta Cocculus, contain picrotoxin, a narcotic poison. Dropped into ponds or streams, dried fishberries stupefy any fish in the immediate vicinity, making them easy prey to be caught by hand. The "drugging" method of fishing is widely practiced throughout India.

A similar method of fishing is used in Peru. A root pulp, derived from a plant native to Central and South America, is thrown in the water. It renders the fish helpless and brings them to the surface where they are easily caught.

# LUNCHEON BOX

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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# SMATTER POP

By O. M. PAYNE



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# Unions Join For Fight On Ruling

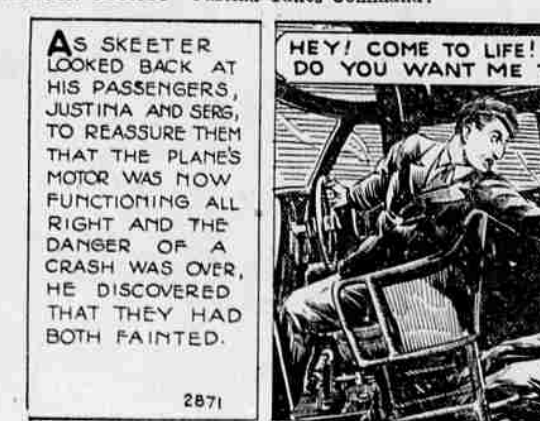
NEWARK, N. J., July 24.—(AP)—C. I. O. and A. F. of L. leaders rallied their forces for a meeting today to "unite in a common bond" to appeal a chancery court ruling that labor contracts for a closed shop are "illegal and unenforceable" and strike for closed shops "unlawful."

# WOMEN WILL BATTLE FOR EQUALITY IN LAW

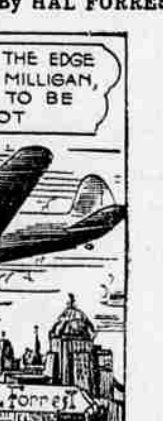
ATLANTIC CITY, N. J., July 24.—(AP)—Delegates representing 65,000 members of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, voted by acclamation today to fight for amendment of the federal constitution to place women on equal footing with men under the laws of the United States government and all the states.

# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Justina Takes Command!

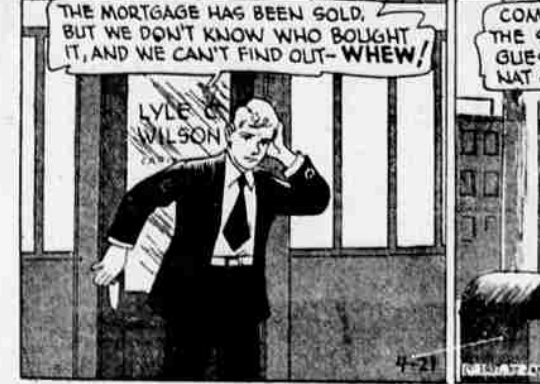
As she washed her face and hands, she tried to reason herself out of the queer, panicky feeling that suddenly took possession of her. The dark premonition that she had had when she said goodby to Ted swept over her again.



2871



# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Surprise!



# THE NEBBS—Always "We"



7-22

# CRATER LAKE TRAVEL NEARS 100,000 MARK

CRATER LAKE, July 24.—(Sp.)—Crater lake travel is continuing to shatter records with the present total nearing 95,000 visitors for the season thus far. The 100,000 mark will be passed within a few days.

# CCC Boys to Join Fight On Crickets

WASHINGTON, July 24.—(AP)—Civilian Conservation Corps crews with 104 in southeastern Idaho battle against Mormon crickets. Representative D. Worth Clark of Idaho said today.

Robert Fechner, emergency conservation director, issued an order allowing forest service, grazing and reclamation bureau camps to use all available facilities to combat the insects, Clark said.

**Moon Aids Farmer**  
ONTARIO, July 24.—(AP)—A field of standing wheat last night was nothing more than shocks of grain today. A brilliant moon and tractor headlights gave L. Koopman all the light he needed to operate a reaper and binder.

Phone 34-467, near away from office. City sanitary service.