

# FLAME TRAIL

BY MARIE DE SERVAUD

**SYNOPSIS:** Josh Hastings, owner of the Flying Six, tries to buy Kay Crandon's Lazy Nine after her ranch house and barn burn. He also tries to court Kay. She distrusts him and is determined to keep her ranch and rebuild. Hastings' coachman, Scrap Johnson, molests Kay, but Ted Gaylor, a puncher she impulsively hires, rescues her and whips Scrap. Later they shoot it out, wounding each other. Hastings, hating both, finds them and murders Scrap, using Ted's gun. Ted crawls to a shack where a girl takes him in. Hastings escorts Kay home one night, telling her an ugly story about Ted.

## Chapter 24

### 'Don't Be A Fool!'

"WHAT'S the hurry?" Josh Hastings pounded up beside Kay and, reaching over, put a possessive hand on her arm. "It's a crime to go rushing through a moonlight night at this pace! Slow down and I'll promise not to tell you any more sordid stories."

Kay's only answer was to shake her arm free and urge Flicker on to greater speed.

An ugly look settled on Josh Hastings' face as he was forced by her action to follow suit. Flicker was a faster horse than his, and he had no more time for talking, if he was going to keep up.

Already, he was losing ground a bit, and as Kay glanced over her shoulder and saw him falling behind, a reckless spirit of mischief overcame her prudence.

She knew it was a silly thing to rouse his temper, but she couldn't resist the temptation to pay him back for telling her that story about Ted. Realizing perfectly that nothing was more galling to a man's pride than to be left behind by a girl, she deliberately pushed Flicker to the limit, and streaked ahead of him.

She had arrived at the corral, turned Flicker loose, and was just starting back to her cabin when he came pounding up.

He pulled up so sharply that his horse slipped to his haunches and almost went down. The next instant he was off, and before Kay could guess his intention, he seized her in his arms, and pressed his lips savagely to hers.

"That'll teach you not to play monkey tricks with me!" His voice was thick with rage and passion, as he held Kay's shoulders in an iron grip and bent his face close to her. "You'd better learn it now! Because I mean to marry you, you little spitfire!"

Regardless of Kay's blazing eyes, and her choked "Let me go!" as he writhed in his grasp, he kissed her again. Then he sprang into his saddle and galloped off without a backward look.

Panting and trembling with fury, Kay watched him go, her mind seething with the outrage. It had all taken place so swiftly, that she could hardly believe it had happened at all.

With a gasp of disgust, she wiped the back of her hand across her lips, and clenched her fist as she gazed after the retreating figure in the moonlight.

Much as she had disliked Josh Hastings, she had never thought to be on her guard against an act like this. Why, he was old enough to be her father! She grabbed her handkerchief and scrubbed her lips as though to cleanse them of his polluting touch.

Marry him! A shudder ran through her, and she was an helpless feeling of dread laid a cold clutch on her heart. Suddenly she felt utterly defenseless and alone. Who could she turn to? Aunt Kate and Babs were completely under Josh Hastings' spell; she could expect no help from them. And if Ted failed her—

### Summons To Aunt Kate

JOSH Hastings' insinuating story flashed in her mind, and in spite of her disbelief, she found herself going over it, bit by bit.

Even if the worst implications about the girl were false, Ted had probably been involved in some sort of affair with her. And there was that other rumor about the dark haired girl he had fought over, that very day when he had later come so splendidly to her rescue.

Kay straightened up suddenly and walked quickly back to the cabin, her head proudly high, though her breath still came in quick, uneven jerks. It was certainly nothing to her how many girls Ted had seduced, or how many to come back for to rebuild her house and barn for her!

Memory of Josh Hastings' kiss flashed over her again, and running up the steps of her cabin, she hastily lit a candle and flung herself down at her father's desk. Something in its very solidity, and the associations that clung to it, gave her a truly comforting sense of strength.

"He thinks he's going to marry me, does he?" Kay savagely pulled open a drawer and took out a sheet

of note paper. "We'll see about that!"

She scribbled a note to Aunt Kate, saying that she was going to send over for them the next afternoon. They could have her cabin, and she could sleep outside in her sleeping bag. Signing it without further explanation, she left it on her desk, so that she could give it to one of the boys to take over the first thing in the morning. Then, with the same feverish haste, she undressed and flung herself into bed.

After a restless night of both waking and sleeping nightmares, Kay was out at the crack of dawn, and over at the bunk house with her note.

After she had actually dispatched Shorty with the summons to her family to leave the Flying Six, she felt better, and by the time breakfast was over, she had persuaded herself that Josh Hastings had made up that story out of whole cloth, for the sole purpose of damaging Ted in her eyes.

"When Ted comes back, I'm going to tell him the whole thing," she resolved, as she made her way over to the bunk house to consult Seth about getting another cot put up in her cabin for Babs.

It was nearly 10 o'clock before Shorty came back from the Flying Six. Kay hastily tore open the note he handed her, addressed in her aunt's cramped old-fashioned handwriting. A slow color rose in her cheeks as she read it through, and then started it over again.

She was suddenly aware of Shorty's eyes on her. Biting her lip to steady herself, she looked up at him.

"Thanks, Shorty. There isn't any answer," she turned away with the note clenched in her hand, and ran down to her cabin. Seated at the desk, she spread it out before her, and incredulously read its surprising contents again.

### Dear Kay:

"Don't be a fool! You're not the first girl to be kissed on a moonlight night! Josh Hastings has told me all about it, and his generous and honorable intentions toward you. I certainly have no idea of coming back until the house is finished. You can insist on Babs coming, but you'll be pulling a horse's nest about your ears if you do."

"I say again—don't be a fool! Your affectionate AUNT KATE"

Kay drew a long quivering breath as she settled back and gazed at the door, where some flies buzzed drowsily in the heat. Suddenly, one of them brushed against a candlewick and became more and more enmeshed as it tried to get away.

With an impulsive movement, Kay jumped up and put a finger through the web, thus setting the fly free.

"If only someone would do that for me!" she murmured, as she settled down and read Aunt Kate's letter again. Forcing herself not to let her judgment be influenced by her indignation, she tried to consider it calmly.

### No Way To Fight Him

WHAT Aunt Kate said about Babs was perfectly true. Kay realized that she hadn't any too firm a hold over Babs' headstrong and self-willed nature. And if she insisted on her coming back in the face of Aunt Kate's determination to stay, life wouldn't be worth living.

Viewed in the light of Aunt Kate's scornful "don't-be-a-fool!" it did seem ridiculous to make such a fuss about a moonlight kiss. And by forestalling her, and telling Aunt Kate about it, and his desire to marry her, Josh Hastings had cut most of the ground for righteous indignation from under her feet.

There just didn't seem any way to fight this insidious move of Josh Hastings, to get her family under his influence, and lined up against her.

She could tell Aunt Kate about his plot to get her timberland away from her. But that would involve telling the whole beastly experience with Scrap Johnson, and Kay had none too much confidence in her aunt's discretion, to want to trust her with that story.

Besides, she'd probably explain away Josh Hastings' part in it by saying that he'd been trying to protect her from making a foolish move.

As long as she was caught in the trap, she might as well accept it gracefully. To have Babs at home, in a rebellious mood, when there was so much to be done, would be anything but a help. And to put such a tragic incident on a kiss snatched in the moonlight, was to magnify the importance of it out of all proportion.

Reluctantly admitting that perhaps she had been a fool to be quite so hasty and dramatic about it, Kay crunched up the note, and threw it into the waste-basket.

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The sheriff brings Ted's gun to the Lazy Nine, tomorrow, for Kay to identify.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



In recent years, the use of perfume has become almost as much a feminine prerogative as the changing of minds, but in the days of "Good Queen Bess" the set-up was far different. By act of Parliament, women were forbidden to use aromatic for fear of cutting down the supply to an extent where there wouldn't be enough for the men.

**Babe Ruth.** First assailed by the lure of the diamond while at the St. Mary's Industrial school in Baltimore, George Herman Ruth took up the game as a catcher. A left-hander, he had to wear a catcher's mitt designed for a right-handed player because it was the only catcher's mitt the

school owned. This meant that in making a throw, he had to flip the mitt off his hand.

Realizing that left-handers never got very far as catchers anyway, Ruth took up pitching. His ability in this position came to the notice of the Baltimore Orioles and he was signed up by the team in 1914.

By 1918, Ruth had become one of the outstanding pitchers in major league baseball, but longed to get more opportunity to bat. In the following year he became an outfielder as his batting ability could be used more regularly. He became the "King of Swat," rolling up a world's record of 714 home runs before he retired.

**The Lost Balloon.** Late in 1936, a passerby stumbled on an object partially buried in the sand near Twenty-Nine Palms, Calif. It was found to be a balloon meteorograph No. 250, which had been released by the U. S. Weather Bureau at Santa Catalina Island nearly a quarter of a century before!

Made of metal, No. 250 was still in good shape, and many of the tracings on its recording plate could still be deciphered. They showed that the meteorograph had been released at 5:05 p. m., July 25, 1913, from Avalon, Santa Catalina, Calif., 122 feet above sea level—temperature 75 degrees F. It had risen to a height of 13.8 miles, where the temperature was 71 degrees below zero.

Tomorrow: What Man's Shadow Lived After Him?

**Woman Flying Doctor** CLONCURRY, Australia. —(UP)—Dr. Jean White is believed to be the first woman flying doctor in the world. She has been appointed assistant to Dr. G. W. Alberry, who is obliged to make practically all of his calls over a vast territory by air.

**Old Building Air Cooled** COLUMBIA, Mo. —(UP)—The oldest building on the University of Missouri campus, Switzer hall, has been air conditioned since it was constructed in 1872. Contractors remodeling the building discovered a forgotten 10-foot air shaft connected in the basement with brick tunnels and running up through the three stories providing cool air in the summer.

**SACRAMENTO, Cal. —(UP)—**Gov. Frank F. Merriam during the recent legislative session won a position as the state's third greatest bill-killer. He either pocketed or vetoed 418 bills. During the past 32 years, however, he has been outdone by Gov. Friend W. Richardson, who killed 519 legislative measures, and Gov. Hiram W. Johnson, who vetoed 433.

# SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GUYAS WILLIAMS

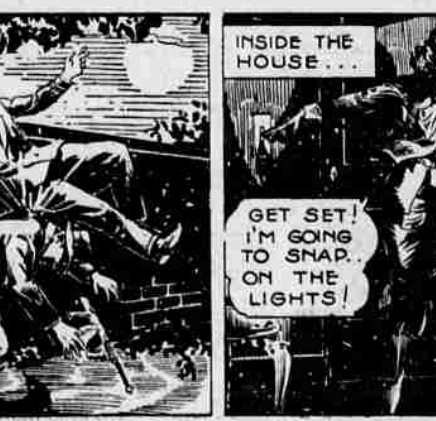


# SMATTER POP

By C. M. PAVIN



# TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Surprise for the Spies!



# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Service, Please



# THE NEBBS—I Can't Mistake It



# WOOL DATA BOARD COMPLETES WORK

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2.—(AP)—Senator Alva B. Adams of Colorado said today a special committee, which for two years has been gathering data on wool marketing operations, has about completed its work and that hearings would probably be held after congress adjourns—by December at least.

F. Haskell, secretary of the special committee, is concluding his nationwide investigation by gathering information as to owners and operators of wool and mohair warehouses in Texas and other states. He also studied the accounts of many large wool operators in Boston and Chicago.

"Naturally, I can't disclose the information we have obtained during the last two years," Haskell said. "We gathered facts and will lay them before the senators when the hearings begin. I can only say they will be very interesting."

**The Gullotine Drops.** BERLIN, Aug. 2.—(AP)—Three men from the Saar basin and one from Silesia, both frontier districts, were guillotined today on conviction of high treason.

**Transients Killed.** SUDBURY, Ont., Aug. 2.—(Canadian Press)—Eight transients were killed and eight seriously injured today in the derailment of a Canadian National freight train 97 miles northwest of here.

In 1935 Samuel P. Langley built a steam-powered airplane that flew for six seconds.