

# FLAME TRAIL

BY MARIE DE SERVAUD

**SYNOPSIS:** Fire destroys Kay Crandon's ranch house and barn. Neighbor Josh Hastings tries to buy her ranch and court Kay, but she hates him and is eager to rebuild. Ted Gaylor, a puncher she impulsively hires, fights Scrap Johnson, a cowboy who molested Kay. Shooting it out, they wound each other. Hastings finds them unconscious and kills Scrap with Ted's gun. Ted crawls to a cabin where a girl (Marion) nurses him a week. Kay sees them together, misunderstands and deliberately gives away the "hideout" after falling off her horse. Ted is arrested and Sheriff Zeke Farley quizzes Marion.

### Chapter 35

#### A Disturbing Return

"HOW'D you come to be here in the first place?" asked Sheriff Zeke Farley.

Marion steadied herself to meet this question she had been dreading.

"My father and I were on a camping trip," she began, agreeably surprised to find herself speaking so easily and naturally. "He had to go back for a week or so on business, and I decided to wait for him here."

"All alone?" the sheriff exclaimed. "You weren't afraid?"

"I'm never afraid in the mountains," Marion smiled faintly at him. "As it happened, it was lucky I stayed. Ted Gaylor wouldn't be alive today, unless someone had taken care of him."

"Reckon that may turn out to be wasted effort," Zeke Farley commented grimly. "But that's neither here nor there. What are you aiming to do now?"

Marion looked at him with wide-eyed surprise that he should ask such a question.

"Why, wait here until my father comes back," she answered.

"What's your father's name?" the sheriff asked abruptly.

"Chris Howell, and we're from Missoula, I'm Marion Howell."

"Chris Howell," Zeke Farley repeated the name reflectively. "Strikes me I've heard something about Chris Howell, and just lately, too."

Marion paused a moment, to be sure her voice was under control. What rumors had he heard? And how much truth was there in them?

"You may have heard that he's been sick," she said finally. "That's one of the reasons we came up here, to give him a complete rest. He'd seen this old deserted shack once, and always had a notion that he'd like to camp out here some time."

"Maybe that was it," the sheriff agreed. "It'll come back to me later." He rubbed his chin in a perplexed fashion as he gazed at Marion. "I reckon there's nothing I can do about you, if you're hell bent to stay here," he said at last. "But you must let me know when you leave. You'll be wanted as a witness at the trial."

"I'm ready to do anything I can," Marion promised. "I'm convinced this charge against Ted Gaylor is all a terrible mistake. That man's no murderer."

"He sure has a way with the women, all right," Zeke Farley commented. "That's what Kay Crandon says."

"Oh, you've seen her, then?" Marion asked with eager curiosity.

"Sure I've seen her. It was her Dad's gun, that she'd given to Gaylor, that the killing was done with. But even in face of that, she's sure he's innocent. Or was, when I talked with her, at least. Seems like she's changed her mind, though."

Zeke Farley stooped down and picked up his hat, preparatory to joining the others outside. Then he paused, as a sudden thought struck him.

"Do you know Kay?"

Marion shook her head. "Ted Gaylor told me about her, I'd like to meet her some time."

"She's an AI girl," Zeke Farley answered. "And smart, too. I don't know just how she found out Gaylor was here, but she sure did Cutter and me a good turn when she tipped us off."

"What's that?" Marion asked in horrified amazement. "Kay Crandon tipped you off?"

"Sure she did. Or rather, she got a friend of hers to do it." Zeke Farley pulled open the door as he spoke, and before Marion could say anything more, he had waved his hat to her, and stepped out to join the others.

#### Thoughts About Kay

WITH a dizzy sense of having passed through a nightmare of unreality, Marion held on to the door frame of the shack and watched Zeke Farley and his men ride off.

Sam Cutter had left with his posse and Ted, while she and Farley had been talking inside. Marion felt a sick disappointment to think that Ted had had to go off without one word from her.

A wave of sympathy swept over her, as she thought of what the sheriff had said about Kay Crandon

having been the one who had tipped him off as to Ted's whereabouts. It would just about kill Ted to know that the girl he was so crazy about had done a thing like that.

"How could she!" Marion exclaimed aloud, an angry resentment against Kay possessing her, and excluding for the moment all thought of anything else. "She can't be as fine as Ted imagines her to be, she went on scornfully, then stopped abruptly as another thought struck her and sent the blood flooding into her face, as it quickened her heart beats.

How had Kay Crandon found out? How could she possibly have found out, except by having seen them there herself?

A memory of the noise she thought she had heard the night before flashed over Marion's mind. Was it possible that Kay Crandon had crept up and looked in the window, while she and Ted had been talking together?

The irony of the fact that at the very minute Ted had been talking to her about Kay, Kay herself might have been gazing at them, but putting a wrong construction on the whole scene, brought a stifled cry of dismay from Marion's lips.

In a flash she could see the whole thing with Kay's eyes. Suppose Ted had been mistaken, and Kay really cared for him, as he did for her? How must she have felt then to find him alone with another girl!

Crimson flooded Marion's cheeks again, as she remembered how, just before she had heard that sound which she had taken for an animal prowling about the house, she had felt Ted's pulse and put her hand on his forehead.

How must that have looked to an observer from outside! Of course, Kay's jealousy would have been aroused, if she had been in love with Ted!

"But jealousy or no jealousy, she shouldn't have given him away to the sheriff," Marion agonized aloud. "I must go and tell her—"

"Who shouldn't have given who away to the sheriff?"

A voice behind Marion made her spin around in amazement. The next moment, she was flying down the steps, and over to the edge of the clearing behind the hut.

"Dad!" she exclaimed, her voice vibrating with joy and relief. She started to throw herself into his arms, but he held her off, and with a rush of her old fear, she recognized the terrible wild look in his eyes.

#### Cold Fury

"WHO were you talking about?" her father demanded. "What sheriff?"

"It has nothing to do with us," Marion said soothingly, her eyes anxiously studying his haggard face. "I'll tell you all about it later. But first, let me get you something to eat. Why don't you wait out here and let me bring it to you?" she ended with a sudden realization of the disorder of the hut, and the inevitable explanations that would be demanded if he saw it, before she had a chance to efface the evidences of Ted's occupancy.

Quick suspicion flared in his eyes, and without a word, he thrust her aside, and walked to the door of the cabin. Her heart in her throat, Marion followed him, and stood trembling, as she awaited the inevitable explosion of his unreasonable wrath.

He took one look in the door, then turned with a cold fury to Marion.

"What is the meaning of this?" The dangerous quiet of his voice was more terrible than if he had shouted at her. "Nice way you've followed my instructions!"

"I couldn't help it, Dad!" Marion reached out an appealing hand and put it on his arm. "Two days after you left, a wounded man suddenly crawled into the clearing here. He was nearly dead, and if I hadn't brought him in and taken care of him, he would have died. You wouldn't have wanted me to do such an inhuman thing as to leave him there to die like a dog, would you?"

"Ha, ha!" her father suddenly gave a wild laugh, that made Marion start with horror. "Of course not! Don't let a stranger die! Kill your father instead!"

A feeling of helplessness and a nameless horror deprived Marion for a moment of all power of speech. This was just the way her father had been when he had first had his breakdown! He had come back from a mysterious absence like this one, wild and uncontrolled, and it had been all she could do to manage him.

It was from some of his muttered ravings then, that she had had an inkling of what he had been doing while he was away, but she had closed her mind to the terrible suspicion which his words had aroused.

Now was it all to begin over again, just when she thought she had succeeded in bringing him out of his mental anarchy to a more reasonable state of mind?

Marion faces the truth about her father, tomorrow.

## STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



WILLIAM GOLDIRON IS A BLACKSMITH at Raton, N.M.



THE 2ND EARL OF ESSEX—ROBERT DEVEREUX, WAS PUT TO DEATH BY AN EXECUTIONER WHOSE LIFE HE HAD ONCE SAVED—GEORGE DERRICK. THE WORD "DERRICK" IS DERIVED FROM THE EXECUTIONER'S NAME BECAUSE OF HIS INVENTION OF A DERRICK-TYPE GALLOW'S.



300,000,000-YEAR-OLD MONUMENT, Ada, Okla. A PETRIFIED CALLIXYLON TREE STUMP IS A MEMORIAL TO THE LATE DR. DAVID WHITE, EMINENT GEOLOGIST.

#### Executed by the Man He Saved.

Strange as it seems, the word "derrick" is derived from the name of villainous English hangman of the 16th century, George Derrick. Official executioner for George Devereux, earl of Essex, during a military expedition in France, Derrick was arrested in Calais for ravishing a woman, was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. Only the intervention of Devereux saved him from the death that he meted out to so many others.

Returning to England, Derrick was appointed crown executioner in recognition of a new type of gallows he invented. It consisted of a mast, booms and a pulley arrangement for hanging several persons at a time.

Because of the fame of Derrick's gallows, his name came to be applied to all hangmen and gallows, eventually arriving at its present usage in meaning various kinds of hoisting apparatus.

At the start of the 17th century, Derrick's one-time life savior, the Earl of Essex, fell under the displeasure of Queen Elizabeth, was convicted of high crimes and sentenced to the chopping block. Detailed to perform the execution, Derrick displayed little squeamishness in beheading the earl on February 25, 1601.

Warm Ice

Failure to let ice of low temperature "warm up" before using it to cover shipment of vegetables may freeze some of them in transit, investigations by the Bureau of Plant

Industry, U. S. Bureau of Agriculture, show. Freezing damage can be prevented by allowing the ice to gain a bit of heat before it is crushed. It will not melt until it reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

Prehistoric Monument

Fitting is the monument to David White on the campus of the East Central State Teachers college at Ada, Okla. An outstanding paleontologist and geologist, he made important contributions in the study of prehistoric plants. The petrified tree monument dedicated to his memory is estimated at well over three hundred million years old.

Mondays: In What Battle Were Three Kings Slain?

and Mrs. Albert Lewis, was swept away and drowned by the raging torrent.

Cardinal Hayes Much Improved

NEW YORK, Aug. 14.—(AP)—Cardinal Patrick Hayes was reported "much improved" today at St. Vincent hospital where he became a patient last night after suffering an attack of indigestion at his summer home near Monticello, N. Y.

There is no cause for alarm, the hospital said, adding the 69-year-old prelate probably would remain a few more days for observation before returning to his home.

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## PORTLAND SLAYER IS GAS CANDIDATE

PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 14.—(UP)—In Roy H. McCarthy, 27, confessed killer of Floyd Peilner, Standard Oil company employe, during a service station holdup Tuesday night, Oregon's lethal gas chamber may have its first victim, Deputy District Attorney Tom Work said today.

## TWO SWEEP TO DEATH BY ARIZONA DELUGE

MIAMI, Ariz., Aug. 14.—(AP)—A 10-foot wall of water roared down a mountainside as result of a terrific cloudburst in this mining area late Thursday, smashed an automobile, drowned a 30-year-old woman passenger and swept a little Indian girl to her death.

## THE NEBBS—The Ungrateful Sucker



## AT THE TENNIS COURT



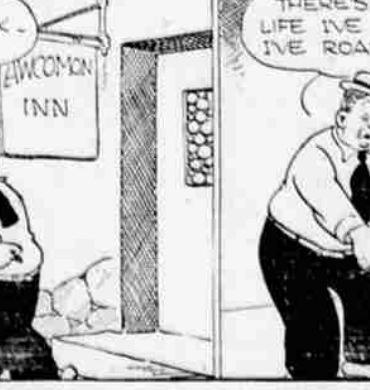
## SMATTER POF



## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—All Alone



## THE NEBBS—The Ungrateful Sucker



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