

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 hired, fights Scrap Johnson, a cowhand 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. Kay sees them together, misunderstands and deliberately gives away the hideout after a fall. Ted is arrested and taken away, then Marion's mentally upset father returns.

Chapter 36 The Dread Truth

"WELL, why don't you do something?" her father roared at her. "I suppose that's what you're waiting for! Get your father killed off, so you can have the ranch and marry Hal Taylor. That crazy prospector will never have enough money of his own to marry you! I see your scheme!"

His voice was growing louder and louder, and he gesticulated with nervous jerks toward the cabin. "Get rid of the old man! Get the sheriff after him! Get—"

"Dad, Dad!" Marion pleaded, finding her voice at last. "Please come in and let me see you. Let me get you some coffee! You don't know what you're saying."

"Oh, I don't, don't I?" A cunning look squinted up his eyes. "I can see through that, all right! Get the old man to lie down! Get him asleep, and then hand him over to the sheriff!"

"Please, Dad, forget what I said about the sheriff!" Marion soothed. "That had nothing to do with us! We don't have to be afraid of the sheriff."

"Oh, don't, don't!" There was no mistaking the insane glare in his eyes as he pushed her back and faced her. "Don't have to be afraid of the sheriff, eh? He scornfully mimicked her voice. "Well, that shows all you know about it! I bet the sheriff would pay you money to get me!" He bent nearer, his eyes screwed into cunning slits. "Never thought of that, did you? Thirty pieces of silver! That's what you try him! He'll give you 30 pieces of silver for me!"

With growing and helpless horror, Marion waited for his next words. Anything she said only seemed to make it worse. There was nothing to do but watch for the moment when exhaustion claimed him. That was the way it had been before, but this attack was worse than any of the others.

Chris Howell straightened up suddenly, and gave a triumphant sweep of his hand.

"Let 'em come!" he declared grandly. "Let all the sheriffs come! It was worth it! They didn't hear it crackle! They didn't see the flames shoot. An army of fiends! They didn't see the sparks going up! They were like an army, those sparks!"

He grabbed Marion's arm as she shrank away with a stifled cry of terror at this confirmation of her worst fears. "An army of fiends!" he went on in a hoarse whisper. "Whole companies jumped from one tree top to another! Whole regiments! It was a crown fire, I tell you!"

He swayed unsteadily, and Marion caught him in her arms. He became suddenly relaxed and unresisting, as she guided him to the door and got him over to the bunk that Ted had so lately occupied.

Marion stretched him out, and covered him. He kept murmuring all the time. "A crown fire, I tell you! A crown fire! Sparks! Millions of 'em!"

Her First Duty

LEAVING him quiet at last Marion groped her way through blinding tears to her own little room, threw herself on the bunk and gave way to great wrenching sobs that shook her whole body.

There was no longer any possibility of closing her mind to her dread suspicions. Her father was the frebreg the whole county was on the lookout for!

"It only Hal were here! Or Ted!" Marion moaned. But Hal, off in the mountains, was an inaccessible as Ted was in jail.

Ted! What would happen to him? The discovery she had made about Kay flashed into her tortured mind. In fairness to Ted she ought to see Kay and explain that she was engaged to Hal and that what Kay had thought was all a mistake.

But how could she leave her father? A deep snore from the other room pulled her back to the dread reality of the present.

Not for one instant must she leave him! She must nurse him back to sanity and never, never must anyone know the terrible truth. Until he was completely recovered, she must never leave him alone to carry out his wild frenzy of destruction.

Marion sat up and pressed her hand to her head, her eyes closed, as she fought for her own control. She mustn't think of the future.

She must just hold on and fight for her father's sanity, anyway until Hal was back and could help. Ted would have to take his chances, both with the law and with Kay. She had done all she could for him in getting him well. Her duty now was all to her father.

Unsteadily she rose to her feet and looked through the doorway at the relaxed figure on the bed. Was it possible that little more than an hour ago she had looked at Ted there in the very spot where her father now lay?

She crossed over and put her hand on her father's head. It was damp with perspiration. For a long moment Marion stood looking down at him. If this attack followed the lines of his former ones, he would be weak and helpless as a child for quite a while.

With a quivering sigh, she tucked the blanket more closely around him, and turned away to heat some water on the oil stove, preparatory to his waking.

Aunt Kate's News

A WEEK had passed since that early September morning of dramatic happenings.

Kay Crandon came out on the porch of the Flying Six ranch house, and sat in the hammock near her Aunt Kate, who rocked comfortably in a big chair.

"I'm plenty well enough to go. Aunt Kate," she declared. "And what's more, I'm going!"

She sprang abruptly to her feet, and ran over toward the door. Suddenly she stopped and grabbed on to a chair, as a fit of giddiness swept over her.

"There, what did I tell you?" Aunt Kate gazed triumphantly at the swaying figure of her niece.

"If you know when you're well off, you'll stay right where you are. I'm stronger than you think I am. Aunt Kate," she persisted. "If I go slow, I'm all right. And I can't stand this inaction another minute. I've got to know what's going on at the ranch, and... and everything." She bit her lips to control her voice.

"I don't know what you mean by 'everything' but I can guess," Aunt Kate looked severely over her glasses at Kay. "The first thing for you to do, is to put that Gaylor man out of your mind."

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Mahomet XI enlisted the aid of Sebastian, king of Portugal, in an attempt to regain his throne. On August 4, 1578, the rival forces met in the battle of Al Kasr el Kabir. Strange as it seems, all three of the kings were killed.

Land of the Lakes

Highest lake in the world was discovered several years ago by an aerial expedition which flew across Mt. Everest. They discovered a lake five miles up the side of Everest, one mile from the summit. The deepest lake in the world is Baikal, Siberia. It has a depth of 4900 feet.

The Dead Sea and the Caspian Sea are not seas but lakes—respectively the lowest and the largest in the world. They are lakes because, unlike seas, they have no direct natural inlets or outlets to the ocean.

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Rangeon Youth a Samson

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Grasshoppers Up

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Montana Hunting Good

HELENA, Mont. (UP) — A total of 587 predatory animals, including 365 coyotes, one bobcat and one stock-killing bear, were killed in Montana during one month, R. E. Bateman, agent of the biological survey, reports.

SCIENCE ASSISTS WORK OF NATURE

ST. PAUL, Minn., Aug. 16. — (AP) — Science is showing nature how to ripen fruits in half the usual time by putting back into fruit the gas it gives off in natural ripening.

Dr. R. B. Harvey, plant physiologist at University of Minnesota farm here, who directed development of the ethylene gas process, said today that even the new ripening speed may be cut in half.

Apples and pears sealed in an ethylene-filled room ripen in half the time of those on trees and have a sweeter flavor, Dr. Harvey said in describing the process. Celery is

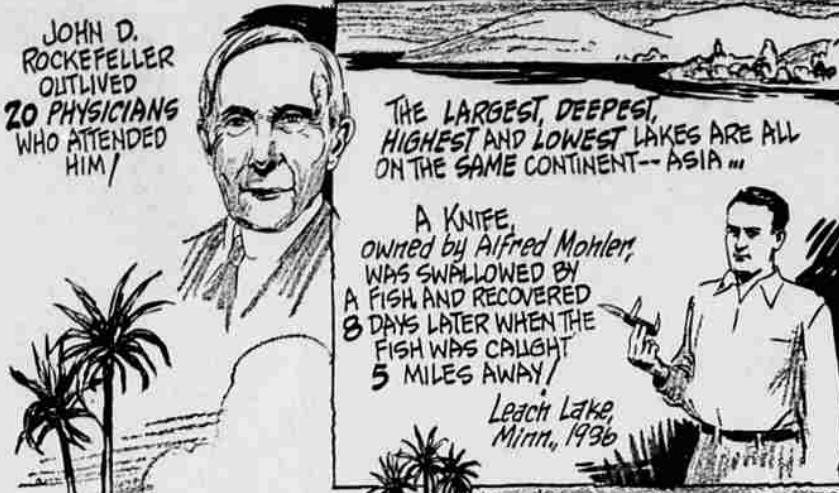
TERM ENDS, FELON LOVES JAIL LIFE

BOSTON, Aug. 16. — (AP) — The man who wouldn't quit state prison when eligible for parole last November left today with the parting remark: "Honest, warden, I'm sorry to be going."

Joseph Traboski, 46, who had

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Moving In

HERE'S THE PLACE, SHERIFF—AN' HERE'S THE OUSTER!

COURT'S ORDERS ALL RIGHT, MR. CRUNCHUM, BUT DON'T YOU WANT T' GIVE 'EM A LITTLE TIME?

TIME? SAY, AIN'T MONEY TIME? CLOSE IN ON 'EM, Y'DURN IDJIT!

MORNIN', SON—AFRAID I'M DOIN' A BIT O' DIRTY WORK TODAY—BUT THE LAW, YOU KNOW—

TAKE IT AWAY, SHERIFF, IT'S ALL YOURS!

THE NEBBS—Send For the Doctor

HEY, YELLOW HAMMER, GET YOURSELF IN SHAPE! I DON'T WANT IT SAID I BEAT A CRIPPLE!

TAKE A PEEK, YOU CAN'T SAY I'M NOT BOOSTIN' THE EVENT—I'LL SPOT YOU SHIN GUARDS A CHEST PROTECTOR AND A MASK AND THEN KNOCK YOU INTO DUST!

IM FEELING PUNK! I DON'T FEEL GOOD—CAN'T EAT, CAN'T SLEEP. IT MUST BE MALARIA OR SOMETHIN'!

IT'S JUST BUCK FEVER, KID, COMES FROM A YELLOW DISPOSITION!

DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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THE NEBBS—Send For the Doctor

By SOL HESS



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