

# the dark ships

BY HULBERT FOOTNER

**SYNOPSIS:** Neill, a resolute young federal agent, comes to Baltimore to spend a week's vacation with his girl. But they quarrel. Janet, who is tall, attractive and independent, refuses to break her dinner-party date with Prescott Fanning. Neill says Fanning is "too old" for Janet; she spends too much money; he's too sick. Janet admits she's been turned against him, knows little about him. Both seced, they part and Neill sets out to prove Fanning a crook. He finds the hotel manager Janet cited as Fanning's close friend. He says Fanning is "a mere acquaintance."

### Chapter Two

#### The Gray Little Man

"How long has Fanning been around?" Neill asked.

"I couldn't tell you exactly. Some weeks," said Mr. Bromley. "What brought him here?"

"He likes the town. Looking for a little place in the Green Spring valley. I've got a place out there, and that's how I got acquainted with him. But it didn't suit him."

"Who introduced him in Baltimore? Who vouches for him?"

"Deed, I don't remember. Fanning is the sort of man you just see around. . . . Do you know anything queer about him?"

"No indeed," said Neill. "I was just trying to find out something about his staying."

"Well, don't ask me."

"Is he a man you would trust?"

"I don't trust any man," said Mr. Bromley grinning.

Neill saw that there was nothing to be had here. "Where does Fanning hang out?" he asked.

gray hair, gray skin, gray lips. He wore a wrinkled gray suit too, as if for protective coloring. It was impossible to guess his age. He would have been completely insignificant had it not been for his eyes. Neill had ever seen. He looked like a lost soul; yet his colorless lips were twisted in a grin.

"Pardon me, sir," he said with a fawning air. "But I couldn't help overhearing part of your conversation just now."

"So what?" said Neill. He felt that he ought to be sorry for the man but he only felt repulsion.

"I heard you asking the boy about Prescott Fanning."

Neill pricked up his ears. "Do you know him?"

"The gray man moistened his lips like a cat," he said slowly. "I may say that I know him."

"Sit down," said Neill. "Have a smoke?"

"That looks too big and strong for me," said the gray man with a sidelong look at the cigar. "If you will excuse me, I prefer my pipe."

"Smoke up," said Neill.

While the little man was busy filling his pipe, Neill studied him. A new type. Not criminal, yet somehow repulsive. Neill wondered if every man who has been through hell becomes repulsive to his luckier fellows.

"You may call me Eyster," he said. "David Eyster."

"I'm Walter Patton," said Neill. He was glad that Eyster did not offer to shake hands. His gray paws looked like a dead man's.

"Do you know Fanning?" asked Eyster.

"No."

"Are you anxious to meet him?"



"He's a devil to women!" Eyster exclaimed.

"Lord Baltimore hotel."

This hotel was further down-town and Neill took a taxi. He sat down in the lobby and looked around. It came to him that the bellboys of a hotel generally have a low-down on the guests, and he beckoned to a lad in a bob-tailed jacket who was passing.

"Fetch me a couple of Eden Perfectos, will you?"

The cigar stand was not more than 15 feet away, but Neill knew that bellboys never resent a guest who refuses to wait on himself.

The cigars were brought and the boy generously tipped. He lit a match, and Neill detained him in talk.

"Do you know a guest here called Prescott Fanning?"

"Mr. Fanning? Sure do, boss. He's in 1410, one of the best suites in the house. Mr. Fanning's a real gentleman, he is."

"What's his business?"

"Don't seem to have any. Just enjoys himself."

"Does he get much mail?"

"Not at the hotel."

"Come on," said Neill peremptorily. "Loosen up."

"What's your graft?" asked the boy with a sharp look.

"Oh, put me down as a nosy individual with a big heart."

"Well, Mr. Fanning's been a good friend to me and I ain't going to . . ."

"I could be a better friend if you gave me any real information about him."

The boy grinned at him as much as to say: "Prove it!"

"Always happy to oblige," he said. "But I can't tell you what I don't know. Mr. Fanning carries a wad of new money in his wallet an inch thick. He plays the races, and his bar bill's pretty near a hundred a week. He appears to know everybody in town. He talks a lot but he never tells nothing. Just loashes."

"A bellboy's hero?" said Neill.

"You said it, mister! I wish they was more like him. . . . Sorry, I got to beat it. I'm not allowed to stand and talk."

Neill let him go.

#### Tragedy in His Eyes

An odd-looking man sidled up to Neill from behind. A skinny little fellow, gray as a badger;

"No. But I want to find out about him. What are your relations with him?"

"I have no relations with him," Eyster grinned. "He doesn't know me, but I know him."

"Well, tell me," said Neill, "what sort of fellow is he?"

"What is your purpose in asking?" said Eyster cautiously.

"I'll tell you," said Neill. "A young fellow that I know has been going around with him, and I suspect Fanning's a bad influence."

Eyster laughed noiselessly. "A bad influence," he said. "That's putting it mildly. . . . I assume that it is really a young woman you are talking about. Fanning has no use for young men."

Neill let it go at that.

A spasm of hatred convulsed Eyster's gray face. "He's a devil to women," he exclaimed with an odd breathlessness. "A devil! A devil!"

**Chapter And Verse**

Neill turned hard inside, thinking of the danger to Janet. At the same time he exulted a little, because he had been proved right. No harm had come to Janet yet, and now he could show her!

"Give me chapter and verse," he said eagerly. "Give me some concrete evidence to show, and it will save a woman."

But Eyster only grinned and shook his head. "These are things I can't tell a stranger."

"Why did you approach me?" Eyster was silent.

Neill felt that he must use caution in dealing with this half-cracked soul. "Where is your home, Mr. Eyster?" he asked in order to get on safer ground.

"I have no home."

"No home?"

"I just go from hotel to hotel."

"Isn't that rather expensive?"

"I have enough money for my needs."

"What's your business?"

"I have no business."

"What brought you to Baltimore?"

"Fanning."

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Neill strikes up an acquaintance with Fanning, 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.



**HONEY BEES WORK THEMSELVES TO DEATH!**  
THE LESS THEY WORK, THE LONGER THEY LIVE.

**NEWELL BANKS WAS U.S. PROFESSIONAL CHECKER CHAMPION FOR 24 YEARS**  
-1910-1934-

**COSTLIEST PHONE CALL**  
FLOYD B. ODLUM, INVESTMENT EXECUTIVE, RAN UP A BILL OF \$1,425 ON A SINGLE CALL... A 96-MINUTE CONVERSATION BETWEEN LONDON AND NEW YORK... -1928-

**THE BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA—**  
Russo-Japanese War,  
WAS DELAYED ONE DAY BY THE RUSSIANS SO THE GREAT VICTORY THEY EXPECTED WOULD OCCUR ON THE CZAR'S CORONATION ANNIVERSARY.  
THE RUSSIAN FLEET WAS ALMOST ENTIRELY DESTROYED IN ONE OF THE MOST DECISIVE DEFEATS IN NAVAL HISTORY!

4-6-37 McManis Syndicate, Inc.

**In Honor of the Czar**  
The Russian and Japanese dogs of war again strain at their leashes. Whether or not the Soviet Republic will dare to pick up the threads of war with Japan that snapped off in ignominious defeat for Russia in 1905 under the regime of the czar is a question that is expected to receive an early answer.

**Ignominious defeat for Russia** it was, culminating in the almost complete annihilation of the Second and Third Russian Pacific squadrons in the Battle of Tsushima. Under woefully poor, if not craven leadership, the supposedly far superior Russian fleet, composed of 38 ships, was beaten in one of the most decisive naval battles of history. Twenty of its ships were sunk, five captured and the rest managed to escape. The Japanese lost only three torpedo boats. Strange as it seems, so confident of victory were the Russians that they purposely delayed their departure for the battle one day so that the great victory they expected could start on the anniversary of the czar's coronation, May 26, 1905.

**Worked To Death**  
The life span of a honeybee depends almost entirely on the amount of work it does. Newly hatched bees are covered with long, golden hair. Within about four weeks of work most of the hair is worn off and the bees' wings show signs of tatter and tear, eventually getting so bad they become incapable of sustaining flight. Bees hatched in the late fall when there is little "field work" to be done usually live through the entire winter.

**Checker Champ**  
From 1910 through 1934, Newell Banks, of Detroit, reigned supreme in American professional checkers. He lost the title to Ass Lone, of Toledo, when a new style of play was introduced, known as the "three move" restriction.

During an exhibition in Chicago, 1933, Banks performed the amazing feat of playing 140 games, taking 145 minutes, winning 133 and drawing seven. His average move took one second!

Tomorrow: Where Are Coffin Splinters Used As Scorecrows?

with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, in the state prison after pleading guilty to a charge of larceny in a dwelling.

**Parolee Returned**  
ROSEBURG, Ore., Sept. 6.—(AP)—Paul Brockman, alias Ralph Gearhart, the supposed Oregon state penitentiary, was sentenced in circuit court here today to three years

**Jobless Lawyer Travels**  
SALEM, Sept. 6.—(AP)—Ralph Campbell, attorney for the Oregon unemployment compensation insurance commission, expects to leave here soon for Wisconsin, where he will confer with the unemployment compensation insurance officials of that state.

Serve creamed chicken between biscuit halves as the main course for the bride club luncheon. Add coffee, a salad, a hot bread and some simple dessert such as gingerbread or doughnuts.

## SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



FRED PERLEY IS NOT IN VERY GOOD STANDING JUST NOW BECAUSE HE RECENTLY GOT HIS NEIGHBORS UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO INVESTIGATE A LIGHT IN THE CORNER HOUSE, WHOSE OWNERS ARE AWAY, AND THE LIGHT TURNED OUT TO BE MERELY A REFLECTION FROM THE STREET LAMP

## 8'MATTER POP

By O. M. PAYNE



By HAL FORRESTER

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Speaks Bluntly!

**TOMMY LEARNED, THROUGH THE PRESIDENT OF THE INSURANCE COMPANY, THAT THE LIFE OF MRS. HORACE BENTLY HAD BEEN INSURED WITH THAT CONCERN IN FAVOR OF HER HUSBAND. TOMMY'S SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONING SURPRISES THE EXECUTIVE**

2908



## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—One Starter!

**WHERE'S THE FIRE?**

**MEBEE IT'S MY BUILDIN'—THE DURNED FOOL WOULDN'T KNOW HIGGINS WAS OUT OF IT!**

**WHERE'S THE FIRE?**

**OVER THERE, STUPE! CAN'T YOU SEE THE BLAZE!**

**TURNED IN THE ALARM, SON—HOW'D IT START?**

**GRAB THAT BIRD—HE'S ONE OF THE STARTERS!**



## THE NEBBS—Go Slow

**PAPPY, I'M GETTIN' KINDA FOND OF BRUCE ARDLEY. DO YOU THINK I OUGHTA MARRY HIM?**

**I DON'T KNOW, DAUGHTER. WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HIM.**

**YOUR MOTHER AND ME KNOWNED ALL ABOUT EACH OTHER AND OUR FAMILIES KNOWNED ALL ABOUT EACH OTHER AND NEITHER OF US HAD ANY MONEY SO WE MUSTA GOT MARRIED FER LOVE.**

**I DIDN'T HAVE YOUR MOMMY LONG AFTER YOU CAME TO US AND I SORTA BEEN YOUR PAPPY AND YOUR MOMMY AND ANY GRIEF YOU HAVE IS MINE, SO DON'T GO SO FAST. FOR THIS FANCY FELLER, MEBEE WE SEED THE BEST OF HIM ALREADY.**



## DEBT MORATORIUM GERMAN EXPERTS ON CROPS CALLED BRAINS OF CHINA

**BISMARCK, N. D., Sept. 6.—(UP)—**Gov. William Langer by proclamation today banned seizure of crops by creditors where this year's production would fall to sustain the grower and his family until another harvest.

In prohibiting such seizures, Langer termed adverse farm conditions in the state during the past few years "a public calamity and not the fault of debtors."

To allow creditors to seize the farmer's only means of maintenance Langer said, "would leave the grower destitute, disturbing public peace, health and welfare."

**NANKING, Sept. 6.—(AP)—**Foreign military observers today attributed to a German military mission a major share of the credit for China's thus far firm resistance to Japan in the present conflict.

The mission consists of five generals, headed by Baron Alexander von Falkenhausen, who helped Germany keep the allies at bay through much of the World War, and a hundred other German army officers ranging in rank from captain to colonel.

The German experts have spent several years in China as military instructors, and work hand in hand

## THE NEBBS—Go Slow

**By SOL HEN**