

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 a dinner date with Prescott Fanning. Angriily Neill says Fanning is too old for Janet, too slick and spends too much money. Both peevish, they part and Neill sets out to check up on Fanning. He interviews an acquaintance of Fanning's, and a bellboy. Then a strange little gray man, David Eyster, sidles up to talk excitedly about Fanning, calling him "a devil to women."

Chapter Three

Cocktails With Fanning
"WHAT'S Fanning's business here?" Neill pressed.
"I haven't been able to find out," said Eyster. "After all, I'm only one man and I can't let him get on to me. But he's up to no good, you can be sure of that."

"What's his record?"
Eyster shook his head. "I won't tell you... yet."
"Why can't we work together on this?" asked Neill. "We both distrust the man and want to prevent him doing any further harm..."

"I don't care how much harm he does," Eyster interrupted.
Neill looked at him in exasperation. He seemed part madman, part child and scarcely human.
Eyster moistened his lips. "The rottenner he acts, the more fun it is to watch him," he said softly. "And the more satisfactory his finish will be."

"What do you mean, his finish?"
Eyster declined to explain. "I like you, young man," he said with a grin. "You won't let anything on, but I can see that you hate him... I'll tell you something, he suddenly went on with a spurt of venom. "My hatred of Fanning is all I live for. And my business, that you asked me about just now, is to follow him around and watch him and feed it."
"Good God," muttered Neill.

"Why?"
Eyster turned cautious again. "I'm not going to tell you anything more until I've tested you out," he said. "I don't want my plans interfered with."

"What's going to be the end of this?" asked Neill.
"The end may be slow in coming," said Eyster, grinning, "but it's certain!"

Neill looked at him, wondering how to deal with such a crack-pot.
"Do you know about his yacht?" asked Eyster.

Here was a bit of real information, "No. What yacht?"

"He has just bought a yacht called the *Nadji*. I can't figure what he wants a yacht for."

"Won't it be difficult for you to follow him if he goes off on a yacht?" suggested Neill, fishing.

"I have made my arrangements," said Eyster, grinning.

"Where's the yacht lying?"
"At the City pier, foot of Broadway," Eyster got up abruptly. "Have you ever seen Fanning?" he asked.

"No."
"Well, here he comes. I'll leave you."

Over The Bar

FOLLOWING the direction of Eyster's glance, Neill saw a tall, dark, handsome man coming in from the street. At first glance he scarcely looked the 39 years he confessed to, but as he came closer Neill judged him about five years more than that. He was in the pink of condition with a skin as fresh as a baby's. His black eyes were set close together, giving him a foxy look; they were the kind of eyes that turn continually and overlook nothing. A hard face, but rendered superficially attractive by a good-natured smile. A crook and a slick one, thought Neill.

Fanning, nodding pleasantly to his acquaintances in the lobby, strolled on into the bar, after giving him a moment or two, Neill followed.

He found Fanning leaning negligently on the mahogany, watching the bartender stir him up an old-fashioned cocktail. Neill lined up nearby and looked him over in the mirror without appearing to.

Fanning was wearing a perfectly-cut gray flannel suit and an expensive Panama hat. His shirt and tie were just a little different from anybody else's. Evidently a man who gave a good deal of thought to his dress. Neill, who bought good clothes without thinking about them, resented it. Just the sort of thing to catch a woman's eye.

Since it was the hour before dinner when nobody is in a rush and each of them was alone at the bar, it was natural to fall into talk. When Neill also ordered an old-fashioned, Fanning said with his ready smile:

"Great minds think alike!"
"Great ones and small ones too," said Neill.

Fanning laughed. "Are you registered here?"
"No. At the Stafford."
"My name is Prescott Fanning."
"I'm Walter Patton."
"Where from?"
"New York."

thinking of retiring and settling in Baltimore."
"You're a young man to be talking about retiring."

"Oh, well, I'm not ambitious," said Fanning. "Forty or fifty thousand a year is ample for my needs. I'm looking for a place in the Green Spring valley. Nothing opulent or showy, you understand. A small place, but perfect in every appointment. That's my ideal. Two or three blooded horses in the stable, a flat field where I can land and take off in my own plane."

Blow-hard! thought Neill. "Are you married?" Pleasantly.

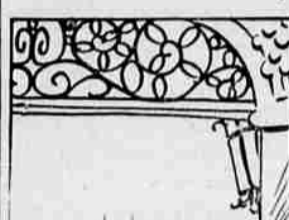
"No, indeed," said Fanning laughing. "I'm too fond of the sex to tie myself down to one. Women are like wines—you want a different type with every course. I wouldn't give up champagne just because I like Johannisberger."

Neill fingered his glass longingly. He had a terrible yen to fling the contents in the man's face.

Shrewd Questions

"TELL me, how did you make enough to retire so early?" he asked laughing. "That's something every man is interested in."

"In the Street," said Fanning.



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"No."
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As Fanning entered,

Neill thought: A crook, and a slick one.

carelessly. "Things are coming back."

"As an operator or a broker?"
"Both... You hear a lot about the cleverness of Wall Street men, but believe me it's all a myth. They're so dumb that a fellow of just ordinary intelligence like me can go in and clean up in short order," he laughed. "What's your line?"

"Contact man for a firm of contractors. What's your firm?"
"I'm out of the Street now... Have you heard this one?"

He told a funny story about Wall Street. While his mouth was full of humorous friendly talk, the foxy black eyes never relaxed their vigilance. Neill had the sense that he was being keenly sized up in his turn.

He matched Fanning's story with another. Fanning laughed and clapped him on the back. "I like you, Patton! You and I speak the same lingo." He beckoned to the bartender. "Set 'em up, Jim. This round is on me."

Neill reciprocated. By the time they had had three, a perfect bar-room friendship had developed. But while the drink appeared to loosen Fanning's tongue, he made no disclosures about himself. When Neill asked a question, he told a funny story. From time to time he slipped in a shrewd question of his own. Neill answered with seeming frankness, but Fanning's sharp eyes hardened.

He is suspicious of me, Neill thought, and he doesn't mean to let me get into his confidence. I wonder what he's found out about me. Well, two can play at that game.

Neill answers an incriminating phone call in Fanning's room, 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.



Nellie Taylor Ross,
FIRST WOMAN TO HAVE A MEDAL STRUCK IN HER HONOR BY THE U.S. MINT, IS ALSO THE FIRST WOMAN TO HAVE BECOME GOVERNOR OF A STATE (WYOMING), FIRST WOMAN DIRECTOR OF THE MINT AND FIRST WOMAN TO HAVE HER NAME INSCRIBED ON THE CORNERSTONE OF A FEDERAL BUILDING

NO TOWN... KEENE, TEXAS, HAS NO JAIL NO POLICE NO TOBACCO NO DIVORCES NO COURT NO JUDGE NO COFFEE NO JEWELRY NO CRIME

FRANK HOWE, of LOS ANGELES, SAW ALL 8 TEAMS OF THE PACIFIC COAST BASEBALL LEAGUE PLAY REGULAR FULL LENGTH GAMES WITHIN 74 HOURS, 8 MINUTES...

BOHEMIAN FARMERS PLANT COFFIN SPLINTERS IN THEIR GRAIN FIELDS TO KEEP BIRDS AWAY...

Nellie Taylor Ross
Although on November 4, 1824, Texas as well as Wyoming elected a woman governor, the inauguration of Wyoming's governor took place several weeks before the Texas governor received her oath of office. Mrs. Nellie Taylor Ross, the Wyoming governor-elect, became the first woman in American history to become a governor of a state. Since then she has run up quite a string of "firsts."

Baseball Fan Howe
Rated as the Pacific coast's "Number One Baseball Fan" is Frank Howe, newspaper man of Los Angeles. By way of insuring this rating against growing competition, Howe recently went on a baseball attendance pilgrimage that eclipsed all similar records. Within the space of 74 hours, eight minutes, July 21 at 2:45 p. m., through July 24 at 4:53 p. m., he saw all eight teams of the Pacific

NEGLECTED HUSBAND UNABLE FEED BABY
PORTLAND, Ore., Sept. 7.—(AP)—An apologetic voice came over the police telephone at midnight: "It's this way. My wife—she went out with another man. We have a baby, and—er—it's about time you could tell me what to do." The police couldn't.

Editor Dies
PORT WORTH, TEXAS, Sept. 7.—(AP)—A two months illness today proved fatal to Prof. Errett Weir McDermid, 60, head of the department of philosophy of Texas Christian university and president of the southwest athletic conference. He died here yesterday.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Makes a Suggestion!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Nothing Else?

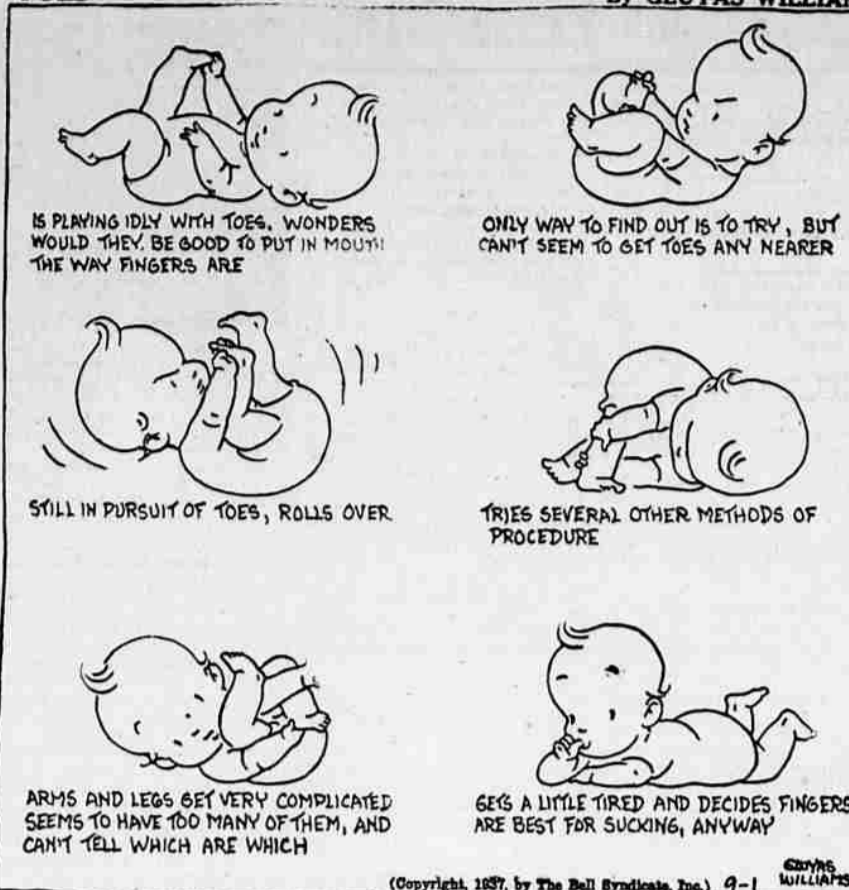


THE NEBBES—Squashed



TOES

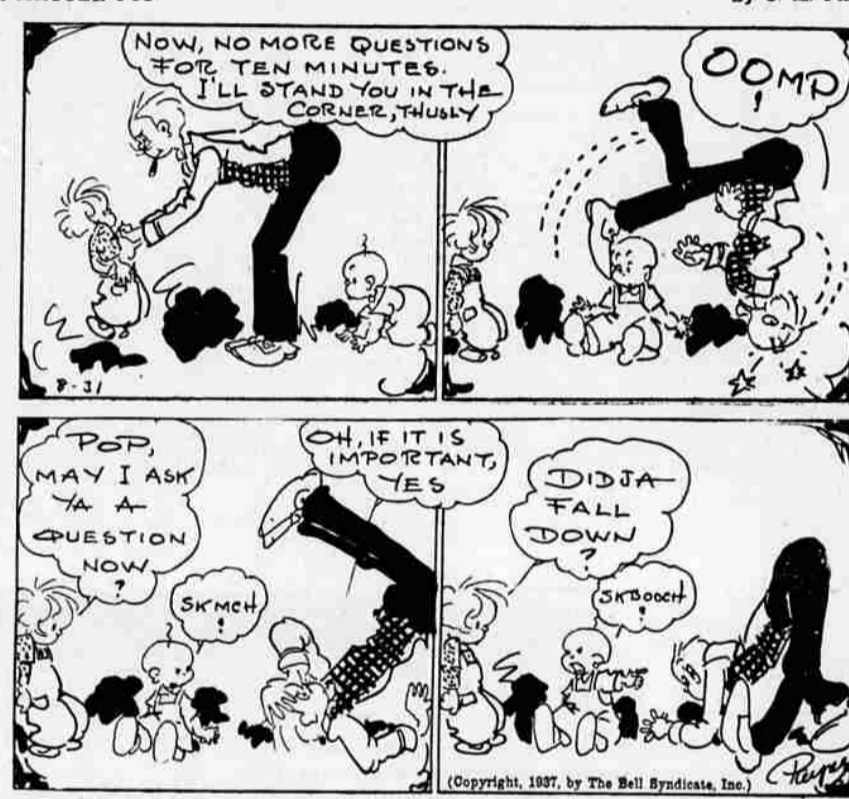
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POP

By O. M. PA



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Camel Popularity Theme Advertising Campaign Launched

In a new series of advertisements appearing this week R. J. Reynolds Tobacco company points out its long established policy of using costlier tobacco has made Camels the most popular cigarette in the world. "Can people appreciate the choicer tobaccos in Camels?" the first of the new advertisements asks. And, answering this question, the Camel manufacturers say people "smoke more Camels than any other cigarette in the world."

better-tasting tobacco cost more to buy. And Camel willingly pays millions more year after year to get them. That's why Camels are different—why they appeal more to men and women in all walks of life—why they're the largest selling cigarette in America—or in the world.

Camel superiority is supported by statements from athletes, explorers, aviators and others who have noted the difference in Camels. "To me, Camels mean 'cheer' with a capital 'C'." George Reis, famous motorboat sportsman is quoted. "I like the quick 'lift' I get with a Camel after I've been through a tough race."

Others who report in favor of Camels in this advertisement include William Hilden, famous tennis player; Joe Crane, parachute jumper; Chas. Belden, rancher; Miss Helen Shamburg, aviation executive; and Miss Dorothy Kigallen, famous round-the-world reporter.

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By SOL H