

the dark ships

BY HULBERT FOOTNER

SYNOPSIS: Wealthy, flashy Prescott Fanning abducts Janet from Baltimore on his yacht. She gets word to Neill, a young federal agent who loves her. Rushing to Abolom's Harbor, he boards the yacht and finds, in a locked cabin, Fanning shot dead and Janet in a faint, a gun beside her. Neill hides her nearby in the drowsy lines. Back at the village, he watches developments and spots queer little David Eyster, who hated Fanning. Neill offers to help Mark Bonnier, keen local investigator. They confer with Lawyer Kettering of Baltimore, who came to fish.

Chapter 19 Back To Janet

WITH the object of drawing a red herring across the trail, Neill said:

"My idea is that the girl's friend was an Absalom's man. The story had already gone around the village that there was a girl locked up aboard the yacht."

"Yes, I have been told that," said Bonnier.

"The story was not generally believed, but I suppose there was one man who went out to see for himself."

"No Absalom's man is missing," Bonnier pointed out.

"He furnished her with the skiff. She then put him ashore and rowed away in it alone," Bonnier said.

"Impossible!" said Bonnier. "The two sailors, the steward, the engineer all tell me that she was a gentle and elegant girl, not at all the type who could have saved herself by rowing away in a heavy skiff. You can depend upon it, her man went with her. Everything points to the fact that it was somebody she knew and trusted. He must have followed the yacht down here."

Neill set his jaw. If Bonnier had deduced so much already, he and Janet were likely to receive short shrift next day.

"He was a cool customer," Bonnier went on. "According to the crew, he took a rug out of the after cabin to keep the girl warm, a flashlight out of the saloon and all the cooked food there was in the refrigerator."

"Why couldn't he have shot Fanning?" looked Neill.

Bonnier looked at him with grim humor. "You surprised at that," he said, "from a man of your experience. Everything shows that Fanning was shot unawares. If anybody had burst in the door and attacked him, the cabin would have presented a very different picture."

Neill was silenced.

"We will know him when we catch him," said Bonnier grimly.

"Wilson got an elegant set of fingerprints on the refrigerator door. He photographed them this afternoon. He's developing it now."

Neill resisted the impulse to thrust his hands in his pockets. His fingertips tingled unpleasantly.

Packing The Purchases

WHEN Bonnier had returned to the telephone in Virgil Longcope's office, and Kettering to his camp, Neill locked himself in his room upstairs and started to distribute the various articles he had bought for Janet about his person. He had not purchased everything in one place but had picked it up at odd times during the day in the different stores about the village.

Women's clothes were out of the question, so he had got her overalls, a shirt, a pair of sneakers. These he had to buy in sizes suitable for himself, and he grinned, thinking how Janet would look in them. In addition he had biscuits, cakes of chocolate, a couple of cans of meat, a bottle of soda water, a towel and soap, candles and batteries for the precious flashlight.

When all this was stowed, he appeared to have increased suddenly in weight. However, he had satisfied himself that the back part of the hotel was deserted. He went down the back stairs and out by the kitchen door.

Once he was in the road, he felt safe from observation for the street lights were feeble and he was between the crowd was still hanging about Longcope's store and after he had turned the corner by the river, he met nobody. Aware that all his movements up to now had been watched, he walked with his head over his shoulder.

When he came to the last houses he watched his chance, and skinned over the fence into the cornfield between road and river. The motorcycle police had been ordered to patrol the state road all night. There was but this one road leading to and from the village on the point, thus it was an easy matter for the police to stop all who might try to leave by car. Neill lay out in the cornfield until he was very sure no one followed him over the fence.

He stumbled on over the ploughed field, climbed a couple of fences and found himself in the side road which served the landing used by the big ships. Coming out on the shore, he saw them lying huge, dark and threatening out in the stream. The captain's lights were out tonight. Since his car was not there, Neill judged that he had

been drawn to the village by the general excitement.

Neill walked up the beach to the little pier below the old farm house. The skiff was tied to it and the oars were in her. He cast off and, making a detour, came back to the Abraham Lincoln from the middle of the river. Feeling his way along the hull, his hand met the twine dangling from above and he twitched it. A moment later the end of the rope ladder fell on his head, and he sprang to his feet with joy. Janet was all right! In a minute he would be with her!

Janet Dons Overalls

THE thin rope lay flat against the vessel's side, and he saw that it was not going to be too easy to climb up. He took off his boots so that his toes could grip the rope, and went up slowly. She was waiting for him at the window. When he jumped in, she flung her arms around his neck in a passion of relief and gladness, and for a little time neither of them could speak.

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How good it was to hold her close!

Both felt as if oceans had parted them.

"Oh, Neill! The day was so long!"

"How good it was to hold her close against him! 'Honey! Honey! Honey! I was hard to be away from you!'"

Having lighted a candle, Neill held her away from him so that he could look at her. A faint light in these strange surroundings was like seeing her for the first time. In the empty ship, her fragile beauty had an unreal quality like a dream. He drew her to him with a sudden fear of losing her.

"If we could only stay aboard here by our two selves and let the rest of the world go to hell!"

When they came back to earth, Janet began to pat him. "What did you bring me? You're covered all over with funny-shaped bumps."

He began to disgorge. She laughed at the curious array of stuff he had brought.

"I wanted those clothes badly. Everything aboard the ship is so dusty my dress is already a sight!"

She carried the clothes into the adjoining room and presently returned looking like a country boy in her rolled-up, hand-me-down overalls. She struck an attitude, sticking her thumbs through the galluses and pursing up her lips to whistle. She looked more real now. He was obliged to seize her in his arms again.

"By God, you look good to me that way!"

"You're smothering me!"

He unwillingly released her.

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Janet runs to give herself up, tomorrow, after a quarrel with Neill.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Champion Distance Runner

A South African farmer, Arthur P. H. Newton decided to go in for intensive training at the age of 40 when he discovered he had a weak heart. Strange as it seems, far beyond simply restoring him to health, his training resulted in his becoming one of the greatest athletes the world has ever known—amateur record holder of every long-distance running event from 30 to 100 miles!

Newton started his training with long walks. Then, as he found himself rounding into shape, he began running. In 1922 he started on a 14-year period in which he eclipsed no less than 14 world's records and averaged 14 miles of running per day for a total of 73,102 miles! On top of this he walked another 29,633 miles.

Following are some of the outdoor records made in Canada, England and South Africa by Newton as compiled by Frank G. Menke, noted sports statistician:

- 20 miles—1408 yards—in 3 hours, 8 minutes, 37 seconds (1924).
- 35 miles—in 3 hours, 42 minutes, 36 seconds (1924).
- 50 miles—in 5 hours, 38 minutes, 42 seconds (1924).
- 60 miles—in 7 hours, 33 minutes, 53 seconds (1927).

In 1928 Newton ran 100 miles in 14 hours, 22 minutes, 10 seconds, a record which he eclipsed in 1934 when 52 years of age by running the distance in 14 hours, 6 minutes.

At last reports the South African "miracle man" was still competing in a minor way as a professional.

Napoleon's Children

Shortly after Napoleon's great victory in the battle of Austerlitz, the French emperor legally adopted the children of every French soldier killed in the engagement. Under provisions of his adoption, all the children were allowed to add the name of Napoleon to their own and were supported and educated at the expense of the government. A conservative estimate of the children adopted in this manner places the figure at more than 5,000.

Monday: The Mystery People of Europe!

Find Man's Body In Klamath Canal

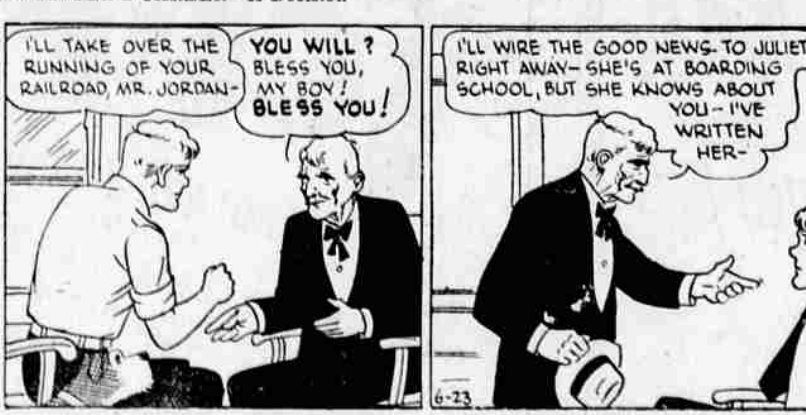
KLAMATH FALLS, Sept. 24.—(AP)—Ditchriders today pulled the body of John Odo, about 60, from a Klamath irrigation canal three miles south of this city. Coroner George H. Adler said the man had been dead about a week and that indications were he had met his death accidentally.

Odo had been rooming at a downtown hotel and disappeared from the hotel Wednesday, Sept. 15. Officers theorized on the possibility he had fallen into the canal somewhere within the city limits and that his body had floated to the point where it was discovered this morning.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Attracts Attention!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—A Decision

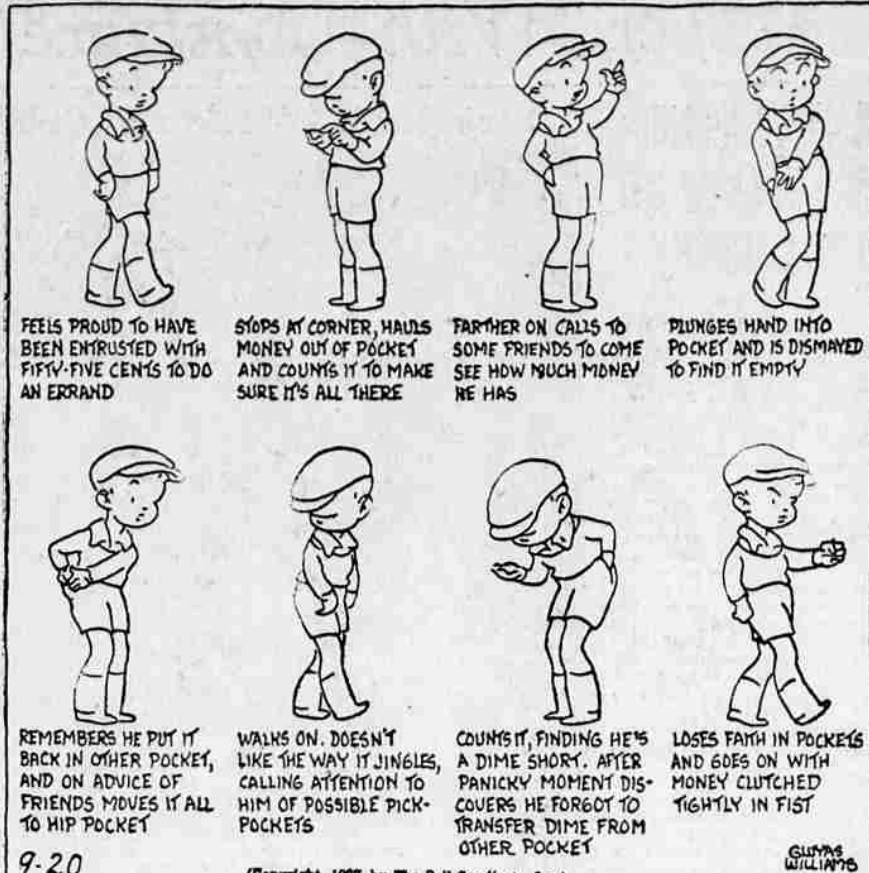


THE NEBBS—In and Out



SAFEKEEPING

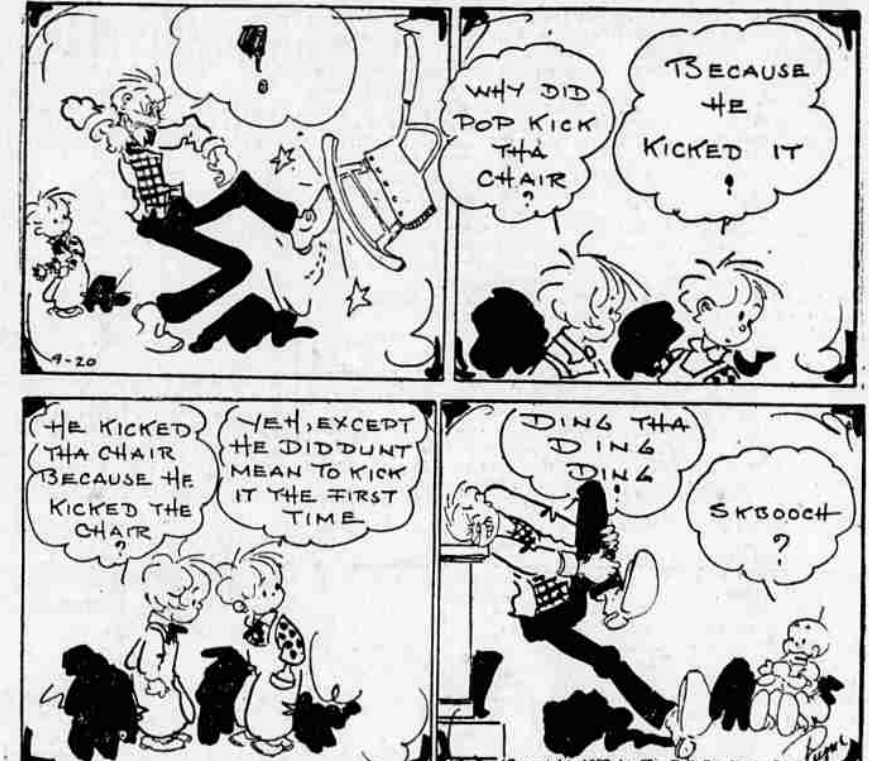
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POF

By O M PAYNE



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By HAL FORREST



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HESS



OREGON VOTES FOR LOW RENT CHANCE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 25.—(AP)—Secretary Ickes has cited Oregon as among 12 states which have enacted legislation to permit participation in the low-rent and housing program planned under the Wagner-Steagall housing act, but which have no local housing authority.

The 11 other states are Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

"Cities which want housing projects—and there are plenty of them—should bear in mind that participation depends upon their own activities in qualifying for aid," a housing spokesman said. "The United States housing authority can not perform this function for the cities."

A total of 30 states have passed model acts submitted by the Public Works Administration enabling the operation of local housing authorities. The 18 other states have neither acts nor local authorities.

DEPORT HYPHENATES IS SPEAKER'S ADVICE

PORTLAND, Sept. 24.—(AP)—There is no room in the United States for other than either Americans or "out and out foreign residents," H. H. Morgan, national president of the Mantle club said here.

"There should be no such thing as German-American, Irish-American or any other hyphenated American, and allegiance should not be paid in equal or unequal parts to two countries," he asserted.