

# the dark ships

BY HULBERT FOOTNER

...Next, a young agent, finds his beloved Janet locked in a cabin on Prescott Fanning's yacht at Astoria Harbor. With her are a gun and Fanning's freshly shot body. Neill hides her nearby in a dilapidated liner, then joins Mark Bonziger, local investigator. Neill learns Janet didn't shoot the Fanning's murderer. He suspects queer little Eyster, who hated Fanning. Also in the picture are Kettering, a Baltimore lawyer down to fish, and Ira Buckless, a tough who trails Neill. Bonziger leads a search of the yacht and together leaves the searching party, reaches Janet's suite and together they slip into the dark corridors to hide.

## Chapter 30 The Dumbwaiter

THEY crouched on the principal stairway, listening for sounds from above. A close heavy silence lay on the ship that was like a weight on their breasts. Neill searched for Janet's hand in the dark and pressed it.

"Jen, darling, I'm so sorry I got in a rage last night."

She leaned against him. "That was nothing, Neill."

"But it was! It was! If I hadn't been such a fool, this wouldn't have happened."

"Don't!" she whispered. "I can't bear to hear you blame yourself!"

"Everything you said was right, Jen! There was a man hidden in the clothes closet of your cabin on the yacht. We found evidence of it today."

"Then you know now that I didn't shoot Fanning?"

"I know it—not that it makes any difference to me."

She kissed him.

After what seemed like an age, they heard doors opening above them in the ship, and subdued voices. The searchers had entered the restaurant on A deck. They did not pause, but came down the stairs. Nor did they linger on B deck. Evidently the plan of searching the vessel had been changed. Neill and Janet had to snatch up their belongings and run on down in a hurry. At one moment Bonziger was so close to them that they heard him say:

"If we cornered them in the hold of the vessel, a desperate man might shoot it's better to work from the bottom up. We'll force them out into the open on deck."

Hand in hand, Neill and Janet flew down the stairs as silently as if they had been on wings—to D deck and on to E deck. In the grand saloon they distributed their litter, hoping that it would not be too closely examined, and ran across the immense room, keeping only Janet's clothes and the precious food and water. As the pantry door swung to behind them, Bonziger's light showed around the bend of the stairs.

Running across the pantry, they entered the corridor between the balcony and cold storage rooms. As they came into the galley beyond, a door on the other side opened and a light showed through. They drew back with the cold hand of fear on their breasts.

"It's no use," whispered Janet. "We're caught between them!"

"Back this way," said Neill.

In the pantry, he switched on his light and cast it desperately around. In the middle of the room a dumbwaiter rested on a table with its ropes disappearing into a shaft overhead.

**Going Up**

"It's a chance!" said Neill. "Quick! Into it!"

"There's no room for two!" gasped Janet.

"Stand on top!"

The dumbwaiter had a hinged shelf. Janet crept into it, pressing the shelf up, and Neill climbed on top. The contraption had never been designed to lift such a weight. Neill pulled the hoisting rope and they started to rise from the table. The whole apparatus creaked alarmingly, but it held together. They disappeared into the closed shaft and Neill stopped pulling.

Listening, they heard the doors swing below them. Bonziger and Bickel met in the pantry. Each had a man with him. Bickel said:

"Aft of the galley there are doors into the port and starboard engine rooms. You and I can take one side. Wilson and Forsythe the other."

"I'll end the way," said Bonziger. "There's a man posted on every stairway."

The door swung again, and there was silence below. After waiting a minute, Neill whispered: "Are you all right?"

"If the stairways are watched, we're still trapped," said Janet. "We're going up," said Neill. "Where does this thing go to?"

"Darned if I know."

He started pulling again and they rose slowly. After a seemingly endless ascent through the closed shaft, one side of it opened and they looked into a room they had not seen before. A little starlight was coming through the

windows. Around the walls there were sinks, racks of dishes, heating tables and the other appurtenances of a pantry.

Neill stepped off his perch and, pulling the dumbwaiter higher, helped Janet out of her cramped position inside. He cautiously pushed out a sliding door for an inch or two and found himself looking into the restaurant on the boat deck with its tall windows all around. A glass door looking astern stood open and outside it showed the silhouette of an armed man. He yawned a udibly and stretched himself, pistol in hand.

Neill placed one of his boots between door and frame so that he could continue to watch the man. Neill and Janet sat down on the floor, leaning together without saying anything, and a long time passed—or so it seemed. Suddenly the dumbwaiter gave a shake and a rattle and disappeared smartly from view. Janet almost jumped out of her skin, and Neill swallowed a laugh.

"It's all right," he said. "They're only making sure that we're not hiding in the shaft."

The noise attracted the attention of the man on deck and he turned to listen. Neill softly withdrew his boot from the door and pulled Janet away. They heard the man coming. The pantry was L-shaped. They retreated around the corner of the wall, and crept under a serving table. The man came in. His mind was on the dumbwaiter. Sticking his head in the shaft, he called:

"Hello, down there!"

From deep below a voice answered: "Hello!"

"Did you just pull this thing down?"

"Sure."

"That's all right then. All quiet up here."

He went out on deck and Neill and Janet relaxed. Neill flung an arm around her to steady her trembling.

**Back To The Royal Suite**

AFTER about a quarter of an hour, Neill said: "The search must have passed beyond the pantry by now. Let's go!"

While Janet watched the man out on deck, he very softly pulled up the dumbwaiter. They got in it as before, and he let it down inch by inch until it bumped softly on its table in the E deck pantry. All was dark and still below.

Neill crossed the saloon, they listening to the bottom of the main stairway. Faint sounds of the search on D deck came down. Bonziger's signal was given and his party ascended to C deck. After a long time they heard the signal again, and the search moved up another flight. Having recovered the bucket, the rope ladder, the ball of twine, etc., Neill and Janet crept up the stairway and stole back through a corridor to the royal suite.

"Hello at last!" said Neill.

They bolted the doors and enjoyed a brief let-down.

They presently went out on the veranda. Neill pulled down the heavy window (it opened from the top) and they stood beside it. Neill and Janet heard the search party come out on the boat deck. Bonziger's final signal was given; and they heard the whole party descending the ladders.

"They have gone," he said.

"Oh, Neill!" faltered Janet. "What now?"

"I must go back and join them."

"How can you get out of this ship if the door at the top of the engine room shaft is fastened?"

"That's easy. I'll climb out on the roof and the search will be on the windows on B deck. You can come with me and close it after I'm out. That is, if you're not afraid to come back alone."

"I won't be afraid," said Janet. "Not after that we have already been through it. How will you get back without being seen?"

"I'll climb out on the starboard side of this vessel. I'll make sure that no one is watching from above before I try to jump across. Once on the Montmorency, I'm safe."

They set out. "Remember the signal when I come back tomorrow night," Neill said as he kissed her at the window on B deck.

He took plenty of time to make the return journey, taking care to spot each guard on the boat deck before exposing himself. The search party was now inside the Columbia. He slid down the rope to the crib that held the vessels apart and dropped into his skiff. He put on his boots and 10 minutes later was twining his skiff to the platform at the foot of the ladder. As he ran up, the policeman's head stuck out over the rail.

"So you're back," he said.

"Anything doing while I was gone?" asked Neill.

"There was an alarm raised over on the Abraham Lincoln but somebody had been seen, but they didn't find anybody. They're in the Columbia now."

"I'll watch the middle gangway until they come back on deck," said Neill. "Have a cigarette?"

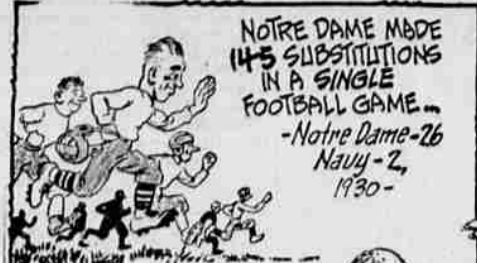
"Thanks."

(Copyright, 1937, by Hulbert Footner)

The yacht is mysteriously ransacked from stern to stern, Monday.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



**OTTER RETRIEVERS**  
The first time that Emil Liers, Homer, Minnesota, took one of his pet otter on a hunting trip into neighboring duck swamps he realized the possibilities of the sleek, aquatic animals as retrievers. Liers' pet otter, on this occasion, watched with an appraising eye as his master brought down a fine mallard. And by the time Liers' dog was streaking toward the murky pool where the duck fell, Mr. Otter was already swimming shoreward with the bird firmly clamped in his mouth!

Since this experience, some 10 years ago, Liers has trained thirty-five otter to "go fetch" small game. His method is to start them on tennis balls, then he advances them to the retrieving of blackbirds and finally he takes them into the field, when they have learned not to mangle the game. Liers puts them through a training period of from six months to a year. Many sportsmen throughout the country are today using otter trained by Liers for their closest hunting pals.

**ABDICATION YEAR**  
Strange as it seems, in a period of 41 days in 1918 more European rulers abdicated their thrones than in any other year in history.

Reigns of the many small monarchies at the termination of the World War was responsible for the "mass evacuation" of kings that led off with the abdication of Ferdinand of Bulgaria on October 4, 1918.

Within a month Crown Prince Boris, who assumed the throne of Bulgaria on Ferdinand's abdication, himself saw fit to abdicate on November 1. Six days later William II of Wurtemberg abdicated, accompanied by the Duke of Brunswick. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany followed suit on November 9 as Friedrich Evert, vice-president of the Socialist Democratic party assumed control of the German government as Chancellor, pending creation of the "constitutional German national assembly."

On November 12, Charles of Austria-Hungary abdicated, followed on the 13th by Frederick Augusta of Saxony.

**OLDEST LEGIONNAIRE FINDS HOME BURNED**  
THE DALLES, Ore., Oct. 8.—(P)—W. F. "Dad" Jowett, famed "Hermite of Jackson Mountain," and oldest American Legionnaire, returned from the recent New York convention to find his home at Antelope destroyed by fire. Jowett, Spanish-American and World War veteran, announced he will move to The Dalles. All his possessions, including military medals, citations and trophies from all parts of the world, were lost.

Sun spot visible  
PORTLAND, Oct. 8.—(P)—One of the largest sun spots to appear in recent years was visible with the naked eye during an early morning fog Wednesday, A. V. Goddard and Robert Millard, local astronomers, reported. They estimated it covered an area approximately 135,000 miles long and 60,000 miles wide on the solar surface, and said it could be seen through colored glasses when the sky was clear.

**TAILSPIN TOMMY—"What Out, Betty-Lou!"**

BETTY-LOU IS USING ALL OF HER CHARM AND FEMININE WILES TO LURE BENTLY AWAY FROM HIS COMPANION, RITA, FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF GETTING HIM TO TALK, AND PERHAPS DROP A REMARK THAT MAY HELP SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF MRS. BENTLY'S DEATH.

WHILE RITA IS FAIRLY CONSUMED WITH JEALOUSY

CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT MAKING A FLIGHT WITH ME?

I MIGHT... LET'S SLIP OUTSIDE... AND TALK IT OVER

AND RITA DECIDES TO WALK IN THE GARDEN, TOO!

**BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Loyalty Offered?**

ME KID YOU? I SHOULD GAY NOT, MISTER WEBSTER! I KNOW YOU'RE TRADD JORDAN'S REPRESENTATIVE—AND—

—MY CREED IN LIFE IS BEING LOYAL TO THE MEN I WORK FOR—I KNOW YOU'RE HERE TO SAVE THE NUGGET LINE FOR OLD TRADD AND HIS LOVELY GRANDDAUGHTER, JULIET JORDAN—

WELL, I'M A GOOD SOLDIER WHEN I GOT A GOOD CAUSE—I LOVE THIS OLD RAILROAD AND I'LL DO ANYTHING I CAN TO SAVE HER—

THAT SOUNDS MIGHTY DECENT, MR. STRALE—

I MEAN IT, YOU'RE HERE TO GIVE ORDERS—I'M HERE TO CARRY 'EM OUT!

**THE NEBBS—Rocks Ahead**

I ASKED BUCE IF HE KNOWERD DANBY NIBROC AND HE'S HEARD OF HIM—SAYS FOLKS SAY HE LOOKS LIKE HIM

I'LL SAY HE DOES, LOOK AT THIS

HERE'S A PICTURE OF A GENTLEMAN THAT HANGS IN THE ROGUES' GALLERY... LOOK AND SEE IF YOU'VE EVER MET HIM—THAT'S DANDY NIBROC

I HATE YOU FOR SHOWING ME THAT PICTURE—I WAS SO HAPPY AND NOW YOU KILLED MY HAPPINESS!

I DID THIS ALL FOR YOU, ENNMA. I KNOW YOU DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW IT BUT I'VE DONE MY DUTY AS I WAS GIVEN TO SEE IT—FROM NOW ON I'M HAVING MY BUSINESS AND I'M GOING TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME AT IT!

**HUNTER CLEARS UP FIRE AREA REDUCED COMPANION'S DEATH DURING PAST SEASON**

TACOMA, Oct. 8.—(P)—The body of Luke Blakeslee, 26, of Bremerton, was recovered from a grave in the woods west of Oig Harbor today by Ernest Dahman, 30, Port Orchard trapper.

Sheriff John C. Bjorklund of Pierce county said Dahman confessed he accidentally shot and killed Blakeslee with a 20-30 rifle on an out-of-season deer hunting trip last September 24.

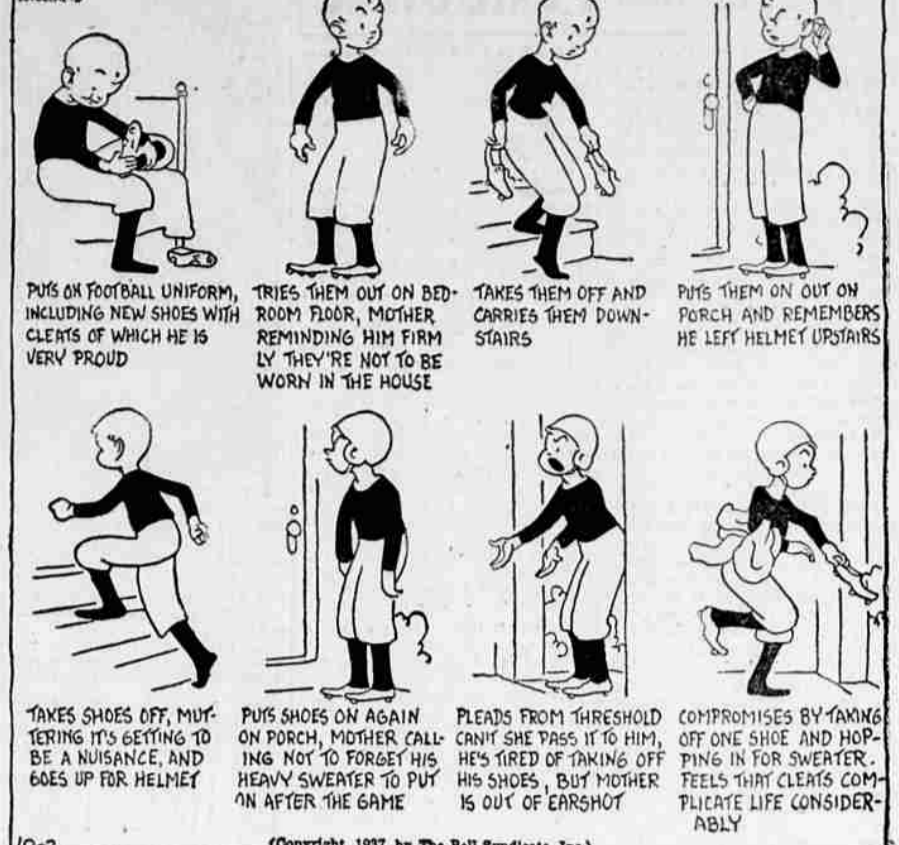
Sheriff Hugh Blakeship said Dahman confessed he buried the body when he became afraid to report the shooting, because the pair had been hunting deer out of season.

PORTLAND, Oct. 8.—(P)—Fire in the 20 national forests of Oregon and Washington this season, numbering 1,483 up to September 30, covered only 7,514 acres compared to an average of 15,250 during the corresponding period in 1936, when 969 blazes were recorded, forest service officials said today.

Lightning fires during the period numbered 1,018 this year, compared to 497 in 1936, man-caused fires showing a material decrease.

Early fall rains have lessened but not eliminated danger of future fires, officials warned.

# CLEATS By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



Copyright, 1937, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.

# S'MATTER POP By C. M. PAYNE



Copyright, 1937, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.

# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Loyalty Offered? By EDWIN ALGER



Copyright, 1937, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.

# HUNTER CLEARS UP FIRE AREA REDUCED COMPANION'S DEATH DURING PAST SEASON

TACOMA, Oct. 8.—(P)—The body of Luke Blakeslee, 26, of Bremerton, was recovered from a grave in the woods west of Oig Harbor today by Ernest Dahman, 30, Port Orchard trapper.

Sheriff John C. Bjorklund of Pierce county said Dahman confessed he accidentally shot and killed Blakeslee with a 20-30 rifle on an out-of-season deer hunting trip last September 24.

Sheriff Hugh Blakeship said Dahman confessed he buried the body when he became afraid to report the shooting, because the pair had been hunting deer out of season.

PORTLAND, Oct. 8.—(P)—Fire in the 20 national forests of Oregon and Washington this season, numbering 1,483 up to September 30, covered only 7,514 acres compared to an average of 15,250 during the corresponding period in 1936, when 969 blazes were recorded, forest service officials said today.

Lightning fires during the period numbered 1,018 this year, compared to 497 in 1936, man-caused fires showing a material decrease.

Early fall rains have lessened but not eliminated danger of future fires, officials warned.

# THE NEBBS—Rocks Ahead By SOL HESS



Copyright, 1937, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.