

# the dark ships

BY HULBERT FOOTNER

## Chapter 43 The Loot Is Found

AT evening Kettering heard Fanning come in and lock the door. The sounds that followed told him that the girl had fainted. To a man mad with hatred, the opportunity was too good to be passed up. He stole out of the closet, picked up the gun that lay on the stand (he had seen it there previously) and shot Fanning as he was putting the unconscious girl in the easy chair.

He placed the gun in such a manner that it would appear to have fallen from Janet's hand, and put the money that he found in Fanning's wallet in the pocket of the girl's wrap. She was the daughter of a man he knew, but Kettering was not one to be deterred by that. He said in his own excuse that he was certain no jury would convict her of murder under the circumstances.

The coming of Neill forced him back into his closet. After Neill had taken the girl, Kettering searched the yacht at his leisure. Behind a secret panel in Fanning's cabin he found the little package which held the takings of the swindle, and swam ashore with it. Having wrung the water out of his clothes as well as he could, he hung around the store in the dark. When the movies let out, the store for a few minutes was crowded with customers buying soft drinks and ice-cream cones, and Kettering took advantage of it to get into the telephone booth without attracting attention. He called up his son and told him to bring down the car with a fishing and camping outfit. He spent the night in his damp clothes shivering in the woods. In the morning he drove up with his son to the store as Neill had seen him.

An hour later he shot the little package addressed to his wife through the slit in the post office door. He telephoned his wife to carry the package unopened to his safe deposit vault. This unfortunate woman was not in any way implicated in the crime. Once they had established themselves at Absalom's, Kettering sent his son back to Baltimore with instructions to disguise himself. Kettering knew that the investigation would fluctuate between Absalom's and Baltimore and he wanted an observer in town. He kept in touch with his son by telephone. Horace, junior, was now lying in a Baltimore hospital with a bullet through his thigh.

**Buckless Talks Freely**  
ON the next day when it all came out, Buckless was released from the yacht. His story was true, and the authorities had nothing against him except a possible charge of wilful damage to the yacht. Having more important things on their minds, they were not likely to push that.

Since he had nothing to fear, Buckless talked freely. He said he had arrived in Absalom's on Tuesday night just as Neill was coming ashore for water. He sent his companion back and walked along the shore, following the skiff part way up the river. From the farm house above the ships he borrowed the same skiff that Neill used later, and cruised around until he had satisfied himself that Neill had hidden the girl on the Lincoln.

Returning to Absalom's, he picked up another skiff and rowed out to the yacht. He discovered that Fanning had been killed and from that moment his whole object was to recover the loot. His first search for it on the yacht was interrupted by the waking of the crew, and he had to make a quick getaway.

On the following night he lifted a skiff in the village and rowed up river to the ships. By sheer luck he found the rope ladder hanging down and went up. The suite was empty and he took the opportunity to search it. He made his getaway before Neill and Janet returned landing nearby, he waited for Neill to come ashore, and attacked him as he had described. On the next night he visited the yacht a second time to search for the loot.

As for Eyster, nothing new about him came out except that he had bribed McGee, the engineer, to keep him informed of the yacht's movements. There was ill feeling between McGee and Buckless and when the engineer went to Baltimore he did not communicate with the strong-arm man. Eyster was a potential murderer of Fanning, but he lacked the courage to carry it out. As a result of his prowling, he knew Buckless and was terrified of him, but Buckless was completely unaware of Eyster.

When everything was known and the excitement began to die down, Eyster came to Neill and offered him his hand. The crazy grin was unchanged, but a certain ease had come into the tragic eyes. "Well, goodbye," he said.

Neill took his hand with a good will. "Where are you going?" he asked.

Eyster merely grinned and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know," he said.

Neill was wrenched with pity

for the poor wretch. "Don't go," he said. "This ugly business will soon be over and we can all get a fresh start."

"You can," said Eyster. "I wish you luck."  
"Well, anyhow, stick around for awhile, and we'll talk things over."  
"All right," said Eyster.  
However, within an hour he had disappeared. Neill never saw him again.

Since the jail at King's Green was not suitable for the confinement of so important a prisoner, Kettering was carried up to Baltimore to await trial. After he was taken away, the village of Absalom's snapped back into its former calm, broken only by the arrival of the weekend fishing parties. Virgil Longcope, however, had no notion of wasting the world-wide publicity of the case. Virgil and Neill made it up between them that Neill was to suppress his share in solving the case, so that the whole credit might go to Mark Bonniger.

"There is a Democratic caucus next week," said Virgil. "I'll present Mark's name as our candidate for state senator, and it will be carried with a hurrah. Not only with the Democrats, but with every voter in the county. At one and the same time we will make the Republicans look sick and get us a Bonniger for our leader just as it used to be in the old days. After he's elected, I'm figuring that he'll see the need of getting married and carrying the family on."

"You are looking a long way ahead," said Neill grinning.  
"It's my motto," said Virgil.  
When Kettering's safe deposit box was opened, they untied the little package they found in it, a flood of shining diamonds, emeralds, rubies and sapphires poured out. Fanning had put all his ill-gotten gains into uncut jewels, as a currency easy to carry around, and good the world over. All this reverted to the estate of Miss Rayner. By will she had left everything to be found at home by indigent gentlewomen. So the old ladies got it. The yacht was sold and the proceeds added to the fund.

Ira Buckless left Baltimore breathing threats against Neill for having fooled him. However, Neill's business had won him many a enemy of Buckless' kidney, and he knew how to take care of himself.

**On Bonniger's Porch**  
AT Absalom's, Neill and Janet were followed by a cheering mob wherever they went. To give them a little peace, Bonniger carried them off to his old square house on a hill above the Pocomo. He locked the gate of his place and, as he drove a mile from the house, they were not troubled by unwanted visitors.

On the evening of the day after the general showdown had taken place, the three of them sat on the porch of the old mansion sipping mint juleps in frosted glasses, and looking at the glorious panorama of the river and its hills. Strangely enough, they did not find much to say. It was sufficient just to be sitting there together.

After a silence, Bonniger said, "Well, anyhow, one good thing has come out of this sorry business."  
"What's that?" asked Neill.  
"A friendship that will last as long as we do."  
"Let's drink to it."  
They raised their glasses.

Bonniger said, with his dry smile, "Virgil wants me to run for state senator."  
"Well, you will, won't you?"  
"Oh, I reckon so. I've got a taste for excitement now."  
"This old house needs a mistress," murmured Janet.  
"Find me one," said Bonniger.  
"You haven't got a twin, I suppose?"

Pretty soon Bonniger rose with a transparently busy expression, saying that he must go look at the pigs. Everything had gone to rack and ruin during the past four days, he said. He disappeared into the house.

Neill moved closer to Janet and drew her arm under his.  
"Is your yen for independence satisfied?" he asked.  
"Ah, don't make fun of me! I was such a fool!"  
"Oh, that's all right," said Neill. "If you weren't a fool I'd be at too great a disadvantage."  
"Idiot!"  
"You haven't answered my question yet."  
"What have you in mind for me?"

"Marriage."  
Janet looked away, but he could still see the edge of a smile in her cheek. "Not a half bad idea," she said airily.  
"Janet!" he cried. "You will! I thought it only meant another argument."  
"I'm not going to argue any more."  
"Oh, don't say that. I'd miss it. Well... just as you like."  
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**THE END**

## STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

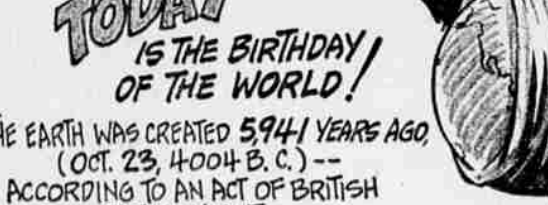
For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



RUSSIAN RADIO STATIONS BROADCAST IN A TOTAL OF 69 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS



NATIVES OF NEW ZEALAND USE THEIR HANDS AS BAIT IN CATCHING SHARKS... BY TRAILING THEM IN THE WATER TO ATTRACT THE FISH...



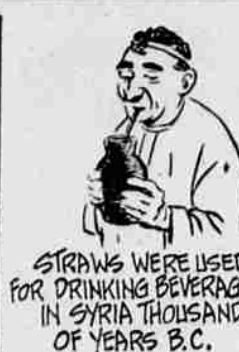
TODAY IS THE BIRTHDAY OF THE WORLD! THE EARTH WAS CREATED 5941 YEARS AGO (OCT. 23, 4004 B. C.) -- ACCORDING TO AN ACT OF BRITISH PARLIAMENT...

**Hands As Bait**  
Depending for their safety on the theory that sharks move slowly as long as their intended prey moves slowly, natives of New Zealand trail their hands in the water as bait in luring sharks alongside their canoes. It takes a real linguist to tune in on Russian radio stations and understand every word broadcast. Strange as it seems, the Soviet's 70 stations use a total of 69 languages and dialects.

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Most, if not all, Soviet radio broadcasting stations use more than one language. The Russian language is, of course, used throughout the U. S. S. R. by all stations and in addition each station uses the languages and dialects of its local dialers.

**Ancient Straws**  
Uncovered in recent excavations of Syrian ruins were a number of perforated copper tubes containing a reed tube inside. Used for drinking beverages in much the same manner no straws are used today, the device also served to keep impurities out of the straws.

**Monday: Which English Queen was Married Three Times in One Year**



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**M'KENZIE PASS PLEA DOOMED BY EXPENSE**  
PORTLAND, Oct. 23.—(AP)—The Eugene Obsidians placed an eloquent but apparently unavailing plea before the highway commission today for a snow-cleared, winter route into the recreational area of the central Oregon Cascades.

The Lane county delegation, represented by Paul Lettieri, Robert Lemon and George H. McMoran, asked maintenance of the McKenzie Pass highway to the vicinity of Frog camp. The commission promised "earnest consideration" but pointed out costs must be kept at a minimum else the state-wide construction program would be endangered.

The commission, coming here from the Siskiyou highway dedication events earlier in the week, opened low bids totaling less than a quarter of a million dollars on eight projects.

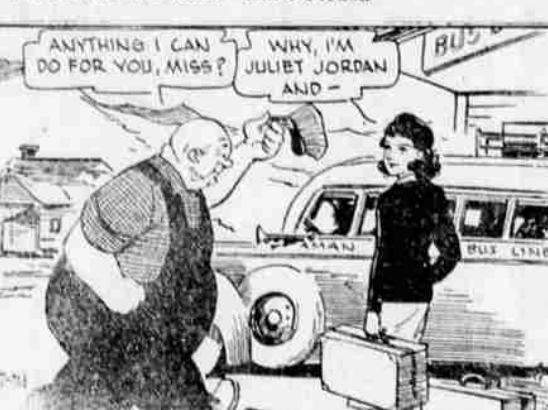
Michigan is called the "Wolverine" state.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

**TAILSPIN TOMMY—Betty Is Apprehensive!**



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Juliet Jordan



THE NEBBS—Friends?



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Juliet Jordan



THE NEBBS—Friends?

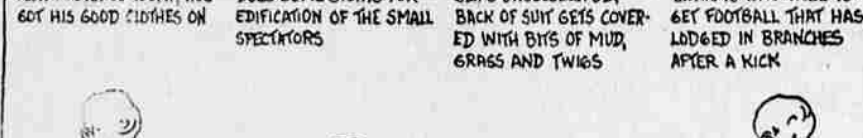


## GOOD CLOTHES

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



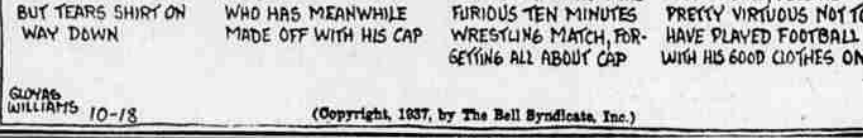
TELLS THE GALS HE CAN'T PLAY FOOTBALL TODAY, HE'S GOT HIS GOOD CLOTHES ON



WATCHES A WHILE, THEN DOES SOME STUNTS FOR EDIFICATION OF THE SMALL SPECTATORS



OWING TO MOST OF STUNTS BEING UNSUCCESSFUL, BACK OF SUIT GETS COVERED WITH BITS OF MUD, GRASS AND TWIGS



WHIPS OFF COAT AND SWARMS INTO TREE TO GET FOOTBALL THAT HAS LODGED IN BRANCHES AFTER A KICK



RECOVERS FOOTBALL BUT TEARS SHIRT ON WAY DOWN

PURSUES BUD BEMIS WHO HAS MEANWHILE MADE OFF WITH HIS CAP

CATCHES HIM AND WINS FURIOUS TEN MINUTES WRESTLING MATCH, FORGETTING ALL ABOUT CAP

GOES HOME, FEELING PRETTY VIRTUOUS NOT TO HAVE PLAYED FOOTBALL WITH HIS GOOD CLOTHES ON

GLUYAS WILLIAMS 10-18 (Copyright, 1937, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

## S'MATTER POP

By C. M. PAYNE



FLEA ON HIM, POP!

OH, I DON'T THINK SO!



PROBABLY PRACTICING A LITTLE, JUST IN CASE! VERY OENSIBLE!

SHOULD WE BE OENSIBLE AN' PRACTICE, TOO, POP?

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

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## PRESIDENT NAMES SON COORDINATOR IN MOVE TOWARD REORGANIZING

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23.—(AP)—James Roosevelt's designation as a coordinator for independent federal agencies was viewed by some observers today as a preliminary step in the president's suggested government reorganization program.

The chief executive asked congress, among other proposed revisions, to increase his White House staff to six administrative assistants and contact men. The house voted its approval last summer, and the senate probably will consider the recommendation at the special session.

James Roosevelt, one of three White House secretaries, emphasized that it was purely the executive work of all the boards, commissions and bureaus involved that his father wished coordinated.

The son, whose long legs stretch beneath a desk in a room across the White House lobby from his father's office, referred to himself as a "clearing house." He emphasized the program was voluntary and said its purpose was greater efficiency.

"The president thought it was a good idea," young Roosevelt said, "to set up some kind of a system whereby the agency heads would have access once a week to someone in the White House to tell what they had on their minds."

Well-kept hair, neat eyebrows and smoothly arranged hair are three marks of a well-groomed woman.

Blue fox is rapidly replacing silver fox as a luxury fur.