

THE CLOUDED MOON

By MAX SALTSMARSH

Chapter 46 The Clouded Moon

I FELT wildly in my pockets for the matches that were not there, and as I did so, heard Hugo swear sharply. Next moment a darker shadow hurtled past me and through the window.

I sprang after it, heard a choking gasp from somewhere below me in the darkness, and recognized the voice as Fleuriot's.

"What's happened?" I called, and Hugo answered from behind. "He landed me one with the knife and got away."

"Badly hurt?" I asked anxiously, and he answered impatiently: "No, no. Only the wrist. Get after him, man, for pity's sake!"

But as he spoke, a sudden flare of light from a pocket-torch cut across the room, and I saw Dunning's anxious face peering in and behind him Fleuriot, doubled up with pain and hugging his waist-line.

I turned to Dunning. "Which way did he go?" I demanded.

"Out there some way," he answered dolefully, "and that madman slipped his leash and made after him. But I wouldn't worry, Archie," he added rather anxiously. "There'll be time enough to look for them when we're straightened up here."

"You can do the straightening," I retorted and with one bound I was through the window and running across the yard.

As I turned out of the gateway, the hot wind lashed my face, and I halted a moment, holding my breath. Now the fire was half-way down the hill, driven by the frantic wind. Death and destruction were leaping down upon us, and I could not believe that any living thing could have been crazed enough to venture through it.

I turned to find Dunning at my elbow. "Any sign of them?"

"None," said I. "They must have gone the other way." I broke off suddenly and clutched his arm. "I was wrong. Look there!" And I pointed upward to a torch a little to the right, on the fringe of the fiery torrent roaring down the valley, a dark shape pranced its way upward towards the tree-fringed skyline.

The big man gasped. "That's one of them all right," he commented bitterly. "And what's more, he's got the rope I tied him up with. See it trailing behind him? But what's he heading for and where's Geiss?"

"I don't know," I answered hopelessly, "but see here, man. If we want to get out of here unscathed, we'll have to get a move on!"

We packed them into the car, Hugo silent and clutching his arm, and Fleuriot still rather green about the gills. I took the wheel this time, with Dunning beside me, and turned the car up the track on the way we had come. But now that we had our backs to the fire, the night was dark, and it was uncommonly difficult to keep to the road. Half-way up the slope I halted, feeling rather uneasy, and that the going was rougher than it should be, and Dunning clambered out and flashed his torch on the ground ahead.

"No road here," he announced, "and no road any place that I can see."

End of A Cartoonist

I GOT out wearily. "There's nothing for it," I told the silent occupants of the tonneau. "We can't take the car blind across country. Dunning and I will have to foot it till we hit the trail."

We set off, scrambling upward over uneven tussocks of grass, heading, as far as we could, to the right, where the path must lie; but there was never a sign of it, and presently we were up among the pine trees.

Dunning suddenly gripped me by the arm. "Look there!" he whispered, his voice shaking.

We were standing on the edge of a little clearing on the very crest of the slope. The smoke had thinned away; the moon was shining fitfully through the cloud-wrack, and by its light I saw, in the center of the open space, a small stunted oak. But it was not the tree that held my gaze, but the figure that dangled, grotesquely, from its lowest branch, and the second figure, gaunt and gaunt, that pranced and capered before it.

I took to my heels across the clearing, with Dunning close behind me, and the dancing creature made no effort to escape, but sidled nearer instead.

"You see," said Noah More, and giggled foolishly. "I have done what you came out to do—I have hanged him."

I ripped out my clasp-knife and hacked through the rope that held the ghastly figure, but as it dropped limply into my arms, I knew that we were too late and the man was dead—dead, I thought, from shock and heart-failure, dead almost before he had hung from the tree.

I turned to Dunning, letting the body slip to the ground, and saw to my horror that Otille stood just behind me, her eyes as wide as saucers, and behind her, Hugo and Fleuriot.

"There, lies the greatest cartoonist of his age," Fleuriot announced quietly. "But I could wish that he had not landed with such force on my abdomen!"

Hugo gave a short laugh. "You've all played your parts most nobly," said he, "except me. I appear to have filled the role of the clown in the circus who takes the knocks and looks foolish, but it seems to me it's time we got a move on." He gripped Otille with his free hand.

She looked up at him piteously. "But Hugo—" she began, and then suddenly her expression hardened. "Oh, well," she said, "it's foolish to have saved my life, I've nothing more to say. Come on, then, let's go!"

But I lingered, for there was more to be decided than that Geiss's body could not be left alone on the hillside, neither could we find room in the car for the whole party. Someone had to stay behind, and I had a feeling that that someone would have to be me.

But Fleuriot had sensed my thought. "No, no!" he said sharply. "It is I that must stay. It is my duty. I will remain here very pleasantly with the corpse and the animal, and you will send a car back for me from Le Trays. See, the wind has shifted—and the fire will spread no more."

I looked up and saw that it was true. Even as I turned back to him, the first drop of rain struck cool against my cheek.

To Have And To Hold

"ALL the same," I said dubiously, "I don't like leaving you here alone—" but he cut in sharply: "Once more, I insist! It is my day's work, and furthermore, I feel there is a little something that should be adjusted between two members of our party."

I glanced over my shoulder. Otille was already sitting stiffly in the back of the car, with an expression that said she didn't mind who sat next to her so long as it wasn't Hugo, while he, on the other hand, was standing stiffly aloof, nursing his wounded wrist and staring gloomily out over the valley.

"All right," I said obediently. "I'll go, but I think you've chosen the easier job."

The tip back was a simple matter, once we had located the track for the fire was dying and it was comparatively easy to see the road. We came to Le Trays in the light of dawn to find that the street was empty, save for one car which held my attention as we drew up at the barrier.

In the tonneau Ada, disheveled and wild-eyed, clung to the arm of an impassive but gray-faced Virgote Wills. It was Ada who first caught sight of us, and with something between a sob and a scream, she scrambled from the car and came running towards us; but quick as she was, Dunning was quicker. He was out of the Hispano in a flash, meeting her halfway and gathering her into his arms.

We were all on the road now, and as I turned to speak to our friend the lieutenant, trying to make him understand that I wanted a car at once to take me back to Fleuriot, I felt Otille pluck at my sleeve.

"Archie," she whispered, "do you think that Hugo realizes he's going to marry me?"

I hesitated. "I believe something of the sort has occurred to him," I answered cautiously.

"Then," said she, "for mercy's sake, make him do something about it quickly. I crossed to Hugo and touched his arm. 'Old man,' I said, 'the Prayer Book says 'to have and to hold,' but in this case it's the latter verb that matters. She's waiting for you to kiss her, and I can't get back to Fleuriot till I've seen you do it.' Almost as the words left my mouth, he had swung round to her arms wide, and in another second they had closed about her.

I drove back through the scorched and smoking countryside with an inquisitive soldier beside me and a taciturn gendarme in the rear, and as I drove, I felt singularly lost and lonely, for it seemed that in all this welter of marrying and giving in marriage, there was no place left for me. But when I saw Fleuriot squatted philosophically under the blasted oak, I knew then that there was still a world of men left for me untangled by the snares of petticoat-strings.

"Fleuriot," I said, as he rose to greet me, "are you married?"

He grinned back at me. "Young man, I am too wise!"

"Then," said I, "you and I have a lot in common, for we are two free men in a prisoned world!"

But he shook his head, smiling cynically but very kindly. "My young friend," said he, "say that to me in a year's time and I will believe you."

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THE END

BRIDE CLEARED IN HUNTING FATALITY

OLYMPIA, Oct. 22.—(AP)—Funeral services for James Russell Jordan, state highway employe who was a victim of a hunting accident Tuesday will be held this afternoon.

Arlie Mills, who is in charge of the services, said that Frank R. McMurray, father of the young bride who was with her husband on the hunting trip, told him that Okanogan county officials had cleared Mrs. Jordan of blame. McMurray said Mills added that the fatally wounded hunter told his wife "You could not have fired the shot that struck me. I was walking towards you when I was struck by the bullet." The bullet struck Jordan in the right hip, coursed through to the left

New Serial Starts Monday

Because of limited space in today's issue, publication of the first installment of the Mail Tribune's thrilling new serial story "Don't Marry the Man," will be deferred to 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.

PAT--
25-year-old parrot of the late Harry Houdini, magician, picked the lock of his cage and escaped!
—Hollywood, July, 1938—

THE BLACK AND BLUE NILE RIVERS JOIN TO FORM THE WHITE NILE!

A 100-FOOT BRICK CHIMNEY WAS STOLEN!
—Essex, England, May, 1938—

T.L. (NERVY) BAYNE--
Tulane's first football coach, also coached his opponents for the first game with Louisiana State! HE INVENTED A YELL, CHOSE TULANE'S COLORS, SELECTED A FIELD AND BUILT GOAL POSTS, MANAGED TICKET SALES AND UMPIRED THE GAME—THEN WAS GIVEN A GREEN UMBRELLA FOR HIS SERVICES!
(1893)

1880's and brought back to his native Louisiana a first-hand knowledge of the game, plus an inspired dream of making the southern state football minded.

As coach of Tulane, he cast about for a likely rival; in Baton Rouge, Louisiana State loomed as a good prospect. He coached the Bayou Tigers, and whipped into shape a suitable rival for Tulane.

Next he had to find a playing field, build a set of goal posts and mark off the yard stripes. A yell was necessary—he invented one. The team needed uniforms—he designed them.

The first fans would want to wave Tulane school colors—there were none, so he picked olive and blue.

On November 25, 1893, he pitted his two teams against each other—and umpired the game. Before 2,000 pioneer rooters the Tulane Green Wave swept over the Bayou Boys—34-0.

For his splendid services, Bayne was rewarded with the gift of a green silk umbrella, which he lost the next day.

Monday: What three notorious American gangs were composed entirely of cousins?

NINE BITTEN BY DOG WITH RABIES

REDWOOD CITY, Cal., Oct. 22.—(AP)—Another mad dog bit nine persons. The County Health Director Charles C. Gans said today as he attempted to locate them to administer Pasteur treatments for rabies.

Dr. Gans said a report from the University of California laboratory showed the dog had rabies. The animal died last night after biting its victims Tuesday and Wednesday.

PORTLAND, Oct. 22.—(AP)—A mad dog, the first victim of rabies since the first of the year, bit two youngsters and the janitor at the Oakley Green grade school yesterday. The janitor was nipped when he rushed Gans said today as he attempted to

TAILSPIN TOMMY—An Invitation . . . to Adventure!

WITH THE WINNING OF THE BENDIX TROPHY BY TOMMY, THE GREAT ANNUAL AIR MEET AT MIAMI DRAWS TO A CLOSE.

COL. HALL, WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR TOMMY TO FLY HIS MERCURY PLANE TO VICTORY, IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE THE YOUNG FLYER TO HIS MANY FRIENDS.

AND IN THE COURSE OF INTRODUCTIONS TOMMY MEETS A FAMOUS PILOT.

KEN! I WANT YOU TO MEET THE WINNER OF THE BENDIX RACE, TAILSPIN TOMMY!

TOMMY, THIS IS LIEUT. BARRY OF THE COAST GUARD AIR PATROL!

GLAD TO KNOW YOU, TAILSPIN!

AND CONGRATULATIONS! I GUESS THE LIFE OF A RACE PILOT MUST BE PRETTY EXCITING!

FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD THE COAST GUARD AIR PATROL IS ABOUT AS EXCITING AS ANYTHING I KNOW OF, LIEUTENANT.

IT HASN'T BEEN THAT WAY LATELY THINGS HAVE BEEN PRETTY DULL.

HOW WOULD YOU AND YOUR FRIEND LIKE TO ACCOMPANY ME IN A FLIGHT OVER SOME OF THE KEYS TOMORROW?

HOT DOG!

SWELL!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Ignorance Is Bliss!

...AND WHEN JUNIUS JIPPEM TRIED TO OFFER MONEY FOR THE SUNSHINE PELLETS, DR. KILEY ALMOST THREW HIM OUT OF THE OFFICE!

IS DOC KILEY A REGULAR GUY OR AIN'T HE? AN' NOW, ON ACCOUNT O' HAVIN' SOME SPECIAL INFORMATION MYSELF, CUP AN EAR, PAL—CUP AN EAR!

SHOOT, RUSTY!

HAD A CALLER THIS AFTERNOON—NO, NOT A CALLER—JUST A PAUSER—WILFRED JIPPEM!

WHAT'D WILFRED JIPPEM WANT?

OH, HE JUST WANTED TO DO A LITTLE TAUNTING—Y'SEE, WHILE HE WAS YANN-YANNIN' AT ME, HE DIDN'T KNOW DOC KILEY WAS GIVIN' HIS OLD MAN THE GATE!

THE NEBBS—Protection?

OF ALL PLACES IN THIS WIDE, WIDE WORLD, NORTHVILLE SHOULD BE THE PRESENT HOME OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS BLUEBIRD DIAMOND!

MR. NEBB, WHILE YOUR BROTHER'S GOT HIS BIG DIAMOND IN THE HOTEL, WOULDNT YOU LIKE A LITTLE SPECIAL WATCHIN'?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT DIAMOND?

A SMART COP GETS WISE TO EVERYTHIN'—IT'S QUIET NOW—VERY LITTLE TRAFFIC AND I COULD GIVE YOU MOST OF MY TIME AND I'LL MAKE IT SO CHEAP YOU'LL BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF WHEN YOU PAY ME!

AND I'LL WEAR PAIN CLOTHES— I GOT A NEW SUIT, SINGLE-BREAST—IT DON'T LOOK A BIT COISH— I'LL PUT MY STAR ON MY SUSPENDERS AND YOU CAN GIVE ME A COUPLE DOLLARS IN DIMES AND I'LL DO SOME TIPPING— I'LL THINK I'M A COP!

THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEAGUE

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

ALTHOUGH HE WAS ONLY IN THE GAME BECAUSE A LOT OF THE BOYS WERE HOME WITH COLDS, LITTLE SHRIMP FULLER WAS THE HERO WHEN HE BROUGHT DOWN THE OPPONENTS' STAR HALFBACK WHO SEEMED OFF FOR A CERTAIN TOUCHDOWN. SHRIMP NEVER LET ON THAT HE WAS ONLY DIVING FOR A NICKEL THAT HE HAD JUST NOTICED BLEAMING IN THE GRASS

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S MATTER POT

WHATCHA HUNTIN'?

LIONS!

NO LIONS AROUND HERE!

I KNOW THAT!

IF THERE WUZ LIONS HERE, IT WOULDN'T BE ANY USE HUNTIN' THEM, WOULD IT?

AN' I CERTAINLY LOVE TO HUNT!

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By HAL FOREST

BY EDWIN ALGER

By EDWIN ALGER

BY EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HESS

BY SOL HESS