

Casual Slaughters

By VIRGINIA HANSON

DAY: Felicia Bridewell is the third victim of the robber. She crawls in Kay's window and sees everything but her girle, shoes and stockings. That same night a fire breaks out.

Chapter Nine

The Man In The Car

JULIA was coming out of Felicia's room when I reached the corridor. She beckoned me and started double timing toward the back of the building, talking as she ran.

"Shows how much sense I have," she said. "I went in to get the keys to her car. The minute I turned on the light I saw that covey and remembered." She giggled hysterically. "She was sound asleep and snoring through all this. No, I didn't wake her. What was the use?"

A red taillight was glowing against the darkness of the long garage behind the club. It started to move and a small roadster backed into view. Julia halted it before, I think, she realized who the driver was.

Jeff's voice answered her gruffly. "What are you doing here?" But he held open the door and told us to get in. "You can drop me at the troop."

He made no further comment, and the silence was uncomfortable because he had finished shifting gears. So I asked him where the fire was, and he thought it was out in the bosque near the target range. Brush fire? He didn't know.

His answers sounded terse and a little bored. Between us Julia made no sound and I could feel my distaste for Jeff Tack growing. Cold, surly ill-bred.

He stepped on the gas suddenly and the car fairly leaped down the row in front of the barracks. He braked with the same disregard for mechanical and human comfort and with a swift movement was out of the car.

"I'll walk back, or pick up a lift," he said aloofly. "I hope you'll use some discretion and not get too close to the fire."

Without further waste of words he was gone. Julia woke from her trance, slid into the driver's seat and engaged the clutch. She did not speak until we had turned onto the back road that led toward the target range, and then she sounded almost happy.

"You can see," she said, "how nice he is when you get to know him."

"What's back here?" I asked as the car turned left beyond the target range. Not far ahead we could see the wild orange and red glow of flames and a column of black smoke ascending against the gray night sky.

"Nothing that I know of. There's a plank bridge over a gulley that runs behind the target butts and beyond that a wooded hill that's the edge of the reservation. The road ends at the foot of the hill. When they're firing you can't even come this far, it's roped off."

Raging Inferno

A THOUGHT struck me. "You don't suppose it's an airplane that crashed trying to land on the range?"

"No pilot would be such a fool on a night as dark as this." But she sounded worried. "Unless it was a forced landing. There's a perfectly good landing field only a few miles from here."

She jammed on her brakes. The narrow road was clogged with cars. Farther ahead a fire truck was outlined in black against the red fog which was billowing up out of the gulley.

We left the car at the side of the road and stumbled through sand and undergrowth toward the flames. I could see now that soldiers were manning the trucks, working with disciplined silence and speed to the accompaniment of the steady hissing of chemicals and the ominous roar of rapacious, gluttony fire.

My heart lurched as I saw what the fire was feeding on—a car, nosed down and heeled over on its side at the bottom of the gulley. Once a car—now a raging inferno at the mercy of those ravaging flames. They were completely out of control, elemental, mocking the puny human efforts to check them.

I was standing beside Julia in silent fascinated horror, staring, moistening my dry lips, when the fire veered at some momentary whim and I saw a dark shadow within the car.

I must have screamed, for suddenly I felt two hands clamp onto my shoulders and I stumbled backward into someone's arms. I twisted, saw that it was Adam, and hid my face against his chest, trembling so violently that I could hardly stand when we got here.

"There's someone in that car," I moaned, and he did not contradict me.

He held me for an instant; then, with one arm still supporting me, led me back from the gulley, back behind the fire truck out of sight of that feeding fire.

"I'm sorry you saw that," he said in a shaken voice, while I still clung to him. "I didn't see you in time, or I would have stopped you. We can't do anything, of course. It was already too late when we got here."

"But who is it? You must know that!"

He did not answer me for a moment, and suddenly I remem-

bered Mimi Pennant, who had gone out alone in her car that evening, who had not yet returned when Julia telephoned.

Julia came stumbling back to us then, looking wild and disheveled in the strange light.

"It's a coupé," she cried breathlessly. "Mimi's car is a coupé. Adam, who is it? Tell me the truth!"

"Not Mimi," he said, and added reluctantly. "It's Felicia Bridewell's car. I saw the license plate. She must have missed the bridge in the dark, though what she was doing way out here—"

"Oh no! No, you don't understand—Felicia's home in bed. I told him eagerly. I felt as if a clamp had been removed from my throat. For an instant the relief was stupendous. Not Mimi—not Felicia. The thief. But—the trembling seized me again—nonetheless, whatever his misdeeds, a husband being trapped in that blazing hell—"

Julia was answering his quick fire of questions, describing Felicia's arrival at the club in her girle, and her explanations. It didn't sound in the least funny now.

Asbes

A SOLDIER came up and saluted. I let go Adam's arm and stepped back, controlling myself, while he listened to the report. The thick of the gulley looking down and shaking his head. The ambulance was just behind the fire truck and two Hospital Corpsmen lounged against it smoking cigarettes.

I glanced around and saw that a small crowd of spectators had gathered. Officers and men, a few women. Colonel Pennant was there, and Jeff Tack and Gerald Beaufort. They joined us and we told again our story of Felicia and the theft of her car. I saw Captain Jones, the doctor, standing at the edge of the gulley looking down and shaking his head. The ambulance was just behind the fire truck and two Hospital Corpsmen lounged against it smoking cigarettes.

The fire began to die at last, leaving behind it a twisted hulk of red and black metal and the charred remains of what had once been a man. Adam came to us, looking quite gray and tired and told us we'd better go home.

"We're going to try to get the body out," he said.

Pink dawn was streaking the sky and the lake when Julia dropped me at the club and went home. I undressed and stood for a long time under the cold shower, trying to shock some life back into my quivering muscles.

I killed as much time as I could dressing, but the mess hall was still closed when, all in clean white, and every hair painfully coaxed into place, I came out into the deserted lounge. So I paced the veranda smoking cigarettes that made me feel no better until I heard dishes and silver clattering inside.

The regular waiter had not come back. The same one who had served us at dinner brought me orange juice and black coffee—two cups of it. Over the last cup I asked him what had happened to Immerman.

"Late," he said disgustedly. "Had the afternoon and evening off yesterday, but was supposed to be here for breakfast. He'll catch it." He clattered some silver down at the head of the table. "Mrs. Bridewell sick?"

I told him she had a headache and was not to be disturbed, and he started a chatty conversation about the fire. I could see that the story of Felicia's mishap had reached the barracks after all; but Adam's entrance, looking as stern as I had ever seen him, dried up the fount of small talk.

"Where's Immerman?" he asked, and was told of Immerman's defection. Then the waiter scurried off to the kitchen.

I seized the opportunity to tell him about Immerman at the Post Exchange, and he listened with a peculiar, startled expression.

"That's very interesting," he said when I had finished. He rose, went out into the lounge, and I could hear him telephoning.

He came back in presently, sat down and salted his grapefruit. I made the wan gesture of passing him the pepper, but he took it from me and set it down without comment.

"Immerman did not sleep in barracks," he said when the waiter had taken himself off again. "I didn't quite follow his thought, but he said no more. And presently, because my patience would not let me wait until he had gone through the usual oatmeal and ham and eggs, I asked him if the body had been identified."

He shook his head. "Small hope of that, unless there was bridge-work and we can locate the dentist."

I need not have worried about the ham and eggs. He left his oatmeal half finished, pushed back his chair and rose.

"We're going out again and sift the ashes for clues as soon as the frame has cooled enough. You'd better wake Felicia pretty soon and tell her to get dressed. There might be something she would recognize—cuff links, buttons, a ring. We'll need some confirmation of the fact that it's the same man who held her up last night—there's always the chance the thief had other fish to fry."

To be continued

On the Radio Chains

Where to Find Them on the Dial:

KEX, 1180, Portland; KFL, 540, Los Angeles; KGA, 1470, Spokane; KGO, 790, San Francisco; KJW, 120, Portland; KJR, 970, Seattle; KXK, 1030, Los Angeles; KDA, 830, Denver; KOIN, 540, Portland; KOMO, 920, Seattle; KPO, 630, San Francisco; KSL, 1120, Salt Lake.

STATIONS

8:00—Symphony Orch. KEX, KJR; Baseball, KGO; Music Hall, KPO; KGW, KFI; Major Shows, KNX, KOIN; KSL.

9:30—Voice of Camilla, KGO; Symphony Orch., KEX.

6:00—Barber Shop Quartet, KGO; Miller's Orch., KNX, KOIN, KSL; News, KEX.

6:30—News of the War, KNX, KOIN, KSL, Easy Aces, KGO, KEX, KJR.

7:00—Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KFI; Arno and Andy, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Kinney's Orch., KGO.

7:30—Musical Americana, KGO, KJR, KEX; Ask-It-Basket, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Good News of 1940, KPO, KFI, KGW.

8:00—Strange As It Seems, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Aldrich Family, KPO, KFI, KGW; News, KGO, KEX.

8:30—Symphony Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Herbeck's Orch., KSL; Answer Auction, KNX, KOIN.

9:00—Weems' Orch., KOMO; Paul Sullivan, KSL, KNX, KOIN; Avilon's Orch., KGO, KJR.

9:30—Rine's Orch., KNX, KOIN; Little's Orch., KGO.

10:00—Reporter, KPO, KGW, KFI; Goodman's Orch., KNX, KSL.

10:30—Safety First, KPO; Richards' Orch., KSL, KNX, KOIN; Fritzl's Orch., KGO, KEX.

11:00—Owens' Orch., KPO; This Morning World, KEX, Buss's Orch., KSL, KOIN; News, KGW, KNX, KFI.

Friday

5:00—Dant's Music, KGO, KJR, KEX; Waltz Time, KPO, KFI, KGW; Brazillan's Orch., KNX.

5:30—What's My Name?, KPO, KFI, KGW; Drama, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Drama, KGO, KJR.

6:00—Public Affairs, KNX, KSL; Don Amerhe, KPO, KFI, KGW; News, KEX; Filbert Filharmonic, KGO.

6:30—Al Pearce, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Quiz Kids, KPO, KFI, KGW; Grant Park Concert, KGO, KEX, KJR.

7:00—Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KFI; Arno and Andy, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Messner's Orch., KGO, KJR, KXK.

7:30—Johnny Presens' KNX, KOIN, KSL; Show Boat, KPO, KFI, KGW.

8:00—Treasure Island Varieties, KPO; Sports, KGO; Chester's Orch., KNX, KOIN, KSL; News Here and Abroad, KGW.

8:30—Death Valley Days, KPO, KGW, KFI; News, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Baseball Game, KEX.

9:00—Dorsey's Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI; Paul Sullivan, KNX, KSL, KOIN.

9:30—Young's Orch., KOIN; Music by Woodbury, KPO, KFI, KGW.

10:00—Reporter, KPO, KFI, KGW; Goodman's Orch., KNX.

10:30—Suey's Orch., KGO, KEX, KJR; Owen's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW.

HUNGARIAN NAZIS STRIKE AT JEWS

Budapest, July 4.—(P)—Segregation of Jews in special railway cars is one of the provisions of a new anti-Jewish bill introduced in parliament today by the Hungarian Nazi party.

The bill is even more drastic than Germany's Nuremberg law. It forbids Jews to: Drive automobiles. Become midwives. Hoist the Hungarian flag. Buy anything from a peasant. Sign any legal document.

In order to "restrict the propagation of Jews" in Hungary, the bill also provides that only the eldest sons and eldest daughters of Jewish families may marry.

RED SHINGLE DUTY POWER IS APPROVED

Washington, July 4.—(P)—A measure giving the federal government authority to impose a

duty on Canadian red cedar shingles was signed yesterday by President Roosevelt.

The duty of not more than 25 cents a hundred square feet may be imposed on all shingles imported in any calendar year in excess of 30 per cent of the average for the preceding three years.

1,200 Tomatoes.

Palmetto, Fla.—(UP)—Henry Clayre, research chemist here who conducts "backyard" experiments in chemical gardening, boasts a tomato vine 16 feet tall from which he has harvested 1,200 tomatoes.

LANA CLAIMS ARTIE HURT HER MENTALLY

Los Angeles, July 4.—(P)—Lana Turner, the college boys' film sweetheart, today filed suit for divorce from Artie Shaw, swing band leader.

Nineteen-year-old Lana charged the 29-year-old Shaw "has wrongfully inflicted upon the defendant grievous mental suffering."

Lana and Artie were married

in Las Vegas, Nev., last February 13, the day after their first "date."

Navy Buys Liners.

Washington, July 4.—(P)—The maritime commission said today it had sold to the navy department the former American mail liners President Jackson and President Grant. The vessels, with gross tonnage slightly in excess of 14,000 tons, were owned by the commission. They and the President McKinley and President Jefferson are laid up at Bremerton, Wash.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

by JOHN HIX

20,000 PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMERICAN LEGION ACTIVITIES IN 20 YEARS-- WERE TAKEN BY DR. LELAND C. BLAIR, AMATEUR CAMERA FAN!

- Post 307, North Hollywood, Calif. -

2-HEADED SNAKE-- WITH A SINGLE BODY AND 2 TAILS! - Reported by Dr. Bert Cunningham, Duke U., Durham, N.C. -

A "LINCOLN LOG CABIN" THERE IS ENTIRELY BUILT OF AMERICAN LOGS AND FURNISHINGS...

'CRACKER CARGO' When in 1738-87 Elias Hackett Derby's Salem ship, "Grand Turk," sailed to China and back, making the first deep-water voyage by an American vessel, she brought home as a curiosity a consignment of Chinese firecrackers.

PHOTO HOBBYIST In 20 years, Dr. Leland Blair, historian of the Los Angeles County American Legion Council, has compiled a complete record of the council's history, entirely from his hobby: collection of snapshots. He takes 1,000 pictures a year.

TOMORROW: Strangest Newspaper Plant!

THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

TAILSPIN TOMMY In the Danger Zone!

HEAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—No Sign of Him!

EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—He Can't Take It!

SOL NESS

By HAL FORREST

HEAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGER

EDWIN ALGER

By SOL NESS

SOL NESS

Texas for Willkie If F.D.R. Declines

Dallas, Texas, July 4.—(P)—A group of Roosevelt supporters reported today they had received state-wide response to a proposal that Democrats nominate Wendell Willkie at Chicago if the president declines to try for a third term.

60 Italian Planes Downed by British

Cair, July 4.—(P)—The British air force shot down 60 Italian planes in the near east in June and probably 25 others, an authoritative British source declared today.