

Casual Slaughterers

By VIRGINIA HANSON

...DAY: Kay finds the... again and decipher... Sandra's message—'Kay, Read... Lover's Return.' Assuring her... she starts to read the manu... script. Then, though a mirror... she sees that the doorknob is... turning.

Chapter 41

Time Stands Still

I had forgotten to latch that bedroom screen! I reached a wildly trembling hand to the light bulb of the lamp on the table and turned it until darkness fell like a heavy curtain. Then I slid out of my chair and down on all fours under the table. The chair teetered for an instant as I released my weight from it, then it crashed heavily to the floor.

I heard the door flung open against it, the clatter of metal on the polished floor and a muffled thud of a falling body—a thud made sickening and horrifying by the lack of any vocal accompaniment of grunts or curses. Only that silent, moving presence quietly disengaging itself from the fallen chair and preparing to stalk me.

If I could reach the corridor door— I began to crawl toward it, hoping my sense of direction would not fail me, praying that my shaking arms and legs would support me, fighting a stupefying terror at the knowledge that I was shut in with Sandra's murderer.

Silence now. I might have been alone in the room. I held my breath for fear it would betray me and my heartbeats shook my whole body. Then, almost simultaneously, there were two sounds—the faint creak of a board in the corridor, and the scratching of a match within the room.

Not two yards from me a small flame licked the darkness, showing me a white hand and a face that was black and blank except for two malevolent eyes. It was then that I lost all control and screamed. The flame described an arc in the air and went out. In the same instant steel hands were at my throat in a lunging attack that threw me violently backward, and my head was being beaten with dogged, diabolic intent against the hard, bare floor.

I heard the doorknob rattle and the drive of a body against the locked door. Then a bomb exploded in my head and I heard nothing more.

'Back To Stay'

I WENT places for a while. The screaming wind between the worlds caught me up and whirled me past Mars, past the flaming outer planets, and there abandoned me to the long plunge back to earth. Time stood still while I dived through space until I brought up quivering, with daylight striking me like a flying anvil between the eyes.

An involuntary groan shattered my skull into a thousand pieces, then I felt hands on my shoulders forcing me back and down, and I found that I still had a little fight left in me. "Hold it!" said a startled, familiar voice. My shoulders were pinned down, my arms pinioned. The shooting pains began to subside. Gradually came to me that there was a pillow under my tortured head, and that the voice was telling me that I was all right.

I opened my eyes a wary slit and saw Adam's face, ludicrously concerned, close to mine. I saw other things, too—familiar, unfamiliar walls, a screen in front of a window. The air smelled antiseptic. I began to draw conclusions, and to remember. It was coming back to me—that turning doorknob, the awful stalking in the dark. "Kay, don't you know me?" he was asking anxiously.

There must be something I ought to tell him while this moment of sanity lasted. "Lover's Return," I whispered. "Yes, dear, I'm back. Back to stay." There was a catch in his voice. He put his cheek, rough and unshaven, against mine. He was being very dense. And my head hurt.

He got up from the edge of the bed, and when I stole a glance at him presently he was pacing the floor. "Don't go so far away," I said, in a voice that insisted on fading to a whisper.

He came back then and took my hand between both of his. "I'm still scared," he said huskily. "You've been unconscious for eight hours. Your eyes were open and staring and you didn't seem to breathe. They said you'd be all right, but—I've been here all night. I swore I'd never leave you again if—"

Tears welled into his eyes. "Don't—please don't," I begged. "It wasn't your fault. And I feel quite well, really."

But he went on as if I had not spoken. "I knew what a fool I'd been when I read about Sandra in the afternoon papers. I was in Penn Station waiting for a train that would have brought me here this afternoon. I went to Mitchell Field instead and found an army pilot to fly me out here. And then I was too late. They were carrying you out to the ambulance when my taxi pulled up. They thought at first your skull was fractured—that mop of hair was all that saved you—"

"You can tell your redheaded grandchildren that," I murmured. He tried to laugh, but it wasn't a very successful effort.

A nurse came in then and took my pulse and my temperature and engaged in a brief argument with Adam in which he lost, of course.

He stood by the bed for a moment, looking down at me intently as if to assure himself that I was really there. "Go to sleep," he said huskily, then vanished through the door the nurse was pointedly holding open.

No Curiosity

I ATER in the morning Captain Jones came in with a strange gray-haired officer whom I had never seen. He proved to be the senior surgeon, just returned from leave. He was friendly and reassuring as he felt gently of my aching head, examined my eyes and asked me what seemed ridiculous questions until I remembered that they do that to football players who have been knocked out.

My neck was stiff, too, and for a moment I couldn't think why until I remembered those steel hands. The senior surgeon nodded when I told him about it but when he spoke it was across me, to Captain Jones. "Take a look at these bruises," he said dryly. "Nothing phony about them. Captain Jones, I saw with surprise, was very red. "And you might read that chapter on 'Malingering' in Ford's Military Medical Administration. Not that you'll find much application for it in peacetime," he added more tolerantly. "But it's interesting reading. Surprising to what lengths people will go to fake a disability. He says, if I remember correctly, that a copper penny, bound on with a cloth soaked in vinegar, leaves a very fair imitation of a bruise."

It was about then that I began to get the drift of the conversation. "You're talking about Sandra aren't you?" I demanded, and then remembered something. "So that was why she got the 'vintage' from the wall—and the doctor, Felicia said looked as if Jeff had been polishing brass with it."

The surgeon looked at me sharply. "Any idea why she should want to fake a black eye?" he asked. "Yes, Oh yes. To take out a grudge on Jeff. I'm glad I found that out. I don't feel so sorry for her now. She had potentialities didn't she?" "She did indeed," he paused, looked from Captain Jones to me in some embarrassment. "Of course I was only teasing the captain here for not having discovered the fake when he first examined the body. Anyone might have overlooked it. Matter of fact, he's had a good bit on his mind this past fortnight. Three violent deaths, and his wife very ill in Chicago. She's all right now, I'm glad to say, and the mother of a fine boy. The scamp arrived ahead of schedule, otherwise I wouldn't have been on leave—"

I congratulated the captain and saw that he looked nicer when he smiled. Then the surgeon delivered his opinion that I was in my right mind and had nothing to worry about. X-rays taken during the night showed no fracture; my coma had probably been due ninety per cent to shock. I should remain in bed for a few days to give any mild concussion time to subside, otherwise I would go to the hospital. They went away, and I partook sparingly of a modest lunch. Afterward I slept. In my dazed mental state I had no curiosity about the night's events. It was easier to lie there, safe and thankful, thinking of nothing but my aches and pains and the blessing of being alive.

To be continued.

On the Radio Chains

Where to Find Them on the Dial: KEX, 1160, Portland; KFI, 940, Los Angeles; KGA, 1470, Spokane; KGO, 720, San Francisco; KGW, 130, Portland; KJR, 970, Seattle; KNX, 1050, Los Angeles; KOA, 830, Denver; KOIN, 540, Portland; KOMO, 830, Seattle; KPO, 630, San Francisco; KSL, 1130, Salt Lake.

STATIONS
Where to Find Them on the Dial:
KEX, 1160, Portland; KFI, 940, Los Angeles; KGA, 1470, Spokane; KGO, 720, San Francisco; KGW, 130, Portland; KJR, 970, Seattle; KNX, 1050, Los Angeles; KOA, 830, Denver; KOIN, 540, Portland; KOMO, 830, Seattle; KPO, 630, San Francisco; KSL, 1130, Salt Lake.

Sunday
8:00—Ford Summer Hour, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Manhattan Merry-Go-Round, KPO, KGW; Our Musical Heritage, KGO, KJR, KEX.
8:30—Album of Familiar Music, KPO, KGW; Paul Carson, KGO, KJR, KEX.
9:00—Take It or Leave It, KSL, KOIN; Goodwill Hour, KGO, KEX, KJR; Hour of Charm, KPO, KGW.
9:30—Carnival, KPO, KGW; Grant Park Concert, KOIN, KSL, KNX.
10:00—Chansonette, KGO, KEX; Regal Amblings, KPO; Crime Doctor, KSL, KOIN; Garr's Orch., KGO.
10:15—Tucker's Orch., KOMO; Irens Rich, KPO, KGW.
10:30—Wagon Days, KPO; James' Orch., KGO; Kenny's Orch., KGO, KJR; Coraby's Orch., KNX.
10:45—Busse's Orch., KNX; Kallenborn, KPO, KGW; News, KGO.
11:00—Dance Orch., KOIN; Sports Newsreel, KGO, KEX, KJR; Night Editor, KPO, KGW.
11:15—Shilton's Orch., KPO, KGW; Garber's Orch., KNX; Shilton's Orch., KGO, KJR.
11:30—Cline's Orch., KPO, KGW; Sanctuary, KGO, KEX; Agular's Orch., KNX, KOIN.

Monday
8:00—Forecast, KSL, KNX, KOIN; Quiz Program, KPO, KGW; Green Hornet, KGO, KEX, KJR.
8:30—Martin's Music, KGO, KJR, KEX.
9:00—News, KNX; Hour, KPO, KGW; Violinist, KGO, Lombardo's Orch., KNX, KOIN, KSL.
9:30—Burns and Allen, KPO, KGW; Blondie, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Adventure in Reading, KGO, KEX.
10:00—Amos and Andy, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Fred Waring, KPO, KGW; Three Songs, KGO, KEX.
10:30—Washington Merry-Go-Round, KGO, KEX, KJR; Where and When, KPO, KGW; News, KNX, KSL, KOIN.
11:00—Show Boat, KPO, KGW; Passing Parade, KGO; Kemp's Orch., KOIN.
11:30—Hawthorne House, KPO, KGW; King's Orch., KOIN, KSL, KNX; Priml, KEX, KJR.
12:00—Paul Sullivan, KSL, KNX, KOIN; Little O' Hollywood, KEX; Classics for Today, KPO, KGW.
12:30—Cline's Orch., KGO, KEX; Lotner's Orch., KNX, KOIN.
1:00—Crosby's Orch., KNX, KSL; Reporter, KPO, KGW; Dancing with Glancy, KGO, KJR, KEX.
1:30—Duchin's Orch., KGO, KEX, KJR; Kent's Orch., KSL, KNX, KOIN; 11:00—Biltmore Boys, KPO; Paul Carson, KEX; Row Songs, KOIN, KSL; News, KGO, KGW, KNX.

CHILD REFUGEE MOVE IS SCORED

Indianapolis, Aug. 10.—(P)—Homer Chaillaux, director of Americanism of the American Legion, disapproves of proposals to provide asylum for refugee children from England in the United States. "A lot of us have fallen for that tommyrot—the poor little kiddies of Europe," he told the national convention of the Military Order of the Purple Heart last night. "In the first place, we have 2,000,000 boys and girls of our own who are juvenile delinquents for economic and social reasons. Let's solve that problem first. "But that's not the most important reason. Just a few hundred of these children are from good English families. These are the ones who are being publicized. The rest are refugee children of the loyalist group in Spain, who were driven from that country because their parents were communists."

BURGUNDER EXECUTED FOR SHOOTING TWO IN EFFORT TO GET AUTO

Florence, Ariz., Aug. 10.—(P)—Nonchalant Robert Burgunder went to his death in the lethal gas chamber Friday with a confession on his lips. As he was being strapped to the wooden seat in the little white execution chamber of the Arizona penitentiary, Burgunder, son of a former county prosecutor in Seattle, chewing gum all the while, said: "I admit the killings. I never tried to defend myself." Then the steel door was slammed and the cyanide pellets dropped into a container of acid at the feet of the 23-year-old former college orator. As the wisps of blue fumes lifted upward, Burgunder breathed deeply without the convulsions of most executed men he died at 5:10 a. m., seven minutes after his entrance into the death chamber.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS

Shanghai, Aug. 9.—(P)—Ma You-Feng, described as a lieutenant of Wang China-Wei, head of the Japanese-dominated Nanking regime, was shot to death tonight in the international settlement by an assassin who escaped.

PUPPET ASSASSINATED

Shanghai, Aug. 9.—(P)—Ma You-Feng, described as a lieutenant of Wang China-Wei, head of the Japanese-dominated Nanking regime, was shot to death tonight in the international settlement by an assassin who escaped.

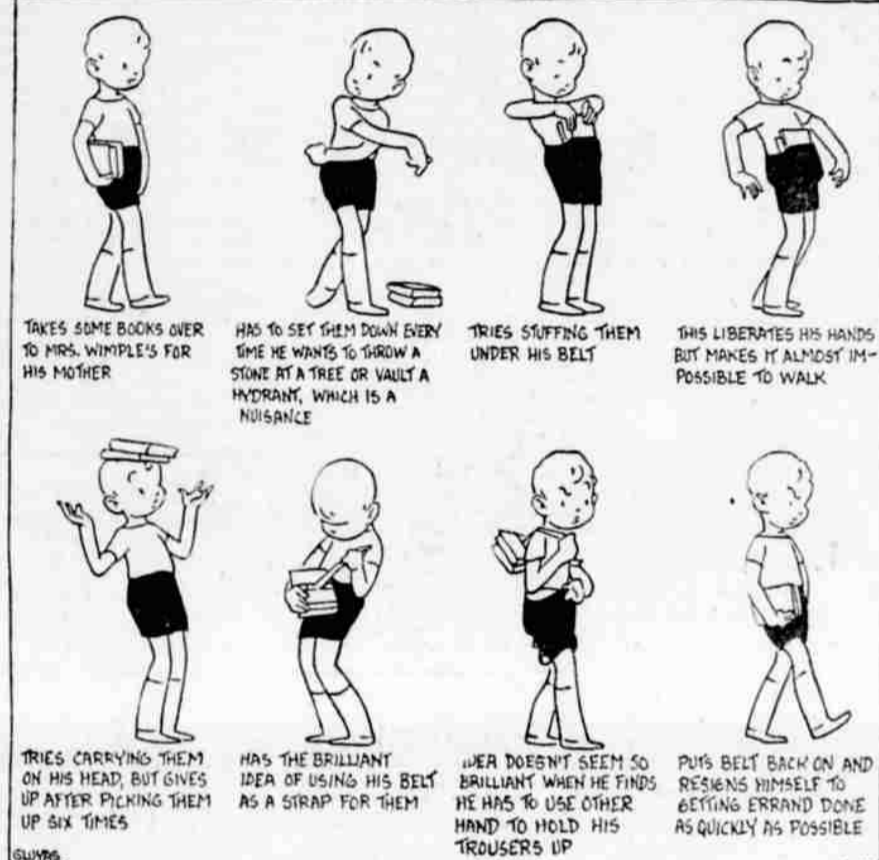
DOG DONOR!

WEE DEATH VALLEY SCOTTY-- HAS GIVEN 28 BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS TO OTHER DOGS, SAVING 25 LIVES! -- Owned by Miss Floy Appleby Elgin, Ill. --



BOOK CARRIER

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Castroni Falls into the Trap



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What a Scrap!



THE NEBBS—I Know You



DOG DONOR

When six months old, "Wee Death Valley Scotty" fought and killed a Boston bull terrier, but tried to save his life by giving a blood transfusion. To atone for his fight, Miss Floy Appleby, his owner, has allowed him to give 27 other transfusions to dogs in need of blood, resulting in the saving of 25 dog lives. ONE-DAY VICE-PRESIDENT Forged by ill health to go to Cuba immediately after his election, Vice-President William Rufus King was permitted to take oath of office there by special act of congress. He died the day after returning to the United States, April 18, 1853. MONDAY: Gamblers' Church.

DOG DONOR



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What a Scrap!



THE NEBBS—I Know You



LABORITES REFUSE DRAFT OPPOSITION

Boston, Aug. 10.—(A)—The Massachusetts Federation of Labor by a 259 to 8 vote, crushed today a resolution opposing conscription of American men for national defense. The action was taken after Harry A. Russell, chairman of the resolutions committee, in opposing the measure, asserted that the attitude on conscription of the Moscow government in Russia and that of communists in the United States were at wide variance. He told the delegates that it was "the distinct policy of the Moscow government to favor conscription" while "the policy of the communist party in America is against conscription." "Think that over," he said. "Let's not kid ourselves. I don't want history to say that the American labor movement stymied and hindered the defense of democracy." Logan, an American Indian, once delivered a short, bitter speech that has been rated at the very top as a sample of eloquence. Closing time for Too Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.