

# CRUISE TO NOWHERE

By Deck Morgan

**BEGIN HERE TODAY**

JANE WESTON feels her dreams have come true when she sets out on a three-day ocean cruise. She accepted in payment the magazine for which she writes as a typical suspended publication.

On board the ship, she meets handsome DIRK STROM, expert ski jumper, as penniless as herself. The two are attracted to each other. Then a misunderstanding comes between them. Jane is attracted by the attentions of TINO ROSSI, opera singer, and Dirk becomes the frequent escort of NOVA LANE, famous actress and owner of the Kokinor diamond.

Others among the passengers are SNOWSHOES, a detective; MADAME DOREUM, a fortune teller; and MANNIE JACKSON, a blackmailer. KEN MARTIN is a Lindbergh-like flyer, floor show entertainer. Snowshoes takes charge of the investigation. Most of the passengers are not aware of the murder, though they know of the theft.

Leaving Nassau behind, a storm comes up that threatens to become a hurricane. Strom, Jane and other passengers get their life belts. Madame Doreum reports that Millie, her companion, is missing.

Linda and Jane, in Linda's stateroom, see a masked man enter, then disappear. Jane is telling Snowshoes about this when a shot is heard and the passengers rush to the doors and see Dutch Lens swept overboard.

## NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER XXIII

THE shooting of Dutch Lens brought about panic among the passengers. Their murmurs rose crescendo, but the fresh onslaught of the storm battering another life boat from its davits and hurling it out to sea, brought about a more active sense of their danger. They began to mill about aimlessly.

They had been calm, but now they moved about, chattering like shrieking monkeys. Rumors flew. Why had there been reports from the bridge? Had the ship been driven off the course—inside the reef? Were they all doomed?

It was suddenly every man for himself. It was a mad scene of fear, stark and in some cases, abject. For some reason the men crowded out of the bar. The alcoholic spirits inside them no longer compensated for the lack of life preservers about their waists.

Instinctively the family groups drew closer together, clutching their life belts as if they were afraid of having them torn away. But no such move came from the men. In the moment of greatest danger they merely sought the companionship of human beings in the lounge.

Two of the ship's officers, their oil-skins dripping water, circulated about and tried to calm the people. There was no relaxation in the stern cockpit, the crew maintained, but the passengers misinterpreted these gestures.

But the orchestra played on. Ken Martin, recovered from his blow and sensing renewed panic in the crowd, began to sing, and Linda Bayes watched him. She joined him, and hand in hand they sang, high above the huddled groups of people. Some of their courage went out to the audience. Two lovers in the storm, they had come together. Linda had proved her love for him at last! Ken was content.

THE detective wanted to ask Linda if she knew anything about the person who had started to strangle her in her stateroom, but he questioned Jane instead.

"You didn't recognize the man?" he said. "Are you sure it was a man?"

"Of course it was a man!" Jane said, "but he was masked, and had a rap pulled down. I couldn't tell whether I had ever seen him before. It all happened so quickly, and the lights were dim. He had on a heavy coat, and he looked rather large, bulged out. I don't think he knew I was in the stateroom with Linda. The roll of the ship flung him against the wall, and saved her from—"

"I believe there's only one man in this," Snowshoes said. "The man who killed Marnie Jackson, stole the Kokinor diamond, and then to cover up his crime made attempts on the lives—successful in one instance—of Dutch Lens and Linda Bayes, is that man. He's aboard the ship."

"Dutch Lens may have committed the first crime," Dirk said obstinately. "Now he's dead. The Kokinor may have changed hands."

But then Snowshoes looked more puzzled than ever. Jane watched him, for her own mind was racing along impossible channels. The detective said suddenly, "If Dutch Lens didn't send that note to Linda Bayes, who did? Who else could it have been? Somebody ashore in Nassau," he added quickly. Then his eyes had a sudden light in them, and he said, low: "There is a passenger on board this ship who is not a passenger. He is the corpse! And he's walking around on two legs like any of the rest of us."

Jane was aghast. "You mean, a man came on board in that long black box? Somebody ashore—"

"That's just it!" Snowshoes said. "It could have been arranged. We'll have to question the ship's officers who had the body in charge, but they're on duty duty now, trying to maneuver this ship through the storm—"

"But if there is another man in the crime, who stole the Kokinor diamond from Nora Lane's suite?" Jane said. "Where is Millie?"

SNOWSHOES was rubbing his bald spot again, and he had to grin with discouragement. "I think I'll just go round up the corpse, and let the rest go hang until the storm is over. I don't like the idea of a corpse running around below."

With Dirk at his side the detective went down to Deck B, and cautiously approached the stateroom where Linda had been attacked by the masked man. The ship took a bad roll once, and they were thrown into a heap on the floor, while the lights dimmed completely and then glowed feebly again.

They were lying there, breathlessly still, when they heard a sound of tapping in the passage-way.

They lay still, and listened. There it was again, and it sounded more than a tap. Something was being banged against the door of a steward's linen closet.

They approached the closet with due caution. There was a simple lock on it that might have slammed shut. The key was in it. But there was undoubtedly some person behind that door, trying desperately to get out.

Dirk propped himself in the aisle, and Snowshoes unlocked the door, flinging it open. Something tumbled out heading and lay on the floor, uttering one shrill cry which was lost in the noise of the hurricane.

"Why, it's Millie!" the detective said, but before they could touch her she ran away from them, up the stairs and into the lounge.

They ran after her and caught up with her just as she flung herself, sobbing bitterly, at Madame's feet. She clung to the old dowager and handed the jewel-box to her.

"Millie, what have you done?" Madame was saying.

"The companion was almost hysterical. 'I've been locked up in that closet for hours,' she sobbed. 'I thought I was going to die. I screamed, and screamed, and nobody could hear me. I was running from him, and climbed in the closet to hide. When I closed the door I was locked in—'

"Running from whom?" the detective said.

"That man! They woke me up, the stewards running up and down when the storm started. I wasn't quite sure what it was, but I heard a noise in the suite next door. They were dragging something heavy over the floor. It was in the room where they put that corpse! I was shaking all over, and hid my head under the covers for a long time. But then I heard something in Madame's bedroom, and I got really scared. I thought it might be the thing—come to life again. I put on my dressing gown and went in. When I saw the thing—it wore a mask and was poking around in the dark—I ran to Madame's pillow, and snatched up the jewels. She can't hear well, and didn't wake up. I got by the thing to the outside door and ran down the deck and got away from him. There were so many people running up and down. I saw that closet open, and climbed in. I don't know whether he followed me or not, I was so scared.

Madame was murmuring, "You poor child, you risked your life to save my jewels!" when Millie broke down. "I don't want to 'own,' she sobbed, brokenly. 'I haven't got a life preserver. Everybody else has one but me. The ship's sinking, I know. And I was locked up in that black hole, going to drown, drown—'

The detective said, sighing, "Well, at least we don't have to find your jewels, Madame? They're safe."

They paused while the ship went through one of those herculean shudders again.

But suddenly the detective knit his brows closely together. "We haven't a single clue," he said. "This man is interested in diamonds and won't stop at murder to get them. But we're stumped. It may be any one of these suspicious-looking louts on board. We can't keep track of them in this storm. And it may be the corpse that walks like a man, and throws his coffin overboard in the storm," he ended unhappily.

The old dowager scoffed. "There have been queer doings on this ship since I came on board. I wouldn't be surprised at anything. Let it walk! Nothing bothers me any more. If I've stood this much excitement my heart is good for a few years more—"

"We won't find the murderer until we find the Kokinor diamond," Snowshoes insisted stubbornly. "And it may have changed hands on a shipboard. And I'll probably show up in a diamond cutter's shop in Amsterdam, in a dozen pieces."

(To Be Continued)

Movies in which actors "stand out from the screen" and appear in relief have been produced with experimental apparatus devised by Dr. Herbert Ives, in New York.

A British phonograph dealer has rigged up a horn attachment on the mouthpieces of his telephone. Customers can call, have any selection played, and choose any records they like after hearing them.

Physicians were encouraged when the girl who had been laughing for more than a week began to giggle. A high school lad can tell you she's normal.

**Flapper Fannie Says**

Adventures in buying a hat make a topping story.

## OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By J. R. WILLIAMS



## MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE

By THOMPSON AND COLL



## LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

By HAROLD GRAY



## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By BLOSSER



## WASH TUBBS

By CRANE



## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By MARTIN

