● SERIAL STORY

GHOST DETOUR

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BY OREN ARNOLD

Yesterday: Franklin checks fingerprints and finds those in the Goldcrest bank are those of Carl Quait, bank robber, ex-convict. Franklin hurries back to Goldcrest to warn his co-workers. He does not tell the sheriff of his discovery.

CHAPTER X

THE wail would have been frightening if it had been heard on Broadway in daylight, but here in a 50-year-old ghost town by darkness it was positively terrifying.

"Ro-se-lee!" murmured Christine, tremulously, grasping her friend's arm.

Both girls sat tense for a long moment, listening, staring. The jail dungeon remained a black splotch on the hillside, but shortly after the wail came a new sort of noise. This time it was a thumping and a guttural melange of voices as of men laboring under stress.

Clank! Something heavy struck the jail's metal bars. Somebody cursed.

"Dick's in there!" Roselee breathed. "Dick! . . . In there!"

Of one accord the girls got to their feet and started toward the place, half walking, half running, fearfully, anxious yet afraid.

Splat! Plop and thump and heave and groan—the sound now was distinctly that of men fighting. The girls stood as if spellbound, peering inside the jail doorway, not daring to enter but unable to leave. They could see nothing in the darkness but the noises made a vivid picture themselves. For one thing Dick Bancroft's words began to become intelligible in snatches.

"O . . . kay . . . brother . . . you . . . unh! . . . you . . . asked for it . . . now . . . now you're . . . gonna . . . GET it!"

• • •

THE "get" was punctuated by what must have been a hard fist blow. Instantly came a quick slap-slap-slap as of footsteps, and a crash into a wall. Iron grillwork rattled. Dust too was now floating even to the outer door of the jail.

It must have been Dick who had got in that hard blow. After the grillwork clanged, comparative quiet reigned for several seconds. The girls could hear sounds of breathing, almost a gasping in fact. But the commotion at least was ended.

"Oouw, you're . . . breaking it!"

This outcry was from a man obviously in intense pain. They did not recognize the voice.

"You bet I'll break it!" Dick exclaimed, then paused to breathe heavily again. "I'll break it . . . unless . . . you do as I . . . say. Whew!"

"Let . . . let me up." The other combatant really was suffering, his voice revealed.

Dick waited several seconds the better to catch his breath before answering. He could talk more distinctly then. "Not—not until I find out who you are, what's your name."

No answer was heard, and then there was a sudden slap, hard, and another outcry.

"You tried scaring the wrong guy, mister," Dick spoke again then. "You sounded like a ghost, but you don't feel like one. So you finally came for the money, eh?"

"No. What money?"

"What do you mean, 'what money'? I'm not dumb. Talk sense—or else!"

"For God's sake—unh-h-h-h—what do you want—to know?"

"Everything. Talk, man, or I'll break it! Talk!"

"My name . . . is . . . is . . . oh God, man, don't! My name is Packman, from the Western Metals and Minerals Corporation . . . I came—to scare the Dale girl!"

"You did what? You—are you L. J. Packman, M. and M. field manager?"

"Yes!"

"You better be able to prove it, mister, or it'll be too bad. Did you put that money there?"

"I don't know anything about any money." He was still breathing heavily, speaking brokenly, in great strain. "Our lawyer—tried to—tried to pay the Dale girl a profit—she wouldn't—she turned us down."

"Go on," commanded Dick.

"I came in, with some tourists, to look around. I heard her say—heard her say she would clean out the jail tonight. So I—I came to try to scare her away. Frighten her."

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THERE was a long pause.

"I don't get it," said Dick, then.

"She wouldn't sell. Goldcrest—has valuable ore. Two assays were sent to us from Briscoe and Son. Both said the ore from here was—valuable. One amounts to a rich strike. Now—let me go! Let me—"

"Well I'll be—I'll be . . ." Dick went on excitedly. "You're really Packman, eh? I'll know you in the light. It better be true. So there were two assay reports from Briscoe. How come two? Talk!"

"I don't—know! One was on reworked ore. Old ore. One was a new specimen."

"Um. What'd the old ore show? How rich?"

"Six dollars—a—ton." He was still breathing in gasps.

"Six bucks! Sa-a-ay! What the devil did Briscoe send it to you for? You sold Goldcrest. Oh! I get it. You wanted to scare Roselee Dale into selling out again—So the company could cash in on the new discovery. Well listen, buddy, I sent in those samples. One of them, at least. I don't know about a second one but I knew about reworking that old ore. I know it can be reworked at even a dollar a ton profitably. I was going to investigate it thoroughly and see what kind of deal we might make with Western M. and M., but I'll be doggoned if I have anything at all to do with you now. I don't like your kind of baseball. Now if I take you out of here and you aren't Packman, your name's mud, and your neck's going to be. Understand? But if you are Packman, then I don't want anything else to do with you. I aim to kick you down this mountain slope, and if you ever come back here again I'll—well.

"Well, move along now," Dick finished. "And no monkey business if you wanta live and do well."

There were sounds of bodies moving, and the two girls instinctively jumped back out of sight in the shadows beside a boulder. Dick and his adversary came outside, Dick grasping the other man's arm in a wrestler's hold.

"You mentioned money," the other man said. "I could pay you."

"Skip that," Dick answered. "I wasn't hinting about any bribe, mister. Yeah, you're Packman, I can see. But I wouldn't have thought it of you. Now start running, and when you stop you'd better be out of sight, forever."

He gave the man a shove and Packman began running, indeed. The girls, hardly daring to breathe, saw Dick stand arms akimbo for a long minute watching the other man flee. Then Dick slapped his hands together as if cleansing them, turned and walked back into the ghost town jail.

(To Be Continued)

Oh, Look, Daddy!

In role of fond father, Gary Cooper carries his little daughter from train at Grand Central terminal, as Maria turns head to take a look at big city life. Cooper and family are in New York on vacation.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia

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"Oh, I wouldn't dream of letting anybody else teach me to swim—remember how long it took last summer?"

MODERN WRITER

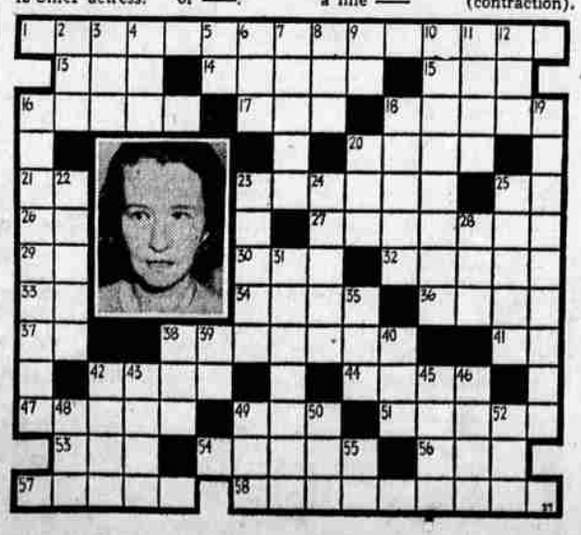
HORIZONTAL

1 Edna ——, modern poetess.
13 To be ill.
14 Fish.
15 Electrified atom.
16 To promote.
17 To fit up.
18 Tedium.
20 Booty.
21 Plural pronoun.
23 To be proper.
25 Spain.
26 Company.
27 Vigilant.
29 Indian mulberry.
30 Wine vessel.
32 Sleeper's noise.
33 Toward.
34 Jargon.
36 To be prolific.
37 Exists.
38 Bureau.
41 Note in scale.
42 Chief actress.
44 Flat round plate.
47 Native.
49 Garden vegetable.
51 Aside.
53 Water sprite.
54 Mohammedan nymph.
56 Poem.
57 She is a writer of fine —— poetry.
58 She is also a playwright or ——.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

VERTICAL

2 Assessment.
3 By way of.
4 Indisposed.
5 Court.
6 To miss an aim.
7 Din.
8 Towboat.
9 Mountain.
10 Surgical lint.
11 To yearn.
12 God of sky.
16 She has had a fine ——
18 Water pitchers.
19 Tool.
20 The deep.
22 Songs for one voice.
23 Bitstock.
24 Scrutinizes.
25 More confident.
28 Enemy.
31 Man who does massaging.
35 To scatter hay.
38 Split pulse.
39 Railroad.
40 Inlet.
42 Bustle.
43 Cab.
45 Stain.
46 Mohammedan judge.
48 Some.
49 Legume.
50 Constellation.
52 Thing.
55 I am (contraction).



OUT OUR WAY — BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE — With MAJOR HOOPLE

BY FRED HARMAN

RED RYDER

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

BY HAROLD GRAY

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

BY BLOSSER

WASH TUBBS

BY CRANE

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

BY MARTIN

ALLEY OOP

BY V. T. HAMLIN