

SERIAL STORY

MEXICAN MASQUERADE

BY CECIL CARNES

COPYRIGHT, 1942, NEA SERVICE, INC.

STATE OF SIEGE

CHAPTER XVI

How do you happen to have the transcript of that cable, Colonel? Allan asked.

You have seen me excuse myself each evening after dark. It was to go down to the shore and receive a water-tight cylinder of reports from a Peninsula Indian who swims them down from a point five miles up the gulf.

I don't believe a shark would bite a Peninsula Indian, said Escobar thoughtfully. I wouldn't care to myself. However, that is how I received the copy even before De Fontanelle received the original.

But, Colonel, interjected Kay, her eyes opening at him, if this Indian comes every night, why hasn't he brought a boat in which you could have escaped to the mainland and arranged for our rescue?

I could have done no more out in the world than I am doing here, senorita, believe me. If I should go, our enemies would smell a rat and perhaps destroy you people as any criminal destroys evidence.

In other words still, mused Allan, regarding the ruse thoughtfully, Escobar was quite simply risking his life rather than leave them to face the angry Japanese alone. Their truculence had been growing, too, as the radio brought news of steadily increasing tension in the Orient between the United States and Japan.

Permit me to tell you, Colonel, said Allan slowly, one thing I have learned down here: if we get into this war and you fellows come in with us, we'll have an ally whose efficiency will amaze the world.

Why, thank you, senor, thank you! And never doubt for a moment, if you go in, we'll be there with you!

The next morning, barely an hour after dawn, Allan awoke from a dream of battlefields in Russia. A few seconds he lay drowsing, then sprang from his bed to his feet in one jump. Machine guns! The usually quiet morning was being turned into a hell of noise by the sharp chatter of machine guns! Dozens of them, it sounded like!

A spurred step, grown familiar, rang in the corridor. The colonel stood in the doorway, smiling and pulling at his mustache.

Hola! Get up, sleepy-head! You're missing a battle! What the devil is it? cried Allan, clawing on clothing with both hands. Have the U. S. Marines landed?

You were expecting them, perhaps? No, senor, it is only a body of roughly clad fellows who are attacking the main island from the Peninsula shore. The cannery has made many bitter enemies among the local fishermen, you understand. Or they may be just bandits.

Bandits! With machine guns? Mexican bandits, too, are efficient, said Escobar blandly. Then he laughed suddenly at Allan's expression and threw out his slender hands in a gesture of surrender. No, my friend, I will be frank with you. What you are about to witness is an affair of international diplomacy.

Diplomacy! With brass knuckles?

In a sense, it is this way, senor: Mexico discovers a Japanese outfit grossly violating her neutrality. If she protests to Japan, what happens? Japan smiles; she is so sorry, but she cannot hold herself responsible for the acts of unofficial Japanese. So the Mexican bandits wipe out the unofficial Japanese, and the Japanese protests are we, nationally, responsible for a stray bunch of outlaws? You see?

My aunt! Well, who are these fellows, then? My own regiment of rurales, senor. They have ridden here from Ensenada to rescue their colonel and his friends! They will show you, I hope, that a Mexican rurale can land as effectively as your Marines!

They hastened to the foyer, whence they might have a full view of the hostilities without exposing themselves to stray bullets. Kay was already there, staring at the scene before her in bewilderment. Escobar thoughtfully brought chairs, observing they could consider themselves as having a stage box for the coming show. It should, he said, be good.

It was good; so Allan decided as he settled with quickening pulse to watch the first real battle he had ever seen. Meanwhile, in a low incisive tone that carried beneath the inferno of noise, the rurale added a few details to the story he had told Allan. He had, it appeared, been up at dawn when the bandits arrived.

They sent a flag of truce—three men and an officer—to demand the unconditional surrender of the island. Watanabe rejected the notion with scorn. The flag went back. As the four men stepped on the beach, a machine gun opened on them from the island, killing or wounding all of them. The flag party, you understand!

The yellow devils! growled Allan.

They will be sorry, predicted Escobar softly. Our fellows will remember that when the time comes!

The happy moment, however, hardly seemed imminent. On the

shore, men and guns were sheltered cunningly behind boulders and in the scrub. A black muzzle would appear from a cleft rock, discharge a raking burst of bullets that combed the island, then disappear to come out again at another spot. On the island, innocent looking rocks would be revealed abruptly as pillboxes, spitting flame and smoke and singing lead. But neither side could penetrate the other's defense of stone and concrete.

Devil take it! grumbled the colonel. I knew they had fortified the place; I didn't know they had converted it into a Gibraltar! At the end of an hour he was knitting his brows; at the end of two, he was biting his nails; at the end of three, he was actually chewing his mustache. Then Allan clutched at his arm and pointed to the western sky.

Look, Escobar! Look! One minute it was a tiny speck. The next, it was a plane. Then suddenly it was a huge amphibian bomber which was power-driven at the men on the peninsula even before they were aware of the death overhead. No bombs were dropped—Allan remembered what Dr. Sargent had said about the sensitive quality of the new explosive—but from each flank of the great plane, and from its bow, guns spat destruction on the scurrying figures below.

The ship straightened out, soared aloft, came streaking down again. It was more than flesh and blood could stand. The Mexicans scattered and ran, searching madly for crevices in the rocks in which they might hide. For the moment, the siege of the cannery was definitely lifted. As if scorned to pursue the fugitives, the bomber circled the spot once or

twice, then dropped softly to the blue waters of the gulf. It taxied to within 50 feet of the island's main pier, then stopped. For the first time Allan could make out the insignia of the fuselage. A great black swastika! (To Be Continued)

AUTOMOTIVE HINT

Dirt, or dead insects, should never be poked out of the radiator or core of an automobile, as this is destructive to the delicate cells. Instead, the hood should be lifted and a hose placed between the cells to force out the foreign matter with water pressure.

Vast quantities of the things we need could be brought to light by a concerted spring house-keeping on the part of everybody. —Lessing J. Rosenwald, chief of War Production Board's bureau of industrial conservation.

NEED A SUIT RIGHT NOW?

IF YOU DO, REMEMBER THAT YOUR

CREDIT

IS GOOD HERE! AS LONG AS 90 DAYS TO PAY

OREGON WOOLEN STORE

8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

Advertisement for 'This Curious World' featuring a man in a striped suit and a locust. Text includes '\$37.50 WILL BUY A FIFTY DOLLAR DEFENSE SAVINGS BOND IN THE U.S.A. OR A WIFE IN YORUBA-LAND, AFRICA.' and '17-YEAR LOCUST HAS A SOUTHERN COUSIN... IT MATURES FOUR YEARS SOONER AND IS KNOWN AS A 13-YEAR LOCUST.'

'FIRST DOG OF LAND'

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for 'FIRST DOG OF LAND' and other words. Clues include '11 Giraffe-like ruminant', '13 Ventilator', '15 Takes down at one swallow', '17 Relevant', '20 He belongs to President', '22 Sets of three', '24 Ostioles (anat.)', '26 Quintessence', '28 Incline', '23 Visionary', '24 Inhuman', '26 Puff up', '28 Fragrant oleoresin', '29 Courageous', '42 Flower', '43 Coal scuttle', '44 Paradise', '47 Vocative (abbr.)', '49 52 (Roman)', '51 Symbol for cobalt', '53 Lieutenant tellurium (abbr.)', '39 Species of pepper', '40 Abstract being', '41 Peacher', '45 Winglike part', '46 Siamese coin', '47 Interdiction', '48 Pertaining to land ownership', '50 Size of shot', '51 State of profound insensibility (pl.)', '52 Satan', '39 Species of pepper', '40 Abstract being', '41 Peacher', '45 Winglike part', '46 Siamese coin', '47 Interdiction', '48 Pertaining to land ownership', '50 Size of shot', '51 State of profound insensibility (pl.)', '52 Satan', '39 Species of pepper', '40 Abstract being', '41 Peacher', '45 Winglike part', '46 Siamese coin', '47 Interdiction', '48 Pertaining to land ownership', '50 Size of shot', '51 State of profound insensibility (pl.)', '52 Satan'.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams

Comic strip 'Out Our Way' showing a man running through a town. Speech bubbles: 'LOOKIT THIS! GOT A BLACK PANTHER THIS YEAR! OH, AN' LOOK HERE—BOY!', 'OPEN IT WAY OUT—GOSH, AIN'T GIRAFFES PURTY, THOUGH UNROLL IT OUT AN' LOOK FER TH' DATE!', 'YOU KIDS ARE GONNA GIT A SWAT WITH THAT BRUSH! I TOLD YOU TO LET THEM ALONE --CAN'T YOU WAIT TILL I PUT 'EM UP?'.

RED RYDER

Comic strip 'Red Ryder' showing Red Ryder and Miss Peggie. Speech bubbles: 'I INSIST YOU GO TO THE DANCE, RED! PEGGIE AIN'T REALLY MAD AT YOU!', 'RECKON I JUST DON'T SAVVY WOMEN!', 'HMMM...MISS PEGGIE AIN'T THE ONLY WOMAN, RED! NO ONE'S ASKED ME TO THE DANCE!'.

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

Comic strip 'Boots and Her Buddies' showing Boots and her friends. Speech bubbles: 'WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS EVENING, BOOTS?', 'DATING A YOUNG FLYER WHO'S HOME ON A FEW DAYS LEAVE', 'YOU KNOW, CORA—I JUST DON'T FEEL RIGHT... DANCING AND STROLLING THROUGH THE PARK, WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH UNHAPPINESS IN THE WORLD'.

WASH TUBS

Comic strip 'Wash Tubs' showing a man and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'AH, POOR DIABLO! THE OLD WARRIOR IS GROWING ILL. THERE IS NOTHING TO SHOW FOR ALL HIS FIGHTING SCARS', 'SO IT IS WITH ME. ONLY IN PEACE DID WE OF THIS VALLEY BECOME PROSPEROUS, HAPPY AND VIRTUALLY FREE. THEREFORE, LET US REMAIN AT PEACE'.

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

Comic strip 'Freckles and His Friends' showing Freckles and his friends. Speech bubbles: 'WHEN SHE HEARS YOUR SIDE OF IT, SHE'LL BE SORRY!', 'SHE WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME!', 'WHY DON'T YOU MAKE HER JEALOUS PAL? TAKE JUDY OUT AND DELIBERATELY BUMP INTO JUNE AND FROSTY'.

ALLEY OOP

Comic strip 'Alley Oop' showing Alley Oop and his friends. Speech bubbles: 'ME, AN ALIEN? WHAT'S ME BEIN' A MOOVIAN GOT T' DO WITH IT?', 'I TELL YOU, I WANT A FIGHT!', 'I'M A DAD-FIGHTIN' MAN AN' I WANT A GIT INTO TH' ARMY!', 'NOW LET'S NOT GET EXCITED, MISTER OOP... ALL I CAN DO IS TO SUGGEST YOU TAKE THIS MATTER UP WITH YOUR LOCAL DRAFT BOARD'.

OUR BOARDING HOUSE, with Major Hoople

Comic strip 'Our Boarding House' showing Major Hoople and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'EGAD! I RECEIVED A REMARKABLE LETTER FROM THE MAJOR TODAY, BUSTER! (MUMBLE-MUMBLE) HE WANTS ME TO COME TO CITY HALL... HE'S GOT A NUMBER OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS WISH TO BESTOW AN APPROPRIATE AWARD ON "OUR CITY'S MOST VIGILANT CITIZEN!"', 'HMM! I TRUST THE AWARD IS IN THE FORM OF CASH RATHER THAN SOME BAUBLE FOR THE MANTLE!', 'SOUNDS LIKE A DECORATION, MAJOR! I'M VERY HANDY TO HIDE THAT EGG SPOT ON YOUR NECK!', 'MONEY OR A MEDAL?'.

By Fred Harman

Comic strip 'Our Boarding House' showing a man and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'YOU'VE GOT A DATE, SALLY? I'M ASKIN' YOU!', 'Y' MEAN IT? OH, MERCY MACKREL! HOW'M I DOIN', MA!', 'ME GUS-DUSTED! WISH-UM PO-KO WAS HERE, YOU BETCHUM!'.

By Martin

Comic strip 'Our Boarding House' showing a man and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'BUT, MY DEAR—I THINK, BY ENTERTAINING THE BOYS AND HELPING TO TAKE THEIR MINDS OFF THIS HORRIBLE WAR, A GIRL IS PLAYING A LARGE PART IN HELPING TO WIN IT', 'WELL, OKAY, DARLING... HERE GOES A RALLY FOR OUR SIDE'.

By Crane

Comic strip 'Our Boarding House' showing a man and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THE JAPANESE... THE JAPANESE ARE OUR FRIENDS, AND WISH TO HELP US. THEY BELIEVE IN ASIA FOR THE ASIATICS. THIS, THEIR COMMANDER HAS ASSURED ME', 'THEN WHY SHOULD WE ATTACK THEM? THERE IS NOTHING TO GAIN, AND ALL TO LOSE, THUS DO I, TITO BOLIVAR, SEE IT'.

By Blosser

Comic strip 'Our Boarding House' showing a man and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'SO HE'D HUNT AROUND FOR THINGS TO DO THAT WOULDN'T COST MUCH! WHAT WOULD THEY BE?', 'LARDIE, GIVE FRECKLES YOUR LIST!', 'BUY BOND TODAY!'.

By V. T. Hamlin

Comic strip 'Our Boarding House' showing a man and a woman. Speech bubbles: 'WELL, HOWDY, DR. WINGLUG... WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE DRAFT BOARD TODAY?', 'I WANT A FIGHT!', 'THE MATTER OF THIS CHAP'S REGISTRATION', 'ALLEY OOP... TAMERVILLE... LOONEY MOUNTAIN ROAD... ALL RIGHT NOW, WHAT'S YOUR AGE?', 'GOSH, I DUNNO... HOW OLD AM I, DOC?', 'HMM! I WAS AFRAID OF THAT'.