

DARK JUNGLES

BY JOHN C. FLEMING & LOIS EBY

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COLD FEAR

CHAPTER VIII

THE rain was pelting like bullets on the tin roof. The close stickiness of the air made the heat seem more oppressive than when the sun poured down. Barry came down the narrow boardwalk to the small hotel office. In the thin gray light of early morning he could see he was quite alone except for the native desk clerk who was stretched full length in a chair snoring noisily. Then the street door opened and Renaldo, beads of rain glistening on his dark face, came in. Behind him came a giant of a man whom he introduced as Jose. Across Jose's hairy chest swung crossed cartridge belts. Two old style six-shooters bumped his hips as he walked.

"Jose is the best muleteer in all Guatemala," Renaldo said. "And the best guide as well. After we get to the plantation he will go on with you to the Quiche country." He clapped his hands loudly and the sleeping desk clerk struggled to his feet. "Coffee and tortillas!"

The native shuffled off in the direction of the kitchen and Renaldo turned back to Barry. "Where is the senorita?"

"I didn't knock at her door," Barry said. "I thought maybe because of the rain she wouldn't want to go today."

"Caramba," Renaldo roared. "We think nothing of rain in Guatemala. It rains almost every day. If she does not like rain then she will not like our country."

"She is a very determined young woman," Barry said slowly. "This is no place for a woman. Especially for an Americano del Norte. We should do our best to convince her of this."

"You heard me convincing her," Barry jeered.

A queer smile crossed Renaldo's face. "I think, maybe, this trip will be convincing."

The native boy came in then with a tray of iced coffee and tortillas. He put the coffee cups around a table in the corner of the room. The men had just sat down when they heard footsteps on the walk. They got to their feet as Allison came in. She looked radiant in her white riding habit, her light hair piled in a soft roll above her smiling face. She wore black patent leather riding boots.

"Looks like we're about ready to shove off," she said gaily as she took the chair Barry was offering her.

"You look more like you were ready for the Biltmore Country Club horse show than for a grueling trek into the jungle," Barry said a little sourly.

"I pity your wife—if you ever get one!" Allison said lightly, stirring her coffee. "You'd be just the type to start the day off wrong by being disagreeable at the breakfast table."

BARRY didn't answer. Allison turned to Renaldo. "What do we do—wait for this rain to stop?"

Renaldo smiled his amusement. "That might be a month from now. We never think one way or the other about rain down here. It might rain an hour, a week or a month. Then the sun will come out and you will be dry in five minutes."

"That's a consolation!" Allison laughed. "Just so I know I'll be dry sometime. It really doesn't matter whether it's this month or next."

"The worst thing about the rain," Renaldo explained, "is that it makes it hard going for the mules. The trail gets slippery and there are many holes where a mule sometimes sinks completely out of sight."

Barry was watching Allison closely, knowing well the misgivings welling up within her. She held her cool aloofness, never once letting a note of anxiety creep into her voice. In that moment he was wondering about Lila, wondering how she might act if her courage were ever put to such a test.

"You can still stay here," Barry said flatly. "No one will accuse you of being a sissy. In fact, it would just be using good sense."

For an instant Allison's smile faded as though she might be considering the suggestion. But then she brightened again.

"It sounds like good fun!" she said. "I wouldn't miss it for the world." She picked a bright red flower from the table bouquet and slid it through the coil of her hair. Barry threw up his hands in a gesture of complete disgust.

"Renaldo, the girl's incorrigible," he said. "We are wasting our pily. We should save it for the mules."

Renaldo laughed.

THEY finished their coffee and Renaldo stepped to the door and said something in Spanish. Six native boys came in and Renaldo sent them scurrying to bring the luggage.

After the native boys had made several trips up the narrow boardwalk and had the small room practically filled with luggage, Renaldo turned anxiously to Allison.

"You are not taking all this!" He made a sweeping gesture with his hand.

"A girl has to dress—even in the jungle," she said lightly. "Dresses, yes, but surely you won't need all this. The more mules we have to take the more trouble we are apt to get into."

the mules again. I have already spoken to the mules and they said they would be delighted to carry my things."

Barry had a look of hopeless abandonment on his face as he turned toward Renaldo. Renaldo shouted something to the native boys. For a half hour the boys lugged baggage and strapped it securely to the wooden carriers on the animals' backs. Finally Jose came in to announce that all was ready. The rain had let up some and had turned from a solid sheet into a fine, sharp drizzle.

The long caravan started single file through the dim, quiet street of the village. Jose led the way and Renaldo followed close behind. Allison and Barry rode side by side. After they had passed beyond the clearing that had been hewn by sharp axes and machetes for the village site, the green solid wall of jungle rose before them. Giant kapok, balsa, mora, and greenheart trees reached up toward the murky sky. Jose first disappeared from sight into the jungle fastness, then Renaldo.

"The path is only wide enough for one mule at a time," Barry said quietly. "You go ahead. I'll follow."

Allison felt cold fear grip her but she smiled valiantly and dug the heels of her boots into the mule's sides as she trotted after Renaldo.

(To Be Continued)

The U. S. army air transport command has set up the greatest transportation system of all time. It is a combined cargo, passenger and mail airline, bigger than all of the commercial air lines of the world combined.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

IF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE DID NOT HAVE SUCH A PREPONDERANCE OF WATER AREA TO STABILIZE ITS WEATHER, IT WOULD HAVE MUCH GREATER TEMPERATURE EXTREMES. FOR THERE, UNLIKE OUR NORTHERN HEMISPHERE, THE SUN IS FARTHEST AWAY IN WINTER AND NEAREST IN SUMMER!

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FORT AND A FORTRESS? MR. WÖRDEN IS A WARDEN IN ZONE A, SECTOR 3, POST C, NEW YORK AIR RAID PATROL OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE.

ANSWER: The words often are used interchangeably. Fortress usually means a larger, more extensive fortification than a fort.

FAMOUS NURSE

Answer to Previous Puzzle: REPUBLIC PLANE, TIRE RIFE, LANCER, SIP IN LOOK VET, EEP O MEN I STERS, IR, REPUBLIC TEAM, ART F REPUBLIC TATE, NAISO D.43 AMIAN, TYCHE LANCER BEARD, TO TATIMES SO, TO WARN ITCH LEA, RENOVIA AIR, LEA EA FANS CAR, COMBAT FIGHTERS

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-31 and a portrait of a man.

The automobile industry feels that immediately after the war there will be call for at least 11,000,000 new cars. Normally the industry would produce about 4,000,000 vehicles a year.



At SEARS... IT'S NOT THE IDLE RICH WHO CLIP THE COUPONS

No indeed! It's the regular folks who sometimes run short of money and like the convenience of Purchase Coupons in their purse. Get a bookful today and spend them like cash when you need them. Small down payment, usual carrying charge.

GET YOURS TODAY AT YOUR SEARS CREDIT OFFICE

7383

by Alice Brooks

7383 by Alice Brooks. Stop—before you throw or stow away those odds and ends. With the aid of these clever instructions, you can turn them into useful house and wardrobe accessories.

Little Orphan Annie

By Harold Gray

Little Orphan Annie comic strip panels.

Out Our Way

By J. R. Williams

Out Our Way comic strip panels. HAH-HAAH HAW-HAW HAR-HAR! I'VE LIVED LONG ENOUGH... NOW I'VE SEEN EVERYTHING!

Hold Everything!

Hold Everything! I told you we were digging this fox hole too deep!

14 Accessories from Odds and Ends

14 Accessories from Odds and Ends. Illustrations of various household items.

Boots and Her Buddies

By V. T. Hamlin

Boots and Her Buddies comic strip panels.

Our Boarding House

With Major Hoopla

Our Boarding House comic strip panels. WELL, JAKE, NOW THAT OUR NUMBER ONE TREE SLOTH IS WORKING, YOU'RE THE LAST BOOKEND IN THE PARLOR!

Red Ryder

Red Ryder comic strip panels. WHAT DO YOU SMELL? I FIGURED THIS RIM-ROCK WAS A SAFE PLACE TO REST UP!

Freckles and His Friends

Freckles and His Friends comic strip panels. HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO KEEP OFF MY PROPERTY?

Wash Tubbs

Wash Tubbs comic strip panels. CASYS ABOARD ONE OF THE LEAD PLANES, THE RAMBLING RESERVOIR ELEVATION 4 1/2 MILES, DISTANCE FROM TARGET SIX MINUTES...

Allep Oop

Allep Oop comic strip panels. OH ROSIE, A FRIEND OF MINE CALLED—HE AND ANOTHER OFFICER WANT TO GO DANCING TONIGHT!

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