

SERIAL STORY

LOVE POWER

BY OREN ARNOLD

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YESTERDAY: Even Leana had not anticipated the terrific force of X-800's explosion. The entire mountain is shaken. Mummy Blair is blown to bits and no one heard Leana's last scream. The village is protected by the solid granite side of Tonto. In Blair, where he had gone at Leana's request, Bob hears the blast, knows what has happened, rushes to his car.

PLANS FOR TWO

CHAPTER XXIV

BOB HALE suffered the tortures of the damned as he raced back down the old mine road. It was narrow, and winding, and so required 10 minutes at the best possible speed. He was sobbing in a sort of restrained hysteria. Neither he nor the man with him could speak. Bob had black visions of his village completely buried or at least laid in death and ruin. Specifically, he suffered in seeing Carolyn Tyler dead a thousand ways.

He swerved around the last curve, then, and instantly identified Carolyn herself.

He yelled at her. "CAROLYN! CAROLYN!"

It was a wild, frenzied cry which slipped into infinite gladness when he saw that she was actually running.

THE village seemed intact, and other folk were stirring now, but he recognized Carolyn from afar partly because he so desperately wanted to and partly because he couldn't mistake the bright red shirt she still wore, the same one she had worn during the ride.

That shirt had intrigued him for two hours this afternoon. It had been a gay challenge to Leana Sormi's severe black-and-white riding habit. It had been precisely the right complement for Carolyn's flaxen curls. It had topped—just right—her dark blue, form-fitting jodhpurs, to emphasize her as the slender, lovely girl she was.

He stopped his car when he had to, jumped out and started running. There was no outpouring of words between them.

All at once he was holding her. Just clasping her tight, feeling her cry and trembling powerfully with her in sheer intensity of emotions.

It was she who murmured first. "Bob! . . . Bob!"

"Little girl!" He kissed the top of her forehead, still squeezing her close. He shut his eyes tightly. There was a strange, sad, and yet sweet ecstasy between them.

THERE was no chance to relax for almost 24 hours. But late on that second day, amid the stirring and the milling and the excitement of peoples arriving and going through all the inevitable, if kindly hullabaloo, Bob said that the time had come to take Carolyn away lest she drop in her tracks. Her mother had already been sent to Blair, along with most of the remaining personnel here in the mountain village. Officials from the Arizona county seat, 100 miles away, had come to take charge.

First thing Bob did was to make Carolyn eat. She had lived only on a sandwich and a few cups of coffee forced on her since yesterday.

"You must eat also," she reminded him, there in the tiny Blair Inn. "Gee, Bob, we do get into the awfulest things!"

The meal was a life saver. In both it restored strength, energy, hope.

"Mind if we don't go back tonight?" he asked wanly, after the twilight meal. "Let's just ride out alone, where we can think."

They didn't have to go far. Only a mile or so to escape the flood of newspaper men, photographers, officers, curious folk who had poured in. They left Bob's car and sat on a flat red boulder near the road.

Stars had begun their timeless winking. Later there would even be a moon, but already the world was beautiful with the soft, evanescent something that is early night.

Presently they found themselves talking. Quietly, intimately, dispassionately going over the whole thing, recounting all the weeks since she had first come to work for him, re-living the horror of the explosion itself but in a new feeling of deep gratitude for escape.

"I waited for you, Bob, at the guard shack, when the guards told me you had not come by," she repeated for perhaps the tenth time. "I just did! But when it happened, I was afraid you had gone in! The granite cliff saved us even there, but I couldn't know about you."

He held her very close. "You waited. For me! It seems to me that I have waited for you since time began, Carolyn! Waited and hungered for you. I was so madly in love with you when you dropped from the airplane that—if it hadn't been for your Ken Palmer, I should have—Carolyn, I warn you I don't intend to be a gentleman ever again! You had told me in the beginning that Ken loved you. I felt it only fair to—"

Remember, I even appealed to you!"

"I remember," Carolyn whispered.

"It is tragic, even so, to know her guilty of this. I had no idea she felt so deeply in a personal way! But Carolyn, may we not promise never to mention that aspect of it again? Anything that would cause unhappiness to linger in you—"

"Of course, Bob. Oh Bob, please hold me very close, and kiss me again!"

THEY talked for more than an hour, quietly, tenderly. It was the best solace they could have arranged. He grew, if possible, more dear to her than ever, more grand.

It was he who suggested giving Ken Palmer a far better job in the Schoenfeld Laboratory back home. It was he who swore then to tell the secret of deriving X-800 to a dozen other picked American scientists, who could form a corporation for developing it in the safest, sanest way.

It was he who, finally, said, "I think I have earned a rest, Carolyn, and I'd like it to be a year, with you. Summer is near, and the Pacific Northwest is beautiful. Then a lazy sea trip down the coast and across to Mexico City—They say it's romance land, sweet-heart! Romance land!"

He had slipped into a boyish sort of enthusiasm. Here was a Bob Hale she had never known before! She could not answer, in words; there was a tautness in her throat. But she could press her head a little closer into the crook

of his shoulder, where her lips could just touch his chin.

Last thing they saw when they arose to go home was a faint, gray spot high on the hills to the north-east. That was the granite half of Tonto Mountain, its peak holding one last hint of day's sun.

"It's still beautiful," Carolyn murmured.

"And strong," said he. "Strong and—triumphant. Like"—he dropped to a whisper,—"like our love, my dear."

THE END

Smax Halifax



British Ambassador Lord Halifax got a real taste of midwestern hospitality when June Challis of Kansas City, Mo., kissed him and presented him with roses after he spoke there.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



THE ORNERY STREAK

OUR BOARDING HOUSE, with Major Hoopie



MEET ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE AT A RACETRACK

RED RYDER

By Fred Harman



YOU MEAN I GO TO SAN FRANCISCO?

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



THE LARVA OF THE INSECT, PTEROCROCE STOREYI, HAS A MOUTH THAT CANNOT CHUTE AND SUCKS THE JUICES OF TINY INSECTS THROUGH HOLES IN ITS JAWS.

ANSWER: Babe Ruth, King of Swat; Joe Jackson, Shootless Joe; Ty Cobb, Georgia Peach; Frank Frisch, Fordham Flash.

NORTH ATLANTIC ISLAND

HORIZONTAL Answer to Previous Puzzle
1 Map of Island of
9 Lemur.
13 Large turtles.
14 Eluder.
16 Portico.
17 Interval.
19 Tiny particle.
21 Free theater ticket.
22 Stop watch.
23 Cloth.
24 Pitcher.
26 Cow-headed goddess.
28 Tatter.
31 Built.
33 Away.
35 To slope.
37 A rush.
38 If not.
39 Beast of burden.
41 Bustle.
42 To adorn with gems.



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

By Harold Gray



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



WASH TUBBS

By Cran



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



ALLEY OOP

By V. T. Hamlin

