

BOMBS BURST ONCE

By GRANVILLE CHURCH

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: Jeff Curtis and his wife, Lee, are already on their way to Tierra Libre when Jeff receives a note from Zora Mitchell warning them not to come. It is too late to turn back, so Jeff decides not to tell Lee, who was opposed to their returning to the tropics. She finally agreed to go only after Jeff had persuaded her that the job of chief engineer for a newly organized fruit company is the chance of a lifetime. They arrive in Tierra Libre to find Zora's husband dead. In a conversation with Jerry McInnis, Jeff learns that Mitchell's death was murder and that there is something strange going on. Jeff and Lee are waiting now for Senator Montaya, who hired Jeff. In spite of the fact that his investigation of the company revealed nothing, Jeff is suspicious.

NOW CONTINUE WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER III

McInnis shoved off for Puerto Soledad at once. His launch was built for service, not speed, and bucking the tides along the coast would slow him down further.

On the dock it took the combined efforts of both Lee and Curt to keep the boys out of mischief.

Presently a downriver boat snuggled into its berth with the ease of a ferry. It gave a pair of toots, delicate as a French railway train's, as the gangplank was wheeled to the vessel's side and the job of beehing completed.

Senator Montaya was unmistakable—all erect of bearing, very clearly the gente de pelo, the gente principal of these countries. He wore faultless whites, a crisp panama on curly black hair. Straight from the ship to the little group he came.

"My sincere apologies, Mr. Curtis, Mrs. Curtis," were his first words. He spoke with very little accent, though the timbre of his voice betrayed his Spanish origin. He made a deep bow to Lee, held out his hand to Curt. "I have been more than busy since—ah, Mr. Mitchell's unfortunate happening. You have discovered by now the reason I need a new Chief Engineer, no?"

Lee took the boys in hand, holding their interest with the selection of a gigantic, gaudy straw hat for each of them, from stock piled a dozen high on a vendor's head, while Senator Montaya led Curt on a quick survey of the docks and facilities here.

In the sheds, two items instantly caught the eye—two boxes forty feet long, ten wide, and quite thin for these dimensions. Curt cocked a brow at them.

Montaya said briefly, "Spare wings. We have two planes. One of them was tied up for weeks once by a damaged wing, so now we have spares on hand."

"I heard you've had considerable use from your planes."

"Yes," was the monosyllabic reply.

"What make are they?"

"It was a conversational question. It would have made no difference one way or another what Montaya answered, yet the question brought a sharp, quick glance from eyes that were busy black here in the gloom of the big receiving shed—and a rotund vagueness in reply.

One end of the bodega was piled high with barrels bearing the stencil of a well-known chemical firm. Curt paused before them, looked them over with considerable interest.

"So you treat the soil before planting?" he asked. "Over-acid, I suppose, from centuries of flooding."

A frown definitely stamped Montaya's forehead at this, but was immediately chased away by a smile that showed even, white teeth.

"That, Mr. Curtis," the senator replied smoothly, "is a question that would come under the head of chemical research. We have a chemical expert, Dr. Toenjes, from Amsterdam. If he likes you, he may be willing to answer your questions. But I wouldn't count on it," he said, with another flash of teeth.

"Dr. Toenjes is quite jealous of his theories, which I expect will produce more and better fruit than Associate across the river."

As Curt was turning this over in his mind, Senator Montaya pulled at his lower lip—a lip unusually red even for his swarthy skin.

"I expect you to work along with us in this fashion. You are responsible for the engineering work assigned to you, just as Dr. Toenjes is responsible as Agricultural Superintendent, just as Mr. Lannestock is responsible for aviation and Mr. Ryden for transportation."

"Lannestock? Ryden?"

"Most of our contract employees are Americans. These two are Swedish. I brought them here as pilots. But we no longer need two full-time pilots. As Mr. Ryden proved himself capable in transportation matters, I have given him charge of that department."

Curt had a long-established habit of fiddling with his pipe when mulling over some point that needed thought. He suddenly discovered he'd been stuffing it during this polite harangue. Since the senator while talking had been leading the way into the open, Curt now lit up, expelling a huge cloud of smoke before he said mildly, with a smile:

"All of which is by way of telling me to mind my own business? Well, that's all right. You've hired me for the engineering end of your venture, and that's where my interest lies. I'll try to curb my wandering curiosity."

Senator Montaya eyed Curt a moment.

"I am quite sure we shall get along, Mr. Curtis."

They took a rapid look-see in the port office, Montaya introducing Curt casually, then returned to Lee and the children, seated on their pile of luggage. The boys' leashes were on their again, much to their audible disgust.

A pair of quick toots now came from the river steamer that had been loading all morning, even as the Pisces docked. The baggage was hauled aboard, the little party followed. As they headed slowly upstream, Senator Montaya made his guests comfortable under a deck awning.

Iced coffee was served as the children, exhausted from heat and excitement, slept on a sarape spread on the deck, each jealously clutching his new hat, big as himself.

To Montaya Jeff said casually, "I suppose there's no reason why you shouldn't say who recommended me to you?"

"No, none," admitted his host. "It was Mr. Mitchell."

"Mitchell?"

"Yes, himself. Though perhaps unknowingly. I explain. Many times I had to warn him about his attitude toward the men under him. Of course, I—what do you say? ah, yes, I hounded him to get the work done, for we have much to do before the rainy season, and it has not gone too well."

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Senator Montaya preened himself.

"A good site, no? The whole year there are winds that sweep across this face of the mountains in late afternoon and evening, but never does the wind come up from the old swampland. The result? We are happy to have no malaria here where we live. This makes the senora more comfortable, no?"

He pointed as the car rounded a curve and the town came into fuller view.

"You see that long, low building? Our hospital. Larger than we need, perhaps, but it is more better to be prepared. Across the plaza is our clubhouse. That building of two stories which looks out over the valley from between, it is our administration building. The ground floor is commissary where the senora can get anything she needs. We are very proud of San Alejo."

"Reason to be," grunted Curt. "Good layout."

"So we think, too. There is nothing to break our view. In back of the club we have the swimming pool, the tennis courts, also the schools—three of them. For the different ages of the children, no?"

And now the car took another curve that brought into sight the further down-slope of Mt. San Alejo. Below, about a kilometer from the town, was an exceptionally long, cleared field, with a broad well-worn strip down its length. A branch of the railroad led to it around the base of the mountain.

"Good sized field," Curt commented. "You've several buildings besides hangars."

"Yes," said the one word.

"But is that a fence I see around the field?"

"Your eyes are sharp, Mr. Curtis. Yes, the field does have a fence. Our chief pilot nearly lost his life during his first month here because of a native's mania for souvenirs. We had not thought to properly protect the planes. It is a serious thing to risk one's life in the air, Mr. Curtis, so I felt I should put a fence around the field."

Curt saw a flash behind the living-quarters. "Swimming pool?"

"Yes, a small one. I do all I can to keep the men contented. It is much worth the cost, it pays well."

At the far end of the field was a sizeable copse of trees, and Curt wondered that they should be left standing within the field. Before he could see more, however, another switch-back of the climbing railroad led the field to view.

The motorcar, laboring up the grade, came out onto a level stretch, picked up speed, and at once they were in the heart of the small town.

"It is late," Montaya was saying. "You have yet to unpack and get settled. I will take you to your house now. I trust, Senora, that the cook and house servant we furnish you will prove satisfactory."

Lee made a vague sound in reply. "In the morning," Montaya turned to Curt, "if you will come to my office at eight, I will spend the day with you. We shall—how do you say it? ah, yes, buckle down to work."

The sidewalks were not wide enough for the group abreast. Montaya walked ahead, carrying the two children whose shoes made smudges on his spotless coat. The boys were silent with this stranger. Lee wrinkled her nose in distaste at the senator's faultlessly tailored back.

"Ha!" he murmured. "Look at him, the dark lily!"

"Sh," Curt tightened his hold on her arm. "He may have ears," he whispered.

"Well, I don't care," she muttered resentfully. "Look how he carries the kids. He likes children? I laugh, ha-ha."

Montaya deposited the boys carefully before a hedge of hibiscus, opened the wire gate, smiled them through onto the neatly scythed lawn where a mango, a fast-growing tree, already offered some shade to lawn and house. He was about to turn away with a gallant lift of his hat, when Curt mentioned Mrs. Mitchell for the first time.

"We were close friends with the Mitchells a few years ago. It must have been a terrible blow to her," he said. "I think we should express our regrets as soon as possible."

"Ah," Senator Montaya pulled at his lower lip. "It was a most terrible shock to her, Mr. Curtis." He cast a glance at Lee. "I—ah, had not meant to speak of it before the senora, but to be sure she will have to know. Mrs. Mitchell—ah, committed suicide only yesterday. From grief. This morning she was buried. A sad affair, yes. That was what delayed me."

Curt managed a blank face to hide the disturbing shock, but Lee was frankly astonished. She reached for Curt's hand. Not until Montaya was out of hearing, however, did she exclaim:

"She never! Zora Mitchell committed suicide? Not Zora! She wasn't the type. Besides, she never cared that much for him."

"She never seemed to," admitted Curt slowly. "They were a cool enough couple."

He turned to the house. Absently he held Lee's hand as they climbed the steps. But his free hand, in his pocket, was crushing Zora Mitchell's note.

Before going to bed that night, Curt held a lighted match to the note. But the words were turned into his mind.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Walter Winchell

W.N.U. SERVICE

Notes of an Innocent Bystander:

The Magic Lanterns: The holdovers are breaking run records in the major temples, which makes the new list meager. . . The Two Bodies, also known as Betty Grable and Victor Mature, pour the glamour on "Footlight Serenade." This is a happy-go-lucky musical. The story voted for Rutherford B. Hayes, but the tunes and gags help it to hide its age. It is packed with likable troupers, including Jane Wyman, Jas. Gleason and John Payne. . . "Lady in a Jam" reveals Irene Dunne as a hare-brained heiress who winds up with a psychiatrist going "tick tick" at her, but he's making loonier noises on his own later, being in love. The flicker is of the old screwball school. Patric Knowles and Ralph Bellamy horse around in it. . . The current quip concerns the soldier in "This Is the Army," who felt that he wasn't officers enough toward the war effort. And so he sat through "Wake Island" twice.

The Wireless: The strut has gone out of the Jap radio. Its spiclers are preparing the people for tough times. The earlier assurances were that beating the Americans was a breeze. . . The patter they write for M. Gross wouldn't be funny if he delivered it in baggy pants and fell on the seat of them every other word. . . The V for Victory series improves with every performance. It has acquired showmanship and gives it plenty. . . Charlie McCarthy returned to the airwaves feeling funnier than ever. Said it was so cold in Alaska "the inhabitants have to live some place else" . . . Roy Shield's crew, weaving the ditty, "I Get a Kick Out of You" (with velvet violins) formed a musical rainbow. . . Victor Borge, awarded the Comic of the Year prize last season, isn't to be renewed by his sponsor.

The Story Tellers: The most shocking charges against the Nazis are now being offered by the krauts themselves. In acts, not words. "The Black Book of Poland," a record of the German atrocities in that land, sounds like a report on the behavior of savage beasts. . . Rex Stout has compiled the pre-Pearl Harbor quotes of some of the leaders in congress, which will make a book called "The Illustrious Dunderheads." Frank Sullivan will quip the introduction, and Gropper's caricatures will make the squirming complete. . . A nice dab of fiction is "Mrs. Willoughby's Letters," by Mary Elizabeth Plummer in Atlantic Monthly. Incidentally, that monthly is on the hustle nowadays, going in heavy for promotion, trying to pull away, presumably, from the graybeard clientele. . . The Most Beautiful Girl on Broadway, according to Harry Thompson in Cosmopolitan, hails from Sioux City. She is Constance Moore.

The Front Pages: Proof that Vichy has accepted the brute philosophy of its Nazi masters was confirmed by the poignant headline in one ayem gazette: "Vichy to Jail Priests Aiding Jewish Children" . . . The Mirror's breezy interview with Special U. S. Prosecutor Oscar Ewing (the sent Pelley to prison for 15 years) revealed that his storm-troops sent Pelley \$10 a month (700 of them) during one month before the trial. After his conviction before sent him about \$150 daily. . . The most arresting news story locally was that one about the Very Rev. R. I. Gannon, president of Fordham, who publicly confessed that his pre-war isolationist views were wrong and "that President Roosevelt was right" . . . "If," he said, "the President had listened to me, China, Russia and Great Britain would now be prostrate and we should be facing our zero hour alone and unprepared."

Edward G. Robinson, the star, was coming out of Dinty Moore's 46th Street rendezvous when someone pointed out Detective Johnny Broderick passing by. . . "Oh," oh'd the famed film hero, "I once played Broderick on the screen. I'd love to meet him. I've heard so much about him."

A pal introduced them. "This is a real thrill," said the movie star. "But another thrill I'd enjoy would be to go with you when you and your colleagues are shooting it out with gangsters!"

"I don't think you'd enjoy that, Mr. Robinson," said Broderick. "When hoodlums shoot at cops they don't use blanks."

One of the more amusing Washington stories (questionably untrue) concerns Halifax and FDR. . . "Mr. President," the British ambassador is supposed to have said, "when I was viceroy of India, I felt that all of India would have understood me overnight had I wrapped myself in a sheet and sat on the floor with Gandhi."

"Then why didn't you?" asked the President.

"Because," blandly basso'd the Britster, "India would have understood—but Britain—neverhhhh!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

PEAKING OF SPORTS

By Bob McShane

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

WHEN Sergt. Joe Louis crawls through the ropes at Yankee Stadium October 12 to defend his title against Billy Conn, that particular larri likely will bring an end to the prize fight business for the duration.

Not that the cauliflower industry will pass completely out of existence—but the important heavy-weight championship matches are almost certain to be cancelled until another vastly more important fight is settled permanently.

Although the proceeds of the coming match are to go for Army Emergency Relief, the army was manifestly reluctant to allow the champ even this one fight. This is an obvious indication that it will be Joe's final appearance so long as he is serving in the armed forces.

Whether or not he can outdraw Notre Dame is still part of future happenings. Frank Leahy has one of his finest squads at South Bend, and from the present outlook he will play to capacity in most of his contests. This will be true against Army, Michigan, Navy, Northwestern and Southern California. Capacity won't be far away against the others, including Stanford, Iowa Naval Cadets and the Great Lakes squad.

It would not be surprising to see Notre Dame close to the half million mark.

Naval Cadet Teams

The Georgia and North Carolina Naval Cadet teams will attract fully as much interest as any college squad, especially if they can get away with fair success. They are still gambles to a certain extent, but they won't be weak. They are taking the hardest training in any service for future flying, and will be physically ready for even their starting assignments. They are all ably coached, and they all have the heart and the fire to give all their systems can carry.

The major cities, such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, etc., will draw big crowds. The smaller bowls or stands that call for automobile transportation will have a rougher road ahead. There also will be less railroad travel on the spectator's side.

Close to the Top

Pennsylvania, with a hard nine-game schedule and the outlook for a first-class team, should be close to the leaders in packing them in. Philadelphia is one of the best of all football cities.

Michigan is another team facing a big attendance year. The Wolverines won't be far from the front with such teams to meet as Great Lakes, Michigan State, Iowa Naval Cadets, Northwestern, Minnesota, Illinois, Harvard, Notre Dame, Ohio State and Iowa. This is what you might easily label a package of heavy trouble. It is close to being the hardest schedule in the country.

Fritz Crisler has a fine squad with such backs as Tommy Kuzma and Paul White, but no one can expect the Wolverine to claw its way unbeaten through this barrage of human flesh. Minnesota and Notre Dame alone are twin bundles of dynamite.

There will be no bother about big crowds in the Middle West, including Ohio State's home at Columbus, with so many feature games and so many featured stars.

In the East

What about the East? New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore will be beyond the average.

New York, with several games transferred to its subway service, will have its best football year. Between the colleges and the professional Giants the Polo Grounds and the Yankee Stadium will set new records.

Even with the transportation odds against them, all other sports have shown an amazing attendance record. This goes for baseball, golf and racing, especially.

As football happens to be the best crowd magnet of them all, there is no reason why the fall season just ahead shouldn't more than keep pace with other forms of competition.

Although at least a hundred stars have been taken by the various services from the pro camps, there has been no lapse of public interest as the Chicago and Los Angeles games have already shown, with close to 200,000 at these two opening salutes. Teams are expecting capacity crowds from Denver to Boston and Baltimore, via New York, and I don't think they will be disappointed.

There may be a dizzy drop later on, but 1942 will set some form of record before the final block is put on and the final pass is thrown on the gridiron.

The last time a big leaguer pitched a double-header was in 1928 when Emil Levson did the chore for the Indians.

Big Six conference schools have had 23 head football coaches in the past 12 years. The average tenure is little more than three years.

Cornelius Warmerdam, the pole vaulter, doesn't like to perform when it's damp or rainy. He says his vaulting pole doesn't work right.

Spotlight

By GRANTLAND RICE

SOME alert statistician has figured it out that the next two months will see more big football games than any season in history. Even with the call of the bugle there will be a greater number of stars in action, and a greater number of headline contests.

But what about the size of the crowds? How will the transportation snarl be settled? This is where the big guess enters.

George Preston Marshall, owner of the Washington Redskins, would like to make a wager that his big professional team will outdraw any other squad in the country, college or pro, and that it will equal its best year in this respect.

Whether or not he can outdraw Notre Dame is still part of future happenings. Frank Leahy has one of his finest squads at South Bend, and from the present outlook he will play to capacity in most of his contests. This will be true against Army, Michigan, Navy, Northwestern and Southern California. Capacity won't be far away against the others, including Stanford, Iowa Naval Cadets and the Great Lakes squad.

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By JERRY LINK



I been readin' about some of these divorces and it seems to me husbands are like automobiles. If you take good care of them, you don't have to keep getting new ones all the time.

And one way of takin' good care of him is to see he gets all his vitamins. And that's where KELLOGG'S PEP comes in. Course it hasn't got 'em all, but it's extrarich in the two most likely to be short in ordinary meals—vitamins B₁ and D. What's more, PEP'S one grand-tastin' cereal, too!

A delicious cereal that supplies per serving (1 oz.) the full minimum daily need of vitamin D; 1/4 the daily need of vitamin B₁.