

ABDIE AN' SLATS

—By Reuben Van Duren



Serial Story—

Secret Voyage

By JOSEPH L. CHADWICK

CHAPTER TWELVE

JIM'S head reeled. A curious numbness stole through the whole of his strong body. He could feel the water, though, seeping in through his rubber suit because of the falling air pressure. He wondered, in a vague way, if he'd suffocate or drown first.

He tried to call Curly on the phone, but his voice was only a thick weak sound and the buzzing in the earphones told him nobody was listening. His tongue was a thick wad in his mouth, his eyes had weights on them, and his nose began to bleed. His lungs felt caving in.

This, then, was what the end was like, 240 feet down. It was all pain and horror, then blackness like this...

THERE was something solid under him when he came to. He opened aching eyes and found himself in his cabin, lying on his bunk, with someone sitting silently beside him. He turned his head toward the man.

It was the man of the careful voice and careless money. He grinned, a friendly sort of grin, without malice. "Have a drink, Mallory baby, and you'll be all right."

A bottle was held to Jim's lips. The liquor burned his throat. He lay awhile, then said hoarsely, "So we meet again, Halloran."

"Right. And under different circumstances. This time, old man, I do the talking. My crew has yours covered with guns that will shoot. We had to knock out that black boy and the bald guy and lock them in the fo'castle. The others didn't want trouble. You're a screwy guy, Mallory, going after a million in gold unearned. Did you underestimate me?"

"Not that," Jim said. He sat up, even though his head spun. "I knew you were tough and smart. You see, I didn't know about the gold."

"You didn't? Then Forbes was right. He said you only wanted to salvage the Sonora's non-existent cargo, but I didn't believe it. I thought you had wind of the gold from the girl."

"From what girl?"

"Hammond's secretary. She had been doing a lot of running after you back at Miami Beach."

"Did she know about the gold?"

"Maybe, and maybe not. I think she suspected something. You see, after the Sonora was lost she asked a lot of questions of the Coast Guard. They couldn't tell her anything, so she wrote to the couple of white men among the crew. But they had been paid a bonus to keep quiet, and they stuck to their story that the Sonora went down in a storm."

Jim said, "She wasn't working with you?"

Halloran looked surprised. "No. She was trying to find out what happened to the Sonora because of me. You see, she and I were engaged."

JIM SWUNG his legs off the bunk and sat facing the man. Halloran had an automatic pistol balanced on his right knee. There wasn't a chance of jumping him.

"Now that you're taking over the gold I suppose you'll be going back to her."

"No," same the slow reply. Halloran was frowning now. "I'm a mug, Mallory. Mary Larsen is a swell kid, straight as they come. I—well, I'm a sucker for women. I tell you that little Cuban nurse who worried over me in the hospital, and I married her."

He paused still frowning, then said, "Look, Mallory, do me a favor. When you see her again tell her about the Cuban nurse, will you? She knows I'm alive, and I don't want her to go on waiting..."

"I'll tell her, Halloran. I've got a lot to tell her."

Jim said, "Yes. But I treated her pretty shabby. I'll make it

FUNNY BUSINESS



THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



up to her. Don't worry about her."

"Well, thanks," Halloran said. "And thanks for leading me to the Sonora. I'm going to look you in here now, and go down after the gold."

"Tell me one thing, Halloran. Where did the gold come from?"

"The Sonora had a redoubtable sea with a Nazi blockade runner. I was entrusted with the gold consigned for a 'secret agent in Central America. It was to be used for fifth column activity, and it probably had been stolen in France or Belgium. Forbes and I—Halloran paused to grin—"decided it was our patriotic duty to keep the gold from reaching its destination, since it would be used against American interests, and make better use of it ourselves. I don't think there'll ever be any claim made on it."

HALLORAN picked up his gun and stood up. "Well, thanks for everything, Mallory baby."

"Thank you for not letting me die down below."

"Think nothing of it, old man."

Halloran stood there for just a moment, grinning at Jim Mallory, and Jim wondered if he should risk jumping the man. It was then that the door to the adjoining cabin opened. Mary stood there, smiling and lovely and incredibly calm. She had Jim's gun in her hand.

She said, "Hello, Bert." And laughed at the way he started. "Put down that gun, darling. I wouldn't like to shoot you."

Halloran's guard was all the way down. Jim took advantage of his

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With Major Hoople



OUT OUR WAY

By Williams



# POLK'S HOMOGENIZED MILK

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