

MISTER 44

By E. J. RATH

A Surprising Story of Love, Humor and Adventure

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Stoddard, a pecker for the Chicago Shirt Company of Buffalo, tucked a note into the pocket of a No. 44 shirt for an anxious assignment. A rush order delivered the box to Canada and the note the day after starting discharged her. He started for Canada to find a job. Indian John delivered to Stoddard her note that she was on the way. Stoddard looked at the note and saw the name of the woman who had written it. He was sure that she was on the way. He was sure that she was on the way. He was sure that she was on the way.

CHAPTER III.

"I T CERTAINLY beat me," she said. "That was the quickest mind-changin' act I ever knew." Stoddard swallowed a few times and bit viciously on the stem of his pipe. "What do you work at, Mr. Stoddard?" asked Sadie suddenly. "I'm an engineer." "You don't look it," she said in a surprised tone. "Locomotive or stationary?" "Neither," he answered, with a faint smile. "A civil engineer."

"Meanin'—"

"Building bridges, laying railroads, and that sort of work." "Oh, I see," said Sadie slowly. "That's an outdoor job. You go wherever they happen to be buildin' a railroad?" "That's about it." "You mean anywhere? All over?" "Anywhere the job may be." A long sigh escaped from Sadie's lips. "Gee, but that must be elegant," she whispered in a tone of awe. "Just to go anywhere—outdoors!" Sadie paused and gravely inspected the man who stood in front of her. "When do I get to work? To-morrow?" she asked.

"Why, I'd—Stoddard halted lamely. "Maybe you haven't had time to locate a job for me," said Sadie readily. "But that's all right. I can hold out a few days." "You're sure you want to give up factory work?" he ventured. "Why, I've given it up!" she exclaimed. "I was fired; the Shrimp done it. I'm through with factories, thank Heaven! It was being fired that started me off so sudden. Otherwise I'd have wrote."

"I see," he answered, cautiously. "Well, the truth is, I wasn't expecting you so soon." "I get you," she nodded. "That'll be all right. Between the two of us, we ought to land something." Stoddard's conscience gave a sharp twinge. Not if he could help it would she ever know why the woman on the south-bound train changed her mind with such startling swiftness. He glanced at his watch. It was 9:30.

"Well, we've got to get a lodging for you," he said. "I was planning to put you up at the hotel on Deepwater Island." "Hotel?" murmured Sadie. "Why, just as you say, is it a swell place?" "I wouldn't call it that. It's filled with city people." "Well, lead me to it," said Sadie with resignation. "I don't know what kind of a flourish I'll get in a swell hotel, but I guess they can stand it for one night. How much'll it cost, Mr. Stoddard?"

"We won't bother about that now. I'll take care of that." "No," said Sadie firmly. "Much obliged, but I got to pay my own way, Mr. Stoddard." "Of course," he said hastily. "What I meant was, if it should happen to pinch you a little, I could advance you whatever you needed until—" "Until I get to working," she interrupted with a nod. "I'm obliged for that, too. But I ain't goin' to do it if there's any way to help it, Mr. Stoddard. I never borrowed any money yet from nobody, and I ain't borrowin' till I've kissed my last iron man goodby."

"All right, Sadie, but when the last iron man goes, I'll expect you to let me know." "Well, maybe—if I ain't got a job by then. Now, which way to the Waldorf?" she asked briskly. "It's mostly by water, we take the canoe," he answered. "Shouldering the canoe and balancing it with one hand, Stoddard reached down and picked up Sadie's grip. "You take your coat and sweater and follow me," he commanded. "Yes, sir," said Sadie, meekly. She was close to his heels when the short path from the station platform led them to the rickety wharf at the edge of the lake.

"All ready," he said, kneeling beside the floating canoe to steady it. Sadie paused before stepping in. "Say!" she declared abruptly. "We haven't shook hands yet. Can't we?" "We surely can," said Stoddard, rising to his feet.

CHAPTER IV.

THE way to the Deepwater hotel from the lower station is all water, if you choose to take it thus. Stoddard felt he was pressed for time, and decided on a portage. It was a very short one—less than 200 yards—and would save nearly two miles of paddling around into the South Arm, where Deepwater Island lay. Sadie insisted on taking her grip. Stoddard let her have her way. It was very dark where the path ran under the trees, so he made her hold fast to the end of the canoe, as a guide to her footsteps. Once she had let go abruptly, and he heard a scuffling behind him, followed by a crash. "Anything wrong?" he asked, halting. "Ain't I the clumsy thing!" exclaimed a voice from the gloom. "My nose got lichen and I didn't dare let go the boat, so I tried to scratch it with my other hand and dropped my bag and then fell over it."

her. But he did not release his grip on the canoe. Relieved of his burden, it reappeared, as a mere outline on the surface, yet floating. "Hold tight, but don't try to climb up. Just keep your head out." Sadie obeyed. Having made sure that she was gripping the gunwale with both hands, Stoddard began to work his way along the edge around the stern, and back on the other side of the canoe, hand over hand, until he was opposite to her. Then he reached across, closed his fingers about one of her wrists, and set them in a powerful grip.

"Now we're all right," he said. "Cold?" he asked her after several minutes of silence. "No; this ain't bad," she answered. "Presently the rain ceased, although there was not the least lessening of the gale. Stoddard turned his glance in every direction, seeking a glimpse of the hotel lights, but failed to find them. Waves that rose about him limited his vision. His arm was becoming numb from the pressure of the gunwale across which it lay, but he did not dare ease it. His fingers were locked upon Sadie's wrist like bands of iron. A black mass slowly began to shape itself against the darkness. Perhaps it was only an island—yet it was earth. Would the drifting canoe reach it? There was nothing to do but wait. He could make out trees now, bowed under the weight of the gale. The canoe drifted on with a sudden, maddening lethargy. Then Stoddard's hopes received a shock. They were drifting past it. "It's that point or nothing," he muttered to himself. "There's land there!" he cried, pointing. "But we've got to swim."



"CAN YOU SWIM?" HE ASKED.

could not long hold this course. "Keep your weight as low as possible!" he called to Sadie. "Lie out straight!" Sadie obeyed as literally as she could, but her head was still supported by the forward thwart. Straight down the south arm they were running now, as nearly as Stoddard could figure. The ever-increasing wind drove them at a speed he could not himself have attained in quiet water. Steerage-way was all his craft would stand in that sea. Presently a sheet of spray flung itself aboard, leaving half an inch of water in the bottom of the canoe. It was followed by another, then a third. Once a gallon or so of water shipped itself. And there was no hint of a lull up in the lake. With a lifted Stoddard found his legs enveloped inches deep in the swash that rushed sternward. "Ball some of this water out!" he yelled. "What with?" "Your hat!" Sadie tore it from her head and went to work. For a while it seemed as if she was gaining a little; then her work was undone by two waves, whose crests came aboard in rapid succession. Stoddard groped with one hand and laid hold of Sadie's grip. With a quick toss he sent it over the side. "I chucked your grip over," he shouted. Sadie uttered a little cry of dismay. Her new things! Then she fell once more to bailing with her hat. "Good-by, wardrobe," she murmured. "Got that ulster on?" he cried. "Yes," came the answer. "Take it off!" Sadie obeyed. "Throw it overboard!" Again she obeyed. "Not alarmed, are you?" he shouted. "I'm past that. I'm only scared stiff."

"Well, stop it!" "All right, I will." She would stake her life that Mr. 44 was not scared. Whatever he told her to do she would do—because he knew! Presently he ceased paddling and crawled forward in the canoe. "Can you swim?" he asked. "No; much. Not in this rig, anyhow." "Well, when this canoe fills we've got to get out of it and hang on to the sides. It'll float. Don't worry. Don't scream. Don't get your mouth full of water!" A moment later she felt Stoddard's powerful hand gripping her by the arm. "Here we go!" he called. Very gently the canoe settled down into the lake until its gunwales disappeared below the surface. As the water rose to their waists Stoddard swung Sadie sidewise and leaped after

books and made a series of journeys into the brush, returning each time with his arms full of balsam boughs. "I'm going to make you a bed," he explained. Drowsy, she stretched herself upon the balsam couch. "It's soft and springy, and it smells good," she said sleepily. "I've had some outdoors, anyhow." After a while Stoddard propped his back against a tree and his head dropped forward on his breast. "It was the sun shining in her eyes that awakened Sadie. She rose cautiously from her balsam couch and tiptoed toward the edge of the lake. "I'll take a little walk," she said. "No, it needs his sleep." Carefully picking her way along the rocks, Sadie followed the winding shore. At last, looking out across the lake, she became aware of something familiar in the landscape. She glanced toward the woods. Fifty yards beyond she glimpsed the figure of Stoddard, still prone on the earth. He stirred, then sat up, rubbing his eyes. "Hello," he called, as he saw Sadie. "How long have you been up?" "Half an hour, maybe." "You should have called me. What have you been doing?" "I took a walk. It's a island." He walked to the point, examined their horizon, and returned. "It's Pickering Bay," he said. "I've been in here often, he added, "but never camped on this island. How are you feeling?" "Oh, fine!" "I suppose you're hungry?" he said. "We might nibble a little of that chocolate." He divided half of it between them and put the remainder aside. "We'll need that for lunch if we don't find something else," he explained. "I wonder what Larry's thinking?" he mused aloud. "Larry?" Stoddard was annoyed at his slip. He had not intended to tell her about Larry. "The man I'm camped with," he explained. "He's a greenhorn in the woods." "Aren't you working up here?" she asked presently. "Read To-morrow's Interesting Instalment."

Camel Walk Cut From Dance List Of High School

Meanwhile, Nutley, N. J., Board Calls Expert to Pass on Its Propriety.

The Nutley, N. J., School Board will engage a professional dancer to determine whether the camel walk and other dancing movements alleged to be indulged in by high school students are proper. The board decided on this action yesterday, after hearing a protest by Mrs. Arthur B. Proal, President of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs, and Mrs. Parley A. Prior, wife of a Manhattan broker. Both are School Board members. At the meeting Mrs. Prior said: "The first time I noticed the undignified and improper dancing by the students was at the freshman class-reception last week. I did not know what the dance was called, but the pupils later agreed that it was the camel walk. The girls rested their chins on their partners' right shoulders and apparently went to sleep. At least they seemed to doze off, for they scarcely moved and their eyes were closed."

Mrs. Proal said: "So much criticism was heard at the dance that Mrs. Prior and I ordered the music stopped and instructed a student who was in charge of the affair to request those who were dancing improperly to discontinue. The talk, however, had little effect on the dancers. I think the students have gone to extremes in their behavior."

"Not very easy sledding," he said. "Why, I don't know," she returned. "A girl can manage. Why, I had a bankbook! The other girls thought I was a nut. But if they'd've got that letter from you they wouldn't have been able to call on you, like you said to do. They wouldn't've even had car fare." He remembered the phrase now: "Any time I can do anything for you, don't fail to call on me." So she had called—literally!

"Speaking of money," he observed. "Let's see what else we've got. I have a knife and eleven matches. And here's my dozen full of water, and about half a dozen smokes," he said ruefully. Sadie had been hunting, too, and from a pocket in her skirt she drew forth a damp, sticky cake of chocolate. "Great!" he exclaimed. "We've got fire, grub, a knife, tobacco. Why, we're millionaires!" Stoddard squirmed into his damp

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