



# Prisoners of Dragon Isle, or the Amazing Adventures of Spencer Norwood and a Princess

CAPTURED BY A FIERCE GIANT AS FOOD FOR HIS WIFE, THEY BUILD A BALLOON AND ESCAPE

THEY FLY AWAY JUST AS A DRAGON TRIES TO GRAB THEM—WHAT A RESOURCEFUL BOY CAN DO

LAST week I told you about a young inventor to whom many wonderful things happened, and now I have another story about the same kind of a boy. This boy's name is Spencer Norwood, and he is the inventor of Norwood's Appetizer, of which you have perhaps heard. This wonderful compound, made I know not of how many ingredients, will restore lost appetite and enlarge one already in good condition, making all sorts of food taste splendid and so invigorating the insides that even bread-crusts taste as fine as the very nicest cake.

Just one drop makes the appetite so vigorous that invalids, dyspeptics and the like find themselves eating like schoolboys on Thanksgiving Day, and I don't really know what several drops would do. Perhaps make a cannibal out of one.

Of course, as there are millions upon millions of dyspeptics, Spencer became very wealthy, for the money he took in from millionaires alone would have made him rich, for, as you perhaps know, as soon as a man becomes a millionaire his appetite fails, and he has to eat "Slotted Milk," "Bifurcated Oats," "Perforated Wheat" and "Ostracized Barley" at every meal, and he envies the poor workman with his dinner pail full of corn beef and cabbage. I wouldn't be a millionaire for a L—usand dollars!

The funny part of it was that when Spencer became so awfully rich his appetite also deserted him, and he was obliged to travel about seeking places where the air was conducive to good living and digestive exercise; at least that's what Doctor Reynolds declared. At any rate, he had to travel all over the earth, and in order to do this in comfort, as well as to be in the fashion, he invented the Mephitic Automobile.



This machine is not only a fast and commodious carriage, but it is also a gasoline launch that can be converted into a submarine boat by simply raising a few sections of covering. Spencer, in this boat, which cost an awful sum of money, but smelt just the same as a cheap automobile, could run along the seashore or over a country road until he came to the water and then off he'd shoot with a puffing and a snorting and the speed of a whale, until, feeling the heat of the sun, he'd sink below and roam around at the sea-bottom like a diver.

Many were the wonderful things he found down there! Old wrecks, sunk ages ago, filled with Spanish doubloons, men's skeletons in ancient armor, queer antique cannon and long-forgotten books and pictures. All these he collected for a sort of museum which was placed in one wing of his splendid house at Ozone-by-the-Sea, a lonely little town which he had built himself, but which was generally called "Appetiteville" by those who were not fortunate enough to live there.

Thousands of people crowded here to see these treasures, all of which Spencer exhibited free of charge, and many there were who envied him his "good luck," which is the term applied by the unwise to those who manage to discover or invent a wonder like Norwood's Appetizer.

One day in August Spencer was moving along the seashore at a remote and desolate spot called Longport, and, casting his eyes seaward, he saw something far out on the misty horizon that seemed to resemble the form of a gigantic man.

This shape loomed up against the sky, and at first he thought it must be a dark cloud thus queerly formed, but it moved along far swifter than any cloud, and in another moment he realized that it was truly a man, but what a wonderful mammoth of a man! It was a giant! Even as he rubbed his eyes in wonder, for he thought he must be dreaming, the form vanished in the mist.

After a while Spencer came to the conclusion that he had only fancied this spectacle, and finally he was certain of it, for he did not believe in giants, but he soon had reason to change his mind.

It really was a giant; a giant, too, who was perhaps bigger and fiercer, smarter and more villainous than any of those dreadful fellows in the old story books. His name was O'Finney, and he was born near the Giants' Causeway, in Ireland, a place once famous for giants, as you may know. Red-headed, red-eyed, with a great mouth full of crooked, blackened teeth, and a hairy body, he was a sight to behold; and, unfortunately, many of those who beheld him never lived to relate their experience.



Yet, after all, it's no wonder that few knew about him, for those who saw him and lived to tell the tale were always laughed at and jeered at, called dreamers or even said to be crazy, for no one nowadays wants to credit a giant story.

O'Finney was far too wise to be seen roaming about in the daytime, for he knew all about the big cannon that are built now, and he was well aware that if the United States Navy got after him there would be nothing left of him, to say nothing of the Japanese Navy.

Thus he was only seen when he happened to be late in getting home, say at dawn or daybreak, and it was thus Spencer saw him on his way to the Dragon's Isle, far in the Sea of Sargasso, a place so deadly calm that seaweed covers the ocean and ships cannot approach it. Here, on this lonely island, he lived with his wife Esther, a giantess as large as himself, but not quite so dangerous, because she was afflicted with the "Sleeping disease." This caused her to sleep nearly all the year, waking at the eleventh month and demanding a pair of plump children for breakfast, after which she would chat with O'Finney awhile, soon falling asleep again.

The island and the sleeping giantess were guarded by the only dragon left in that part of the world, and he was a wonder, too. The giant had to feed him, you may be sure, and it kept him busy catching fat cattle along shore wherever he could find them, for the dragon had to have many daily.

These cattle were kept in a field near the giant's great house, and an old woman named Amelia Martha Wallis, who was born in Tuckahoe, New Jersey, was kept by the giant to feed the dragon; or, rather, to drive out the cattle to him on the shore. She had been captured by O'Finney many years ago, but proving too thin and tough as a child for the dainty appetite of his wife, he had just kept her as cook and general housemaid, until now she was an old and feeble woman who had almost forgotten her beautiful woodland home.

She attended to the giant's food, preparing it and

cooking it by natural gas, which came through a great pipe driven into the ground not far from the house. It's just the same as ordinary gas, only it costs the gas company nothing at all except driving the pipes and making out the gas bills, but O'Finney had no gas bills or gas meter, as he had driven the pipe himself.

There was enough and to spare to cook the food for a whole city, so that he allowed a great deal of it to flow out into the air, making such a dreadful smell that it sickened the dragon when he got to leeward of it and compelled him to speed most of his time up to his eyes in the sea, although he carefully guarded the island and the giantess all the while.

Had O'Finney been just a bit wiser he would have formed a gas company, had himself elected president, and been respected by all men, but he was too much afraid of being punished for the many children he had stolen.

One day, about a month after seeing the giant in the distance, Spencer emerged from the ocean far from shore, intending to take a sail on the surface of the calmest sea he had ever set eyes on. This spot was so near the Sea of Sargasso that his course would have surely taken him into that region had he been allowed to pursue it; but, as luck would have it, O'Finney, by the merest accident, happened to be looking about for a fish dinner, and caught sight of the queer craft shooting along over the sea. In an instant he resolved to capture it and the boy guiding it, for the day was approaching when he would need a pair of children for his invalid wife.

When he had almost reached Spencer the boy heard a sound of splashing waves behind him, and turning saw this immense creature pursuing him at a speed far greater than that of the auto-boat.

Instantly he closed his covers and then sank the boat, but he was too late. Hardly had the waves covered him when the giant, seeing clearly through the limpid sea-water, reached down beneath the surface and seized the boat. Spencer felt the iron and copper work of his auto craft crumple in the giant's grasp, and the water rushed in upon him, but O'Finney drew him out of the sea, and then, splitting



ESCAPE OF THE PRISONERS FROM THE DRAGON'S ISLE

open the auto boat, took him out as one takes a hermit crab out of his shell.

Then he tossed the boat into the sea, placed Spencer in his coat pocket and took his way home with a grim smile on his face.

"Never expected to catch ten quite so near the house as this!" said he to Amelia Martha, as he set the boy down in the kitchen of his big house.

"He's not very fat, but a month of your good cooking will make him as plump as any partridge! Now run about and enjoy yourself, boy, and remember don't go too near the dragon or he may make a meal of you and cheat my poor, sick wife out of her breakfast."

Of course, Spencer was heartbroken! All hope of escape vanished as soon as he surveyed the island from a third-story window. His auto-boat gone, no other craft in sight; nothing left of all his great possessions but a simple pint bottle of Norwood's Appetizer, which he happened to have in his pocket. Helpless, at the mercy of a giant and a dragon, on a lonely, almost deserted isle, the great and wealthy inventor of this marvelous compound stood staring out over the sea like a shipwrecked Crusoe, and not even a man Friday to keep him company; nothing but a toothless, feeble old woman!

"Oh, for my swift auto-boat!" he sighed, as he saw the sun sink behind the dim, distant horizon, where never a ship dotted the hazy seas from day to day, from year to year.

But the very next day he had company, and company so delightful, so sweet and alluring, that had he not the dreadful certainty of being fed to the invalid giantess, he would have been happy even on a desert isle.



O'Finney arrived in a great good humor, carefully carrying a young girl, whom he sat down beside Spencer, saying:

"Here's a little playmate for you, who says she is a real princess and a king's daughter, but I guess that you'll make her taste any sweeter. Still, as my wife has never eaten a real princess, nor I either, I guess we will wait until she is served before we express any opinion."

"You are a cruel, heartless monster!" cried the enraged Spencer, boldly shaking his fist at the smiling giant.

"Yes, I suppose you think me all that and more!" retorted the giant. "But remember that my poor wife is ill and needs nourishment. Now, you two are all that she needs, and therefore I'll go gather a

few head of cattle for old Calorific, the dragon."

He departed, after fondly kissing his sleeping spouse, leaving Spencer trying to comfort the poor princess, whose name was Alinda Grace Clara Madeline Leila Alice Maud Lilian Von Melmstadt, and whose father was and still is King of Little Wurzburg. She wept so bitterly that his heart, already smitten by the sight of her rare beauty, was torn with anguish, and when she laid her head upon his shoulder he almost cried himself, so you may judge that his sympathy was excited.



After her first emotion had somewhat subsided he showed her all the sights of the island, although, I confess, they were few, indeed. The dragon, of course, was the most interesting, after which came the sleeping giantess, whom it was almost impossible to really see, as her bed was always above their heads and the house afforded no step-ladder.

Alinda was glad to find an old woman in whose lap to shed a few tears, for always she had been attended by an old woman in Wurzburg, but when the old Amelia Martha wept, also, the princess proudly raised her golden head and said:

"Weep not for me, for at least I shall not live to grow old and feeble waiting on giants!"

That made Amelia mad, but she remembered that princesses, of whom there were none in Tuckahoe, were always proud and independent, she overlooked what she called "impudence" and prepared a nice luncheon for the little girl.

Meanwhile the princess examined the long row of silk dresses hanging in Mrs. O'Finney's spare room, so many that there were enough for a dozen giantesses, all made of a silk far finer than Alinda had ever seen, so she declared to Spencer, and of course who could know more about fine silk than a king's daughter, who wore nothing else.

"That gives me an idea!" cried Spencer. "I think I see a way to escape from this place!"

"Oh, I am afraid that is impossible!" cried the princess, looking out over the sea. "Nothing but a balloon would be of use to us here."

"Why, that's exactly what I was thinking of!" shouted the boy, delightedly.

"Isn't that funny?" she replied. "But how on earth can we get a balloon on this deserted island?"

"We will make one; that is, if you can sew!" added he, somewhat doubtfully.

"Of course I can. That is the only thing princesses are allowed to do, except play the piano," said Alinda. "I can sew beautifully!"

"Then we are all right! I see our way clearly!" shouted Spencer, dancing around the room among the silk skirts, that rustled in a manner to delight the heart of the princess. "Let's go to work at once, for although the giant may be gone a long time, he might return this very day."

So, after sounding the old woman and finding that she, too, wished to escape as well as they, all began to cut up the great silk dresses into long strips, pointed at each end, so as to shape and form a great balloon in the approved style, about which Spencer knew all the little details because he had made two when he was investigating the effect of air upon the appetite.

They hurried the work and were very silent, although, of course, there was little need of that, for the loudest noise could not awaken the gigantic sleeper there in the next room until the time came. The old woman said that she always snored quite dreadfully for several hours before she awoke.

But it took several days to prepare the silk, and several more to sew all the many-colored strips together. Then they took the giant woman's thread to make a netting over it all, after which they fastened Mrs. O'Finney's enormous clothes-basket to the ropes, for that's what her thread was, simply great strands of linen rope, and the balloon was completed.

"Gee whiz, but it's a beauty!" cried Spencer, as he looked it over. "It's a pity to spoil all that fine color by oiling it, but we have to do it."

"Yes, it's quite true," sighed Alinda. "That what's oiled is spoiled, alas! but I think I'll take a few dozen yards of this silk with me when we go. It would be a pity to leave it, for she is always asleep and never enjoys it at all."

"Take all you want!" exclaimed Spencer, generously. "We will have room for all you need."

"I'll grab a few yards myself!" cried Amelia, "just to pay me for the years I've worked for them critters, and all for nothing but faultfinding and bickering!"

After carefully lowering the whole fabric out of the back window into the great courtyard, where

he snorted in alarm. Nothing like that had ever been seen on Dragon's isle in all his four hundred years of life!

Springing up as quickly as he could, he began to scramble toward the high wall in order to examine this wonder at closer range. Then he heard the princess giggle delightedly, and he knew that something was doing behind that wall.

He reached it and stuck his scaly head over the wall just as Spencer cut the rope, and the released balloon shot upward like an arrow from a bow!

The startled dragon drew back in affright, but instantly seeing the children looking down upon him with equally alarmed faces, he realized at once that they were about to escape, and he sprang high into the air in a desperate effort to snatch the basket before it had gone out of reach. But he was just a mite, a tiny smitch, too slow!

The dragon's sharp teeth just touched the edge of the basket and tore off a few splinters of willow. Then, with a panderous thud, as of a million tons of old iron falling, he rolled upon the hard ground, but instantly darted upward again with wide-open jaws.

Oh, it was a dreadful sensation, that of looking down into the very works of a dragon; but, fortunately, Calorific, although once a fire-spouting monster, had long ago lost all flame, probably because he spent so much time in the water, and they were safe from a conflagration, yet they shuddered to hear the click and snap of his great jaws as they came together when he failed to reach them.



Calorific, at the third attempt, opened his jaws so wide that he almost dislocated them, and just then Spencer took from his pocket the sample bottle of the Appetizer. With a quick movement he poured nearly every drop into the dragon's throat, just as the evening breeze took the balloon out over the shore.

The dragon gulped and smacked his lips. Then, as the Appetizer took instant effect, for there was nearly a pint in him, he again tried to snatch the fleeing prisoners, but now they were far above him, soaring away like released birds, and in a few minutes they had vanished among the clouds.

"Oh, that was splendid!" cried the princess. "When we get home I'll have papa make you a Grand Duke, and then you can marry me; for, as of course you know, we princesses can't marry anything less than a Grand Duke."

"Ah, but I am an American, and all Americans are kings. I am especially known as the 'Appetizer King,' and even if your father doesn't wish to make any more grand dukes I will buy one of the little ten-foot kingdoms near his place and then he will have to consent."

"Yes, that will be easy!" replied Alinda. "I know of a little kingdom, a dear little place, that is for sale and just big enough for a newly-married couple. It's only two miles from Little Wurzburg, but it's dreadfully out of repair, for the King is very poor!"

"I have enough money to fix it up in the very best style, just like what you've been used to all your life," said Spencer, proudly.

"Oh, I haven't been used to such a lot of luxury, myself!" declared Alinda. "For, after all, I must confess that papa is rather poor, and not at all as well as most kings. In fact, he hasn't even got an automobile."

"Then I'll give him one of my patent, all-around Mephitic Submarines!" cried Spencer, "and that'll put him in good humor, even to giving you to an American!"

Thus they conversed gaily as they sailed along toward home, for the balloon went as straight as a string toward Ozone-by-the-Sea, and by night they were in Spencer's great palace, where everybody in town hastened to express his delight at their escape.

Reporters thronged to get the wonderful story, and next day all the world knew of their marvelous rescue, and unstinted was the praise of the boy's ingenuity. The balloon was photographed, and even Amelia Martha's picture was in the papers, so that in a week she received eleven good offers of marriage, which always results from having your picture printed in the papers.



But perhaps you want to know what happened on the island when the giantess awoke or when O'Finney returned? She never awoke, for when the Appetizer began to get in its work on old Calorific he rushed into the catfold, instantly devoured every beast there, and still unsatisfied, crawled into Mrs. O'Finney's bedroom and ate her, also!

Then, while he waited for O'Finney to return, he dug a few million clams, just to keep from starving to death. Finally, when the giant loomed up on the distant horizon, Calorific was hopping about in an agony of hunger, and when O'Finney waded ashore with a few miserable, thin oxen in his arms, the starving monster leaped upon him and seized him by the leg.

O'Finney, although much surprised, thinking that the dragon had gone mad, made a desperate and brave struggle, but the Appetizer was too much for him. The hungry dragon soon forced him under water, and then, with a death hold upon his hairy throat, choked him, after which he ate him up in an hour.

Thus ended the career of the two giants, who, had they been wise and gone with a good, big circus, or even a cheap dime-museum, might have lived in honor and comfort, visited by all the crowned heads and rolling in press notices for years and years!

Calorific soon starved to death because he couldn't get away from the island, as the Sargasso Sea is far too full of sea-weed for a dragon to swim through it; but still Professor Rankin, of Princeton, claims that he was probably poisoned by the rank Stinkfungus that grows there, when he went to stay his stomach on that growth.

Anyway, he's dead, all right.

Spencer bought the little kingdom when he married Alinda, but neither of them were comfortable there, and they soon returned to Ozone-by-the-Sea, where they have hot and cold running water, ice cream daily, open-work plumbing, bath tubs, ice-water and electric lights, for none of these things have reached Little Wurzburg yet.

And you ought to see Alinda's silk dresses!

WALT McDUGALL