

# THE BLUE BOMB

BY J. V. GIESY

"A Story Of Humor, Mystery, Romance, and Adventure"

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She looked about her. The little island in the marsh was covered with a short, sparse grass, which rustled under her feet. It was not over the half of an acre in extent, and sloped in a gradual descent from the center to the shore-line all around.

It looked like the top of a submerged hat. And all about it, beyond the narrow strip of water, rose the green wall of the rushes, waving slightly in the wind, with a faint, fairy whispering of their interlacing stalks. Only overhead was there a farther outlook, and there the whole sky was blue and pink with the new day. She turned to Gafford with glowing eyes.

"How did you know, Lieutenant Ned?" she asked.

Gafford laughed. "Drop the lieutenant," he said quickly. "I've been in such swamps before, and I know what to look for and how. I hope that our friend the fisherman doesn't come hunting for his boat. It would be a pity to spoil the peace of the scene. You are now cast away on a desert island, my lady, for at least a day."

Shiela returned his laugh as she glanced down at herself. "I wonder," she remarked, "if any woman was ever before cast away in a silk kimono, a pair of golden slippers, and a sash?"

"Don't know," Gafford responded. "Have you a pin?"

"A pin?" said Shiela. "What for?"

"I might try for a fish," he explained. "We have nothing to eat."

She shook her head. "I've nothing but hairpins," she said. "I'm afraid that settles it," he made rueful rejoinder. "Perhaps you'd better try to sleep."

He made her a pallet of grass under the shade of a lonely bush and insisted that she lie down. After a time she yielded and fell asleep. For her the day passed in slumber until mid afternoon. She woke and stared about her in momentary wonder, saw Gafford sitting a little ways off, and sat up. "What time is it, Ned?" she asked.

"About three and all serene," he answered, squinting at the sun. He rose and came to her. "You've the seven sleepers beaten a mile. How do you feel?"

"All right, but awfully thirsty," she answered him. "Is there any water on our desert island?"

He shook his head with a troubled face. "Only around and under, and that's salt."

"Never mind," said Shiela. "Gafford smiled upon her. "You're a brick of a girl," he declared. "I don't know as I'd object if it was a desert island, really—with you."

Shiela laughed. "Come, sit down," she suggested. "I want you to tell me all about everything now."

He dropped down at her side in the shadow and told her the story from first to last. As he talked Shiela's face took on new expressions of surprise, wonder and admiration.

She put out a hand and laid it over his. Gafford turned his palm and covered her fingers with his own. So, sitting hand in hand, he outlined his plans for the rest of their journey when it should grow dusk.

"We'll go back to the track and along it to solid ground," he told her. "From there we'll skirt about the town, which is probably under martial law by now, and reach the bay below the water-front. There's a little headland there, and I've arranged with Captain Spry to have the launch stand off and on at that point every night from ten to twelve. I'll build a little fire on the beach, and the fishermen make and wave by boat in front of it in the wigwag code. That will bring them in fast enough, as they will be looking for it. Ten minutes after that you'll be safe, little girl."

"You didn't see father, did you?" she asked.

"No. He was still at Tokyo. Spry cabled him, however, when we left Nagasaki. No doubt he is in touch long ago."

"He'll be crazy—poor old dad," said the girl. "I'm all the girl he has."

"I was blamed near crazy myself," admitted Gafford with a nervous laugh.

Dusk fell at last over the world of rushes. Gafford helped the little silk-clad figure into the fisherman's boat and fought his way back to the railway embankment. There he tied up the boat and twisted a crisp bark-note into the cleft stem of a rush, which he laid in the little craft. "When he finds that he'll swear that his gods had use of his boat," he laughed softly to Shiela as they set off down the track.

Somewhere between ten-thirty and eleven a girl in a drabbed kimono crept up the accommodation-ladder of the yacht Nantucket, reached the top, cried out, and hurled herself upon the heavy figure of a man with iron-gray hair, an aquiline nose, and wide-set eyes of gray. "Dad!" She laughed and wept and choked. "Dad—dear old dad!"

The one she cried to swept her into his arms and bowed a working face against her brown hair. "Shiela," he whispered, "my girl—my little girl."

Captain Spry turned from that scene to grip the hand of a man clad in the uniform and puttees of a chauffeur.

In the saloon of the Nantucket, an hour later, Gafford had told his story to McRae, Shiela, and the captain. The two men had again wrung his hand. Spry had forced a cigar upon

him, and, in the way with men of their class, the incident was, for the time at least, closed.

It was then that Shiela, clothed again in the mode of her country, leaned forward with eyes which shone and sparkled and spoke. But before that she laid a small, leather-bound book on the table at which she sat.

"I have something here," she began, "which I want you all to look at. After we reached the bomb factory and Oshitu took me to his house, he asked me to marry him, and I refused. He did not, however, make me a prisoner in the strict sense, for he knew I could not get away. As a result, I was free to roam about the house. In the room which was assigned to me was an old, ink-covered book. It was unlocked and I looked inside. It was full of American souvenirs. Oshitu had attended Harvard and the things were things he had gathered over there. There were college pennants and flags, dance programs, the menus of class banquets, a class pin on a ribbon, a lot of kodak pictures, a baseball uniform, some text-books in English, and this book.

"It is a sort of diary which he kept at that time. Part of it is written in English and part in Japanese. On the fly-leaf, as you can see," she opened the book—"he has written: 'Diary of Irawaya Oshitu while at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U. S. A.' Most of the first part is written in English and contains only an occasional record of some matter of interest to him.

"There is no regular sequence of dates. Sometimes he skips months at a time. Then, about the middle of the book, there is another leaf inscribed: 'Diary of Irawaya Oshitu while an honorary student at the American Military School at West Point.' Beyond that the writing is mostly in what I suppose is Japanese, with only an occasional word in English. Here and there through this part, however, the name of Lieutenant Gafford appears.

"At least I suppose it is his, though the word is merely 'Gafford.' Of course I couldn't read it, but I thought that as it was written while Oshitu was in America, and mentioned that name, that it might be important. And so when Lieutenant Gafford and poor Karloff came for me last night, I wouldn't leave until I had run back and got this book. You see—I thought—she paused and then finished with a rush—"I thought that maybe it might have some bearing on Lieutenant Gafford's case."

Spry and McRae were sitting forward in their interest. Gafford, paler than was his wont, gripped the arms of his chair. "Would you mind letting me see it?" he asked in a voice not quite steady, despite his visible effort at self control. "You know I read Japanese."

Shiela extended the book, opened at a place she appeared to have marked.

Gafford took it, and ran his eyes from top to bottom of the page and read on with a strained attention, sprang suddenly to his feet, and brought the book down on the table with a crash.

"Mr. Secretary," he cried in intense emotion to McRae, "will you believe me when I say that, when this is translated, it will prove all that I contended at the time of my trial? It is here—here in black and white!"

"If you can read it, why not translate it to us now?" suggested McRae with evident impatience of delay.

"If you wish," Gafford made eager assent and picked up the book. "This first place where my name appears, which was where Miss McRae handed me the opened book, reads: 'I, Irawaya Oshitu, am today the recipient of a great honor in that his divine majesty the Mikado has hereby commanded me, on penalty of death for failure, to secure the plans of certain military works of the Americans, both built and in course of construction. I have much hope that through my friendship with Gafford I may be enabled to begin this at once.'

"Go on," urged McRae, as he paused.

"I will have to ask you to let me read it as I find it, then, sir," explained Gafford as he seated himself and began turning the leaves of the book. While they sat and waited he read on and on. Gradually his face became absorbed and he seemed to forget their presence. Quite unexpectedly he closed the book and looked up with eyes which burned. "It is all here, sir!" he burst out. "I can't read it aloud to you now. I haven't the control. It means too much. But—I'll tell you this. It closes—with an exultant paragraph to the effect that I have been convicted of his act, and that no one suspects him of the theft."

"His voice rose and broke on the last word. He sank forward against the table and bowed his head on his arms.

McRae rose and crossed to his side. He put down a hand and laid it on the bent shoulders.

"Lieutenant," said he, "I congratulate you from my heart. This was all that was needed to make the incident complete. As soon as I return home I shall see that the case is reopened and we all know what the new verdict will be.

"And along the same line, I want to stop in Nagasaki long enough to visit this woman whom you call White Kate. I feel that, in view of her service, I can pledge her such action as will result in her being

perfectly free to come back to the States."

"She's not a bad woman," said Gafford, sitting back in his chair and speaking quickly. "And she loves her country. She's proved it. I hope you can fix it, sir."

McRae nodded. "And now"—he addressed Captain Spry—"if you'll call away the launch, captain, I'm going ashore. Late though it is, I must see our consul, and when I get back we'll sail."

The captain rose, and McRae followed him from the room.

Alone, Gafford turned to the girl. "And you thought to bring this book at such a time," he began. "How can I thank you for all I owe you? First you came to me and wakened my deadened manhood. Now, at the last, you give me back my country and my good name.

"The nightmare and despair of the

five last hideous years is ended, and I can live again. It was your woman's soul which read all the answer to the riddle of why all these things have happened and pointed it out. It is you whom I must thank for the fact that once more I can call myself—American. This little book means the rehabilitation of the name of Gafford. I shall go back to my country and live for it, and dear old dad, and"—he paused, and a slow flush mounted his cheeks ere he went on—"and—if you'll say the word, Shiela—for you."

The blue eyes answered his question even before she stretched out her hands.

Something of all this may be found in the records of the reopened case of Gafford. They are touched upon also in the proceedings which made it possible for White Kate to come home.

Somewhere in a place known to but one or two men there lies a strongly padlocked box which contains a bit of apparatus consisting of sextants and dials and wires. Under it, quite in the bottom of the box, is a series of technical drawings, comprehensive to none save a competent engineer.

As for the explosion of the bomb plant, the world at large paid small attention to a press notice of a minor volcanic disturbance on the island of Hondu, back of Kobe.

THE END.

## THE MYSTERIOUS MONOGRAM

by HOWARD P. ROCKEY

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## OPENING CHAPTER STARTS NEXT WEEK

### "Don't Fail To Read The Opening Chapter"

If you start this wonderful story you will not miss a single chapter.

### POOR QUALITY OF BUTTER OFTEN CAUSED BY LACK OF THOROUGH COOLING OF CREAM.

One of the most common causes of poor quality butter is the lack of immediate, thorough cooling of the cream after separation. The Dairy Division of the United States Department of Agriculture has made a careful investigation of conditions on a large number of dairy farms, and the data obtained show that, if properly cooled, cream of the best grade can be produced with but little extra labor or expense. The principles involved are very simple and are easily understood.

A liberal use of ice which has been stored in winter to be used the following summer, is one of the requirements for the solution of the poor butter problem. Farmers who are already successfully delivering good products to the creamery have usually provided for themselves a convenient source of supply for the ice, suitable houses for storing the ice, and ice water tanks for the immediate cooling of the milk or cream. In parts of New England, although the dairyman often holds cream on the farm four days in the summer and seven days in the winter, they deliver practically all their product while sweet. After it reaches the creamery it is pasteurized and shipped a distance of from 50 to 300 miles, and may still be sold in these remote localities in the form of sweet cream.

The expense connected with the liberal use of ice in this connection is so small and the result so satisfactory that details have been compiled for the consideration of those interested in dairying and are now issued in the form of a new Farmers' Bulletin (No. 623), entitled: "Ice Houses and the Use of Ice on the Dairy Farm." The bulletin should be useful in dairy sections where natural ice is obtainable. Plans and specifications for ice houses are given.

In its general summary the bulletin makes the following ten suggestions:

- (1) Wherever ice is abundant the cost of harvesting and storing is usually very small.
- (2) If a stream of water is available, a small ice pond can generally be constructed on the farm by building a dam.

(3) In building an ice house care should be taken to provide for proper drainage and ventilation. The drain should be efficiently trapped to prevent air from entering the house through the drain.

(4) The efficient insulating of ice houses is of the utmost importance, consequently great care should be exercised in the selection and installation of the insulating material.

(5) About 40 cubic feet of space should ordinarily be allowed for a ton of ice. A cubic foot of ice weighs about 57 pounds.

(6) Under general conditions about 1 pound of ice will be required to cool and keep 1 pound of cream in good condition until delivered to the creamery when deliveries are made three times a week.

(7) When storing ice about 50 per cent more should be packed than is actually needed. This amount allows for a heavy shrinkage and for household uses.

(8) The dairy farmer should provide annually one-half to 1 ton of ice per cow for cooling cream only and 1½ to 2 tons per cow if whole milk is cooled, depending upon the locality and other factors.

(9) If a cake of ice is kept floating in the water surrounding the cream cans when the ordinary cooling cans are used, the temperature will remain at about 40 degrees F.

(10) Good ice water tanks can usually be constructed for \$5 to \$20.

As many as 72 different kinds of wood are used in the manufacture of umbrella handles, canes and whips in this country.

In parts of the west, where trees are scarce, sage brush is used for fuel. In Nevada the large main stems are trimmed by Indians at \$3 a cord and delivered to the user at about \$6.50. Sage brush burns rapidly and is rather dirty, but produces good heat.

A surprisingly large number of substances, ranging all the way from the condensed fumes of smelters to the skimmed milk of creameries, have been tried or suggested as means of preserving wood from decay. Most of them, however, have been found to have little or no value for the purpose. Certain forms of coal-tar creosote and zinc chloride are the most widely used wood preservatives.

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