

SERIAL STORY

The FLYING MERCURY

By Eleanore M. Ingram

Author of "The Game and the Candle"

Illustrations by RAY WALTERS

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CHAPTER I.

"The roaring reports of the motor fell into abrupt silence, as the driver brought his car to a halt.

"You signaled!" he called across the grid of set brakes.

In the blending glare of the search lights from the two machines, a gray one arriving and the limousine drawn to the roadside, the young girl stood, her hand still extended in the gesture which had stopped the man who now leaned across his wheel.

"Oh, please," she pleaded again.

On either side stretched away the Long Island meadows, dark, soundless, apparently uninhabited. Only this spot of light broke the monotony of dreariness. A keen, chill, October wind sighed past, stirring the girl's delicate gown as its folds lay unheeded in the dust, fluttering her fur lined cloak and shaking two or three childish curls from the bondage of her velvet hood. The driver swung himself down and came toward her with the unobtrusive swiftness of one trained to the unexpected.

"I beg pardon—can I be of some use?" he asked.

"We are lost," she confessed hurriedly. "If you could set us right, I would be grateful. I—we must get home soon. I have been over the house somewhere here, and started to return to New York this afternoon. The chauffeur does not know Long Island; we cannot seem to find any place. And now we have lost a tire. I was afraid—"

"The Journey Will Be Short Now," the gray machine.

"Thank you," she said again, meeting his eyes with her own, whose darkness contrasted oddly with the blonde curls clustered under her hood.

"You are not afraid to drive into the city alone?" he asked.

"Alone! Why, my cousin—"

"Your cousin is going to stay with me."

She flung back her head; amazement, question, relief struggled over her sensitive face, and finally melted into resignation.

"You are clever—and kind, to do that! No, I am not afraid."

He closed the door.

"Take your dress home," he bade the chauffeur. "Crank for him, Rupert."

"Why, why?" stammered the limousine's other passenger, turning as the motor started.

No one heeded him.

"By-by, don't break any records," Rupert called after the chauffeur. "Hurry yourself, too. If you should be my own three, telegraph for me, and if I'm within a day's run I'll come put them on for you and save you time."

Silence closed in again, as the red tail light vanished around a bend. The gray car's driver nodded curtly to the stupefied youth in the middle of the road.

"Unless you want to stay here all night, you'd better get in the machine," he suggested. "My name's LeStrange—I suppose yours is French?"

"Dick French. But, see here, you mean well, but I'm going with my cousin. I'd like a drive with you, but I'm busy."

"You're not fit to go with your cousin."

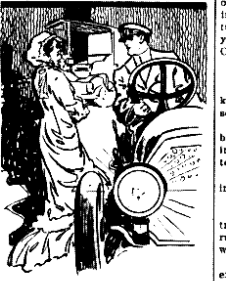
"Not—"

"No," he completed LeStrange definitively. "Can you hang on somewhere, Rupert?"

"I can," Rupert assured, with an air of his own. "Get your friend aboard."

LeStrange was already in his seat, waiting.

"What's that for?" asked the second driver, as he looked back. "The young man slipped around his wheel, sending him to the east."



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"There are your tools, your chauffeur?"

The bewildered chauffeur mechanically reached for a box on the running-board, as the young assistant came up, grinning all over his small dark face.

"Oh, quicker! What's the matter, rheumatism? They wouldn't have you in a training camp for motor trucks on Sunday. Hustle, please!"

There never had been anything done to that sedate limousine quite as this was done. Even the preoccupied girl looked on in fascination at a rapidity of unwavering movement suggesting a conjuring feat.

"By George!" exclaimed her escort. "A splendid man you've got there! Really, a splendid chauffeur, you know."

The driver smiled with a gleam of irony, but disregarded the comment.

"Would you like to get into your car?" he asked the girl. "You will be able to start very soon."

"I see that," she acknowledged gratefully. "Thank you, I would rather wait here."

"Is your chauffeur trustworthy?"

"Oh, yes; he has been in my uncle's employ for three years. But he was never before out here, in this place."

There was a pause, filled by the soft monotone of insulins drifting from the side of the limousine. The driver talked while he worked and his fellow-worker did not please him.

"Wrench, baby! Wrench! Oh, look behind you when you put it—need a memory course. You ought to be passing spools to a lady with a sewing machine. Did you ever see a motor car before? There, pump her up, do. He rose, drew out his watch and glanced at it. "Five minutes. I'll have to beat that day after tomorrow."

The driver looked over at him and the eyes laughed together. Now, for the first time the girl noticed that across the shoulders of both men's jerseys ran in silver letters the name of famous foreign automobile.

"I am very grateful, indeed," she said bravely and graciously. "I wish I could say more, or say it better. The journey will be short, now."

"But all her dignity could not check the frightened shrinking of her glance, first toward the interior of the limousine and then toward the man who was to enter there with her, and the driver of the gray machine saw it.

"We have done very little," he returned. "If I put you in your car?"

The chauffeur was gathering his tools, apologetically outstretched and making ready to start. Seated among the rugs and cushions, under the light of the luxurious car, the girl deliberately drew off her hold all she held of her small uncovered hand to the driver of the gray machine.

"Some men are born awake, some awake themselves, and some are slunk on into awakening," paraphrased LeStrange, in addition. "If I were you, I'd wake up; it comes easier and it's sure to arrive anyhow. There is the village ahead—shall I stop?"

"It looks terribly dull," was the doleful verdict.

"Then come with me," flashed the other unexpectedly, for a fractional instant his eyes left the road and turned to his companion's face. "Did you ever see race practice at dawn? Come try a night in a training camp. You'd bother with me?"

"Yes."

A head bobbed up by French's eyes, when he was clinging in some inexplicable fashion.

"Once I rode eight miles out there by the hood, head downward, holding it in a pin," he imparted, by way of entertainment.

French stared at the reeling perch indicated, and gasped.

"What for?" he asked.

"So we could keep on to our control instead of being put out of the running, of course. Did you guess I was curing a headache?"

"But you might have been killed!" exclaimed French.

"Even by the semi-light of the lamps there was visible the mechanic's droll twist of lip and brow.

"I'd drive to hell with LeStrange," he explained sweetly, and settled back in his place.

French drew a long breath. After a moment he again looked at the driver.

"I'll come," he accepted. "And, thank you."

It was LeStrange who smiled this time, with a sudden and enchanting warmth of mirth.

"We'll try to amuse you," he promised.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Fairness Wins.

That it pays to be fair with employees was illustrated recently in the New York Business district. A young man who had worked for a large house for three years was forced to remain at home two days because of illness. He had never been absent from his desk a day during the entire time, not even for a summer vacation. Nevertheless, when he received his salary envelope the amount of two days' pay had been deducted.

The boy was indignant and resigned on the spot. The following day he called on the president of the firm, who had received \$10,000 worth of business, and would have meant a clear profit of \$30,000 to the firm he had just left. The young man turned the business over to his boss, and was given a position. His contract called for double the salary he had received at the old house and stipulated that he is to receive one month's vacation each summer with full pay.

"A Perfect Saw."

"To say nothing and saw wood" seemed to be one of the most accurate phrases passed down by our hard-working forebears. Like most sayings which have emanated from manual labor, this is blunt, honest, and to the logically inclined, substantially accurate. Show me a man bent double with a short log across his back, and I will show you a man who is not doing his own business with admirable skill. If he speaks, he speaks to you. While he says he is necessarily busy, I have seen a man who has a saw cut a perfect saw—Adolphus March-

ILLINOIS NEWS TERSELY TOLD

Champaign—Bright athletes began down on the track at the annual inter-scholastic meet under the University of Illinois auspices. The weather was not so favorable, but was considered appropriate for record making. Partisans of the 93 high schools represented cheered their champions as they warmed up. University High's crack team, three-time champion and Lane Tech were favored teams. Down-state schools hoped to see the points split up so that a contender might have a look. Martin Delany of Chicago refused the big meet.

Springfield—Springfield's board of education, which recently co-operated in the establishment of a free dental dispensary, heard members of the Illinois State Dental Association tell of the merits of dental inspection. The board members were guests of the State society at the last lecture session of the forty-eighth annual convention. F. P. Mott of Chicago was the chief speaker. He is head of the Chicago dental bureau.

Rockford—De Kalb county's board of supervisors will be petitioned soon to buy the property known as Coltonville in De Kalb county, to townships, and convert it into a public park. The historical associations of Coltonville are responsible for the movement. It is a picturesque spot and for decades was a favorite resort of the Indians. The red men loved it, grew their maize there and made it the burial place of their dead. The first court in the county is held at Coltonville, where at one time flourished stores, a school, blacksmith shop, hotel and distillery.

Springfield—Salaries of guards at two penal institutions of Illinois have been readjusted. The changes, however, are only in cases of new employes. This announcement was made by Secretary Ward Robinson of the State Prison Service commission. The two institutions for decades have been where the changes have been ordered are the state prison at Jester and the reformatory at Pontiac.

Caro—A series of bogus checks on the First National Bank and Trust company of Caro in northern Illinois led to the arrest at Minneapolis of Ira Newman, formerly of Caro. Sheriff Frazer has wired the authorities to hold Newman until the requisition papers can be obtained from Governor Deneen. While in Caro Newman was employed in the Iron Mountain railroad office.

Joliet—Frank A. Jackson, a carpenter contractor, has just been informed through a London law firm that he was sole heir to an estate of more than \$6,000,000 left by Mrs. Mary Jackson, an aunt who died in February. The estate comprises 8,500 acres and is located at Pelkington, Yorkshire, England, and several pieces of rich business property in London.

Rockford—Mrs. Regna Nelson, a widow aged twenty-six, is thought to have committed suicide by leaping from a bridge into Rock river here. Her clothing was found on the bridge. The body has not been found.

Mount Vernon—Ransom Mendon all was fined \$50 and costs in the circuit court here for using deceit to get a state civil service position. He was holding a place which he lost. He took an examination under another name and passed with good grades. He received the second appointment. When the deceit was discovered Mendonall was removed and fined.

Springfield—The Illinois branch of the National Citizens League organized to promote a sound banking system, will hold a conference in Springfield Tuesday, May 11, at which time a committee appointed to prepare a statement to send over the state will make a report. Subdivisions of the organization have been organized in every congressional district.

Sterling—Guy A. Spilke, a farmer near Richardson, while plowing turned up a pocketbook containing \$2,000 in hundred dollar bills and \$30 gold pieces. It bore evidence of having been buried a long time.

Bloomington—J. C. Jewett, a wealthy merchant of Shelbina, Mo., was made defendant in suit for slander by a man who is being sought \$10,000 damages alleging that Jewett asserted that Robbins had sworn falsely during some recent land litigation.

Springfield—Dr. E. F. Hassell of Springfield was appointed by Governor Deneen to conduct the state board of dental examiners.

Jerseyville—The sheriff of Jersey county is conducting a search in the timber along Otter creek in the county for a supposed wild man of the woods. According to officials of Jersey county, the man is being sought by a game warden attached Edward Vilmer, a woodsman, and attempted to take him out from him. Farmers hold the sheriff the man has been in the area for two years. Otter creek residents say the wild man knows something of the mysterious disappearance of a man who has been in the area of two years.

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TERMS: Single service \$8.00; season service \$12.00; to insure mare in foal \$15.00; to insure standing foal \$20.00. Special rate for two or more mares. Due care will be taken but will not be responsible should any accidents occur. Parties disposing of mares before they are known to be in foal will be held for insurance money. Positively no Sunday service.

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