

By Sidney Sm

# West Wind Drift

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON  
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**THIS STARTS THE STORY**  
 Captain Trigger, com manding the steamer Doraine, whose disappearance was reported to the United States with 710 passengers, was a mystery to a world. After the vessel leaves port Algierson Adonia Perovai, an American, is brought before Captain Trigger, by the chief engineer as a stewardess. The captain questions him as to how he boarded the vessel and as to how he came aboard as a coal passer. He wants to return to the United States, and explains that robbers have taken all his money. The captain also learns that two deckhands have leaped from the ship and suspects a plot to rob the vessel. Perovai is put to work under guard. Next morning the wireless operator reports his transmitter out of order. Some carry around their jewels for safety and a banker "stuffed his belt" in his capacity with bank notes and gold. While at work Perovai is recognized by Ruth Clinton, a debutante daughter of a banker. She met Perovai at a dance. Shortly after he is recognized a series of explosions occur, killing forty-two of the crew and passengers and making the great ship a hopeless derelict. She remains afloat, however, and the crew decides to try to reach the fortress of the sea "Out of the silent hulk comes the voice of the first officer, and a series of messages from the ship—commands to the encircling walls of the sea."

his voice in joking, for there were dead and injured lying in the shadows; there were grief-stricken, anxious men and women crouching out there in the sun; there were limp, unconscious women and half dead children, and over all still hung the ominous cloud of catastrophe, fat with prophecies of perils yet to come.

They had gone out from a ship filled with a monstrous clangor and confusion, they were returning to a tomblike hulk, a lonely mass in which echoes would abound, a thing of signs and glimmers, the corpse of a mammoth that had thrashed yesterday but never more.

Up in the curving triangle of the forward deck were two long, canvas-covered rows of the dead! Forty-two mangled, silent forms lying side by side, some calm in death, others charred and mutilated beyond all possibility of identification. Every man in the engine room at the time of the explosion was now mangled, unrecognizable thing. Engineers, electricians, stokers—all of them "viped out in the flash of an eye—burnt, boiled, crushed, killed. Half a dozen women, as many children, lay with the silent men.

The injured had been placed in staterooms on the promenade deck, regardless of previous occupancy or subsequent claims. There is the score and the score of seriously injured, and there toiled the ship's surgeon and his volunteer helpers. Salty and the doctor, the worker and the scholar and dot, sturgeon and first cabin, wealth and poverty shared alike in the deplorable condition of identification. There was no discrimination. One was as good as another to the doctor, and the doctor was as good as a man's full of suffering as that of the rich man, the wall of the stateroom was as good as the wall of the poor man's.

Capt. Trigger was one of the injured. He swore a great deal when the doctor ordered him to the hospital. "Why the devil should he be put to bed for something a schoolboy would do?" he asked. "Why the devil should the younger officers be killed by the explosion that wrecked the bridge and burnt house?" The engineer Gray died in the engine room. Cruise was blown to pieces in the wireless house. His assistant, the cripple with the charmed life, was dead.

A few seconds before the first explosion took place, the doctor had been with a big navy revolver. The last seen of Cruise was when he appeared in the office of his station, an expression of mingled rage and alarm on his face. Pointing frantically at the figure of his assistant as it shot down the steps and across the deck, he shouted:

"Get that man! Get him! For God's sake, get him!"

It all happened in a few seconds of time. The shrill laugh of the fleeing assistant, the report of the revolver, an instant of stupefaction, and then the dull, grinding crash.

It will never be known what Cruise had heard or seen in the last moments of his life. No one on board the Doraine, however, doubts for an instant that he had discovered, too late, the truth about his misshapen assistant. They now knew with almost absolute certainty the identity of the odd man in that devilish trio, the man whose footsteps Perovai had heard, the man who stayed behind to guarantee the consummation of the hideous plot. Coward in the end, he shirked the death he was pledged to accept. He knew what was coming. Unlike his braver comrade, he took the simplest way.

The count began. Late in the afternoon it was completed. There were forty-two known on board the Doraine, the majority being members of the crew. Seventeen persons were missing, chiefly from the stateroom. Twenty-nine seriously injured were under the doctor's care. Some of them would not recover. A hundred or more persons suffered from shock, bruises, cuts, and exposures, but only a few of them required or demanded attention. In spite of their injuries they fell to with the spirit that makes for true heroism and devoted themselves to the care of the less fortunate, or to the assistance of the sorely tried officers and men who strove to bring order out of chaos.

Among the survivors were two American surgeons and a physician from Rio Janeiro. They, with the nurses, all of whom had been saved, immediately went to the relief of the ship's doctor, and in short order an improvised hospital was established aboard. There was a remarkable unanimity of self-sacrifice among the passengers. High and low, they fell to in a frenzy of comradeship and worked side by side in whatever capacity they were needed, whether fitted for it or not. No man, no woman who was able to lift a helping hand, failed in this hour of need.

Mental labor fell to the lot of the lordly but uncomplaining Landover, to Nicklestick, Jones and Snipe, and even to the precious Sloop, who, forgetting his Carusolic throat, toiled and sweated in the smoky saloon. Morris Shine, the motion-picture magazine, while he labored amidst the wreckage of the after deck, lamented not the cheerless task but the evil fate that prevented the making of the most spectacular film the world had ever known.

Mrs. Carel-Amor, Mrs. Oboosky and her dancers; bejeweled Jewesses and half-clad emigrants; gentlemen unused to toil and women who were born to it; the old and the young—all of them, without exception, rose from the decks of despair and faced the rigors of the day with unflinching courage, gave out of a limitless store of tenderness all that their strength could spare.

After the sun had set and the decks were dark and deserted except for the from the gunners' hoard. Swiftly, methodically, one after the other, they slid down to the black, greasy water, and the grave that is never still, yet always silent, to the vast, unexplored wilderness that stretches around the world.

The thin little missionary from the barren plateau of Patagonia and the plump priest from the heart of Buenos Aires, monotonously commended each and every one of them to the mercy of God!

The sun came up again in the morning over a smiling, happy sea that licked the sides of the Doraine with the tenderness of a dog.

The plight of the hapless steamer could not be disguised. Even the most ignorant passenger knew that the wrecked vessel could not be repaired or compounded. They knew that the Doraine was completely paralyzed. The power to move it will be forever lost, the force that had driven her restlessly along the chosen path was still. The seaworthiest promoters were idle; the hasty port wrecker so badly that the "udder was useless. She was a "rift, helplessly drifting. Of what avail the wheel and a patched-up rudder to the mass hat lay inert, motionless on a smiling sea?

Every one on board realized, with a sinking heart, that the Doraine was to go on drifting, drifting no more, until she crossed its path of a friendly stranger out there in the mighty waste. No cry of distress, no call for help could go crackling into the boundless reaches. That was the plight of the Doraine and her people on the morning day that followed the disaster, and unless fate intervened that would be their fate.

Mr. Mott, temporarily in command, addressed the passengers in the main saloon, where they had congregated at his request. He did not mince matters. He stated the situation plainly. It was best that they should realize, that they should understand, that they should "know the truth in order that they might adapt themselves to the conditions he was now compelled to impose upon them. They were, so to speak, occupying a derelict. Help might come before nightfall, it might not come for days. He hoped for the best but he intended to prepare for the worst.

Without apology he laid down a rigid set of rules, and from these rules he made it perfectly clear, that he could be no deviation. The available supply of food was limited. It was his purpose to conserve it with the greatest possible care. Down in the holds of course, was a vast store of consigned foodstuffs, but he had no authority to draw upon it and would not do so unless the ship's own stock was exhausted. Passengers and crew therefore, would be obliged to go on short rations. Better to eat sparingly now, he said, than not to eat at all later on. He concluded his remarks in this fashion:

## THE GUMPS—Shop Talk



## SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Smithers Has a Clean Reputation



**WHAT IT CONTINUES**  
 THE word came down to the scores who filled the boats that they were to lie by until sunrise, keeping in close contact with each other, and at no great distance from the ship. The most thorough, careful examination of the steamer was in progress. If it was found that there was no danger of foundering, all the would be taken aboard in the evening. Nothing could be done at present. A few hours more would tell the tale.

And then, for the first time since the disaster, the note of the croaker was heard. Each and every boat contained at least one individual who knew exactly what ought to be done in a crisis like this.

Mr. Landover addressed the benumbed remaining occupants of the boat into which he had climbed with commendable reluctance as one of the last persons to leave the ship.

"Why don't they begin sending out SOS calls? What's the wireless for, if not to be used at a time like this? Say, you! Tell them there to some of those damned muddle headed idiots and all them what to do. Tell them that I say for them to send out calls for help. What's that? What did you say?"

The steward in charge of the boat repeated his remark and Mr. Landover at once said he would report him to Captain Trigger.

"You won't do any good," complained the banker despairingly. "Captain Trigger hasn't the backbone of a cat. He'd let you tell him to go to hell and never think of jacking you up for it. No wonder we're in the fix we're in now. If he'd had the sense of a jelly fish, he'd have— Here! Sit still! You'll upset the boat, you fool! What— what are you going to do with that one? I'm going to knock you over the bean with it if you don't take back what you said about Captain Trigger," said the steward, earnestly. "Take it back, do you hear me?"

"Would you murder me for a little thing like that?"

Mr. Nicklestick aroused himself from the torpor of despair.

"Make it back, Landover—please do. If he misses you, he'll get me sure. It's so dark, and I got nothing but the deepest respect for Captain Trigger. He's a wonderful man, steward. Don't make any mistake. You hear me say he is a wonderful man?"

"Oh, shut up, Nicklestick," grated Landover, crouching down behind the gentleman addressed.

"I do do it in a minute if it wasn't for the women and children in this boat."

"I intend to have every officer on that steamer arrested for criminal negligence the instant I set foot in New York," boomed the banker. "I call upon every one of you, my fellow passengers, to assist me to the utter lack of precaution taken by the men in charge of this ship. And what efforts are they making to bring help to us now? By gad, if I was in command of that vessel I'd send every officer of that vessel— Great Scott! What's that?"

"That's a rocket," roared the steward. "Great Scott!" grunted the exasperated banker. "Are we having a celebration with fireworks?"

"The hapless occupants of the life-boat watched with fascinated eyes the first of the giant rockets that whizzed and roared their way from the deck of the ship, an endless array of fire piercing the night. A loud report, the scattering of a hundred stars, and then—denser blackness than before.

Morning came. Up out of the east stole a sickly gray, and then, suddenly, the sea was blue and smiling. In the heart of the dancing cordon lay the wrecked steamer, an endless array of fire piercing the night. A loud report, the scattering of a hundred stars, and then—denser blackness than before.

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## The Young Lady Across the Way



## Willie Tries to Get the Guest to Make a Small Bet With Him



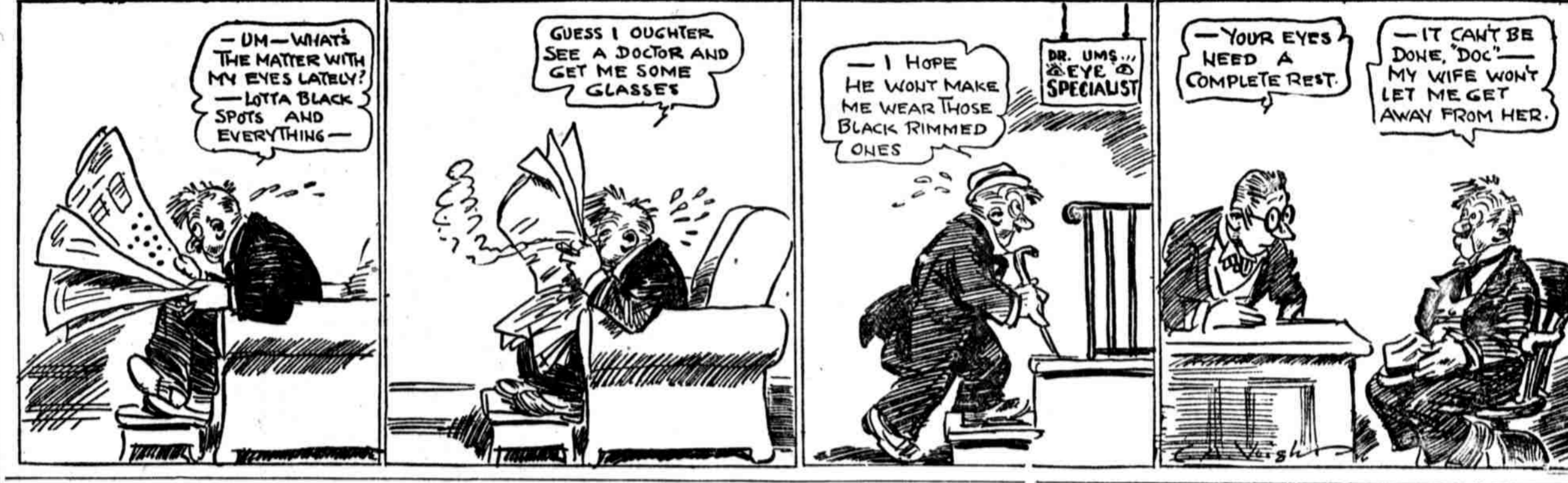
## By Fontaine Fox

## SCHOOL DAYS



By DWIG

## PETEY—Absolutely Hopeless



By C. A. Voight

## "CAP" STUBBS—Pop's Sense of Humor Has Suffered a Relapse



By Edwina

CHAPTER III  
 The gaunt, coal-face Mr. Mott commanded the port side of the vessel; Mr. Oodge, the purser, the starched flighting men in the breeches and leggings of the American navy, blackened and bandaged stokers, and the crew of the cotley company that stood ready to drag the occupants of the boats up into the dark, smoke-scented maw of the ship.

One by one, in regular, systematic order, the lifeboats came alongside. There was no confusion, no bungling. They bumped gently against the towering rows of masts and masts, made fast by men employed in the gruesome business, their precocious cargo. No one lifted up

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)