

# Jungle Breath

by Ben Lucien Burman

## THIS HAS HAPPENED

Attempts have been made on the life of Elise Marberry, and several murders have occurred near the little town of Porto Verde, Brazil, outside of which Elise owns a plantation. Her cousin and protector, Vilak, believes that Gaylord Prentiss is responsible for all the trouble. Word comes that the dam at Avilos has burst. Elise, Vilak and Lincoln Nunnally, an aged chemist, ride to warn Prentiss. They are fired upon as they near Prentiss' fazenda and Vilak learns that the flood warning is but a ruse on the part of the natives to get Prentiss away from his home so that they may murder him. The three gain the shelter of Prentiss' house and warn him of the true state of affairs, then prepare to defend themselves against an attack. During the attack by the natives Nunnally is wounded.

## NOW BEGIN THE STORY

### CHAPTER XXIX.

Vilak turned his blackened face from his rifle for an instant, shot a glance at the chemist, squeezed his shoulder affectionately. "Hard luck, Nanny," he said cheerily. "Work for you, Elise."

He swung his head back to his rifle and began to reload the rate of his already rapid fire. "Cheer up, Nanny. Needed another wounded man to keep me company. You with your arm and I with the wrist I got the other night will go around singing with a grinder-organ after we get out of this. Make more than that you do with chemistry."

Elise had hastened forward to examine the wound. Nunnally tried to prevent her. "No. . . er. . . No," he stammered. "It isn't anything. . . Just a scratch. . . A splinter of steel. . . er. . . splinter. Fix it myself. . . Need you at the window."

Elise did not heed him. She looked at the floor, now in places covered with an inch or two of water from the spring trickling in the corner. She found a clear pool and in one instant had brought water from it and washed the wound in the next had torn a strip of cloth from her dress and tied it in a tight bandage, checking the flow of blood.

The gray silk appeared like a great butterfly which had settled on his wispy arm. A bell began to ring in some far off part of the house. The dog bayed loudly. Prentiss' cadaverous body writhed, his angular face contorted with fear, his eyes were the eyes of a trapped beast. "They've gotten in. . . he pants. "Gotten in. . . they haven't. I can see too plainly. A bullet must have cut one of the electric wires around the lock." A man's silhouette appeared on the barbed wire which overtopped the wall. Vilak fired. The silhouette toppled. "Good idea that extra wire. Makes them perfect targets. Don't think they'll try that again even if they do know now that it isn't carrying high voltage."

The besiegers' firing became desultory. Vilak took advantage of the interval of inaction to stretch his cramped muscles and light a cigarette. The match sputtered into the water at his feet. He gazed at it philosophically. "Hope none of you are susceptible to pneumonia, with all this water on the floor. Seems to me I've been living in the liquid for the past month."

He splashed over to the box of cartridges, which for security against a stray bullet had been put behind a heavy wooden chest. He fingered the bullets thoughtfully.

"No use losing our heads, but the cold fact has to be admitted that we're in a pretty situation. Our ammunition's running very low, our enemy is superior in numbers, at least four times ourselves, I should say, judging by the rifle bullets. At the most, even with no change of tactics on our part and with everything in our favor, we can hold them off only two hours or so while it will be morning before anyone learns that the report of the food is false and returns to Porto Verde. So we can expect no help there. A beautiful job this. Perfectly planned. Perfectly planned. I expect our friends outside my compliments."

He flicked the ash from his cigarette. "If you have any ideas, they'll be welcome."

Elise and the old man looked at him and shook their heads. Prentiss did not turn from his window, but kept his eyes fixed now on the gate, now on the house. Vilak stretched again, then returned to his post. A sound of chopping rose up from the creek, followed soon after by the rumble of a falling tree.

Elise glanced at Vilak questioningly. "A battering ram, probably," he said. "About time they thought of it. They'll try to break down the gate. And at the loss of a few men they'll undoubtedly do it, for most of them can keep in the shelter of the wall."

A few moments later they heard the dull, muffled booming of wood against iron as a log struck the gate. They fired. The muffled thunder continued, in short, regular intervals like the reports of some distant artillery regiment practicing on the range. The pile of cartridges grew smaller.

The old man, despite his wounded arm, had resumed firing. His rifle jammed. Vilak cleared it. "Gate can't last much longer," he muttered.

The spring in the corner gurgled softly, the water rose an instant, then trickled noisily over the stone door-sill. A brilliant green caterpillar, irritated by the acid smoke of the guns, crawled ed out of a crack in the rocks and began climbing the wall. Some frightened, unseen nightbird dashed against the window; a jaguar howled far off in the jungle.

Vilak took betel. He became absorbed in contemplation, his finger mechanically pressing the trigger of his rifle; his eyes became the dull, dreaming eyes of a philosopher in some Tibetan lamasary; the thin film like a bird's inner eyelid crept slowly over the white eyeballs again.

Suddenly he put down his rifle. "A perfect idiot," he flashed, as he hurried to the other side of the tower and began surveying the low plateau back of Prentiss' house. "Completely losing my imagination. For the second time in a week I've ignored a means of escape when it was crying to be used. Any powder or dynamite here, Prentiss?"

The other whipped away from the window. The mark on his forehead was quivering. "Dynamite? . . . Not much. . . A little," he whispered feverishly. "Left over. . . blasting. . . for wall." His face was flaming. "Got a plan? Got a plan?"

Vilak nodded quickly. "Where is it?"

"Little shed. . . few feet back here. . ."

"Let's get it."

They crept out the door, keeping to the shadows. They were not perceived by the attackers; in a moment they had returned to the lower room with two packages wrapped in dirty newspapers. These Vilak untied and, exposing a number of sticks of dynamite, examined them closely. "Still good all right. Not touched by dampness." He shot a glance toward the old man and the girl. "Fire as fast as you can. Delay them. Time's the important thing now."

The log boomed monotonously against the gate. He took the piece of twine in which one package had been wrapped and began rubbing it with the explosive to make a fuse.

"What's your plan? What's your plan?" Prentiss panted.

"Not mine. Nature's. Should have thought of it at once, with that spring gurgling there and soaking our shoes all the time. The water up in these little lakes on the high ground all around you is doing its best to break through and come down on us. We'll just give it a little assistance."

He searched among the newspapers for a detonator. "Blow up part of that retaining wall I noticed damming that first fairly large lake back of your house. Do it with a pick if we have to, but the dynamite's quicker. Our friends outside said there was a flood. We'll give them one. Nothing original. The Dutch did it all the time when the country was invaded. Cut the dikes, if you remember."

He tied the sticks in series of threes. "Not so safe here. Taking chances. Long chances. A lot of water up there. Don't know exactly how much. And we're only ten feet or so higher than the creek bed. Perfectly apt to get us as well as the others. But it's the only chance we've got."

The booming of the log ceased, probably to allow the attackers to rest. Prentiss stared at Vilak, half fearful, half incredulous. "Going to. . . let two lakes. . . down on us?"

"Yes."

"Wash us away. . . everything away."

"If you have a less dangerous plan, we'll be delighted to take it."

Prentiss shook his head sullenly. Vilak swiftly unbundled the explosive in a newspaper and started toward the door. He turned to Prentiss. "Any way I can get through the wall? Don't want to climb over unless I have to. Almost sure to be seen."

"There's a place. Old drainage sewer. Barred up now. But can get through if you know how. Straight line from kitchen."

"Better come and show me. Save time."

"All right. Want to get outside any-

## Do Trees Commit Suicide?

Trees often strangle themselves with their own roots. Fortunately, this takes time, and if it is detected, the offending parts may be cut away, saving the tree's life.

Tree suicide, little known and often overlooked, is described in Free Talk (Stamford, Conn.), by F. A. Bartlett, who writes:

"The practise of hark-kiri, or committing suicide, is far more common among trees than is generally recognized.

"Many a fine specimen of maple, pine, oak, or elm has taken its life of its own accord. It has not been killed by foreign agents, such as insects, disease, wind, lightning, starvation, or unfavorable soil, but by the pernicious habit of winding its roots about its stem, usually just below the surface of the ground, and gradually, but surely, strangling its own life-blood and cutting away its circulation."

"There seems to be a greater tendency on the part of certain varieties of trees to resort to self-destruction than in others. The swamp maple is particularly prone to such means, though the practise is in no way confined to this variety, and may occur, and often does, in nearly all species, including the forest and orchard trees."

"Norway maples, and particularly transplanted ones, are more apt to injure themselves than trees growing in their natural state. A perfectly normal tree has a well-rounded trunk with buttressed roots running radially in all directions. As the tree grows older the buttresses become more and more pronounced. The yearly growth of annular cells is much greater on the buttresses than the annular cells between the buttresses of great roots."

"The writer has observed an avenue of Norway maple trees nearly one-half mile in length, the trees averaging eighteen inches in diameter, with more than one-half the trees in various stages of root-strangulation, some already dead, some dying, and many weakened by self-infliction."

"Fortunately for the tree that is suffering, and when the period of self-infliction has not reached the stage of actual decay, there is a remedy, and that remedy is to cut away the offending member. Sometimes severing the root will relieve the pressure, but it is often necessary to chisel away, chip by chip, the girdling member, which may be deeply imbedded in the trunk, taking care not to break through the bark of the tree. Careful work often saves the tree. Indication of root-girdling, or self-strangulation, is apparent by the dull appearance of the bark of the tree on the girdled side, the absence of large roots or buttresses, and a general depressed area at the surface and along the trunk."

"In the transplanting of small trees care should be exercised that roots are spread radially from the tree and not twisted into a small hole, for whoever does so is aiding and abetting the tree to self-destruction or suicide in later years."

The End

Mrs. Higgs—"I haven't seen yer 'usband about lately, Mrs. 'iggins. I 'ope e's quite well."

Mrs. 'iggins—"Didn't you 'ear? 'E got hit by a car an' got 'conclusion,' my dear."

Mrs. Higgs—"You mean concussion, my dear?"

Mrs. 'iggins—"I mean conclusion, 'e died."

Use Mimir for Rhusmatism.

A strong-minded woman and a weakly gentleman came on board a transatlantic liner. The pale gentleman retired to his cabin, and the strong woman tucked him up with shawls. Then she strode on deck and hailed the captain. "We'll ma'am" asked the skipper. "My husband is particularly liable to sea-sickness, captain," said the woman. The skipper nodded. "I've heard of that complaint before, ma'am," he said. "Could you tell him what to do in case of an attack?" asked the burly woman. "Taint necessary, ma'am," replied the skipper. "He'll do it!"

Mummy—"I hope you were a good boy at the party, and didn't ask for a second piece of cake?" Tommy—"No, mummy. I took two pieces the first time."

What New York Is Wearing

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Five O'Clock Eggs?

Whitby.—The freak egg championship for this district is claimed on behalf of a Rhode Island Red pullet by its owner, William Maw, of Whitby. On the shell of the egg recently produced by the enterprising pullet, the face of a clock with the hands indicating five o'clock, is plainly marked. It has been suggested that the pullet determined to out-do the Oshawa hen that laid the "Teddy Bear" egg several weeks ago.

Eagle Brand Milk

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Write for booklet telling all the facts on the three Richardson 1930 Cruisabouts.

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Your pride prompts you to keep your hair well groomed. . . then for the same reason smarten your dull, unpolished shoes regularly with a glossy "Nugget" shine — waterproofs the shoes as it polishes.

"NUGGET" SHOE POLISH

The NUGGET TIN opens with a twist!

Salada Orange Pekoe has by far the finest flavour

"SATADA" TEA

"Fresh from the gardens"

Soap Bubbles Used to Measure Stresses on Parts of Airplanes

Milwaukee.—Engineers are blowing bubbles in their studies to test the strength of airplane construction. G.W. Trayer, a research engineer, speaking before the faculty conference of the University of Wisconsin's engineering college here recently, explained how the use of thin soap film over specially designed holes enabled scientists to compute stresses in airplane parts.

One of the principal difficulties in using the soap film method for investigating torsional stresses, as described by Mr. Trayer, was that the ordinary soap bubble is a fragile thing totally unsuited to standing the wear and tear of a hard day's work. Persistent effort resulted in the production of a soap film that will last for adays under continuous measurements.

A hole of the size and shape of the cross-section of the airplane part which is to be studied is cut in a metal plate. Over this hole is swept a film of soap by a sweep of the type of brew. Then the film is blown up slightly by a current of pure air. Ordinary human breath would destroy the film within too short a period of time.

The next step is to measure the slopes and contours of the bubble. This is a delicate and tedious process similar to the work which is done by a land surveyor in gathering field data and mapping topography.

When the step is completed the investigator has data from which he can compute the stresses that will be produced in the airplane part by the loads and twisting it will suffer in service. The soap film is not loaded or twisted; it so happens that there is a curious analogy between the contours of the bubble and the stresses in the airplane part whose cross-section it represents.

A cynic says: If you are given something for nothing, there is usually something wrong with "something."

Mimir's for Insect Bites.

Do not miss the new Sunday School Lesson

June 22. Lesson XII—The Resurrection of Christ

THE GREAT COMMISSION, 16

INTRODUCTION.—It is upon the resurrection of Christ that the Christian Church is founded. It was the belief that Christ had risen from the dead that started a new era in the world's history. It was the belief that Christ had risen from the dead that started a new era in the world's history.

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Dominion's Appeal To Visitors Wide

Inquiries from Many Lands Received — Phenomenal Motoring Growth

Canada's recreational resources are a national asset of the first order. They compose the lodestone which each year draws millions of visitors to the Dominion and they form a source of wealth which annually adds a large and rapidly growing item to the national income. There are, in fact, few records in the annals of Canadian development more interesting or more remarkable than that of the rise to importance of the Dominion's recreational features.

Some idea of the extraordinary growth of holiday traffic may be gained from the records of touring automobiles entering Canada in recent years. In 1919 the number of cars entering Canada for touring purposes was 238,000 and during the 40 years up to 1929 this figure had increased to 4,500,000. Aside from the phenomenal increase of motor tourists, railway and steamship lines each year add large numbers to the thousands who holiday in Canada. Tapping an even wider field than the automobile, these organizations have spread the Dominion's fame as a holiday land literally throughout the world.

Diversity Unequaled

The most casual traveller crossing the Dominion from east to west, cannot but be struck by the sheer diversity of Canada's natural features. First there is the rugged Atlantic shore; then the great system of inland lakes, seas in depth and size; next a thousand miles of rolling prairie, followed by the great barrier of the Rockies, rivalling the Alps in grandeur; and finally the sea, bathing in its warm waters the far flung Pacific coast. All these contribute to the glorious panorama of a transcontinental trip across Canadian territory.

In the Maritimes

The charm of the Maritime Provinces is not easily depicted. These provinces—Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick—are famed for the mellowness of age that captivates the visitor from newer regions. The snow-white lighthouse, crowning the cliffs that overlook the sea, the white sail of the fishing smack seeking its sheltering cove, the quaint fishermen's cottages that straggle up the hillsides, the shaded inland roads and winding forest streams, the spring-time mantle of blossom that clothes mile upon mile of orchard valleys—all these suggest the Maritimes that blend to give the Maritimes a picturesqueness peculiarly their own.

Baby Gets Sixteen Baptismal Names

Americans are never happier than when they are claiming a world record of one sort or another and one proud parent in the United States recently had sixteen baptismal names given to a defenceless baby, in the hope that this would make the child the bearer of the longest name on record.

Lamp Makes Plane Wheels Stationary

It is no longer necessary to stop airplane propellers or revolving wheels to inspect or study them. A propeller may cut through the air at 3,000 revolutions a minute or at even greater speed, yet the lettering and insignia on the fast-moving blade can be read as easily as if it were standing still. A new lamp, called the stroboglow, does the trick. It was invented by a trio of Westinghouse engineers—L. D. Knowles, L. R. Peters and W. E. Bahles.

Little Amy Johnson

"Take a letter—take a letter"—Every day the same demand made! Was there nothing any better For a stenographic handmaid?

Yes! she bought a little Moth (Not the kind you get in cloth) And a tin of chicken broth. And an aeronaut's regalia. And, by Jo! she took a letter Clear from London to Australia!

Sunday School Lesson

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