

# THE DESERT MOON MYSTERY

BY KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

Gaby and Chad stood on the porch talking for two or three minutes—a very short time, at any rate. Then she went down the steps, and Chad still smiling, came back into the room.

As he came in, Danny called down from the top of the stairway. "Gaby—oh, Gaby?"

She knows where Gaby is going, and whom she is going to meet, and she, too, is afraid, I decided, because of the queer strained of her voice.

"Gaby has gone out," I called, in answer. And then, since I could still see Gaby, walking down the path, "Do you want her, Danny? We could fetch her back."

"No," Danny answered. "Don't bother. I'll come down." I had to reverse my first decision about Danny's being frightened. At least, her voice was natural enough, now; I fancied, perhaps, a note of relief in it.

It couldn't have been more than ten minutes after that, when Martha came running into the house, laughing and dancing, and wearing the gold bracelet, with the monkey gliven Gaby, she said, had given it to her, just now, out by the rabbit hutch.

While we were all still exclaiming over the monkey, and praising it up, to please Martha, Danny came downstairs. She was freshly dressed, and sweet smelling with the nice, quiet flower scent she used, but she looked really ill. She said her headache was worse again, and she drew the curtains at the windows beside the big davenport, to ease the glare of the light, before she curled up on it.

I thought it was a good time to continue the conversation we had begun the other evening.

"Danny," I said, as I sat down beside her, "if you just could tell John, or Sam, or me what is troubling you, I am pretty sure that we could find some way out."

"Bless your hearts," she repeated. "You are all too good. I am afraid I can't tell you what has been troubling me. But I can tell you, honestly, that I think now the worst of the troubles are over. They never were really mine, you see; they were Gaby's. And now Gaby has decided to—well, stop being troubled."

"We had a good long talk this afternoon. She has made me some promises. She is going to try to act differently, to be good—as she used to say when we were little. She had a dreadful disappointment day yesterday. It made her act very badly—at first. She has decided now to make the best of it, for there is a best of it to make. You've noticed how much better she acted last evening and all of to-day? She is making a fresh start. You see, she has even given Martha her precious monkey. I am sure we shall all be much happier, from now on."

"Do you know where she was going this afternoon?" I asked.

"For a little walk."

"Why did she wear her wrap, and carry her beaded bag, just to go out for a little walk?"

Danny sat up straight pressing her hands to her aching head. "Wrap—to-day? Her beaded bag? Surely not."

"That's just what she did. Didn't I see her before she left?"

"I was lying down. She came to my door and said that she was going for a walk, and asked me if I cared to go with her. I said that my headache was too severe. She went into her room, and from there downstairs. I felt guilty about refusing to go with her, after

our talk. I thought that I should; so I called after her. But, when you said she had gone, I was afraid she would be annoyed at being called back. I had gotten up; since John surely will be home before long, now, I came down. I can't understand her wearing a wrap. It is so silly, on a day like this."

It sounded all right, but I was not quiet satisfied.

"I thought," I said, "that, when you called after her, you were frightened, or worried, or—something."

"Frightened? No, Mary, I had nothing to be frightened about."

"Gaby was frightened," I said.

"Gaby! She couldn't have been. She was all right this afternoon. Nothing could have happened since then."

"I don't know. Something was the matter with her when she walked through this room. I'll go bond that, wherever it was she was going, she was afraid to go."

"Mary, it must be that you are imagining this. Unless—Oh, it couldn't be that Gaby has not told me the truth about anything. I am sure she was honest with me this afternoon. I am sure—And yet—Dear me, I wonder where she went for her walk?"

"She talked to Chad, just before she left. Maybe she told him where she was going."

Danny called the question across the room to Chad, who was improvising cheerful, happy music on the piano.

"Not a word," Chad spoke above his music, "except that she was going for a walk and didn't want my company."

"Gaby told me," Martha piped up, from where she was sitting on the arm of Sam's chair, "that she was going to the cabin. She was in a big hurry. She ran."

"Up toward the cabin?" Danny questioned, though we all knew we could not put a mite of trust in anything Martha said.

"Yes. Chad loves me better'n he loves her. Don't you, Chad?"

"You are positive," Danny insisted, and I couldn't see why, for a minute, "that she went to the cabin, or toward it? You aren't fibbing, are you, Martha dear? Are you sure that she didn't go around the house toward the road?"

When she asked about the road, her meaning was clear to me. Danny was afraid that Gaby had gone to meet John, from Rattail before this. But, if she had hoped to get anything out of Martha, she had made a mistake in her questioning. For anyone to accuse Martha of a fib, was to make her stick to it like a waffle to an ungreased pan.

"She told me she was going to the cabin," Martha answered. "She ran. She was in a hurry."

Danny stood up. "I think I shall walk up to the cabin and see whether I can find her. You'll come with me, Mary?"

I said not in the heat. Besides, it would soon be five o'clock, and time to be starting supper. She asked Mrs. Ricker to go with her. Mrs. Ricker refused. I wondered why, when neither of us would go, Danny did not go by herself. She did not. Had she, perhaps, guessed at the cause of Gaby's fear? Did she share it? Was she afraid to go to the cabin alone?

## CHAPTER XV

### One Return

At five o'clock the men put up the chess board. Chad stopped playing the piano, and the three of them went to the barn together.

I went into the kitchen to get supper. Danny, in spite of her headache, insisted upon

ling before the eyes of all who are interested, theoretically or practically, officially or privately, in the development of foreign trade, we might make a bonfire of the thousands of books and pamphlets written on the economic aspects of international commerce, and there would be absolutely no excuse for a speaker on the subject taking up your valuable time at this or any other foreign trade convention.

In addition to our tangled thinking, we Americans have been lulled into a sense of false security by the fact that, in spite of warnings of economists the last few years, we have, as a recent writer expressed

helping me. She did the best she could. She managed to get the table set, in between times when she was running to the window to see whether John was coming.

At six o'clock though neither John nor Gaby had returned, we sat down to supper. Danny was too nervous to touch a bit of food. She kept looking out of the windows, and at her watch, and out of the windows again.

"Don't worry, Danny," Sam said. "John has had tire trouble, on account of the who should have been back heat. They'll come riding up the road any minute now."

"They?" she questioned.

"Gaby toggled up and went down the road to meet John, didn't she?"

"No," Danny's voice curled into a wail. "No, Uncle Sam, she didn't. Martha saw her going to the cabin. Didn't you, Martha?"

"Martha," Mrs. Ricker astonished us all by saying, "doesn't know where Gaby went. She knows only where Gaby told her she was going."

"But why should Gaby tell her a fib about it?" Danny asked.

"And why," I questioned, "should Gaby go around the house to get to the road, instead of going right out the front way?"

Again Mrs. Ricker shocked us by speaking. "She would not go out the front way, if she wanted to keep her trip to the road a secret."

"Mrs. Ricker," Danny's voice trembled, "what are you hinting? What is it that you know?"

"I know," said Mrs. Ricker, "that there is not a man living who is not as false as sin."

Sam growled, "Come down to facts, Mrs. Ricker, if you have any."

I think it was the first time Sam had ever spoken unpleasantly to her. He betrayed his own anxiety by so doing. It was easy to see that she was cut to the quick.

"I have no facts," she said, "except, that right after dinner a private conversation, and he ner to-day John and Gaby had decided, very suddenly, to go for the mail."

At that minute we heard a sound for sore ears—the car coming up the driveway. Danny jumped up and ran to look out of the living-room window. "He has gone all the way around to the kitchen," she said, when she came back.

If it had not been sort of pathetic, showing how worried she had been, her impatience at having to wait another minute or so to see him, would have been funny.

She ran into the kitchen. She and John came to the door of the butler's pantry. John was gray with dust. His brows were knitted, as they are whenever he is troubled about anything.

"He hasn't seen Gaby," Danny announced, with an exultation that showed plainly what she had been most up the rock-salt. That's why anxious about. "He brought up he drove to the kitchen. Come and see, Mary?"

"I'd rather see you two come and eat your suppers," I said. "Goodnight!" John answered. "I've got to go and get rid of a few tons of dirt before I can come to the table."

"No," Danny insisted. "Never mind the dirt, dear. Supper is all cold now. Please come and eat."

John patted her on the shoulder, and smiled at her, and, manlike, did as he pleased. He went through the kitchen and upstairs the back way. Danny called after him, asking him to hurry. He didn't.

When he finally did come, all slicked up, and bathed and shaved, he said it was too hot to eat, and would have nothing but some ice-cream.

Sam asked him what had kept him so long, on the trip. John said tire trouble; and that he had met Leo Saule, two miles this side of Rattail, with his flivver broken down. John had stopped to help him, and, at last, had been forced

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Q. How many people are employed in hotels? I. K. W.

A. More than 600,000 workers are employed in the 26,000 hotels of this country.

ly visible in the offing—there must inexorably come a settlement by means of increased shipments of goods to the United States or by a decrease in our shipments of goods to foreign countries.

## COUE BEDCLOTHES

Paris—Dr. Coue's famous theory has finally wound up in the bedclothes business. It has been adopted by this trade with the result that bedclothes are now being embroidered with the auto-suggestions, "You Can Sleep," "Count Ten and You'll Sleep Tonight," and "You Won't Dream Tonight."

to tow him the six miles to his place.

John has a way, when he is worried, of shutting and opening his eyes, and of tossing his head back and to the side with a quick little jerk, as if he were trying to get shed of something that was in it. All the while he was eating and talking, he kept doing this. I asked him whether his head ached.

"No," he said, "But I think I'm sort of loco from being out in the sun."

"Gaby kept you waiting quite a while?" Hubert Hand stated and asked.

"What do you mean?" John questioned.

"Waited for her down the road, didn't you, and took her to Rattail in time to catch the train for Reno, or Frisco?"

I thought John would fly into a temper. He has a handy temper. But he only looked around at all of us with a bewildered expression, and, "Say, are you fellows trying to put something over on me, or what?" he asked.

"Then you don't deny—" Hubert Hand began. Sam, who has enough dander for John and himself both, when necessary, broke in.

"John doesn't have to deny anything. Marcus will be in the office now, waiting for Twenty-one. Phone down. Phone's handy. Ask him whether he flagged Twenty, to-day, for a passenger, or whether he is going to flag Twenty-one."

Hubert Hand went straight to the telephone. From his end of the conversation, we could tell that Twenty had not stopped, and that no one was waiting for Twenty-one. He looked foolish, when he turned from the telephone, and said, "Take it all back, John. My mistake."

Sam looked mighty serious. "Well," he drawled, "I don't know but what as good a plan as any would be for us all to go out and have a look around for her—"

"Oh!" Danny exclaimed, sharply. "Uncle Sam, do you think that she has met with some mishap?"

"I think," Sam said, "that she has met with another machine and ridden off in it. But, better safe than sorry; then we'll be fine and fit for the fireworks. Eh, Martha?"

Martha, who had been drowsy all during supper, was half asleep on the davenport, and did not answer.

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Murder

Sam's first plan, after he and Hubert had made a quick ride to the cabin and back with no sight of Gaby, was for the two of us to go down the road in the sedan. Fortunately, he decided at the last minute to have John come with us to drive. Danny came along with John. Chad and Hubert Hand were to scout around the place on their ponies. Mrs. Ricker stayed at home with Martha.

As soon as we had started, Sam said, in a cocksure overbearing way he never has except when he is not as certain of himself as he'd like to be, "We'll not have to go far. Not more than a mile, I reckon to find the fresh tire tracks of the machine that came up here to meet her. After the breeze and the shower this morning, the fresh tracks will show up like mud on a new fence. Whoa! What did I tell you? See there."

Tire tracks, sure enough; but they were the tracks made by the sedan, patterned like a snake's back, and showing plain as print, on top of the dim tracks made by the outfit's departure for Telko the morning before. We rode along, watching the four long trails; two for John's trip to town, and two for his trip back to the ranch. The only breaks were the spots where, as it was plain to be seen, John had twice had tire trouble.

## OF INTEREST TO FARMERS

### PEPPING UP SOD

In the past decade apple growers of America have shown a marked tendency to change the prevailing system of culture from cultivation to a more permanent sod. In the Middle West, particularly in the great plains section, sod culture has always been preferable to clean cultivation, because of the added protection against winter injury to the root system. Whatever cultural system is used, it must provide strong, vigorous wood growth if satisfactory annual crops are to be expected. It is theoretically possible to secure too luxuriant a growth, resulting in a lower yield, but this over-vegetative condition is seldom obtained in a bearing orchard. The writer has seen occasional trees in such a condition, but has yet to find his first mature orchard in which growth has been overpromoted to the point of producing fruit production. On the other hand, nine out of ten sod orchards show very evident symptoms of lack of vigor. Satisfactory vigor may be maintained in sod orchards, but experience has shown that it is generally necessary to provide a mulch under the trees and to apply some form of nitrogenous fertilizer. While some mulch material may be grown in the orchard, it is generally necessary to supplement this by straw or low-grade hay which may be hauled in from the outside. The nitrogenous fertilizer should be applied early in the spring before growth starts to be most effective. Depending upon soil size and condition of the tree, from three up to eight or ten pounds of nitrate of soda or an equivalent quantity of sulphate of ammonia should be broadcast on the ground beneath the branches. Such a fertilizer will revitalize a weak tree and bring it into bearing in a way that is often astonishing.

### COWS NEED GOOD BEDS

If one sleeps in an uncomfortable bed, he wakes up at odds with the world, unable to do his best work. It would be desirable if more dairymen applied this to their cows. As we approach the end of the heavy spring rush of farm work our cows are not so badly in need of an indoor bed. Hence, it is an excellent time to give some attention to our cow stalls. In many barns the stalls are not long enough. In such a situation the cow must stand in a cramped position, and when she lies down her udder is forced across the edge of the gutter and there is danger of injury. Occasionally stalls are too long. This does not detract from their comfort, but it results in an accumulation of droppings on the platform, the udder becomes badly soiled and the production of clean milk is difficult. The proper length of stall depends, naturally, on the size of the cow, and this, in turn, varies with the breed. For Ayrshires the stall length should be from 54 to 58 inches; for Brown Swites from 58 to 68 inches; for Guernseys from 54 to 58 inches; for Jerseys from 58 to 68 inches; and for Jerseys from 52 to 56 inches. Width of stall, too, is important. It has been found that the smaller cows of a breed require a stall about 12 inches less in width than it is in length. The larger cows require a stall approximately six inches wider than the smaller cows of the breed. Stall partitions also are important. In one cow-testing association here in the Middle West 23 cows had udders injured in five months by adjacent cows stepping on them. Stall partitions will go far toward removing this danger.

### CLEANLINESS COUNTS

No one can be successful with chicks unless they keep the chicks and their equipment clean. Filth makes excellent breeding places for all kinds of trouble, both diseases and parasites. There is nothing so fatal to chicks as dirty watering devices, feed troughs or brooder houses.

Last spring a friend wanted me to look at her chicks as she was losing a great many of them. When the brooder house was visited, I tried to be polite and hopeful but I could not help but wonder how the death losses were as small as she had stated. The drinking fountains for both water and buttermilk were exceedingly dirty. Even though the chicks were over two weeks old, effort had been made to clean the house or equipment.

The chicks showed signs of having bacillary white diarrhea. No doubt only a few of the chicks were affected at first but the remainder had been contaminated through the troughs of the diseased chicks. As a result the mortality was much greater than if proper sanitation had been provided. Part of the diarrhea was undoubtedly due to filth around the drinking fountains.

The exterior of many brooder houses is as important as cleanliness on the inside of the houses. If the chicks are allowed to run outside on ground that has been contaminated with the droppings of older birds, the chicks are more apt to contract coccidiosis and to pick up "hog eggs." This can be prevented by moving the brooder house to ground that has not been used by chickens during the previous year. Putting ground into some cultivated crop for a year will aid greatly in destroying any contamination.

### THE "HEN PASTURE"

When the times comes to turn the cows out on pasture, a natural question in respect to poultry management is whether or not the flock of hens can be turned out to grass with a corresponding reduction in the amount of feed required. To answer the question correctly, it is necessary to consider some of the points of similarity and difference between hens and cows.

Both hens and hens respond to proper care and feeding by an increased yield, and both are adversely affected by the wrong kind of feeding. Both must be fed on the basis

### SEGREGATE AFFLICTED

Birds that show signs of disease should always be put to themselves and treated until it is safe to return them to the flock. If any considerable number of them show signs of the same trouble, they should all be taken out of the flock and a wholesale cleanup should be made; clean out and disinfect all houses and equipment; clean up yards and in every way attempt to remove all possible sources of infection.

### BREED ONLY BEST

The easiest way to increase the profits in pork production is to improve the sow herd. This can be

of expected future production rather than according to past production if best results are to be obtained, and both require rations that are fairly high in protein content.

In many other ways, however, they are quite different. Egg production in the hen is equivalent to reproduction, and the conditions which favor high egg yields are those which are conducive to rapid and abundant reproduction. The cow has been induced to yield a quantity of milk that is far beyond the ordinary needs of the growing calf, while the hen has been brought to a point where she lays a number of eggs greatly in excess to the number required for propagating her race.

A large part of the cow's ration consists of roughage, but the hen has no provision in her digestive tract for handling coarse and fibrous feeds. Her ration must consist mainly of concentrates. The mistake sometimes is made of reducing or eliminating the dry mash as a part of the ration for the flock of hens as soon as weather conditions are such that they can be out of doors most of the time, with free range available to them. This plan will result in a lowered feed cost per hen but it will also mean fewer eggs laid per hen than if a complete mash mixture is available at all times.

There seems to be a little question but that the best practice is to give the hens access to abundant clover, alfalfa, or other legume pasture while still providing an ample supply of a dry mash that contains a sufficient protein supplement to encourage high egg production.

### GOOD FENCES AID PROFITS

It is a well known fact that the building of new fences and the keeping of old fences in repair has in recent years fallen far below the standards. In the last 10 years many fences have been allowed to deteriorate very rapidly, until now they are three or four years behind normal replacement. Without being able to point to any special statistics on this subject, there is no doubt that most farms would be greatly improved in the way of income that could be derived from them were the fences in better condition. Every livestock farm should be fenced hog tight, so that each field might be used for pasture purposes in regular rotation, and so that the farm's stubble fields might also be utilized to advantage. On a great many farms, some of the old fences should be removed and the fences enlarged to facilitate the use of larger machinery. Irregular fields should be done away with and the farm laid out into as many fields, reasonably uniform in size, as there are crops in the rotation practiced. The fields should be as large as possible as this is a decided advantage where mechanical power is utilized. Since the soils on so many of our farms are too sour to grow legumes, except soybeans, it is often difficult to carry out a liming program fast enough to make it possible to grow alfalfa, common clover and sweet clover on all sections of the farm, yet the aim should be to reach that desirable condition as soon as possible. There often is some question about finding the money necessary to lime one-fourth or one-fifth of the farm annually till the job is completely done, but there is never any question about the profitability of the practice, when lime is needed to grow these legumes successfully. The sooner such a program is carried out the better, and once it is started it will pay for itself in larger crop yields. There is one good thing about the fencing problem, and that is that fence posts as well as good fencing materials are relatively cheaper than a great many other things the farmer has to buy. Statisticians declare that the price index of fence stands at about 122, as compared with the price index of 135 for the products of the farm. This would indicate that the present is a good time for the farmer to do as much fencing as possible and thus make the farm that much more profitable.

### HOG DOORS AND DRAFTS

In some hog houses, there is a door in each end of the building and both doors are constantly used. To avoid drafts through the building I put a spring on the swinging door, says a practical hog man. The spring needs to be stronger than found on most screen doors. I nail a block on the jam of the individual hog door so that there is about an inch crack. If the pigs are accustomed to use the door, they soon learn to open the door in spite of the spring. If they do not seem to learn the trick readily, prop the door open about six inches for a few days. After this the prop may be removed and the pigs will enjoy sleeping quarters without serious drafts. I have even fixed two or more doors in the same building with springs for different groups of hogs. For individual houses, I prefer a burlap bag containing a scoopful of cobs. If this is hung in the door with the bottom of the sack about four inches from the floor, it aids materially in the comfort of the hogs or pigs that sleep inside. Some hogs persist in adding the burlap bag to their depleted bedding supply. Usually a bag will last about two months.

### AGE AND INHERITANCE

The ability to produce a certain quantity of milk and butterfat at a certain age and under a definite type of feeding, care and management is an inherited characteristic. Since this ability is inherited from the germ plasma of the sire and dam of the individual, and since the characters are believed to behave in true Mendelian fashion, the age of the sire or dam does not affect the inheritance. On the average, a cow will inherit the same qualities from a sire when he is first available for service, as she would if her dam were served by the same sire at the time of his maturity or in old age.

done by selecting gilts from the largest and fastest gaining litters. Litters must be marked if this is to be done. At eight weeks of age, if possible, weigh each litter separately and select by weight instead of by numbers. This will automatically identify the litters from sows that are good sucklers. Pigs from poor mothers receive a setback that is seldom overcome in time for early sale.

### REMEMBER THIS

Grain fed to milk cows when the flies are bad and the days not, will bring greater returns than at any time of the year. Cows cannot otherwise maintain their milk flow.

### Two Sides to Trade.

From Commerce and Finance. All nations do their utmost to sell; none are over anxious to buy. All pat the exporter on the back, none have a word of encouragement for the importer. He is the black sheep of the human herd. What the commercial nations of the world need today more than anything else is to learn the old lesson all over again: Trade, whether local, national or international, is nothing more or less than a process of barter, an exchange of goods. In other words, that it is a two-way traffic. If so simple a definition as this were constantly kept in

mind before the eyes of all who are interested, theoretically or practically, officially or privately, in the development of foreign trade, we might make a bonfire of the thousands of books and pamphlets written on the economic aspects of international commerce, and there would be absolutely no excuse for a speaker on the subject taking up your valuable time at this or any other foreign trade convention.

In addition to our tangled thinking, we Americans have been lulled into a sense of false security by the fact that, in spite of warnings of economists the last few years, we have, as a recent writer expressed

it, continued to mix the oil of a creditor status with the water of an export surplus and found that the mixture was good. Why then cannot this condition continue? Why worry? The answer is that we have found it very convenient to forget that during the last 10 years our annual export of fresh capital has largely enabled our foreign debtors to cancel the promissory notes which they were unable to redeem with the sale of goods to us. But the time is slowly but surely approaching when our export of new capital will be far below the level of foreign interest obligations. When that time comes—and it is distinct-

ly visible in the offing—there must inexorably come a settlement by means of increased shipments of goods to the United States or by a decrease in our shipments of goods to foreign countries.

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