

Floyd Gibbons

Adventurers' Club

Hello Everybody!



"Prayers for the Dead"

By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter

YOU know, folks have gotten themselves into adventures doing almost everything under the sun, but Meyer Smookler of Brooklyn, N. Y., got the big thrill of his life out of the one thing you'd never suspect would get a man into trouble. Some birds go out to meet Old Lady Adventure in automobiles. Monkeying around with explosives has led a lot of other fellows into first class jams. But it was saying prayers that tossed Meyer into the most exciting ten or fifteen minutes of his life—and if you can find a stranger thing to cause an adventure, or even think of one, I'd doggone well like to hear about it.

Meyer is a dealer in scrap metals, and he travels all over the continent buying and selling the stuff. Sometimes business is good, and sometimes it's bad. It was bad in September, 1928, when Meyer arrived in the little town of Madden, North Dakota. Meyer was broke, and he was hungry, so he walked into a little Jewish restaurant and asked the proprietor to stake him to a meal.

Meyer got the meal, and while he was eating it a man walked in and asked the proprietor if he knew anybody who was familiar with the Jewish prayers for the dead. The proprietor scratched his head. "Maybe that fellow does," he said. And pointed to Meyer.

Yes, Meyer Knew the Prayers.

Meyer said he did. The man said his name was Berstein. His father had just died and he wanted someone to sit up all night and pray according to Jewish custom. He offered to pay Meyer well if he would come to his house at eight o'clock that evening and perform that office.

Meyer agreed. At eight o'clock he arrived at Berstein's house and was met by his family. They showed him into the room where the coffin was, and as Meyer looked at the dead man he remembers thinking that it seemed as if he were just taking a nap, so lifelike were his features.

About eleven o'clock, the family departed, and Meyer was left alone with the corpse. There was a desk near the coffin with a telephone on it. Also there was some fruit and a bottle of whisky which the kindly Mrs. Berstein had left for him. Meyer sat down and waited.

Dead Man's Hand Sticking Out.

About midnight the telephone rang. It was the dead man's son. He told Meyer he had forgotten to shut off the steam in the heater that produced the hot water, and he was afraid the boiler would explode. Would Meyer do it for him?

Meyer told him he couldn't do it. The heater was in the cellar, and he couldn't leave the corpse alone. But he offered to step into the kitchen and turn on the hot water. That would keep the boiler from exploding until someone arrived to shut it off.

"About fifty feet from the house," says Meyer, "ran the Wabash railroad. As I went into the kitchen to turn on the water, a freight train started going by. The whole building shook and vibrated, and the coffin, being on rollers, shook and rocked, too. As I returned from the kitchen I noticed the DEAD MAN'S HAND STICKING OUT OF THE COFFIN."

Meyer didn't like the looks of things. Maybe it was only the vibration—but how could vibration make a dead man's hand reach upward and out of its coffin? He remembered how lifelike the corpse had looked when he first viewed it, and his imagination began working overtime. He went over to the desk and took a good drink of whisky from the bottle Mrs. Berstein had left him. Then, still shaking like a leaf, he went over and put the hand back in the coffin.

He Was Grabbed by the "Corpse."

The task unnerved him completely. "I was still trembling," he says, "and I went over to where the whisky was and finished the whole bottle. By the time it was gone I was a little unsteady on my feet, so I decided to say the prayers while sitting down. I pulled a chair over to the coffin. Right then and there my stomach took a turn and I felt my heart sticking in my throat. For the dead man was trying to get up out of the box, and his glassy eyes were looking straight at me!"

All at once, Meyer's senses left him. "I staggered toward the box," he says, "and without realizing what I was doing, I tried to push him back in again. HE GRABBED ME BY THE NECK and hand and began motioning to me to take him out. I felt my knees giving way, and I was trying hard not to lose consciousness. For a full minute I didn't know what to do. Then I realized that the man was not dead."

After that, Meyer's wits came back to him. He took the man out of the coffin and sat him down on the couch. "He tried to say something," Meyer writes, "but he couldn't open his mouth. Finally I realized that he was pointing to the empty bottle on the desk and I understood that he wanted some water. I squeezed some orange juice into a glass, and using a dull knife to pry his mouth open, I poured the juice down his throat and made him lie down on the couch."

Train Shook Him Out of Coma.

When the relatives came in, they began to scream and faint, and Meyer had a tough job getting them calmed down. He found out then that the man had been in a coma for nine weeks and the doctors had finally pronounced him dead.

Later, Meyer talked to a doctor who was interested in the case, and when he told about the train that went by, shaking the coffin, the doctor said it was that vibration which had probably brought the sick man back to consciousness. Meyer says the old man's son gave him a job in his store, but he had to quit it. He got tired of having people come from all over the countryside asking him to tell the story over and over again until it almost drove him crazy. About four years ago, when he was in the neighborhood, he went to see the old man, and found him in the best of health and planning a trip to Palestine.

Derivation of Word Scaramouch

The term Scaramouch is derived from Scaramuccia, a famous Italian buffoon, who acted in England in 1673, and died in Paris in 1694. It is also applied to one of the grotesque characters of the Italian stage who was dressed in black, wore a mask and represented the swagger and poltroon. In France the scaramouch was used for a greater variety of parts.

Harvest in Hungary

In Hungary the harvest season is celebrated with village festivals and processions in which peasants march carrying rakes, scythes, sickles and other tools decorated with ribbons and flowers. Two men carry on their shoulders a pole from which hangs a harvest crown, made of several kinds of grain and decked out with pink and blue paper flowers and bits of ribbon, says Grace Humphrey in "Hungary, Land of Contrasts." The afternoon is spent in singing and dancing to gypsy music, and is climaxed with a great supper of goulash, potatoes, paprika, onions and wine.

Strawberries as a Dentifrice

The following information is taken from a book of prescriptions published more than 100 years ago: "The common strawberry is a natural dentifrice and its juice without any previous preparations whatever dissolves the tartareous encrustation on the teeth and makes the breath sweet and agreeable."

New Stiff Silks That 'Stand Alone'

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



WITH the midwinter social season upon us and festivities at southern resorts going at high tempo, smart women everywhere are preoccupied with new evening gowns to add glamour to time, place and the occasion. Greater formality than in years is the rule, and women are playing up to this edict by wearing gowns of rare beauty and richness.

One may belong to either of two schools of fashion—that which favors heavy stiff heirloomlike silks with a regal air or the type which favors diaphanous sheer silks that float about one enchantingly as one dances or promenades in the great concourse of fashion. Stiff silk satins such as slipper satin or duchess satin are lovely choices for dramatic gowns. The "delicious" colors of these glorified satins are simply entrancing—make you think of moonlit rays that go glimmering over rippling waves, or icy blues that crown snow-capped mountains or the lovely tints of the rainbow as it enhances summer skies.

To be style-correct these stately satins should be fashioned along graceful lines with quaint artfully gored skirts that sweep into widened hemlines. See the model to the left in the illustration. It is a frock of Edwardian period influence done in ice-blue satin with the new shirred bosom styling. The puffed sleeves and princess lines achieve a charming youthful silhouette. The diamond sunburst worn suggests an heirloom that accords harmoniously with the type of silk used for the gown—a silk so grand and stiff it, as was the boast in grandma's time, would "stand alone."

Some of the newest silk satins are studded with gold or silver sequins or rhinestones. To the right in the picture stands a modern Juliet gowned in gardenia white satin, all-over starred with gold paillettes with halter neck of matching paillette banding. Accessory highspots include a Juliet cap and a handbag done in gold paillettes, together with an exquisite white ermine coat.

Warp printed silk taffetas have new looking patterns such as colorful bow-knots in vivid hues on white or green. Centered in the group a modern Jenny Lind greets us in a rustling silk taffeta frock warp-printed with red bow-knots. With it this lovely lady wears pale pink kid gloves embroidered in gold and pearls. The new and fashionable gloves featured this season are veritable works of art. There are pearls at the throat of this fair lady and she wears a swank pearl bracelet.

Other charming versions of the princess dinner and dance gown are done in stiff Lyons velvets with puffed sleeves and buttons all the way down the front. Rich silk dasks are also fashioned in princess lines made square-necked, in puff-sleeve styles which look like Edwardian ladies come back to life.



For high-style this midwinter season let your hat be either fur-trimmed or feather-trimmed. The model at the top is a stunning fez turban of black felt and persian lamb designed to complement a fur-trimmed cloth costume or a fur coat or cape. Smart vogue calls for fur trimmed millinery. With the coronation in sight ostrich feathers are enjoying increasing popularity. A lovely British film star wears the delightful hat shown in the picture. It is an exquisite black felt with twin ostrich feather plumes in two shades of rose. Another cunning new style for young girls that takes on an ostrich trim is the little felt shape that is somewhat a Juliet type, being a shallow round skull cap. This is worn far back on the head with two wee ostrich tips posed perkily at the front.

what Irvin S. Cobb thinks about:

Making 1937 a Safe Year.

SANTA MONICA, CALIF. —This time last year we were all dedicating ourselves to a crusading campaign to make 1936 a safer year for motorists.

We were going to cut down the volume of traffic disasters, going to reduce the appalling mortality toll which had marked the preceding year.

So what? Well, here's what. The end of 1936 showed an all-time top for deaths on the public highways—roughly 37,450, or approximately 450 more than in 1935.

So now we'll piously resolve, all over again, to do something about this hideous destroyer which kills by the thousands and maims by the hundreds of thousands and makes our fatalities and casualties in the world war seem, by comparison, puny.

And what will come of the renewed agitation? The National Safety Council will wage a gallant, hopeless fight, various local organizations and civic bodies will do what they can, newspapers will rail and statesmen will deplore—and the ghastly record of slaughter will keep right on mounting.

The Value of "Experts"

I HEARD a supposed expert advising a director, bound for Africa to shoot a big game picture, that practically everything about his kit was wrong except possibly his rear collar button.

It reminded me of the pampered millionaire's son who was heading for the arctic circle. He called in a veteran of polar expeditions and told about his outfit. All went well until he started describing his parka.

"It's fine," he said, "made of seal-skin and the hood all fringed with wolverine and—"

"One moment," said the professional, "is the hairy surface of the pelt worn next to your body?"

"No," said the youth. "The fur is outside, of course."

"All wrong," pronounced the critic. "Thermal demonstration has proved that to conserve the bodily heat the hide should be turned so the fur is used as a lining and the smooth or naked side is exposed, thus cutting the wind."

The youngster burst out laughing. "Have I said something to excite your mirth?" demanded the specialist.

"Oh, not at all," said the amateur. "I was just thinking what a darned fool a buffalo is."

Americans in England

RENEWED excitement has been aroused in the British isles by the discovery that yet another member of the royal family—this time it's the young duke of Kent—not only shows a regrettable tendency to enjoy himself as any normal natural, healthy youngster might, but, what is even more distressing, has lately been seen in the company of an American woman.

Oh, these pestiferous Yankee women! In spite of all that can be done, it's almost certain some of them will witness the coronation, and several thousands of them will break their girlish necks trying to do so.

Militarizing the C. C. C.

REPRESENTATIVE NICHOLS of Oklahoma is trying to accomplish something which should have been done long ago. He's preparing a bill to make military reserve units of the C. C. C. boys, which would mean discipline and morale for thousands of young Americans and, if needed, would provide the nucleus of a trained citizen-army.

Seems to me there is every reason why congress should enact the legislation, not as a warlike gesture, but as a peace-time move for national defense and national protection. But watch the professional pacifists fight it—professional pacifists being well-meaning folks who believe in Santa Claus, turning the other cheek, and the beautiful, if slightly impractical theory, that a white rabbit will be perfectly safe among a pack of greedy coyotes.

Actors Trading Careers.

HALF-WAY across the continent, actors who have succeeded in Hollywood and are headed east, hoping to break into the legitimate stage on Broadway, pass actors who, having succeeded on Broadway, are heading west, hoping to break into the movies in Hollywood. It is a two-way traffic which grows heavier all the time.

Thus we see how human hopes are uplifted and how curious a thing is human nature, not to mention human ambition. Also it's good for railroad travel. But if the jaybirds suddenly decided to trade their nests for woodpecker holes and the woodpeckers fell in heartily with the idea, we superior creatures could laugh at feathered friends for being such idiots.

IRVIN S. COBB.
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They're So Simple to Sew!



NOT only the sun, but the moon as well, will rise and set on these new styles created by Sew-Your-Own. This timely trio is one of the most wearable ever offered the members of The Sewing Circle. Yet, and you'll love this, there isn't a complication or a single trick detail to bother with in the whole program.

Pattern 1981—Pajamas so comfortable, restful and entirely satisfying that the alarm clock will have to ring twice—no foolin'—that's the boast and even the promise of this newest two piece outfit. It goes through your sewing machine like a dream, and really is one made up in satin or one of the vivid new prints. For lounging, the long sleeved version in velveteen or silk crepe is a knockout. It is designed in sizes 14, 16, 18 and 20 (32 to 42 bust). Size 16 requires 5 yards of 39 inch material, with short sleeves 4 1/4 yards.

Pattern 1207—If your day begins at the crack of dawn with a standing invitation to prepare breakfast in nothing flat, or thereabouts, this is a house dress you can well appreciate. It's on in a jiffy and is just the thing for a two-handed, expert breakfast maker. The lines are clean cut and slenderizing. It has a large pocket that's helpful, and general prettiness that is conducive to one's mental and physical well being. It is available in sizes 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, and 50. Size 36 requires 4 3/4 yards of 39 inch material, with long sleeves 4 3/4 yards.

Pattern 1978—This blithe little blouse will add spice to your wardrobe at this time. Not only is it the essence of smartness and the last word in style, but the first word in simplicity, which is important to you who sew at home. It is feminine as to collar, delicately slender of waist and highly original throughout. You may have it with short or long sleeves, as you prefer. It is designed in sizes 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 (30 to 38 bust). Size 14 requires 2 1/2 yards of 39 inch material, with short sleeves 1 3/4 yards.

Send for the Barbara Bell Spring and Summer Pattern Book. Make yourself attractive, practical and becoming clothes, selecting designs from the Barbara Bell well-planned, easy-to-make patterns. Interesting and exclusive fashions for little children and the difficult junior age; slenderizing, well-cut patterns for the mature figure; afternoon dresses for the most particular young women and matrons and other patterns for special occasions are all to be found in the Barbara Bell Pattern Book. Send 15 cents today for your copy.

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\$500,000 Price of Novel

Probably the highest financial value ever placed on a contemporary publication is \$500,000 a copy for ten copies of "The Mint," by T. E. Lawrence. These were issued by the publishers to protect the copyright as, by the terms of his will, the book was not to be given to the public until 1950.

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