

## "The Fighting Trail"

Episode 6 — "THE LEDGE OF DESPAIR."

"He's dead!" Drant muttered curtly. Von Bleck sat mutely in his chair. He said not a word while Drant made the explanation, but his heavy brows were drawn together in a frown that signified that he was anything but pleased.

Suddenly, as von Bleck was peering through the half light at his two companions the three men started to their feet with a jump. Outside in the distance could be plainly heard hoof-beats of two horses. They were approaching the hut at a gallop, but they were still perhaps a quarter of a mile away. Von Bleck and Drant looked at each other in the minds of all was a single thought. Gwyn and Nan were returning, possibly with assistance, to get the chart. It was impossible to tell from the sound of the approaching horses, how many of them there were. The three in the cabin knew that they would be caught if they did not act immediately. They would have to think quick, and move quick. Drant was the first to awaken to the situation. He ran into the kitchen and returned a moment later with a can of kerosene oil. Von Bleck watched him almost with dread as he poured the fluid over the floor and furniture, and then went into an adjoining room to which the body of Cordoba had been removed, to sprinkle the oil about in there. His motive was obvious—he intended to burn the hacienda to the ground. Although von

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Von Bleck broke the glass with his fist.

"You might as well give in," von Bleck announced. "You can't get out until the side burns away and you'll suffocate before then. All we want is the chart—the half you have—and we'll open the door and be your friends. What do you say?"

"I'll I can say," replied Gwyn, "is that if you want this map you'd better find a more practical way to obtain it. It is in my pocket and it will stay there—if it burns. And then it will be more impossible for you to get it than it ever was." He turned and left the window.

Von Bleck's face remained at the window for perhaps a minute longer

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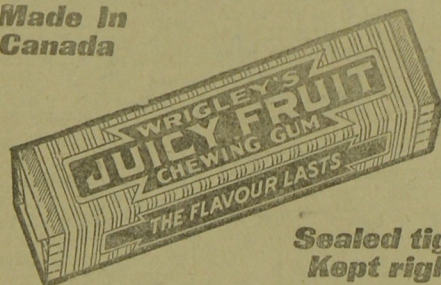
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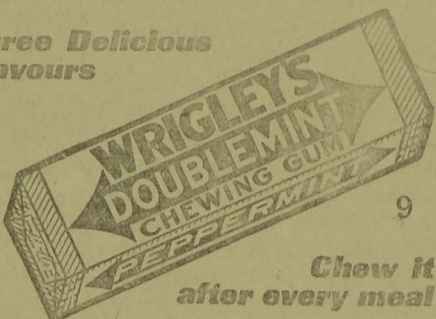
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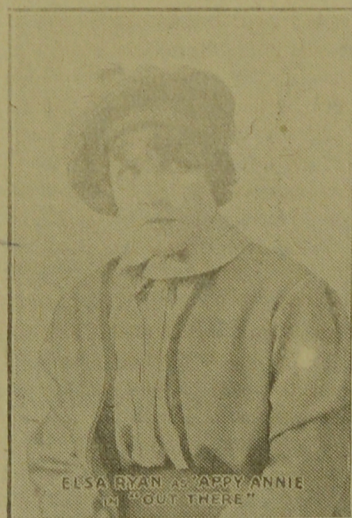
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