

STRAIT GATE

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THE STORY

CHAPTER I—Sarah Lynn Dana, youngest of the Dana women of Danavale, Calif., chafes at the well-ordered life approved by her mother, Adelaide, who is trying to marry her to Duncan Van Doren, Detroit society youth. Great-Granny Dana, covered-wagon pioneer, and community matriarch, recognizes in the girl the restless adventurousness of the "dark Danas," a trait shared by her and Cousin Sally Ann Dana, traveler and author, and pleads with Sally Ann to take the girl abroad.

CHAPTER II—Uncle Lynn, wheelchair invalid, adds his plea to Sally Ann to save Sarah Lynn, as does the girl's young brother, Bill. Another plea comes from Miss Pennington, "Penny," adoring governess of the girl, saying she is unhappy and misunderstood. Charmed with Sarah Lynn at their first meeting, she is determined to help her.

CHAPTER III—At a family dinner party, Sally Ann first hears of Keaton Dana's ultra-modern wife, Ardine, who runs a roadhouse called the Stewed Prune, and is trying to wangle a flight with Gunnar Thorwald, Norwegian ace, famous for his refusal to fly women, through their mutual friend, Jim Allison. Sally Ann tells Adelaide of her desire to take Sarah Lynn abroad. At the height of Adelaide's displeasure, Gunnar Thorwald arrives with Jim Allison, and Sarah Lynn is instantly attracted to him. Duncan invites her to the Stewed Prune.

CHAPTER IV—Sarah Lynn, loathing the Stewed Prune, refuses to drink anything but ginger ale, which Ardine herself serves. Cousin Mary Dana Webster tells Sarah she suspects Ardine and her friends of framing on Gunnar, and Sarah Lynn, in an increasing stupor, decides to warn him. When Gunnar arrives, angry at Jim Allison for missing connections, he hears Sarah Lynn cry, "Go away! Don't come in! Ladybug, fly away home," and sees her carried out to the ladies' room, unconscious.

CHAPTER V—Jim Allison and two friends arrive at the airport and warm up Gunnar's plane, but when Gunnar arrives, he is told Allison is ill. Sarah Lynn, partly out of her stupor, imagines the sensations of flying, with Gunnar at the controls. Gunnar, in a cold rage, senses someone standing behind him. Thinking it Ardine, his rage mounts, and when he realizes it is Sarah Lynn, he shouts, "Keep away from me, drunken fool," will listen to no explanation, and plans to detour to Fresno.

CHAPTER VI

Miss Pennington always marveled that her charge never wept, even in childhood, but Sarah Lynn was crying now, bitterly and uncontrollably, salt tears running into her mouth, shivering under her woolly coverings.

In spite of the cold, the stinging, biting air, she was seared and shriveled by the flame of Gunnar Thorwald's scorn and contempt.

"Keep away from me, drunken fool!"

The hideous irony of it—Sarah Lynn, flat-tire in the mad tempo of fourth generation Danavale because she would never take a drink! She looked at his rigid shoulders, at the relentless angle of the head in the sternly classic helmet and absolved him utterly. Why shouldn't he have believed the worst of her, seeing her there in that loathsome place, heavy-eyed and staggering and babbling?

"I'm not afraid!" she exulted. "I'm not the least particle afraid. I adore it. This won't be the last time—I won't let it be. I'm going to fly all my life. It's fun! It's heavenly! It's the kingdom and the power and the glory!"

There was a bump which threw her forward in her seat, and then they were thumping along over a field, terrestrial again, all glory gone. They turned and drew up presently in front of brightly lighted buildings with a big group of people before them. An attendant came running to meet them.

Gunnar Thorwald did not leave his seat. He spoke through the window.

"Thorwald, San Jose to Glendale."

"Gas?"

"Nothing. I land a passenger." Without looking round, he indicated Sarah Lynn with a motion of his shoulder.

The man opened the door and

thrust in his head. "Getting out, lady?"

"I—yes, I suppose—" Sarah Lynn got to her feet, tripping over the blanket, gathering it clumsily into her arms. The attendant reached a hand to help her.

The Norwegian ace did not turn his head as she went by him.

"I am sorry," Sarah Lynn began unsteadily. Then the words came in a rush. "No, I'm not! I'm glad, glad! It was the most wonderful, glorious—"

The pilot was silent, eyes set forward.

"Look out, lady! Low bridge!" the attendant warned her.

Sarah Lynn, looking at Gunnar, lifted her chin defiantly and struck her forehead on the casing of the low door, and the man helped her to the ground, the blanket trailing. She raged at herself. Must she always be grotesque before him? Always a figure for scorn and loathing?

"Say, is that Gunnar Thorwald? Feller that flew the ocean?" the attendant wanted to know excitedly.

"Yes."

"Well—gosh! Hey, Eddie! That's Gunnar Thorwald! You know—the Norwegian ace?"

The other came running. "The deuce it is! Why, sure—that's his ship, all right. Hi, fellers!" he waved a beckoning arm. "Know who that is?—Gunnar Thorwald!"

Sarah Lynn was aware of a gathering group as the plane took off.

"Can you feature that?" one of the workmen said in a low tone. "Just came down to dump her, huh?"

"Yeah; threw her out like she was a sack of mail."

"And look at her! What's the big idea?"

A large and noisy element was added to the crowd, pouring out of the bright waiting-room, a man in evening dress, a girl in bridal costume, half a dozen men and girls with flowers and old shoes and rice and confetti, all staring at Sarah Lynn.

A man in the company's uniform came up to her, touching his cap. "Beg pardon! Is there anything we can do for you? Would you like a taxi? I mean, where are you going?"

"To San Jose; to Danavale." She turned round then, coming out of her abstraction, painfully aware, suddenly, of the curious throng. Her face flamed. She gathered up the blanket and shook it and tried to wrap it around her.

"We haven't another plane tonight."

"I must telephone my father," Sarah Lynn said. "Where—"

The bride ran after her and caught hold of her arm. "Say, listen, sister," she said in a high, sweet voice, "are you in a jam?"

"I'm quite all right," Sarah Lynn said stiffly.

"Well, is that nice? Throwing you out like a sack of mail! Is that a good old Norse custom?"

"I want to telephone—"

"Here—I'll show you!" She picked up her glistening train.

Sarah Lynn followed her. "Is this Fresno?"

"Well, for Pete's sake! Didn't you know where you were landing? Yes, this is Fresno, and here's your booth. I'll wait for you."

"Thank you," Sarah Lynn said coldly. "It's not necessary." She looked fully at her for the first time and took in the details of white satin and filmy veil and orange blossoms. "I mustn't keep you from—"

"Oh, that's all right!" she said easily. "It's just one of my weddings! Married in Hollywood and flying to Frisco and set the ship down to say hello to a bunch of nit-wits. Go ahead and telephone your folks." The young man had followed them and he said something to her in a low tone. She nodded. "Don't shut the door, dearie—you'll smother in that box. I'll stand right here."

The youth lit a cigarette and strolled away, but kept within hearing distance.

"I want Danavale 3704. Yes. It's a suburb of San Jose. I want to speak to Mr. Dana—Mr. Edwin Lynn Dana."

There was at once panic and reassurance in the sound of her father's voice, thick, drowsy, amazed. "It's Sarah Lynn. I'm at Fresno. Fresno. F-r-e-s-n-o! Why, I flew down. Flew! With Gunnar Thorwald. What? I don't know where Duncan is. Oh, Dad, please—I'll

explain everything when I see you. How can I get home? I haven't any money." She was silent, listening. "Yes, at the Fresno airport. Shall I wait here? What? All right. Yes; the Californian hotel and ask for Mr. Pond. How soon can you get here?—Tell Mother not to worry, please! I'm perfectly all right. Yes—I understand—Mr. Pond, Californian hotel." Her voice, thin, strained, hoarse, warmed suddenly. "Oh, Dad, it was glorious—glorious!—yes. Good-by."

The young man came close to her, speaking with controlled excitement. "You're Miss Dana? From Danavale? I used to work on the newspapers in San Jose. You flew down with Gunnar Thorwald? Well, of course you did," he grinned, "but what I mean is, weren't you going all the way to Glendale with him?"

"No," Sarah Lynn said briefly, aware now of the avid curiosity in his gimlet gaze.

"Isn't it a fact he vowed he'd never take a woman up in his ship?"

"Yes."

"And then he kidnaps you in a blanket and—"

"He did not" she defended him hotly. "It wasn't his fault—I mean, he didn't intend—" she stopped, confused.

"Why did he dump you out like that? Didn't you ask him to set you down at Fresno? But you didn't know it was Fresno, did you? I guess maybe it was a pretty wild party, wasn't it? Do you mind telling me just how—"

The bride put a protective arm about the forlorn, thin figure. "Lay off the interview, Beanie! Isn't it a girl's privilege to get out and walk home when she wants to? Probably the Great Dane got a little too primitive and she—"

"No!" the girl said vehemently. "It wasn't his fault! I told you it wasn't his fault!" She walked away from them, her blanket spreading out behind her like a train, and spoke to the uniformed attendant. "I want a taxi, please."

"Wait!" the bride ran after her. "There's a flock of cars here. I'll have somebody drive you. Look—I'll come with you myself!"

"Please don't trouble," Sarah Lynn was rigid. "I want a taxi, please."

"No trouble, lambie! Hi, Larry!" she hailed the groom. "Listen, angel; I'm driving this child to the hotel. Back in a jif." She flung her long white gloved arms about him and gave him a painstaking cinema kiss. "No, of course I won't run out on you, beautiful! You just stay here and play with your wooden



soldiers and the first thing you know it'll be Christmas morning!"

The young man spoke to her in a low voice. "Hold everything for a sec', will you, Kit? I want to get the two of you together, with your train and her blanket. Boy, is this a wow or is this a wow?" He beckoned to a man with a camera who came swiftly forward. "All right, Mike; make it snappy."

The bride arranged her veil and settled the little lace cap, and thrust her arm through Sarah Lynn's. "Come along, babe! Well, will you look who's here!"

Sarah Lynn glanced up. There was a soft explosion, a dazzling flash.

"Slick!" the reporter said gleefully. "It's a knockout!"

"Oh!" Sarah Lynn cried out in panic. "Did he take our picture? He mustn't! My mother would be—"

"Don't you worry! I know how his stuff turns out—we might as well be a couple Native Belles of Mo-zamee village. Here we are, hon!" She shepherded Sarah Lynn to a car garlanded with white streamers. "Californian hotel, Tommy, my lad, and let 'er step!"

The instant they were out of hearing the youth flung himself upon the telephone and shouted a number.

"Hello! Nick? Say, feller, just pin the ol' ears back and listen! What a story! Ready? Gunnar Thorwald, Norwegian ace, who has just flown the Atlantic, and who had taken a vow never to fly a woman in his ship, set the Hermod down at Fresno at 2:45 a. m. and unceremoniously landed Miss Sarah Dana, of the famous Danavale colony, exclusive suburb—he drew a reviving breath and went on—"of San Jose, and I got a picture that's a honey—the gal in a formal and a blanket—blanket, yeah, b-l-a-n-k-e-t, standing beside Kitty Medill, Wild Woman of the Air, Hollywood's stunt-flyingest fool and her nth bridegroom!"

(Continued next week)

Colored News

I wish to express my most heart-felt thanks to every one for their kindness and sympathy shown us in our recent bereavement in the loss of our father. Also for the lovely floral offerings. A. Jones, and Mrs. Floyd. All expressed their joy of the evening. Mr. and Mrs. Carrie Wright.

The Mother's Club met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Floyd. Program in charge of Mrs. S. H. High. After the business refreshment was served by Mrs. A. Closed to meet with Mrs. A. A. Jones Dec. 1.

We are still having Sunday School at the home of the Supt. Last Sunday two-thirds of members were present. We hope to have all next Sunday.

J. W. Jones is in Duke hospital. Call to see him when you can.

Mrs. Della Baker is sick at the home of her son in White Oak section. Will be glad to see you coming.

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Gresham attended the funeral of Mr. David Harris in Stantonburg last Friday.

When we're late to classes
The teachers fuss 'n' fume,
But being late to chapel
Is o. k., I presume.

Some students sit in chapel and wiggle to and fro
And what is said or done there,
they never really know.
Often I sit and wonder after they rise and go,
Why they sat and wasted that precious hour or so.

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