

# STRAIT GATE

By RUTH COMFORT MITCHELL

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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, Sally Ann considers the idea.

**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**—Thrown out at Fresno "like a sack of mail," Sarah Lynn is greeted by a group headed by a bride and groom, who recognize Gunnar. While the "bride" drives Sarah Lynn to the hotel to await her father, one of the party phones the story to the newspapers, identifying the two fliers, and the "bride" as Kitty Medill, wild stunt flier. Danavale, meanwhile, is in an uproar, but partially convinced Sarah Lynn had been drugged. Uncle Lynn promises to get the truth to Gunnar through an airman friend, Conrad Jordan. Sally Ann takes Sarah Lynn abroad, giving her every opportunity to fly, and writes Uncle Lynn of her plan to make an aviator out of her. Sarah Lynn receives a cable from home, saying her mother is threatened with pneumonia.

## CHAPTER VII

"Of course it might well have been going to be pneumonia," Mary Dana Webster conceded reasonably. "And Adelaide being what the English amiably call 'a bit on the plump side,' it might well have been going to go hard with her," Lynn Dana contributed.

Sarah Lynn had been home for a fortnight, and her mother, large and languid in expensive negligees, was ruling her realm from a mid-Victorian sofa.

The plain cousin sighed. "Well, at any rate, she's got Sarah Lynn back again."

"Ah, but has she? Geographically, yes; psychologically, no! Something's happened to the child, Mary. A sea change—no, air! Mary, I'm telling you! The last of the queer, dark Dana girls has found her element."

"You mean she'll actually be a flier? Have her own plane?" She shook her head. "Cousin Adelaide won't listen to the idea, and can you imagine Ed Dana going against her?"

"Ah, but reinforcements are rapidly galloping to the rescue, headed by Great-granny, tailed by the dashing and heroic figure now before you."

"Lynn! You're going to finance her?"

He nodded. "Yes. But not a word to anyone."

Gunnar Thorwald came to meet Sarah Lynn. He spoke at once,

without greeting or prelude, "I ask you to pardon."

Sarah Lynn stood still, staring at him.

He took off his helmet and absurdly she recalled Kitty Medill's high, sweet voice in the dim-lit lobby of the Hotel Californian at Fresno—"You tell your big Swede I don't like his fireman's hat!" His hair was the guileless yellow of unsalted butter, and he had a lean, stern, young face and ice-blue eyes. Their grave gaze was steady upon her. He said again, "I ask you to pardon. I know now the truth. I have shame of my rough words."

She bent her head. "Thank you," she said unevenly.

He put his quaint head-gear on again and continued to regard her seriously. "You like to fly?"

Color came flooding back into her face. "Oh, better than anything else in the world!"

"Now? You will come?"

He was asking her to fly with him. Gunnar Thorwald, Norwegian ace, who never flew women, who had scorned and despised her, was asking her to go up in his plane. She heard herself making a vague sound and she saw that it must have seemed like acceptance because the tall youth nodded.

"So! We go to tell them." He turned into the little dooryard with its cinnamon pinks and candytuff



"We fly," he stated briefly.

and China asters and stood aside for her to precede him through the narrow door, up the precipitous stair. Gunnar Thorwald in the first little old Dana house with the matriarch and the man in the wheelchair, and a stranger, and Jens serving tea with heavy care, his huge shoes creaking as always.

She sat silent in her dress and cloak and beret the color of ancient brick and Lynn Dana's eyes were warm upon her.

The Norseman put down his cup and rose. "We fly," he stated briefly.

The stranger, who was Conrad Jordan, stood up, too. "I'll drive you out to the field," he said.

"I'll telephone your mother, Sarah Lynn," her uncle said.

"Oh, but not until after I've gone!" she cried out in panic.

The nonagenarian gave her shrill cackle. "You just up'n put out, Sairy Lynn, quick's ever you can," she chuckled. "If there's any to-do about it, you tell 'em your grammer said you could!"

Sarah Lynn sat beside Conrad Jordan in the small, swift car, and the Norwegian ace doubled up his length in the rumble-seat. They had telephoned from Danavale and the Hermod was being warmed up when they arrived, and she saw Gunnar Thorwald walk round it once, twice, and again, in eagle-eyed inspection, before he took his place.

Conrad Jordan observed him with satisfaction. "That lad will never smash up through his own carelessness," he nodded. He amplified it for her—"Most of the crashes occur on the ground."

"I see," Sarah Lynn said quickly.

He considered her shrewdly. "I believe you do." They were stepping nearer to the plane and he said above the roar, "You can get aboard now." He took her elbow in a firm hand and helped her into the cabin.

She sat down quickly in the rear seat, fastening the belt about her waist, calmly folding her hands in her lap.

The Hermod taxied sturdily down

off trimly. There when it seemed to hang in the clear air, suspended over the field. She could see Conrad Jordan waving. Presently he lost dignity and importance and became a tiny toy figure in a world of playthings and vanished altogether.

They flew over the Santa Cruz mountains, brown, green, compact as if they had been carved out of wood and painted.

They circled the water and turned inland again, picking up the mountains, Danavale, San Jose, the airport, like dropped stitches.

Sarah Lynn caught her breath. "Quick! Such heavenly quickness!"

He nodded. "I have named him for Hermod, the swift one. You know?"

"I know. Hermes—Mercury."

"Yes. We go down, now."

The west was darkening when they swooped to earth with a suave landing and rolled briskly to the hangar.

The old attendant came limping to open the door and help her out. Conrad Jordan was not in sight.

"He said would you come speak to him in the 'phone booth," the man addressed Gunnar, and the Norwegian ace followed him in.

The older flier stood with the receiver in his hand. "Hello, Gunnar! Do you mind? I'm waiting for this Glendale connection. Will you run Miss Dana home for me?"

"Please don't trouble," she said quickly. "They will send a car for me." But Gunnar was already stepping toward the roadster and she followed him.

He drove a car as smoothly as a plane. They had ticked off a twilight mile before he spoke. "You have no fear."

"No."

"That is good." After a moment she said, "I want to be a flier."

"That is also good."

"Then, you think women should fly?"

Continued next week

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## NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

Under and by virtue of a Judgment of the Superior Court for Wake County, made in an action entitled the Town of Zebulon vs. Mrs. C. B. Eddins, et als, the undersigned Commissioner will, on Wednesday, the 21st day of December, Courthouse door, in the City of 1938, at 12 o'clock M, at the Raleigh, N. C., offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash those certain tracts of land lying and being in the Town of Zebulon, Little River Township, Wake County, North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Two lots on Horton Street in the Town of Zebulon and more particularly described in a Deed from C. B. Eddins to Mary E. Eddins, recorded in Book 406, Page 470, in the office of the Register of Deeds for Wake County.

One lot on Whitley Street or Avenue in the Town of Zebulon, and more particularly described in a Deed from W. L. Wiggs and wife to Mrs. Mary E. Eddins, as recorded in Book 431, Page 506, in the office of the Register of Ddeeds for Wake County.

The above property is offered for sale subject to all taxes due the County of Wake, if any, and all taxes due the Town of Zebulon after 1935.

That the successful bidder or bidders are required to deposit with the undersigned Trustee 10 per cent of his bid in cash, to show good faith, at the time of sale.

This the 17th day of November, 1938.

A. R. HOUSE,  
Commissioner.

Nov. 25-Dec. 16.

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