

SPORTSMAN FLIES HIGH

by Lawrence A. Keating

FINAL INSTALLMENT
 "You get the snow, I want the girl—alive. But there's to be no killing of Graber, understand? Not unless it's self defense."
 Worriedly, Dan watched the repetition of farms. He berated himself for bungling back there in his office. Over-confidence had ruined the whole game. A swelled head! Otto had certainly been swept off his feet by the news that Irita, known to him as Helen Fane, and Colwell, were Customs Special Agency operatives! It naturally had never occurred to Graber that a Graber-Vael Agency sleuth might also be a representative of Uncle Sam.
 Admiration rose in Colwell's blue-grey eyes. Irita had taken chances, insinuating herself with those fellows! It was like walking a tight-rope over Niagara Falls. By astute means known only to her clever, resourceful self, she had prevented the ras-

icals quarrelling over her. Yet she had won and maintained their confidence.
 That hectic ride lasted five minutes less than an hour. But Ewing, Pennsylvania, a country town of perhaps a thousand souls, was not their goal. As they careened down the main street Dan turned to Lefty.
 "Now which way? It's up to you to find the camp!"
 Quillen nodded. "Straight ahead, buddy," he told the driver. "The second road outside town, turn left. Hit it up!"
 Another thirty minutes dragged past. Despite his efforts at calm, Colwell's tension heightened. They turned off the main road, went two miles down a muddy country lane, and halted when Quillen ordered the driver to do so.
 The two men piled out. "Guess you earned the ten-spot," Dan paid the fare and handed it to him. "Suppose you roll back in three hours?"
 They waited until the rattly cab was gone. "Come on," Quillen snapped, and led the way into the towering forest. It was rapidly growing dark; in fifteen minutes it would be like night. But the killer of McDonald and Carterby seemed to know the way.
 Another mile they traversed afoot before Lefty stopped and touched Dan's arm. It's up there. See that cabin?"
 Colwell could not at first make it out. Going nearer, they found it dark. The two men exchanged questioning looks at this. Dan felt his heartbeat slow, then go faster. Suppose their guess was wrong? Suppose Graber still was back in the city?
 Cautiously they approached the square log structure with the slanting roof extended over a front porch. There was no light

in it, no car nearby, no sign of habitation. Quillen seemed concerned. He walked to a side window and peered in. Then both men went to the front door which they found locked. Again they peered at each other—it was dark now—and again were in wordless agreement. They put their shoulders to the door and after several efforts of their combined power, burst the cheap hinge lock.
 Dan struck a match. "We won't light that lamp—we don't need it. Just want to see if their things are gone."
 Several matches flickered and died before they convinced themselves that the hunting party had not abandoned the shack for good. Two deer rifles were there, one of them identified as Graber's. A supply of canned food, coffee, and bacon, was found.
 "They're coming back," Colwell stated.
 He walked to the door and stared at the black sky. Suddenly almost a mile of the countryside flared alight, and at the same time he became conscious of the whine of a motor. "Lefty! There's a plane!"
 Quillen followed at his heels onto the porch. It was a flare the ship had dropped, used when a pilot seeks an emergency landing field. The motor roared loudly now and in the slow-burning three hundred candle power magnetism they found the ship itself circling. It was quite low. A cabin job of the Monogram make with a powerful Whirlwind motor.
 By mutual consent when the flare died at the end of its appointed three minutes, Quillen and Colwell rushed to the fringe of woods. They judged that Graber—if it was he—intended landing somewhere to the south. Both men ran fast as they could over hard, uneven ground. Until, two minutes later, they burst suddenly from the cove of trees onto a wide, flat clearing.
 "Sure! I remember this. But I never thought Otto could use it for landin'," Lefty panted.
 Colwell determined the direction of the wind and knew which way Graber must face to land. As the ship banked, coming lower, he started at a dead run for the spot it was due to touch. But he had forgotten Graber's second flare.
 It burst alive suddenly, illuminating the two men who raced across the cleared space. "Down!" Colwell yelled, and hurled himself flat. With a searing curse Quillen followed suit.
 But they had been seen... The motor, which had been cut out, picked up with a roar. The ship's nose lifted as Graber put her into a climb. Dan's heart stuttered and seemed leaden in his breast. They had given themselves away!
 Vengefully, Quillen raised his automatic. He, too, could utilize the still burning flare that swung lower on its small parachute. He fired, twice, three times. Polish, of course. It seemed useless.
 Or was it? The monoplane was only two hundred feet up. Suddenly the motor sputtered. It died and the plane rode without a sound. The white magnesium still made the field almost bright enough to read a newspaper. The motor picked and Graber increased his revs anxiously. It sputtered, choked—went completely dead.
 "He's got to come down!"
 The words were scarcely out of Colwell's mouth before he and Quillen rose full height with a jerk. Lefty gave an ejaculation. Dan's jaw sagged; he was speechless. His eyes like agates followed the sharp swoop of the aircraft, nose foremost but side-slipping badly.
 There was a splintering crash. That was the undercarriage and the wing tip. Yet the monoplane like a wounded bird bumped and floundered along with diminishing speed, pushed by her momentum. Another yell from Quillen—trees looming up close before the ship—and a louder rending of metal and wood and fabric.
 Quicker of wit, Colwell was dashing for the ship before that final catastrophe. It was a hundred yards that seemed never-ending. His great fear was of a sheet of flame that would burn them all to a crisp and prevent any interference, any saving of life.
 It did not come. In the dying light of the flare which had struck ground somewhere, Colwell saw a form crawl out. "Stick 'em up!" he shouted.
 The man did—but with a gun in his hand. It lanced fire. Colwell's hat left his head as though wiped off by some invisible hand. The next instant he realized that this chap was not the first to alight. The first fellow was hidden behind the crumpled wing and had opened fire.
 Lefty Quillen's forty-four roared. He was closing in as fast as he could. As he struck ground Dan realized that Irita Doran was on the floor of the partially demolished cabin of the monoplane—helpless though she squirmed—and battled her bonds.
 Dan groped on his knees, shooting. The second man to alight gave a yell and toppled. Dan saw Quillen locked with the other chap; Vael. He rushed for his own quarry. The fellow lay still... but when Colwell got within ten feet, his figure dim in the half-covered ship's ground lights still burning, Graber!

They struck. Both heavy, the terrific impact merely jarred them. Neither gave way. Graber's square face was contorted into hate and rage that Dan never had seen there before. Perhaps also there was desperation at knowing they had outguessed him to arrive here first and that now he battled the last time, to win or lose.
 His stubble of hair felt hard as the bristles of a brush to Dan's hand. They mauled and punched and grappled for the guns. Colwell's twirled from his grasp. It hit wing fabric with a ping. Otto Graber got in a murderous left hook that grazed Dan's jaw. Had it landed all would have been over.
 But it didn't land, and Colwell put new savagery into his attack. Graber's gun exploded upward—and again. In the darkness they could scarcely see each other; there was only feeble light from the wing lamps. They stumbled back against the metal stirrup at the open cabin door. Dan's lucky right flattened Graber's big German nose. Blood spurted from it as water from a fire hydrant.
 Otto howled. Colwell tried to wrap both arms around him to bend him back out of control on the floor of the cabin. Graber side-stepped, and his terrific blow to the temple stunned Dan. He was aware of shots a distance off and of Lefty Quillen's scream. And that he himself was weakening, that Graber was more powerful than he ever had estimated.
 He punched again with both fists and suddenly grabbed for the gun as it swung nearer a line with his face. Their hands struck; the weapon slipped; it was gone. Graber, panting, jammed Colwell back. His head hit an iron support just inside the cabin. Things got foggy...
 Something cold came into his hand. "Dan! Dan!"
 It was a scream uttered close to his ear. Venomously he swung Graber's skull. And it landed with that cold thing, swung it at a low, hollow sound that thrilled one clear to the pit of the stomach.
 Otto crumpled. He twisted and wriggled on the ground while Colwell slowly collected himself and stood swayink groggily, forced to cling to the open cabin door or fall. Graber's writhing hand paused there on the dark ground. He raised his arm suddenly—"Look out!"
 Graber grasped it just as Lefty Quillen limped up. Dan reached out and with a kick at Graber's arm tried to dislodge the gun. And the first shot did go wild. But the second took effect.
 Lefty Quillen, knifer of two men Dan knew about, gave way at the knees. A dot blackened his forehead and an expression of bitter surprise stamped his face. He uttered a low moan—then folded in a heap. Dead.
 Dan straddled Otto Graber. He clouted him with his own automatic until Graber slumped unconscious. Then Colwell, very unsteady and with warm blood trickling down his shoulder went uncertainly to the fellow Lefty had tussled with. Horace Vael was badly mauled and weeping drunkenly with the rage that was in his helpless body.
 Dan lurched back to the cabin. He had Irita free in a matter of seconds. "We've got to tie them!"
 He nodded. "Their belts—will do. Until we can get rope from the cabin. You—all right?" he panted.
 "Yes. Oh Dan, Dan, I—" Shuddering, she shook her head. "How did you know? How did you guess they'd fly here? How did you come so fast? We were stalled—motor trouble."
 "He meant to kill me. Vael was a little afraid, but he was for it, too. Graber said he'd do it because you—"
 "What?" he asked wearily. Colwell folded the girl in his arms and inhaled the fragrance of her hair. "The snow's in there, eh? All of it? Good. Graber said he'd kill you because I—what?"
 She nestled closer to him. "Love me!"
 Colwell considered a moment. He was growing faint and weaker. "Sure," he said, and with a great effort chuckled. "I do. You know that! I—there hasn't been much chance to say it. But—" He struggled for breath to go on. "There will be, lots of chance. From now on!"
THE END

NOTICE
 The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Elkin-Jonesville Building & Loan Association will be held at Hotel Elkin, in the Kiwanis room, on TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1937, at 7 p. m. The purpose of the meeting is for the election of directors and the transaction of any other business that may come before the meeting.
 This the 21st day of January, 1937.
 PAUL GWYN,
 Secretary.

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NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR PARDON OR PAROLE
 Notice is hereby given by the undersigned that he will apply to the Governor and the Parole Commissioner of North Carolina for a pardon or parole. All persons opposed to the granting of a pardon or parole to the undersigned will forward their protest to the Governor or Parole Commissioner at once. The undersigned was convicted at the February 17th term of Superior Court of Surry County on the charge of accessory after the fact and received a sentence of not less than two years nor more than three years in the State Prison at Raleigh, N. C.
 This the 14th day of January, 1937.
 1-28 GABIE McCRAW.

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