

# Up in the Clouds

by Beulah Earle

**NINTH INSTALMENT**

Monty Wallace has just arrived in California, having broken the East-West cross country airplane record. Natalie Wade, mistaken by him for a newspaper reporter, writes the exclusive account of Monty's arrival and succeeds in securing a trial job with a paper in exchange for the story. Natalie becomes attached to Monty.

Although she discovers Monty's love for her is not sincere, Natalie admits that she loves him. She is assigned by her paper to report Monty's activities for publication. Jimmy Hale, the newspaper's photographer, becomes Natalie's co-worker.

Natalie interviews Jabe Marion, a wealthy airplane builder, who decides to build a record-breaking round the world plane for Monty. Marion's daughter, Sunny, exquisitely beautiful, is attracted to Monty. She invites Natalie to dine with her, when they meet the aviator unexpectedly.

Natalie discovers that Sunny is jealous of her friendship with Monty, and that she is trying to prevent them from being alone. After driving to a mountain resort with Sunny and Jimmy, Monty again declares his love for Natalie.

Natalie induces Monty to set out with her in an airplane search for two missing aviators. At dusk Monty lands the plane in the open country, where he and Natalie must spend the night.

Resuming the search in the morning, they finally locate the fliers. Natalie wires the story to her paper. That night at dinner, Marion announces a non-stop, round the world flight, with Monty piloting the new plane, "Sunny Marion."

Monty's plan is to have ten refuelling stations along the route, where pilots are to go aloft to refuel his plane. Monty flies with Natalie to New York, where he will begin the flight eastward. They are followed by Jimmy and Sunny.

Two more days and Monty would be roaring over the ocean on the most impossible flight in history. Something gripped at her heart. Something told her she would never see him again.

She stood up and moved to the window of her room. Children were playing at the curb. The world was going on without a thought of impending tragedy.

She tidied her hair and renewed the light make-up she wore. But panic was upon her. She had to see Monty again quickly. His room, she knew, was at the end of the short hall. She slipped along the worn carpet and tapped gently at the door.

There was no response. Someone was coming up the twisted stairs. She turned the knob of the door and slipped inside.

Monty was asleep. He had thrown off coat and shoes and tie.

For a long time she stood there listening to his heavy breathing. Then very quickly she moved forward and sank to the floor beside him. She laid her cheek against the sleeve of his shirt.

She would stay there a little while guarding him with her love. And now her fear fell from her. It was as though his nearness and her adoration for him had driven it out.

Her throbbing heart grew calm and she knew content again. And so she fell asleep beside

him and did not wake till early afternoon.

"Is this nice?" he asked, seeing that she was awake.

She sprang up quickly but he caught her hand and drew her down beside him.

"I'm in a hell of a fix," he said, her hand to his lips.

"I'm supposed," he chuckled, "to be a devil with the women. I've been that way deliberately so that I wouldn't ever want to marry anybody. Now, I've got myself in a spot where you come in here and I wake up and you are just as safe as though I didn't love you. What's the answer?"

"Maybe you really do love me," she said faintly. "You've only wanted me before."

"Well, it's a new one on me . . . and I love you all right. But there isn't going to be any marrying in our business."

He spoke a little angrily, she thought, as though he fought against something.

He whipped a glance at the watch on his arm. "We'd better be getting back to the field. They'll be looking for us."

She went back to her own room then, but her heart was singing as though in triumph. It seemed queer about that when he had just told her they were not to be married. She wondered about it a little but there was no explanation—unless it was that her heart knew better than her mind that he loved her as she had to be loved.

He came for her in a few minutes and they rushed away to the field.

Jimmy was there and Sunny Marion presently, a frowning Sunny who attached herself at once to Monty Wallace. Jimmy

tried to get the girl away once or twice but she would not go with him and the four went together for dinner at a larger hotel in the neighborhood.

Natalie wrote another story in her quiet room that night when Jimmy had taken her to the small hotel and then she sat waiting for Monty's footsteps outside her door.

They did not come and she got into becoming negligee, hoping to rest until he should appear. Once, twice, she waked having dreamed that he came up the stairs, but each time she saw that the door of his room stood blackly open and knew that he had not come back.

It was so until the morning and, when Jimmy telephoned, she went out to breakfast with him a little sick at heart. At the field, she waited and watched for Monty, but it was mid-morning before he appeared.

He was haggard and pale. Natalie hurried to him with quick alarm, fearing that he might not be ready the next day for the long grind of the flight.

But he was intent on his work and it was not till Sunny Marion arrived, her smile oddly triumphant that Natalie knew the truth of that night.

She took him away from the Marion girl then. Directly and deliberately she made him go with her, and she drove with him straight to the small hotel.

She got him into the place and commanded him to sleep.

"Don't you realize," she cried, "that your life may depend upon it? You're in no shape to fly. You're all broken up about something. You've got to forget everything but the flight."

"All right," he told her. "But get out of here. I'll be all right."

She knew then that something more than a night out was behind those tense white lips of his. It was something, she thought, connected with her; something that made him brusque with her. But she couldn't make out what it might be.

She saw to it that he was not disturbed that afternoon and night. When he appeared the morning of the flight, there was still a line of tension about his mouth but his eyes were clear and he could grin.

On the way to the field after breakfast, he was silent. She thought he might be worrying about the flight and tried now to bolster his confidence. But he turned to her impatiently.

"Nat," he said grimly, "I may not be coming back from this thing, and if I don't, I want you to know something. I swore I couldn't ever love a girl enough to want to marry her. Marriage is not for fools like me that have to be taking crazy risks. I made marriage virtually impossible for me and then you came along. If I could have got you, it would have been all right. But I couldn't and now I'm mad about you. I went out last night trying to forget you and now it's worse than ever. I'm going to make this flight or die trying and I'm going to be wanting you every inch of the way. But I don't want you to be where I can see you on the take-off."

"All right, Monty. I'll keep out of sight," Triumph sang in her heart as she said the words. "Everything is all right if only I know you love me. Even if we never marry, we will have the most important thing. Now stop worrying, especially about that."

She drove with him to the plane and then she slipped away into the small early morning crowd. It was little more than dawn but these people had come out to see the start.

As she passed toward the flight office, she saw a man in shirt sleeves pushing his way toward the plane.

Inside, she asked the first question everybody had been asking. "What is the weather report?"

"It's bad," the answer came. "They're going to hold everything till tomorrow."

Natalie strolled back toward the plane. She wondered what it was best to do. Had she better see him again, be with him that day? Or would it be better to keep away from him?

When she came near, she saw that Sunny Marion was talking with him. She seemed to be her old, brilliant self. The put was gone from her face. That little smile of triumph seemed to ride there.

Monty turned to the shirt-sleeved man at his side. He took the paper he held, glanced at it, then tore it half across.

Leaning down quickly, he kissed the blonde girl and sprang into the cabin of the plane. He revved up the motor, found that it had been warmed, that it answered to the throttle.

Then, suddenly, the ship was roaring across the field. Grease monkeys scattered. Someone rushed out of the field office crying, "Stop him! Stop him!" But the plane was rising now . . . it was up and speeding for the sea.

Natalie drew back alone. A sobbing moan broke from her lips. The weather was wrong. He had not waited.

And this was the man she loved, the man who loved her, rushing into unknown terror and death on a mad flight around the world.

She looked around for someone and knew at once that it was Jimmy she sought in that small crowd. But Jimmy was not there. He was nowhere. Through tear-wet lashes she could not see him at any rate.

And when she did see, she stood stock still.

For Jimmy Hale was leading beautiful blonde Sunny from the field. And Jabe Marion came behind with the field officers.

Natalie fled then. She raced for a taxicab and hurled herself

into it. "Quick!" she cried and gave the address of her hotel.

For the newspaper woman in her had come to her rescue. The flash would go out from the field office. She must have her story ready for the wire in half an hour. And as she rode through the morning streets she was planning the lead of that story.

"Defying the elements," she found her lips saying, "tossing aside contemptuously the adverse weather reports that would have held up the flight from Mineola field today for Mineola field—around the world—non-stop."

She hardly knew when she reached the hotel. She stopped for nothing when she faced her typewriter in that quiet room.

She thrust paper and carbons into the machine and banged at the keys. Her story must go. Her heart might break. Her lover might crash to a thousand deaths on sea or land from the vast height at which he flew, but these bits of paper must be lashed by the keys that her fingers drove. They must be whipped out one by one till the telegraph boy rushed away with them, till the pencils slashed, till the linotypes crashed, till the presses grumbled and roared, till the whole world knew that Monty Wallace was on his way.

The story ended at last. "To be continued," she wrote for a last paragraph. "To be continued is the story Monty Wallace writes in the clouds and sea today. To be continued is the epic of the Twentieth Century's fourth decade as one tousled-headed youth rides high to new fame or death."

She did not break when the story ended. She did not stop till the last page had been thrust into the hands of the waiting boy and hurried on its way.

There were two pilots on the plane going home.

Natalie could have screamed when she saw them, for they reminded her again that Monty Wallace was alone as he fought his way across the Atlantic.

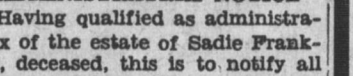
It was all she could do to bring herself to enter the roomy trimotor that afternoon when she knew that it would still be hours before any possible report could come from the lone flier. She wanted to cling to the window of some telegraph office, or better still, to sit at the elbow of one of the radio operators in the world-flight chain.

Continued Next Issue

**ADMINISTRATRIX NOTICE**

Having qualified as administratrix of the estate of Sadie Franklin, deceased, this is to notify all persons holding claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned within one year from date of this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons owing said estate please settle at once. This December 1, 1937.

Mary F. McNeely, administratrix of the estate of Sadie Franklin, deceased.



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