

DIANA AND DAEDALUS

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mountain. He then turned off his radio and concentrated on conquering the 10,831-foot San Jacinto peak.

Bob called when Frank's transmission was ended and told Anne and Peter to follow behind the other crew. He too, then settled down to the serious business of getting out into the desert.

Weaving a tortuous route through Jack Rabbit Canyon, Anne had to drive very carefully. Peter was talking to her and telling her about the wonders and mysteries of the atmosphere. She was intrigued. The petulance and frustration she had felt that morning back in the hotel lobby had long ago dissipated. She was quite happy. Soon, they swung onto Highway 60 and reached Beaumont. Another five or six miles and they passed through Banning. Here the highways widened and the traffic speeded up. Bob called and said he was at 8700' and was thinking of cutting across Banning Pass toward San Geronio Mt. and Morengo Valley. Peter gave their position as passing the Banning airport. Bob replied that he would call as soon as he made his decision. He left his radio on.

Peter Allerton still held the mike in his hand. Suddenly he was feeling very strange. A queer nervous sensation fluttered in his stomach and an ominous feeling flashed over him. At this moment, Anne started a terrifying scream. She saw one of the oncoming cars careen drunkenly into their lane. The car lurched, slowly started a roll, and then violently struck upside down, skidding right into Anne's path. Her foot jammed on the brake and she swerved hard to the right. Peter was thrown unmercifully against the windshield. As this action started, Peter clenched the mike switch in a reaction of horror. Anne's frightening scream punctured Bob's ears high overhead. Then followed fearful sounds all garbled together. Although losing consciousness, Peter held a death grip on the mike switch.

Frank Elder looked in amazement as he saw Bob Howard's glider peel off to the left and go into a screaming dive down into the Banning Pass. He tried to call Bob on the radio, but to no avail. As he watched, he became more bewildered because the glider seemed to be under perfect control. "But why," he wondered, "would Bob go down after struggling so hard to

gain this altitude?" He thought possibly Bob might have become ill. At any rate he would have to wait till much later to find out. Looking ahead, Frank noticed a line of high cumulus clouds forming out near Indio and stretching toward Blythe. He pointed his glider for the first of these clouds and soon forgot about Bob. Just north of Indio, Frank climbed to 13,500 ft. in good lift and as he headed down the cloud street which led to Blythe, his watch read 1520.

One hundred fifty miles to the southeast of Frank the radio waves crackled with "#31 Kilo calling KNC7." Betty Coverley answered her husband. They exchanged locations. Bill was southeast of Yuma just beyond the tip of the Gila Mts. Betty was just leaving Yuma on Highway 80. She had stopped to gas up. A cool drink and a splash of cold water on her face while in the restroom had refreshed her immensely.

The nurse at the desk noted on the card, "Entered emergency—4:00 p.m." Anne and Bob Howard stood before the desk giving information about Peter. At the moment, he was having his head X-rayed. Relief and gratefulness filled Bob, for miraculously Anne had not been injured. In a day or two she would be aware of bruises, but they did not bother her now. Standing in the antiseptic atmosphere of the hospital, Bob over and over silently expressed his thanks. He was also offering a prayer that Peter would not have a fractured skull. His concentration and meditation were punctured as he realized he was being called over the loudspeaker system. Would he please call the switchboard. At the other end of the wire was one of Bob's close friends telephoning from Banning airport. He and his crew had been returning from Cabazon and had noticed Bob's glider and trailer by the side of the highway. The police had told them about the accident and the name of the hospital. Before the conversation ended, the friend and his crew had offered to dismantle Bob's glider and replace the blown tire on the trailer with a spare which they had. This meant Bob needed only to drive back from the hospital, hook on the trailer to the car and return to Elsinore. He and Anne went out to sit in the car while waiting to find out about Peter. As they approached the station wagon, Bob noted the body and fender damage. The clock on the dashboard read 1620.

Bill Coverley could hardly believe his eyes. Stretching out ahead of him on the desert-like plains were dozens of dust devils. Their columns were straight and plainly visible. Never before had he seen such a sight. "The land of many smokes," he thought, for these dust devils looked like smoke columns dancing along the sandy floor. Soaring along with ease, Bill enjoyed this phenomenon until he was well past Gila Bend. At 1720 he was about five miles northeast of the Sand Tank Mountains. Despite the fast time Bill had made during the past two hours, Betty had been able to stay within fifty miles of him. The highways were good and the terrain level, so the driving was comparatively effortless. The fatigue her body suffered was overshadowed by the excitement which continued to grow as mile after mile sped by. At 1820 she was slowing down as she approached the town of Casa Grande. Bill had been following a line of cumulus clouds. Below him on his left he identified Pichacho Peak. Overwhelming fatigue had numbed Bill for brief periods during the last hours. Now Tucson was only 45 miles away. Bill was so absorbed figuring how to take best advantage of the weather that he was no longer conscious of being tired. He just knew that he must hurry.

At this moment Frank Elder was relaxed, lying in the back of his station wagon. An hour earlier he had landed at Heron Field on the outskirts of Blythe. His crew were already waiting there. Within twenty minutes they had dismantled the glider and mounted it on the trailer. They took half an hour to eat and now were en route back to Elsinore. Frank was content. He had made a satisfactory flight.

Half dozing he started thinking of his wife. It would be good to get back to her. He pictured her full, free smile. He liked her brown hair cut in its short bob and slightly curled along the lobe line of her ears. Best of all Frank liked her graceful carriage and the way her clear eyes would look fully into you with a healthy interest. He fell asleep.

Anne Howard leaned her elbows comfortably on the restaurant table. The decor was attractive and the lights soft. She thought to herself, "These are truly wonderful men." Peter, his head swathed in bandages, was reliving the events of the afternoon. He and Bob would listen in

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