

# Up in the Air

by Beulah Earle

## SIXTH INSTALMENT

Monty Wallace had 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.

Also 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.

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.

Sunny attempts to drive Natalie from Monty's attention by climbing a high wall. She almost loses her balance and is pulled back by Monty. Jimmy later asks Natalie to consider his love for her if she refuses Monty.

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 pass the night. Resuming the search in the morning, they finally locate the

writing the big account of her life.

Mack Hanlon was rushing out an extra at the other end of the telephone. Jimmy had flashed him before he raced to tell Sunny. He had tried to call Natalie but could get no answer. Now he was reading Natalie's story, line by line, to Hanlon.

Mont Wallace would complete his flight and try again at once for the non-stop honors, the story read. Jabe Marion had issued orders that the flight organization was to remain intact for the second trial.

Natalie finished her story and made Jimmy take her to the office.

"I don't want any more vacation," she told Hanlon as the shouts of newboys announced the extra on the street. "I want to handle the yarn from now till the second flight is over."

Hanlon was like a pleased child. "What I ought to do," he laughed, "is to send you along with this bird. These flights are harder on you than they are on him."

Natalie could laugh at that. There were few secrets between her and the weakened little city editor.

She went to find Jimmy in the photographer's den. He was sloshing about in the dark-room with its eerie red light.

"Wait a minute," he yelled at her knock. Then he opened the door and she stood beside him under the red light while he worked.

"I thought you were supposed to be laid up," he chuckled as he rubbed the tips of his fingers over a weak spot in one of his negatives. "I guess there wasn't anything the matter with you that Dr. Mont Wal-

When it was clear that he would finish easily, Natalie and Jimmy started East with the Marions to meet him. The girl reporter felt as though her heart would burst when she saw him again. But she hung to her self-control as well as she could and managed to make the trip without revealing the tumult within her.

Sunny Marion had a new bearing now. That seeming triumph was gone but in its stead had come a quiet determination.

Their own pilot had miscalculated the speed Mont would make. It was a race at the last to see who would get in first at Mineola and scarcely had their tri-motor stopped rolling when the black ship, a little battered and worse for wear, swept downward.

It was then that Natalie's knees almost buckled under her. Jimmy and Sunny raced ahead to gather him into their arms. Natalie came after with Jabe Marion.

To her amazement, Sunny faced her with Mont, her arm about him and his thrown across her shoulder. "Congratulations us, people," she was saying. "Mont and I are going to be married."

Mont turned quickly and looked down into Sunny's face. Clearly he had not expected so early an announcement but he grinned when he looked up again and gripped Jabe Marion's hand as the older man sprang forward.

Natalie was surprised at her own reaction. She thought she knew now what Sunny had meant when she spoke of cheating. The girl, no doubt, had taken Mont's words as an offer of marriage on their night together. Mont had been caught in the trap of her apartment naïveté.

Suddenly then Nat realized that she, too, had been caught. Nothing she could say or do would make any difference. Mont was equally helpless. And if what she suspected was true, there might be desperation behind Sunny's haste.

Natalie caught Mont's hand in hers and clung to it. But her eyes avoided his face, fearing what they might find there. Maybe it was all true. Maybe Mont had meant only that he could not marry Natalie. Maybe he had willingly been drawn into this engagement with Sunny Marion.

Such was their greeting. Such was Natalie's meeting with the man she loved after the agony of those weeks.

But the joy of seeing him, of having him near, kept her from being cast down. It was not until she was alone that night that she gave way to a torrent of tears.

They had gone to the Rensselaer Hotel in New York for the night. Natalie had done her own story and had listened while Mont talked with the other newspaper reporters. She had no time alone with him.

Jabe and Sunny Marion had borne him off with them.

And even Jimmy Hale was nowhere about.

Next day the newspapers all carried the announcement Sunny Marion, for whom his plane had been named, would become the bride of the world flier, Mont Wallace. Jimmy's pictures of her appeared everywhere and that evening there were pictures of Mont and Sunny before the world-flight plane.

It was understood the cut-lines said, that the wedding would be postponed until after Wallace had made another attempt at the non-stop trip around the world.

After that there was nothing much left for Natalie Wade but the job she held and she plunged into it with all the energy she could muster. She wondered a little that she saw nothing of Jimmy outside of working hours.

Jimmy had told her once that he would be waiting for her if things cracked up for her. They would, he said, jump off a high place together. Maybe that was what he was afraid of now. Maybe he felt that his return to her would bring a mood of desperation to them both.

But she laughed at the thought. She could take defeat, not with equanimity it was true, but she could take it. It was desperate uncertainty that unnerved her.

Mont Wallace and the Marions were deep in plans for the second flight. There would be little news in that until it was accomplished, for failure made no heroes for the front pages. Monty had been a spectacular figure on his return, but only because of his return from the dead. His romance had kept the page open to him for another day, but after that there were more thrill-

ing stories than his new preoccupation with work, his hours spent on the plane and on the revision of the flight organization.

Natalie herself was writing a new series of features and found herself engrossed.

Life was returning to its old round. Even Mack Hanlon was little interested in the story of the new flight attempt.

But at last the day of the take-off came.

The plans had been changed now. The start was to be made from the home airport. New York was only one of the refueling stops. The last leg of the flight would be down the coast from Nome.

Before dawn they were at the field. Jimmy was there with his flashlights going to record the new scene and the altered plane.

And Sunny Marion was there. It was the first time Natalie had seen her in weeks. The change in her appearance shocked the older girl. It was not possible that this was the golden beauty of a few weeks before.

The plane had been trundled out to the runway. Its motor was turning briskly. The clockers were in their own places. Grease-monkeys swarmed about. And because it was the first start of an international flight from the small port, there was a goodly crowd of curious onlookers.

Natalie moved thru the crowd for a sight of Mont. At last she found him talking with Jabe Marion and the little radio operator. She joined the small party and stood at Mont's side.

"Good luck and success this time," she spoke in a low tone. "I got a bet on your nose."

"There's a lot more than that on this flight, Nat," Mont said cryptically. He gripped her hand and turned to Marion and to Sunny who had come up.

Natalie stood watching when he climbed into the ship and wondering at his words as he revved the motor to high speed in swift tests of the throttle.

The motor roared again and this time the ship moved forward. It was an old thrill now to Natalie but nevertheless it stirred her. No less than before, this was still the man she loved, risking his life on the maddest flight that ever the world saw.

Cheers burst from the crowd. The ship picked up its tail and then ran screaming across the field. It lifted and slanted for the distant mountain tops as the sunlight tipped their peaks with gold.

Then Jimmy Hale stood at Natalie's side. He slipped a note into her hand. "From Mont," he said quickly and was gone.

Natalie's fingers were numb as she tried to open the sealed envelope. What could Mont be writing to her? What was there that he hadn't been able to say to her face to face as they stood there beside the plane before the start?

She remembered that strange, cryptic utterance of his: "There's a lot more than that on this flight, Nat."

What could he have meant? At last she had the envelope in shreds, had brought out the folded note paper within. She read:

DEAREST NAT: I couldn't say anything to you before. Maybe I ought not to be writing this. But I can't go on this flight without knowing that you know.

I love you. I've known it all along but I had to change my whole life to admit it. I mean I love you with the kind of love that wants only marriage, the kind you have been telling me about. I tried—even after I knew that—to keep from asking you to marry me. I haven't been rotten, but I've done things that make me ashamed and it seemed to me that I ought not to bring that sort of record to you.

But I couldn't hold off any longer. When I came back the last time I was determined I'd ask you to marry me and I hoped in spite of everything that you'd say yes.

Then Sunny pulled her fast one. At first I was flabbergasted, didn't know what to say or do. And then it occurred to me that maybe it was for the best, that it would keep me from making love to you, from trying to get you to marry me. And it did that. I hadn't the effrontery to say anything to you like that after the announcement was out. That much, at least, it did for us.

But I found I couldn't go on with the marriage. I didn't tell Sunny that. I thought maybe, after I had got things all figured out, that I could go on. But it didn't work. At first Sunny didn't suspect. But she kept urging that we be married right away. I couldn't do it and I just stalled.

That wasn't very decent of me, but it was the best I could do. I kept thinking of you more and more and I knew that wasn't right. But it couldn't be helped. At last Sunny lost patience with me. She told

me something that I can never tell anyone. Almost I believed it, but not quite, and she admitted afterward that it wasn't true.

I saw then that she had tried to trick me again and we had a showdown. She finally agreed to one thing. It was the best that I could figure. She has agreed that if I complete the flight this time, the engagement is off. And she won't say anything to her father that will get me in bad with the company. She's been holding that over me.

I'm ashamed to have you put in a position like this but it's one of the things I've let myself in for. It's one of the reasons why you may not want to marry me at all, even though you've told me you love me. Whatever you decide, my dearest, will be right. With this flight I'm trying to earn the right to come back to you and ask you to marry me. If I don't get thru—if I crack up, that is—I want you to know that there has never been anything in my life more wonderful than the love I have for you. If I come back but haven't made the flight as it was planned, then I'll keep my word and I won't be seeing you again, except just casually as it has been lately.

But if I come thru on schedule, then I'm going to hope and believe that it means I've a right to talk to you and that you won't hold against me the things I've done when marriage seemed to be out of the question for me.

Don't spare my feelings if you decide you can't see things my way. There's nothing I want but your happiness. I forfeited the right to ask anything for myself and I can take what's coming to me. But if you love me and can think at all of marrying me, I'll know, I think, and nothing on earth or sky or sea can stop me on this flight. Here's all my love, however it goes.

Yours, MONT.

Natalie could have screamed with happiness. She hugged the letter to her heart and rushed for the office. There she wrote like one mad and then she hurried home to be alone with her happiness for a little while.

She could think of nothing except that Mont was out there flying for her. It occurred to her presently that he would be reported occasionally on his flight to New York. She went back to the office and sat over the news wires there till the next morning. Then she rushed for the field office and the short-wave radio receiver.

It was only a little after dawn in New York when Mont refueled there—He had broken all records across the continent.

When she knew that Mont was out over the Atlantic she tried to go home again but before she had been able to make a start she turned back. She would stand by at the radio set until he was safe across. That much, at least, she could do.

After a while Sunny Marion came to sit beside her but the girl said nothing and Natalie found no speech in her heart or on her lips that would not reveal how much she knew.

It seemed at times as though the Sunny was in terror part of that day and the following night but she could not be sure. Together they waited beside the little radio operator who dozed in his chair between calls, depending on the buzzing of the receivers to wake him when news came.

Occasionally Natalie sent out for something to eat but Sunny would take nothing but a little coffee.

Sometimes Natalie thought that the younger girl was breaking under the strain but she would not leave. Her father came in from time to time and appeared anxious about her. But she sat silent beside the radio desk and seemed to hear nothing but the occasional hum in the black receivers at the operator's ears.

It was not till Jimmy Hale came in, that she looked up and smiled. And presently Jimmy got her to walk about with him and finally to leave the field.

And within half an hour after they had left, the station office was roaring with the news that Mont Wallace had broken another record, the cross-Atlantic flight record and had refueled at the first control station in France.

After that, wild horses could not have torn Natalie away from her post beside the radio operator. She could not sleep. She scarcely ate. She hardly moved from the office chair where she sat with a typewriter at her hand.

Jimmy and Sunny came back, joining her in the vigil as that leg of the trip began. Reports were that Mont was pale and looked very weary as he crossed the control station. Then the operator's yell told them all that Mont was safe across the Siberian wastes. He was heading for Beijing Strait and at last for Nome.

Sunny Marion cracked then. Natalie saw her face when that word

of further and further across came. She knew what the girl must be going thru and moved swiftly to do what she could to comfort her. But Sunny stood up shrieking. "Jimmy! Jimmy! Take me out of here."

Jimmy stepped quickly to the girl's side and led her out of the office. At the door he looked back once. Then he grinned and went out as though he, too, knew the dreadful significance of that flight.

Natalie sat back in her chair. She was too bad about Sunny but there was nothing Natalie could do.

The other girl's face had been terrifying when she stood up and screamed, but Natalie's mind was already back with Mont Wallace, knowing that now he headed more across dark waters on his flight to Nome.

Others were coming into the station now. The word had gone out of course. Jabe Marion came and sat beside the operator.

Natalie wrote her story—she began it, but she had to change lead before it was finished for the operator suddenly sat bolt upright and talked rapidly as he translated his message.

"Wallace down at sea," he said. "Steamer in Behring Strait reports seeing wreckage of plane in fog. Hunting for it now. Probably Wallace."

Natalie's fingers beat at the typewriter keys. She felt it was the only thing that saved her from collapse, that necessity of getting out the story of the tragedy. But when more news came, when it told of the steamers mobilizing for the hunt out there in the fog, when it told of bits of wreckage that had been picked up, she almost believed.

Then there was a sudden stir at the radio desk.

Natalie leaped from her place and stood beside the operator as he read the message aloud.

"Wrecked plane identified," he said. "It's not Wallace, not the Sunny Marion. Russian ship trying flight to Nome. Pilot safe."

There were cheers then but they died quickly. Where was Mont Wallace? Where was the gallant plane now many hours overdue at Nome? Uncertainty made the suspense more terrifying now than before. Natalie telephoned the office quickly and sent corrections for her story. Wallace might be down but this was another plane wreck.

And even while she spoke there was a shriek from the little group on the other side of the room.

"He's safe. He's safe. Vancouver reports him. He dodged the fog. Cut straight for Vancouver instead of Nome. He's safe. He's in. He's in. Nothing can stop him now."

Natalie sobbed for joy and screamed into the telephone to Mack Hanlon.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

When sending garments to the dry-cleaner, inform the cleaner of the nature of the stains.

## Notice to Creditors

Pursuant to an order of the Surrogate's Court of the County of Allegany by Hon. Ward M. Hopkins, Surrogate, notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against the estate of Benjamin S. Brundage, late of Andover, New York, deceased, to present the same, with the proper voucher thereon, on or before the 8th day of September, 1939, to the undersigned executors of the Last Will and Testament of said deceased at the Andover National Bank, Andover, N. Y.

ANDREW D. FULLER, MALCOLM F. BRUNDAGE, Executors.

CRAYTON L. EARLEY, Attorney for Executors, Andover, N. Y.

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At last she had the envelope in shreds.

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."

The day before the flight, Monty once more declares his love to Nat.

But Natalie knew what he came to say and perhaps Sunny knew as well. For nothing else could have sent him to them in such mad haste. "Mont's safe," Natalie cried out. "Is that it, Jimmy?"

He nodded his head, gasping. And then the two seized him and pummeled him till he actually could not get the words out.

"Just like Jimmy Mattern," he sobbed out presently. "He was down twelve days before he could get word out. Some little place in Siberia. The Russians flew over twice hunting for him but he couldn't make them see him."

Strength surged into Natalie like a miracle. Sunny forgot herself and danced so madly that they thought she would hurl herself from the rock in her ecstasy.

Then they were all three running for Jimmy's car, and Jimmy drove them straight to the flying field.

There the news was pouring in. Mont himself stood at the elbow of one of those short-wave operators on the other side of the world. He had fought his way thru the wilderness sometimes afoot, sometimes on a peasant's wagon, at last in a puffing Russian train with no one aboard who could speak a word of English.

He had reached the Siberian control and had flashed the story of his safety. He was there now letting the world know and Natalie, piecing together the bits that came from the humming receivers thru the lips of one small radio operator, was

lace couldn't cure."

"Gosh, Jimmy," the girl responded, "you don't suppose I'm crazy or anything, do you? How can anybody be like that who is in her right mind?"

The boy grinned at her in that eerie glow.

"You and I ought to know, kid," he said, "that love makes plain insanity look foolish."

He went on with his work for a few minutes in silence. Then:

"How come you and Sunny Marion got so thick up there on that rock? I thought you hadn't been seeing much of each other?"

"Oh, that's just some more of the craziness. She's got it too, poor kid. I wonder sometimes if she hasn't got it the worst of us all."

"Don't worry about her, Nat," Jimmy rejoined. "She'll take care of herself. She forgets quick."

"That's a gift, Jimmy, I think."

"That's pure genius, if you ask me. Come on. Let's go somewhere and try forgetting."

It had been so long since she and Jimmy had spent an evening together that the girl was surprised at the invitation. There was no sign that she could find during that evening that Jimmy remembered at all his love for Natalie Wade.

It was an evening she was to recall afterward, an evening she often wondered about.

There was a delay of two days before Mont resumed his flight. He clicked it off then in amazing fashion. Station after station reported him. Each time he made the next control almost exactly on the schedule.

It was as though the elements having done their worst and failed to put him out of the running had now given up and were willing to let him come thru.

## Independence

(Mrs. Floyd Clarke, Re)

Aug. 8—Misses Mary

Ruth Greene of Wellsville

guests of their uncle Mr.

W. E. Greene from Thurston

Monday.

Mrs. John Illig attend

"Land Use Tour" conduct

by the Farm Bureau.

Mrs. Mary Crandall, Mr.

R. E. Spicer and Charles,

Mrs. Paul Vincent, Mr.

E. M. Crandall, Anna La

all, S. B. Crandall and

Mrs. Floyd Clarke attend

reception for Mr. and Mrs.

Crandall in Alfred Thurs

day.

Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Cra

in Ithaca Friday to see

Mrs. Wayne Crandall. Ma

with accompanied them to

ist.

Carolyn Alice arrived

to make her home with Mr.

Carl V. Clarke. Everyone

our congratulations.

Messers Charles and

Clarke also Milford Bassett

of the New York State Po

stration in Tully Thurs

day.

Miss Eleanor DeRemer o

gave a very interesting t

work in Turkey at the Su

Community service. Fi

of Alfred will speak ne

evening.

Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Cl

and Mrs. Maude Clarke

Friday at Stony Brook G

Mr. and Mrs. M. R.

Maxson Jr., and Carol

Conn. Mrs. E. R. Cran

and baby, Jim Row

red were callers of M

Crandall Sunday.

Miss Eloise Mings is

this week assisting Mrs. E

all in the care of Mr.

Cowley and baby Frederi

Maxson Crandall Jr.,

Conn. spent Sunday with

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Cla

Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Cra