"CONTRABAND"

By RANDALL PARRISH

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A Thrilling War Story of the North Atlantic

CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

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"There is not much to tell," he went on, almost jauntily. "I saw exactly how things were going before we left the boat. I knew Hollis' reputation ashore, and determined to warn you of his purpose, but had no opportunity. Besides, I felt you had so poor an opinion of me that probably you would not listen."

"You were greatly mistaken Mr. McCann," she said pleasantly. "I would have gladly received your advice. You were my father's friend."

I could read the man's surprise in his face. The graciousness of her words was a shock, yet his egotism made him instantly her victim.

"You mean you trusted me? That you would have listened?"

"Most assuredly. How could you think otherwise? I knew you were not yourself in the boat, and the treatment to which you were subjected was brutal. I owed my life to you equally with Captain Hollis, and am very grateful. I have never forgotten that you have been a guest in our home, a business associate of my father's. Why should I not have confidence in you?"

I looked at her in amazement, but her eyes never met mine. What did this mean? Was the girl acting a part? Was she endeavoring to deceive him, or was she speaking now in deadly earnest? Nothing in her manner, or in the tone of her voice, gave me a clue. As for McCann, the very expression of his face pictured his delight, his conviction of her sincerity. It was almost too good to be true, yet his was not a nature to doubt his own attractiveness.

"I—I—you surprise me," he stammered, absolutely forgetting my presence. "I—I assure you I was actuated by the highest motives in all my efforts. My—my duty was to you, and your father."

He turned and faced me, the bully in him surging to the surface.

"I will converse with Miss Carrington alone."

To resist would have been utter foolishness. I could see the gleam of the gun in his hand, and realized that he only required an excuse to use it. More, there was nothing in the expression of the girl's face to inspire me to resistance. She did not even glance toward me, or exhibit the slightest interest.

With hands clenched in impotent rage, not even venturing a reply, I stepped backward. As I crossed the threshold McCann closed the door, and I heard the key turn in the lock. Trembling still with anger, and dazed by the strange action of the girl, I sank back upon the stool, realizing my utter helplessness. All she had done and said appeared so natural it never really occurred to me once that she might be acting a part, seeking in this way to gain McCann's confidence, in order to win from him the information we required. It was only as I sat there in silence, brooding over every detail, that this possible conception began to slowly dawn upon my mind. That she could trust the man in any way was practically impossible, for he had revealed to her his true character in so many ways the memory could not be blotted out.

As the full knowledge of this truth grew apparent, I was able to view all that had occurred later in a different light. She had simply accepted her one chance; had grasped with womanly intuition the single weapon left at her command. Girl as she was in years, her experience in the world had been that of a woman, and she instinctively realized her power—the power

The Black Outline of the French Warship Was Plainly Visible.

of wealth, of beauty, and of youth. It had been beautifully done, so deftly accomplished as to deceive even me. Aye! and the method had succeeded with McCann. I recalled the expression of surprise, of gratification, of awakened pride on the man's face. He had no power of resistance left; he was already putty in her hands.

True, but would he remain so? The game she played was a dangerous one; if she ventured too far she would discover the brute lurking in him still. And he had the power, the physical power, to wreak vengeance once he suspicioned deceit. And there was no one to help her if she made a single false step—absolutely no one; she was a lamb among wolves. Those fellows would never release me again, not for a moment. I would be compelled to take observations, to calculate position, to trace our sailing course on the chart, but not for an instant would I be left again unguarded, either on deck or in the cabin. McCann would see to that.

The afternoon passed, dragging its weary hours. Nothing happened to relieve the monotony and dread of solitude. No one approached the door of the stateroom, not even to offer me food, and my ears were able to distinguish no sound of movement in the main cabin. Occasionally footsteps passed along the deck overhead, and once or twice I heard the voice of Liverpool sing out some order to the men forward. The sun sank, its rays glinting across the waters, and telling me the ship held to its southwest course, but the ocean, so far as I could see, remained desolate, the horizon unbroken by a gleam of sail, or smudge of smoke. No echo of a cry reached me from any lookout aloft. The vessel proceeded quietly, no effort being made, apparently, to achieve speed. I judged our rate would not exceed eight knots, and decided there was either a scarcity of men in the stokehole, or else they were conserving fuel to attain greater speed during the hours of darkness. The bright sunlight began to fade into a purple dusk.

CHAPTER XIX.

A French Man-of-War.

No food was brought me during the afternoon, nor had I eaten all day, yet my mental state was such I had no consciousness of hunger. I had discovered no means of creating a light, although my eyes were sufficiently accustomed to dimness to enable me to move about my narrow quarters safely enough.

It must have been between eight and nine o'clock when the key turned in the lock of my door, and Liverpool looked in. The light from the swinging lamp in the main cabin flared into my eyes, blinding me, yet I recognized his face, and saw Dade close behind him, bearing a tray. Neither of them spoke, but Red, having assured himself of my presence, stood aside, and motioned the steward to enter. The latter deposited the laden tray on the desk, and backed out silently, every movement showing him thoroughly cowed by his guardian. Realizing that any word from me would only result in insult, I remained silent, and the two disappeared, closing and locking the door behind them. I confess I ate the food with relish, for it was well cooked, and served with some daintiness. After a second cup of coffee I felt much more like myself, rummaging through the captain's chest until I found some tobacco and a pipe, which I at once appropriated to my own use. No one returned for the emptied dishes, and I sat for a long while at the open port smoking, the blue spiral swept away by the rush of air, and my eyes on the starlit waters.

I had been sailor long enough to accept the ordinary perils of the sea as part of the profession. Nothing was too strange to be true at sea; and so it was not the position in which I found myself; not the possible fate of the Indian Chief, or of her captured officers, which weighed most upon my mind—it was Vera Carrington. If those villains scuttled the ship; if they took to the boats to save themselves, leaving us to drown like rats, what would they do with the girl? Would McCann dare to take her with him? Would he venture leaving her alive to bear witness to his crime? There was but one answer—not unless she was utterly in his power. Either he must quiet her by force, and thus bring her spirit to his will, or else compel her to marry him, and so legally seal her lips. And the man was perfectly capable of taking either course — whichever seemed easier.

This was the consideration which served partially to arouse me from coma. I could not continue to sit there waiting for Fate to approach; better far to go forth and meet it in manly fashion. I had a good strong knife in my pocket, and the lock of the door was a common one, the wood surrounding it soft pine. There was nothing in that obstacle to prevent my escape, and if I was discovered at large, my punishment would merely be confinement elsewhere. I had therefore nothing to lose, but everything to gain by the experiment. The hour was late, the night had thus far been a quiet one, and it was quite probable the fellow, comfortably situated, was drowsing at his task. Anyhow, I would make little noise, and the chance was worth taking.

The labor proved easier than I had supposed. The soft pine yielded easily to the sharp blade, and a very few moments sufficed to cut the lock clear, enabling me to open the door silently and take cautious survey of the main cabin. At first I doubted the presence of anyone, and had, indeed, ventured forth before perceiving the form of a man outstretched on the divan surrounding the butt of the mizzenmast. The fellow was asleep, yet restless enough to be dangerous. His face was in shadow, and I thought it best not to venture close enough to identify him, although the dim light revealed a belt about his waist, and the bulging butt of a revolver. Convinced that my only hope of accomplishment lay in the discovery and release of my fellow prisoners, I crept across the deserted cabin, and entered the passage leading forward. Somewhere amidships these were surely confined. But I was not destined to discover where. I had taken scarcely a step when the companion door opened, and a man started down the stairs. Crouched in the darkness, I saw the sleeping guard, aroused by the noise, spring upright, and as the light fell on his face, I recognized a seaman named Dubois. The man on the stairs paused, gripping the rail, staring down as though momentarily blinded by the light.

"Is that you, Dubois?" he asked in the harsh croak belonging to Jim White.

"D—— you—you was asleep."

"I lay back to rest, but I was not asleep, monsieur—non, non."

"Well, we won't fight over that now. You're the only Frenchman on board, and we want you on deck. Go on up; I'll stay here. Aye, man, yer better leave the gun."

"Vat ees it, Monsieur White? Why they want me on deck?"

"What's the difference, you frog-eater? But I'll tell yer anyhow. There is a cruiser showing up off our port quarter, which has caught sight o' us. She looks French, and if there is a hail, it will be up to you to answer—you are the only one aboard this hooker who talks the lingo like a native, see!"

Dubois stood staring, his lips parted in sudden terror.

"A French warsheep; eet hail us?"

"Not yet; but they are bound to question us, all right. There! did you hear that? A shot across our bows, politely asking us to heave to; aye! and we are slowing down; come, hurry up on deck with you, Frenchy."

"But—but, monsieur, what ees it I can say? I know not ze words, ze—ze explanation."

"You speak French, don't you?"

"Oui, monsieur, oui, but—but I know not what to speak."

"Well, don't let that worry you, McCann will tell you—but God pity you, Dubois, if you fail to repeat it. Up with you now, and be lively about it!"

All thought of my former purpose vanished from my mind as I realized this new chance of rescue. At any risk I must attain quickly to the open deck, where I could create an alarm sufficient to awaken suspicion on board the approaching Frenchman. McCann's only hope of escape lay in some satisfactory explanation, which would lull the suspicions of the French commander—some lie smooth enough to prevent boarding and search.

Assured that White was beyond observation of any of my movements, I crept cautiously around the stair rail, and noiselessly mounted the steps. I found the after part of the main deck deserted, although forward of the mainmast I could perceive dark blotches along the port rail, where members of the watching party were observing the approach of the French cruiser. With heart beating like a tripdenly the door behind me yielded and I staggered back, unable to regain my balance until fairly within the stateroom. With a crash the door closed, instantly shutting out the surprised faces of the two men in the cabin; a key creaked in the lock, and Vera Carrington fronted me, her back against the wood.

"Were—were they trying to kill you?" she panted.

"They certainly did their best," I answered, "but it was my turn when you dropped me in here."

"You—you mean that I made a mistake—that you were in no danger?"

"I had the upper hand. I took this revolver away from White, and do not believe either of the others were armed. In another second I should have fired. Our only hope of rescue lies in creating an alarm; there is a French cruiser lying just off our port quarter."

"A French cruiser! We have been captured?"

"No; merely halted and questioned. The Frenchman does not even suspect anything wrong. I was endeavoring to sound an alarm when these fellows two vessels. I felt the heart come up into my throat as I gazed spellbound, every nerve in me throbbing painfully. A single voice echoing along those decks yonder could blow us out of the water. Even as I stared at the grim spectacle, the slim figure of a man appeared at the rail of the bridge, and a voice hailed us in French.

"Ahoy there! What ship is that?"

There was a shuffling of feet above me; then McCann spoke in English:

"The American freighter Indian Chief, bound for Liverpool."

"Is there anyone aboard who speaks French?"

I heard them hustle Dubois forward to the rail, and caught a word or two of McCann's swift threat hissed into his ear; then the frightened Frenchman stammered out an answer.

"Oui, monsieur, Je parle Francais."

"Then talk up; what ship is that?"

I could hear McCann prompting, and Dubois echoing the words put in his mouth.

"The Indian Chief, Boston, McCann, master, from St. Johns to Liverpool, two days out."

"With what cargo?"

"Miscellaneous; mostly farm machinery."

A searchlight swept us fore and aft, but finally settled on the little group of men clustered together on the poop rail.

"You're north of your course."

There was an instant of hesitation; then Dubois' explanation:

"We ran before the storm last night, monsieur, having been struck by lightning."

"Ah, I see; that accounts for your stump of a foremast and the temporary wheel aft. What shape are your boats in?"

"Three of them left, monsieur."

"Send the captain, with the Frenchman, over with the ship's papers. Be lively about it."

"Oui, monsieur; what is the name of the warship?"

"The French cruiser Descartes, on patrol. Get your boat over."

What would McCann do? Was he ready for such an emergency as this? Had he taken the precaution to alter the ship's manifest, or even forged a new one? There was a moment of excited talk on the deck above me; then McCann descended the starboard ladder, and disappeared through the companion, evidently after the ship's papers. Liverpool's voice ordering the watch to lower number five boat, and stand by, sung out from the poop rail. McCann emerged from the companion, called up to Liverpool, waving his hand with a laugh full of confidence, and went forward. A moment later he was joined by Dubois, and the two men clambered over the rail and dropped into the lowered boat. His actions, his easy manner, startled me; those must be carefully forged papers in his pocket to enable him to proceed with such confidence. Slowly I lifted myself until I could peer over the side at the dark expanse of water between the vessels. The searchlight of the warship rested in a glare of white on the small boat bobbing up and down, revealing the men at the oars, and McCann and Dubois in the stern sheets. Neither glanced back, but I could see their faces clearly, and McCann was smiling as though at an excellent joke.

CHAPTER XX.

The Cruiser Leaves Us.

I was still clinging to the rail, and staring down at the light; I heard nothing, felt no premonition of alarm, when suddenly a hand gripped my throat, the great fingers stifling every effort to cry out. Before I could resist, or even brace myself, another hand was clapped over my mouth and I was fairly hurled back below the shelter of the rail, dragged across the black deck, and thrown through the opened door of the companion. This was accomplished so quickly, and with so little evidence of struggle, as to attract no notice from the Frenchman, from whose deck no doubt every eye was fastened upon the approaching boat. Half hurled, half dragged, I plunged into the dimly lit cabin, and it was not until I struck the lower deck that I even realized clearly what had occurred, or who were my assailants. I fell sprawling on one shoulder, but was as instantly on my feet, bruised, but otherwise uninjured, maddened by a rage beyond all control. White, emerging from the stateroom, through the port of which he had been viewing the scene alongside, startled by the sudden uproar, a revolver gripped in his hand, was the first face I saw.

"What the——" he exclaimed in bewilderment, but before he could say more my fist jammed into his jaw, and the fellow went over full length on the deck, the gun flying from his opening fingers. I had possession of it before he could stop me, and was backed against the door of a stateroom opposite, murder in my heart as I confronted the two who had flung me from the top of the steps. I recognized them now for the first time—Liverpool Red and Tom Dugan. But one thought seethed in my brain—to kill.

"Curse you both," I cried, covering them as they shrank back, "we'll end this thing right here."

Red gripped Rugan, holding the Irishman in front of him as a shield. My revolver covered them both, my fingers nervous on the trigger. Suddenly the door behind me yielded and I staggered back, unable to regain my balance until fairly within the stateroom. With a crash the door closed, instantly shutting out the surprised faces of the two men in the cabin; a key creaked in the lock, and Vera Carrington fronted me, her back against the wood.

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DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE

By MARY GRAHAM BONNER

SQUIRREL FEAST.

"Come to the feast," said Sharpy, the squirrel.

"I'll be delighted," said Chippy Chappy.

It was snowing in the park and the squirrels were hurrying and scampering for their warm homes in the trees.

"Are you going to have a good feast?" asked Chippy Chappy.

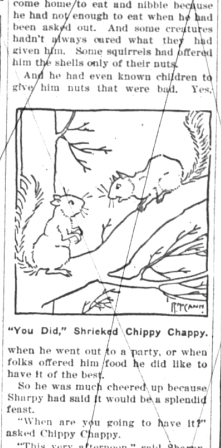
"A fine one," squealed Sharpy. "The spring will be here soon and we might as well enjoy our food. Soon we can hunt for more."

"Dear me," said Chippy Chappy, "now careless you are becoming." And to himself he thought it was fine that he was invited to a feast by Sharpy which Sharpy said would be a fine one, and he was glad too that Sharpy wasn't being too careful.

It was so much nicer to go to a feast where creatures weren't careful. Chippy Chappy had been to both kinds and he knew.

He knew of the many times he had come home to eat and nibble because he had not enough to eat when he had been asked out. And some creatures hadn't always cared what they had given him. Some squirrels had offered him the shells only of their nuts.

And he had even known children to give him nuts that were bad. Yes,



"You Did," Shrieked Chippy Chappy.

when he went out to a party, or when folks offered him food he did like to have it of the best.

So he was much cheered up because Sharpy had said it would be a splendid feast.

"When are you going to have it?" asked Chippy Chappy.

"This very afternoon," said Sharpy.

"We'll probably quarrel a little," said Chippy Chappy, hoping they wouldn't quarrel over the food.

"Oh that won't matter," said Sharpy, "a little fighting is good for our digestions."

"What are digestions?" asked Chippy Chappy, cocking his head on one side, and whisking his tail up high.

"Digestions," squealed Sharpy, "are our tummies when food is received by them happily. To have a good digestion means we can eat anything, to have a bad one means that we have aches and pains and feel very poorly, and that food is disagreeable to us."

"We certainly have good digestions," said Chippy Chappy.

"We most assuredly have," agreed Sharpy.

"And is fighting good for us, do you think?"

"Excellent," said Sharpy.

"Isn't afternoon here now," said Chippy Chappy. "It seems as if I had been talking to you all the morning."

"Not polite to talk like that," squealed Sharpy. "It should give you great pleasure to talk with me."

"It does, Sharpy dear," said Chippy Chappy, "but it gives me even more pleasure, if that could be possible, to eat with you."

Chippy Chappy said this with a sly little wink. But Sharpy did not notice it. He was feeling hungry himself.

"Come along, afternoon or not, we'll have the feast."

So they went to Sharp's hole, and of all the wonderful feasts Chippy Chappy saw, one that did his heart or his tummy or his digestion, he wasn't sure which, a great deal of good.

"My mouth waters!" exclaimed Chippy Chappy. "My! But there is a feast here. Where did you steal all these nuts from? They certainly aren't saved up ones. You'd never have many left over at this time of the year if they were only saved up ones."

"I did save them," said Sharpy. "I didn't steal! I didn't!"

"You did!" shrieked Chippy Chappy. "Now that you are beginning so angry about it, I am sure you have been stealing. And now you are not telling the truth."

"You say I steal, and you say I don't tell the truth. I'll punish you for that!"

And they began to fight. As a matter of fact Chippy Chappy had no right to scold Sharpy for stealing, as he was only too glad to eat some of his stolen food, and too, Chippy Chappy had just as bad a reputation for stealing as had Sharpy. All squirrels are famed for it.

But they fought and they fought until they were all tired out and until the nuts had been almost forgotten. But after awhile they stopped fighting and made up.

"I'm glad you've got the nuts anyway," said Chippy Chappy, "and I really don't care how you got them."

"Of course you don't," said Sharpy, as they both munched as fast as they could.

Old Games.

Many of the games played by the boys and girls of today are of very ancient origin.

Marbles, for instance, have been found among the ruins of Pompeii.

The more modern marbles, however, came from Holland, and were introduced into England about 1630. They were made of clay, stone and agate.

Handball goes back to the fall of Troy, and the little people of ancient Greece used to see who could hop the longest. From Greece, also, came skipping the rope.

"There'll Be Six of You Dead If You Break In This Door."

you cannot fight alone against the whole ship's crew. The best thing for you to do now is to listen to reason."

"What has become of the French cruiser?"

He laughed, and I could hear Liverpool join in rather noisily.

"Five miles to leeward, and going strong. She'll be out of sight in two hours. There's no hope for you there, my man."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SILK HAT LOSES POPULARITY

In London, Where Every Man Wore a "Topper" Until Recently, Caps Are Now the Rule.

Our Grandfathers wore "stovepipe hats;" and the hats of politicians were one time frequently called "plug hats." This male head-dress, even more extraordinary than the derby, books of etiquette sometimes say should not be called "silk hat," but a "high hat." In London but a few years ago no man ever went into the city with other than a top hat, or "topper," as they say over there.

It is said that the going out of general favor of the silk hat has been occasioned in a considerable degree by the popularity of raincoats in preference to umbrellas. If you observe any great crowd in England today you will find in it few hats of any kind; it is in the main a sea of caps. The American "dude" and the antebellum British "knut" always wore silk hats.

Gentlemen at the British race course and fine old clubmen of Pall Mall effect a white or gray top hat, of the sort which was so becoming an ornament to the late King Edward.—Exchange.

Air Raid Insurance.

Accident rates issued by London underwriters insuring against personal injury by air raids are quoted at surprisingly low rates and would seem to greatly belittle the loss occasioned by the air raids.

The wheel and wing policies, covering all personal air raid risks, including falling buildings, bombs, shrapnel, fire, explosion, etc., issued at the £1 rate, offer the following personal benefits: £1,000 in event of death, £1,000 in event of blindness or the loss of two limbs, or any other injury causing permanent total disablement; £500 in event of loss of one eye, hand or foot, or any other injury causing permanent partial disablement; £6 per week during total disablement up to 52 weeks; £1 10s. per week during partial disablement up to 52 weeks.

All medical expenses up to 15 per cent of the compensation otherwise payable.—Spectator.

Joker Dressed as Bear.

Representing himself as a bear which is said to have annoyed the residents of Reddon, Del., a young man of that village was shot at and badly beaten before his identity was discovered.

For several weeks residents of Reddon declared that they had seen a bear in sections of the village. Taking advantage of the fright in the little town, one young man dressed himself up to represent a bear and started out to startle the villagers. His practical joke took the wrong turn when a number of men with guns and clubs started to chase him. Before he could tell who he was he was badly pounded with clubs and came very near being shot.

Answering Specifications.

"The jury in my case were a lot of fools."

"That couldn't be helped. The law requires a man to be tried by his peers."

You can't grow very great yourself by basking always in the shade of a fine old family tree.

TO ALL WOMEN WHO ARE ILL

This Woman Recommends Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound—Her Personal Experience.

McLean, Neb.—"I want to recommend Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to all women who suffer from any functional disturbance, as it has done me more good than all the doctor's medicine. Since taking it I have a fine healthy baby girl and have gained in health and strength. My husband and I both praise your medicine to all suffering women."—Mrs. JOHN KOPPELMANN, R. No. 1, McLean, Nebraska.

This famous root and herb remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, has been restoring women of America to health for more than forty years and it will well pay any woman who suffers from displacements, inflammation, ulceration, irregularities, backache, headaches, nervousness or "the blues" to give this successful remedy a trial.

For special suggestions in regard to your ailment write Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass. The result of its long experience is at your service.

Perhaps if your head were as clear as a whistle, it would not ache—

Try Kondon's for your headache

(at no cost to you)

50,000,000 have used this 29-year-old remedy. For chronic catarrh, sore nose, coughs, colds, sneezing, nose-bleed, etc. Write us for complimentary can, or buy tube at druggist's. It will benefit you *Fever* times more than it costs, so we pay money back. For trial can free write to KONDON MFG. CO., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

KONDON'S CATARRHAL JELLY

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM

A toilet preparation of merit. Trial size bottle free. For Restoring Color and Beauty to Gray or Faded Hair. 50c. and $1.00 at Druggists.

DID YOU EVER EAT A DURIAN

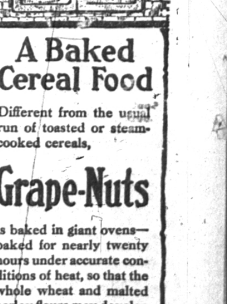
According to Traveler, Fondness for That Fruit Is Directly a Taste That Is Acquired.

My second day in Malaysia was almost spoiled by an attempt to eat a durian. Eating a durian, or, as in my case, essaying to do so, is an experience not soon lost to memory. Its achievement must be productive of a noticeable growth of ego. I often think how I should enjoy being able casually to boast, 'I have eaten durians in the East,' or 'This tastes as good as a durian.' The durian has a powerful personality. It is large and green, not unlike a breadfruit, and it is covered with unpleasant spikes. But these, I am told, are no deterrent to the man or beast who has acquired the durian habit—who, by complete suppression or mortification of the organs of smell, has succeeded in swallowing even a section of the fruit. It grows on tall trees, and natives will sit for days waiting for a ripening durian to fall. White children, vice immune, prefer it to all other fruit; tigers will approach close to Malay villages, risking their lives to lary their carnivorous diet with a mouthful of durian.—William Beebe, in Atlantic.

Bayonet.

"Think you can hit that dummy right now?" Drill—"I can make a stab at it."—The Jesters.

Cold shoulder is an unpalatable dish for a friend.



A Baked Cereal Food

Different from the usual run of toasted or steam-cooked cereals,

Grape-Nuts

is baked in giant ovens—baked for nearly twenty hours under accurate conditions of heat, so that the whole wheat and malted barley flours may develop their full, rich sweetness.

You don't need sugar on Grape-Nuts.

"There's a Reason"