

Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW

JANUARY, 1946

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The Fangs of Tsan-Lo

By JIM KJELGAARD

OF COURSE I do not know about the unknown. But I am sure that there is more to this world than any living man has even dreamed. Silly? Talking through my hat? Perhaps, but my first fear of Tsan-Lo came to me the day I read the letter about him. And yet it was just an ordinary letter, like hundreds I've received.

Dear Mr. Roberts:

As per our previous agreement, I am this day shipping Tsan-Lo from Wind city. He should arrive the 27th of May. I am depending on you to see that he receives proper care.

To be perfectly frank, I do not expect miracles from him. He is big, strong, and able, but obstinate, and possibly you will have to undo the harm wrought by my amateurish efforts. I have experimented with Tsan-Lo myself.

Please keep me informed of his progress.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ibellius Grut.

I stared across the desk. But sweat stood on my forehead and cold chills chased each other up and down my spin. I tried to shake the feeling off, and could not, and I read the letter again. There

was nothing even a little bit strange about it, unless you'd call Tsan-Lo a strange name for a Chesapeake retriever and wonder a little bit about anyone named Dr. Ibellius Grut. I tried to shrug it away.

"Get hold of yourself, Clint," I said. "First thing you know you'll be crazy as a drunken pigeon."

"Drunken pigeons don't talk to themselves," a voice said.

I turned around and saw Sally standing in the open door. She's Sally Evers, daughter of John Evers, and I wouldn't do a darned thing for her—except anything she asked me to. Yes, I'm in love with her. In fact to put it mildly, she's the sun, the moon, the stars, and the air I breath all rolled into one. But I'd never told her about it because, though you wouldn't call them exactly filthy rich, her folks have plenty of what it takes. And her mother made up Sally's mind that she's going to marry Harris H. Harris, who's social register, Harvard, and the Harris Company. Nobody knows why she wants to spend any of her time with an ordinary trainer of retrievers—but I'm awfully grateful for small favors as long as she's part of them.

"Smatter, Frank Buck?" she asked

What possible connection could there be between a prehistoric lizard and a Chesapeake dog?

me. "You look as though you'd seen a ghost."

"Only a vision, sweetheart," I told her. "Come on in."

That was spoken very lightly, but boy how it felt deep down inside! Sally's about five feet three, and beautiful from any angle. Her coppery hair frames a small face, and I think it's her eyes that get me most. They're big and brown, and half the time they're full of the devil. But the other half they're so serious that Sally could be a thousand years old. She

has the darndest ideas, especially about animals and animal training, and she spouts them out on the slightest provocation.

"What'd you have for breakfast?" she wanted to know.

"A little girl about your size. Too bad you weren't around. I could have eaten another one."

"Clint Roberts, the great humorist!" she said scathingly. "But you do look terrible, and no wonder. Look at this house! The only things in place are the



pictures of your dogs! I declare! Men would still be savages if women hadn't been around to civilize 'em!"

"Yes," I said drily, "the earth would probably be overrun with uncivilized men if there'd never been any women." But the little cold fingers were still plucking at my spine, and I didn't want her to notice it. I, a professional trainer of retrievers, was frightened because I had another one to train! "Why don't you come around once in a while? Buck's been lying on the ground with his head between his paws, moaning to himself since you left yesterday afternoon. And, if it's any satisfaction to you, he refused his dinner last night."

"Oh, poor Buck!"

"She's like that, loves to pretend that she's tougher than a baby-killer most of the time. But the minute anything suffers, or she thinks it's suffering, she melts all over the place. She scooted out the back door, threaded her way among dog crates, and stopped in front of Buck's run. He had been lying under his kennel on the ground. But the minute she came in sight he jumped out, started leaping in the air and yelling his fool head off. I stayed on the porch a minute to enjoy the sight.

I HAVE thirty-seven dogs. Five belong to me, and Buck's one of them. He's a big, black Labrador with a sleek, shiny coat, and muscled like a lion, and is the best retriever I ever saw. I'm grooming him for the National field trials, and will win them as soon as I can correct a few minor faults. He, too, adores Sally, and when I got to the run he was pushing his nose through the wire so she would scratch it. Sally looked at me.

"Clint Roberts!" she scolded. "Let

this poor dog out of that dinky little pen!"

It isn't a dinky little pen, it's twenty by twenty, but I let Buck out and made him sit. He obeyed, looking at Sally instead of me. It's she he loves best, and I guess he'd do anything in the world for her. Sally picked up a stick and threw it.

"Fetch!" she said.

Buck unleashed all the power in his mighty body, and flew after the stick as though he'd been shot from a gun. At the edge of the mud hole he paused, leaped a quarter of the way across it, struggled through the mucky slime, climbed out on the other side, and got the stick. He jumped right back into the mud, crossed it, and put the stick in Sally's hand. His coat wasn't black any more, but mud-colored.

"Fine thing," I said, "making my dog swim across the mud!"

She tickled Buck's ears. "Oh, Buck can take it. Why don't you fill that awful place in, anyway?"

"I've dumped two hundred tons of ashes and gravel into it."

The mud hole was on the place when I got it. It's a pit, I think an old quarry hole, and I don't know how deep it is because I've never been able to sound the bottom. It's fed by subterranean springs that carry a lot of goeey mud from somewhere. On top it's soupy stuff, but the mud get thicker the farther down you go. About all a man can do is push a fifteen-foot pole down into it — any deeper than that the mud's so thick you can't push.

We wandered down to the lake, and I watched Sally put Buck through his paces. He jumped in, and swimming so

smoothly that scarcely a ripple flowed behind him, brought back a stick she cast. Then she pointed a floating stick out to him and he got that. He seemed eager to obey her, and if only he'd work that way for me I'd as soon enter him against any competition anywhere. I looked at my watch.

"Well, I'm glad somebody can play. But I'm a working man. I have to pick up a new dog."

"Can we take Buck?"

"Nope."

"Gee, you're mean."

But it's one of my rules that a new dog must come in as easily as possible. They're usually nervous anyway, after a long train ride and new surroundings, and taking another dog when I pick them up at the station only makes them more so. But I knew Sally couldn't resist having a look at a new dog any more than she can stop breathing. We locked Buck back in his run, and left him moaning while we climbed into the pickup.

"What is the new dog?" Sally asked.

"A Chesapeake. His name's Tsan-Lo."

Sally settled back in the seat and away we went.

THE train was just pulling out when we got to the station. We walked around to the express platform, and sure enough there was my dog in his crate. I whistled. Whoever crated the dog either had a lot of money to waste or else wanted to be absolutely sure that Tsan-Lo didn't get out. He was in a tubular steel crate, reinforced at the corners with steel blocks and the door had a double padlock on it. Dimly through the slats I made out the dog, lying down, and there was a big white sign riveted to the crate. "For

Mr. Clinton Roberts. From Dr. Ibellius Grut."

And again, for some unknown reason, the hair at the nape of my neck bristled and cold chills ran up my spine. Even as he stood crated on the station platform, there was something about Tsan-Lo like nothing in any dog I'd ever seen. It wasn't what he did, for he did nothing except lie in the straw on the floor of his crate. But what came out of that crate—. I couldn't see it but I could feel it. It was as though this dog was directing at everything else some invisible aura, some mysterious waves. And it was at that moment, for the first time in my life, that I felt hate.

I do not mean that I hated. But I sensed that the air was charged with hate, viciousness, brutality, and concentrated fury in its most primitive and elemental form. It was emanating from the crate that housed Tsan-Lo. I shook my head, trying to shake such notions from it. Sober thought told me that the whole thing was silly, no dog was capable of the attributes with which I was crediting this one. But I could not shake it off, and unaccountably there rose before me a mental image of a *papier mache* creature I had seen in a museum. Tyrannosaurus, they had called it, a reconstruction of a monstrous prehistoric reptile with huge jaws and immense teeth. As I stood before it my imagination had given it life, and I clearly remembered experiencing the same sensations I felt now.

But it was still silly. What possible connection could there be between a prehistoric lizard and a Chesapeake dog? The one had become extinct long before man ever trod the earth, the other was a product of man. I had never seen the dog I could not handle, and I'd handle

this one. I took a step forward, and was halted by the pressure of Sally's hand on my arm.

"Clint, don't!"

I looked down at her. Her eyes were wide, and the little pulse in her temple throbbled furiously. I shivered. Sally is soft as a marshmallow when anything's hurt or needs her help. But I had never known her to shrink from a problem or lack some way of solving it. She's no coward, but her staring eyes and taut mouth revealed that now she was very much afraid.

"Don't accept that dog!" she whispered. "Send it right back!"

"Nonsense!" I forced a laugh.

"It— It's not a dog, it's a monster!" she breathed. "It hates me, and would like to kill me! Can't you feel it?"

Again the cold shivers ran up and down my spine and my lips were suddenly dry. So she felt it too, and perhaps more strongly than I since the dog's hate emanations seemed to be directed at her. But I still told myself that it was nonsense. Tsan-Lo might be a vicious dog, with a certain something about him that made his viciousness felt. He could be nothing else and I had handled vicious dogs before. Sometimes, if they're carefully trained and watched, they make the best hunters.

"What have you been eating?" I joked.

"Clint!" her fingers dug into my arms. "Do you know Ibellius Grut?"

"Why— He's a doctor."

"He's more than that, Clint! He's been in two insane asylums, and denounced by the Humane Society a dozen times for his cruel experiments on animals. He's been experimenting on Tsan-Lo. You'll be sorry if you take him!"

"But I can't refuse him. I make my

living training dogs. The least I can do is accept this one, and tell Dr. Grut whether or not he's any good. After all, he's paying me fifty dollars a month to find that out."

She shook her head, "You're going to take him?"

"I must, Sally."

"Put him in a good strong run."

"Never fear. He won't get away from me."

I walked over to the crate and looked down at Tsan-Lo. He was a big yellow brute with a massive, strong-jawed head and bigger than a Chesapeake ordinarily is. In fact, he was so big that he looked even a little malformed. His eyes were wide and yellow, and when he swung his head to look at me I had to look away. For a moment I was a little bit nauseated, and again I thought back to the *papier mache* tyrannosaurus. But aside from looking at me there was no response whatever from Tsan-Lo, no wag of the tail, no whine, none of the eager little manifestations with which crated dogs usually greet anyone who comes near them. I said:

"Hi, San!"

But still there was no response. The dog swung his great head to focus his baliskisk eyes on Sally, and for one split second I was almost tempted to take her advice and return him to Grut. If only I had—

But I didn't. I backed the pick-up to the crate, swung it on, and put the tail-board up.

SALLY was silent beside me as we drove home. It was not the silence she had affected on the way to the station, when she hadn't wanted to talk because talking would have spoiled the

symphony of a spring morning. Now she was moody, thoughtful, and I could tell by her eyes that she was still afraid. And I could still feel the weird aura Tsan-Lo cast. But the first cold impact of that had worn off, and I was more than ever convinced that here was only an unusual dog which, no doubt, would have to be approached and trained by unusual methods. I drove the pick-up into the yard and backed up to a run. Sally got out beside me, speculative, but said suddenly:

"Look at Buck!"

I looked. Buck was standing in front of his kennel, feet braced and head down. His ruff was bristled, his lip curled back over white fangs. The dogs nearest Tsan-Lo were walking stiff-leggedly about.

"Clint, you still have time to take that dog out of here," Sally said, forcefully.

"Uh!" I scoffed. "It's only a dog."

Just the same I opened the run, lifted the crate down, sat it inside the gate, took the two keys that were wired to the padlocks, unlocked the door, and opened the crate. Tsan-Lo walked out, and without exposing myself at all to him I withdrew the crate to close the run. Buck went crazy, leaping against the wire and snarling. He began to bark, and his eyes rolled whitely as foam dipped from his jaws. I called:

"Buck, sit!"

He continued to rage and claw at the wire, so overcome by fury—or fear?—that at first he did not hear me. A couple of the other dogs tuned in with him, and a little Golden retriever slunk fearfully into her kennel. I called, more imperatively:

"Buck, sit!"

He sat. But his head was still hunched between his shoulders and his lips drawn

back in a snarl. I turned to look at Tsan-Lo. He betrayed no interest whatever in his new surroundings, merely walked to the center of the run, sat down, and turned his opaque eyes on Sally. She shrank from them, and put both hands to her mouth.

"Clint, I can't stand that dog! He'll kill me if he gets the chance!"

"Don't worry. He won't get the chance!"

I was scarcely conscious that my own voice trembled as I spoke, and at that second I wished mightily that I had taken her advice and returned Tsan-Lo to Dr. Ibellius Grut. Sally had called him a monster, and she had not miscalled him. She walked down to Buck's run, and the big Labrador sidled over to be near her. But he did not beg for her caresses or leap against the wire. He merely sat, as though he was protecting her, and continued to watch Tsan-Lo.

"I must be going," Sally said.

"Okeh. Come back day after tomorrow and I'll show you a dog that's learned something."

"Ugh! I hope so. Be careful when you go into the run with that thing."

"Don't worry."

I WAS glad when she'd gone. Not because I didn't want her around—my wildest and fondest dream was that some day I'd have her around all the time—but because there did seem to be something that menaced her in that big Chesapeake. After she'd gone, Tsan-Lo stretched out with his head on his paws. But he didn't sleep. His colorless eyes remained wide open. And he did not even lie, or move, like another dog. There was something about him very cold, and very far removed from anything I had ever

seen or sensed. He seemed an atavistic thing, and again I thought of the museum's dinosaur.

But it was still only another dog, I assured myself stubbornly as I went into the house, and if I couldn't handle him I'd have no business calling myself a dog trainer. Of course I couldn't guarantee to make a hunter out of him, some dogs are no more capable of discharging the duties for which they've been created than are some men. But if I failed I could always send him back to Ibellius Grut. I mixed the daily feed, and the first thing I noticed when I pushed the feed cart outside was Buck. He hadn't moved from the edge of his run, was still sitting with his eyes glued on Tsan-Lo. I made a mental note never to let them get together, one or the other would be killed if I did. But when I gave Tsan-Lo his allotted feed, again I turned away from his fathomless eyes. There was something about his stare that I just couldn't stand.

That night Sally's roadster stopped in front of the house. She'd changed her slacks and denim shirt for a white blouse and a blue skirt, and my heart came into my throat. She looked—. Imagine how an angel looks and you'll have it.

"How's it going?" she asked.

"Good. It always goes good."

"That—. That Tsan-Lo too?"

"Oh him," I laughed, and lied. "I went in his run this afternoon and pulled his ears. The only thing the matter with him is laziness."

She looked sharply at me. "Well, I could be wrong. Just the same here's a book I want you to read."

I tucked the book under my arm, it would be a desecration to look at anything else when Sally's around.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"Oh, Harris is coming in and I must pick him up at the station."

"Well—that's fine."

"I'll be seeing you."

She drove off, and I stood for a moment wishing I'd inherited a million or so from my father instead of having been brought up in an orphanage. Then maybe Sally Evers would have been wearing my ring instead of Harris H. Harris's. But some things you just can't change, and this was one of them. I looked idly at the book she'd given me.

It was *The Perfect World*, by Dr. Ibellius Grut, and because I hadn't anything else to do I sat down to read it.

IT WAS a strange-looking book—old, tattered, and musty. It was dedicated to "The Quest for Perfection," was privately printed by Dr. Grut, and began:

"Since time began the world in which we live has never been either perfectly balanced or perfectly adjusted. The history of that world is the history of seeking such balance and adjustment. It has not been achieved in man and man's possessions. They are but a passing phase of infinitely greater plan, the ultimate aim of which is absolute perfection.

There followed a discussion of the earth's creation, and the little, mouse-like creature which was the first mammal to come out of the steaming seas to run about on the land. There were a whole lot of formulas and equations that I had never seen before, and which I judged to be original with Dr. Grut. Then:

"There can be no doubt that a fumbling and far from perfect intelligence has thus far dictated everything which has occurred. It is a striving, restless brain that does not know how to proceed

but must work on the trial and error method. It eradicates its own mistakes, and thus we see the passing of the giant reptiles. But sometimes it approaches that which it desires, and for an example of this we have only to consider the dog.

"Ample evidence points to the fact that the dog, as we know it today, is the descendent of some giant creatures which, except for its size, was very much like our present-day house pets and hunting companions. The size of these ancient dogs surpasses human imagination. How long they roved the earth no man knows. But the restless brain which created them perceived at last that, as they were, they did not fit into the general scheme and eradicated them—or rather—let them eradicate themselves.

"That was accomplished by a simple, natural process. In the first place, the appetites of things so huge must have been enormous. There was just not enough food for them. Then, too, there was nothing save hunger to challenge them or keep them alert, and as a consequence their brains deteriorated to the point where they could no longer adapt themselves to changing conditions. Such a dog, accustomed to living within a certain area, would not possess even the intelligence to forage into another district when its food supply ran out. Thus it died of starvation, and thus the other great dogs died.

"Though this applied generally, it did not apply completely. Some dogs, doubtless the smaller and more adaptable, survived. They, and their descendants, had to compete for the available food with predators more nearly their own size. Thus their brains were sharpened and their adaptability developed. Gradually the dog as we know it today has evolved.

True, man has taken that dog and by selective breeding has produced half a hundred forms and sizes which never would have been present had their development been unimpeded and uninterrupted. But there is within every dog an immutable something which man can never change! The smallest and most effete poodle bears within itself the same germ that its giant ancestor bore.

"Do not think that the great dogs were merely a passing phase, or that the creatures which once inhabited the earth are forever gone! The intelligence that created them can at any time bring them back. It would merely be, as I have proven to my own satisfaction, a matter of applying certain hormones and hormone products. Tsan-Lo, the Chinese scientist, originated such applications.

"We can go backward as far as we care to go. Now, can we discover the secret of going forward? Can we?"

THE book went on to discuss other animals and to say that this vast intelligence, this thing that ruled the earth and perhaps the universe, was capable of adapting itself to various forms and some day might even appear as a human being. You couldn't help getting the impression, in the closing paragraphs, that that man had already been born in the person of one Ibellius Grut.

Whew! No wonder they'd had him in two insane asylums! The miracle was that they'd ever let him out of either. But he was in Wind City and I was here, and if he suddenly took it in his head to alter the universe he'd probably start on subjects within reach. Besides it was not up to me to question a man's sanity or his morals, but to train his dog.

The next morning I went out to work Tsan-Lo. Nothing, as far as I could see, had changed. Tsan-Lo, his steady yellow eyes unblinking, lay on the ground. Buck watched him, maintaining a steady vigil where the big Chesapeake was at no time out of his sight. Except that they were a little quieter than usual, the other dogs were normal. With the training collar in my hand, I stood for a moment before the door of Tsan-Lo's run.

And then I left it, ran away with the collar in my hand to some place where I could no longer see that yellow sphinx. I told myself that it was too early to begin, the dog should have time to adjust itself to its new home. But I knew the real reason. I was afraid, very much afraid. There was something about that immovable hellion to inspire fear.

It was early evening before I screwed my courage up to the point where I could return. And, in addition to the training collar, I carried a baseball bat. I knew that I had to go in that cage, or I would never again dare call myself a dog trainer. But I was going to be prepared which I did. I opened the door and stepped in.

Without seeming to move at all Tsan-Lo hurled himself up and out in a springing, savage leap straight at my throat. But luck was on my side. The swung bat collided suddenly with the side of his head and he dropped to lie twitching on the ground. I left him there and walked away.

I WAS awakened the next morning by an eerie sense of something unreal and terrible. I fought to adjust myself, and rose on the bed to peer out. I could see nothing except a yellow mass of something plastered against the window, and I fell back on the bed. Strange,

at the same time, I had a curious sensation of being both awake and in full possession of my senses, and in the grip of some awful nightmare. I was vaguely aware of a noise outside, and finally identified it positively as Buck's raging voice. There was a heavy, nauseous scent in my nostrils, but finally I shook myself awake and leaped out of bed. Just at that moment the window shattered and the terrible, complete reality of what was outside burst upon me with all the sharpness of a stinging whip lash.

I tried to run, to escape from the bedroom into the kitchen and get my hands on the revolver I kept there. But the great jaws that were thrust through the open window opened and closed on my pajamas. I was dragged back through the window and dropped to the grass beneath it. I lay motionless there, unable to cry out, or move, or do anything except stare.

Tsan-Lo stood over me, and even my most horrible nightmares had never painted a picture so terrible. As he squatted there, the top of his head touched the top of the second-story window. His yellow, expressionless eyes were big as saucers. He panted slightly, and the fangs over which his lips were curled were a full six inches long. His paws were the size of elephant's feet, and still all I could do was lie and stare. It had happened, as Ibellius Grut's book had said it could! Something—! Somehow—!

My shocked brain began to function, and for some reason I remembered an excerpt from Grut's letter. "I have experimented on Tsan-Lo myself." He had! Indeed he had! And the tap on the head I had given Tsan-Lo last night had set in active motion all the hellish things

with which Grut had been working. Tsan-Lo, with the brain of a killer, was bigger than the biggest Percheron stallion! Desperately I gauged my chances of doing anything at all. And then the dog moved.

He reached down to rip my pajama coat from me, and a scrape of his immense paw carried away the trousers. I lay stark naked, and he dipped his head to gather me in his jaws. I felt his hot tongue on my belly, the roof of his mouth gritted on my back. I was to Tsan-Lo what a rabbit is to an ordinary Springer or Labrador. Had he so desired he might have bitten me in half and swallowed me in six gulps.

But he didn't. He hardly more than pinched, and it was not difficult to understand the reason for that. He was a retriever, undoubtedly one which had had some training, and they are taught to be tendermouthed. Even though this one had reverted four hundred thousand years, he still was unable to forget the training that had been drummed into his brain.

With my head, shoulders, and arms dangling from one side of his jaws, and my thighs and legs from the other, Tsan-Lo began to trot away. I was half numb with terror, but still noticed hazily what went on about me. There was Buck, leaping against his run and trying to tear it down as he strove to close with this monstrous thing. A half dozen of the other dogs, the braver ones, were likewise snarling and barking. But most of them cowered in their kennels. I saw Tsan-Lo's shattered run.

Paying not the least attention to the other dogs, Tsan-Lo threaded his way among the kennels and started for the lake. Still only half-conscious, but think-

ing with the detached clarity that a numbed man sometimes will achieve, I tried to fathom his design. Tsan-Lo entered the lake, waded out far beyond the depth where an ordinary dog would have been swimming, and struck across the deep water. It was then that I knew his intent. There was a woods on the other side of the lake. Tsan-Lo was a wild thing, and like all such wanted to eat his captured prey in solitude. We were three-quarters of the way across the lake when he suddenly opened his jaws to drop me. I heard a high-pitched, excited voice:

"Buck, fetch!"

I SWAM groggily, trying to keep my head above water, and turned to gaze at the shore. My blood froze in my veins. Standing on the shore, trim and slender and unafraid was Sally. Tsan-Lo swam toward her with his head high, churning the water and leaving a curling wake behind. I screamed:

"Sally, run! For God's sake, run!"

Buck's silky black coat shone like a polished mirror as he sprang into the lake. I saw Tsan-Lo gain the bank, bear down on Sally. I tried, with all the strength I had left, to swim toward them, to reach her side before that horror did. But even as I swam I knew that it was hopeless. And something seemed to have hold of me now, something that gripped my limbs and dragged me back into the water. The bright morning faded into night.

. . . When I awakened I was lying on the lake shore, with my head pillowed on Sally's lap. I looked up into her eyes, and saw tears there.

"Clint! Darling!" she moaned.

I moved then. I think that word from

Sally would have brought me back from the dead.

"I—. What happened?"

"Clint!" she kissed me then. "You're alive!"

"What'd you call me?"

"Darling," her eyes were shining.

"What about Harris H. Harris?"

"He told me last night that he's going to marry Lucy Stanner, of the banking Stanners. But I like dogs — and dog trainers.

"Tsan-Lo?"

"He fell in the mudhole, Clint. I ran down this morning when I heard Buck raising the fuss. I saw that Tsan-Lo had broken out of his pen, and that you'd broken your bedroom window when, in the grip of a nightmare, you left your bed. I sent Buck to bring you out of the lake. Tsan-Lo attacked me. But I was on the other side of the mudhole, and he tried to cross it. But he went down."

"He—. He was big as a horse," I murmured.

"Clint, darling, you're still dreaming. I always knew you needed a woman to take care of you."

"I—. I need some clothes," I said.

Sally smiled. "The care's already started, Clint. I got some trousers from

the house and put them on you."

That's about all, except that when I wrote to tell Dr. Ibellius Grut of Tsan-Lo's death I received word that Grut had been found dead in his office. That was three years ago, and Sally's Mrs. Roberts now. We live here, and train retrievers, and we're doing all right too. Little Sally—she's the image of her mother and I hardly know which one to love the most.

Of course there is one other item worth mentioning, and you have to remember that there was never yet a situation with which Sally was unable to cope. For instance, if she could possibly arrange it, her husband would look back on some things as just a terrible fantasy, and never as reality. After all, I have to work with dogs. But I finally had the mudhole drained. They took a skeleton out of there, a skeleton of a huge dog that scientists said was at least a quarter of a million years old. It made quite a stir in the papers. Then, too, I'd always been of the opinion that any ordinary dog could easily have crossed that mudhole. But if something weighing three thousand pounds ever fell into it—. I didn't say anything.

There are times when it's just as well not to.

