

# A True Story in Pictures Every Week

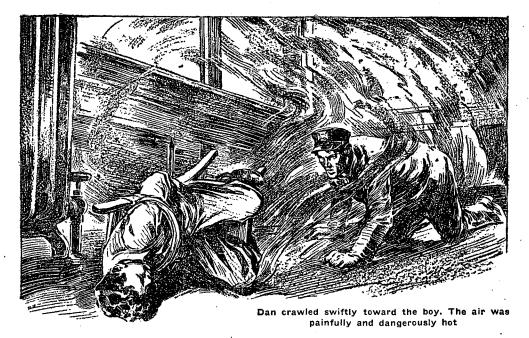
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# Man of the Flame



Just another kid who wanted to be a fireman; just another kid to get in the way. But when the test came, he proved that he could eat smoke with the best of them; and it was the best of them that brought him out

#### By MAURICE BEAM

Author of "Don't Look Now", "The Wind Won't Tell", etc.

HE pall of smoke which overhung the city had become a pall of fear, for people knew there was a firebug loose. The newspapers hinted it. Later, an overzealous newscaster blurted it into the ether from a local station. The result was something very near mass hysteria.

The talkative radio announcer seemed

to take pleasure in pointing out that there had been three mystery fires in a row, all in the same district: Acme Body Works, Intercity Venetian Blind factory, and the lying-in hospital on Quincy Street.

At the hospital a score of mothers and expectant mothers, nurses and doctors had narrowly escaped being roasted alive. At Intercity a woman worker was burned severely, would die; a fireman was crushed beneath a falling wall. Money losses were more than half a million.

It was pretty definitely established, though police and fire officials had dodged inquiries, that an intensive manhunt for a firebug was under way. A pyromaniac. The radio speaker rolled the word and made of it a bogey. Protests came in, but it was too late.

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