

Handmade Rainbows

By Mrs. HARRY PUGH SMITH
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INSTALLMENT TWELVE—The Story So Far

This is the story of an American family in depression years. Laura Maguire, wife of Mike Maguire, happy-go-lucky editor and mayor of Covington, is mother of four children:

Tom, whose real estate job in the big city near Covington is shot and who separates from his wife, Mary Etta, secretary to a big shot, when she refuses to give up her job to return to Covington with him.

Alec, who, unable to get a job, runs

CHAPTER XVII

Alec Maguire gravely balanced himself on one foot like a stork and squinted along the bottle of gin as if it were a shotgun.

"Ready, fire!" he said with vast solemnity and killed the bottle dead. Myra laughed herself into hiccoughs. "You're so comical," she said.

Alec surveyed her with bloodshot eyes that would not quite focus. "That's right. I am. Comical as hell. When I'm liquored up. Guess I'd better stay that way."

They were seated in one of the alcoves which lined the large dining room at the Porterville Swimming Pool. They had been sitting there since four that afternoon. According to the original plan they had intended to start back home when they had their swim. Only Myra had dared them to go somewhere else where they could dine and dance.

To do Alec justice he had meant to go home for dinner. But he felt unusually low that day. The only relief was to get so cockeyed he could laugh and laugh.

Natalie, who so far had been more sappy than convivial, suddenly giggled. The mechanical orchestra at the other end of the big pavilion was playing an old record, "Shuffle Off to Buffalo."

"Why don't you two stop fooling and pull a real one?" she suggested. The others stared at her. "I mean elope. Get married. I mean middle-aisle it. Or what have you?"

Alec stared. Marry Myra Boone! For a moment he was jolted back to himself and saw the woman beside him with painful distinctness—the coarse blowsy face, the metallic yellow hair which was drab at the roots. Everything within him revolted. Marry a woman like that! Take her home to Laura as his wife? He'd rather die.

"I said you weren't game," murmured Myra.

Alec drained his glass. "I'll call your bluff, Myra. Let's go."

Her nostrils dilated. "No kidding?"

The drive back to Covington did nothing to clear Alec's confused brain. Myra put the gas throttle down to the floor board and the speedometer touched eighty more than once.

They had just entered the suburbs of Covington, still at a maniacal speed. Each of them at the same moment saw the big fire engine careening toward them down the middle of the street. Myra was a true neurotic. She covered her face with her hands and shrieked. It was Alec who reached over and gave the steering wheel a tremendous jerk. It threw them into the opposite curb to the detriment of fenders and running board. But at least they did not meet the fire engine head on.

"And was that a near thing?" laughed Alec.

The others, still weak from shock, huddled in their seats and said nothing.

"Where's the fire?" Alec asked of a man running down the street.

"Over on Kirby Street."

Kirby Street! Mike had always said those ramshackle buildings down that way were nothing but fire traps. He had begged the City Council for years to condemn them before they went up like waste paper in a bonfire, taking their dreadful toll of innocent lives. Alec's brow was wet with sweat.

"Sit down and let's get going," muttered Myra irritably. "We've a little private matter to attend to." She meshed gears, and the big car shivered away from the curb and began laboriously to pick up speed.

Alec had, however, already snatched open the door and leaped out. By the time she had brought the big machine to a halt which burned the tires, Alec had picked himself up and disappeared toward that ominous coppery glow across the tracks.

He knew before he was within two blocks that his hunch had been right. The conflagration undoubtedly centered in that section of Kirby Street where Pete Knight had a dingy flat. Alec began to run faster. Covington had a naive idea of adequate police protection. Usually there was little need for anything elaborate in that line. But in emergencies things were likely to get beyond the venerable chief and his two men. They were doing all they could to hold the crowd back from the danger zone. But that amounted to little. Alec, already feeling the heat of the blaze on his face, slipped under the ropes.

The whole row of dilapidated frame buildings was a strut of licking, crackling flames. Alec's heart turned over. Quite suddenly he saw Lou. She was standing in a little knot of weeping women and children. All of them hugged small possessions which they had rescued

from the fire. Lou clasped the straggly red geranium in its forlorn tin can to her breast. Like the rest of the women she stared as if fascinated into the roaring red flames. Tears ran slowly down her cheeks. Lou seemed dazed by the completeness of the disaster.

"Lou," said Alec huskily.

She turned slowly and stared at him. Her eyes were a little blank and they returned at once to their fascinated study of the crackling, leaping flames which were feeding greedily from roof to ground on flimsy buildings. Alec looked around for her father. He thought it likely the old stow was dead to the world somewhere in a gutter. Pete had failed Lou on every other occasion. It was too much to expect him not to now. But Alec discovered Pete Knight almost at once just out of range of the flying sparks. A tragic yet ludicrous figure, as usual. Reeling a little as his bleary eyes stared into the inferno before him. Once he attempted in a clumsy way to aid with the fire hose but he succeeded only in drenching himself. People laughed hysterically. Even at that grim moment shambling Pete Knight furnished the comic relief.

"I don't know what we're going to do," whispered Lou suddenly. "Everything's gone except what we've got on our backs."

"Gee, Lou, I'm sorry—" he began, but paused abruptly.

A tremendous shout went up from the crowd swelled by the wails of



Lou seemed dazed by the completeness of the disaster.

women and the frightened whimpers of small children. Alec followed strained pointed fingers with his eyes. A little boy stared from the window of the flat to the left of the staircase. A small, white-faced boy with a crutch and eyes mad with terror.

"It's Joey! Bess Wilkins' Joey!" shrieked a woman.

Alec knew about Bess Wilkins. She was night operator in the telephone office down town, a widow with one crippled child whom she had to leave alone while on duty.

"Oh, God, everybody forgot Joey!" sobbed Lou.

"They're spreading a net," yelled someone.

"Jump, Sonny, we'll catch you!" The child, peering from the upper window, stared down at the web spread to receive his thin frail body. Then the little cripple slid slowly to his knees and vanished out of sight behind the window frame.

"He's fainting!"

"Oh, God!" whispered Lou.

"Stop that damned fool!" shouted a policeman.

Alec whirled. A shambling figure was on the staircase weaving in his tracks, but fighting his way up against the ferocious heat and blinding burning smoke.

"Father!" wailed Lou Knight.

Alec caught her in his arms. She fought him furiously, but he held her against his heart.

Pete Knight had reached the top landing of the stairs. Flames licked out at him from the upper corridor. Then suddenly he was inside the burning building.

A great sigh swept over the crowd.

Lou hid her eyes against Alec's breast. He held her tightly in an agony of pity. There was a gasp, a tremendous cheer. People surged forward. Pete Knight stood at the window of the flat. He had Joey in his arms. A limp, unconscious Joey! Awkwardly but gently Pete Knight, still swaying on his feet, tossed the child out. The web caught the thin little body. Again a sigh rose from tightened throats.

"Jump, man! Save yourself!" "Father!" screamed Lou.

Ritchie Graham, also a newspaperman, is interested.

Banker Mays threatens to break Maguire for criticizing him. Mike and Ritchie laugh at him. Kathleen is critical of them. Peeved, she goes to a swimming party with "Hot Shot" Mays, the banker's son. Ritchie saves her from drowning when she is seized with cramps. He tells her he loves her. She hates him, she says.

But does she?

Pete Knight gathered his big uncertain body together. But it tricked him as it so often had before. He lurched, gasped, fell back. And with a terrible sucking roar the floor beneath him collapsed as the roof gave way.

Street boys would never laugh at Pete Knight again. He was gone forever from the sight of men.

CHAPTER XVIII

The girl in Alec's arms had not fainted, although her slight trembling body felt lifeless, as if a cord had snapped. Even the small hands no longer clutched him. He stared about wildly. What on earth was he going to do with her? The forlorn human huddle of which she had been a part hovered near for a moment and then, after a glance at Lou's ghastly still face slowly drifted away, words sticking in locked throats. Words were so inadequate before the dumb tragedy of Lou's eyes. These people were her neighbors, her closest acquaintances. Yet they too were bereft, helpless.

Adrift, without a roof or a bed on which to stretch themselves. They had nothing to share with her except their inarticulate pity.

The fire having glutted itself was dying of its own passion. There was no longer anything to see but gaunt blackened ruins above red coals. Curious spectators began to drift away. It became possible for the police to erect ropes and have them respected. Gently Alec took Lou by the arm and moved down the street. Her face was stark. But she walked steadily along beside Alec.

"I guess to everybody else," she said in a low strained voice, "he was just a drunken bum. But he never looked like that to me. And he never all I had."

Alec's eyes stung. "At least he died magnificently, Lou."

Her chin lifted a little. "He wasn't ever really bad. My mother was killed. In an automobile accident. He was driving. And he adored her. He never got over it. Every time he sobered up he heard her screaming."

Alec shivered. "He'll not suffer any more, Lou."

She drew a long quivering breath. "Where are we going?" she asked suddenly.

"I'm taking you to Mother for the night," he said gruffly.

It had come like a flare from a shell over no-man's land, that inspiration.

"Maybe she won't want me," said Lou. She flushed. "I'm just a sug-gin, you know."

Alec winced again. Laura was a grand sport, but even she might wonder at her son appearing on the threshold with a girl he was not even supposed to know.

"This is Lou Knight, Mother. She lived on Kirby Street and got burned out tonight. And her father—"

"Yes, I know," said Laura quickly. "Mike just telephoned me."

She had been sitting in the living room alone ever since Mike had rushed off to be of service if possible or at least in the middle of things. Her eyes traveled slowly from the girl's drooping figure, the run-down heels and nervous twisting hands, to Alec's haggard face.

"You see, Mother," said Alec. "I've been taking Lou places. But she hasn't anywhere to go now. So I brought her home."

Laura's heart beat thickly against her side. She could not move her tongue for a moment. Alec and this cheap little girl! Alec had been going around with drunken Pete Knight's daughter. Laura wondered if all mothers felt frantic at times.

"I like her a lot, Mother," said her son in a queer roving voice.

Lou's hand jerked violently in his and her little wistful face flooded with burning color. Alec gave her a glance that cut the heart out from under Laura.

"It's all right," she said. But it wasn't. It was the bitterest dose she had ever swallowed.

Shirley and Jaid went to the fire in Connie Mays' car, accompanied of course by that piece of excess baggage, Lance Ferguson. Connie was a glutton for excitement. She never missed anything of that nature if she got wind of it. She was a thin, vivacious girl whose nerves crackled from overstimulation. The destroying flames aroused in her only a fierce exultation. That hundreds of distressed people were being burned out of their homes did not impress her. She clung to Jaid's arm and laughed hysterically as the block of ramshackle buildings, gutted by the blaze, collapsed upon itself.

"What a show!" she cried.

Shirley shivered. In that moment she hated Connie Mays. With a wild savage hatred that frightened her.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

by DREW PEARSON & ROBERT ALLEN

CHANGES IN PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON.—Recent months of war in Europe have made some significant changes in the habits and the outlook of the President. He is more serious, more worried. Also he is more circumscribed. The latter is important, because it means that he sees fewer people, loses some of his old contacts.

During his first eight years in office, probably no President in history was in closer touch with the country as a whole than Franklin Roosevelt. Not only did he see a great number of congressmen, labor leaders, business men and politicians during his daily routine, but he traveled more than any other President. Several times a year he took turns round the country, kept his ear to the ground, met all sorts of people.

Ever since the international emergency, he has stuck close to Washington. Not once has he got out into the Middle West, even during the 1940 campaign. Seldom has he gone farther away than New York or down the Potomac. Thus he has missed the relaxation, the rest, and the obvious joy he used to get from his roving junkies. Also he has missed his old personal contacts.

Note.—The President boasts that he rests on a railroad trip, and this is really true. He seems to sleep better on a Pullman, and on occasion orders have been given to the train engineer to stretch out a run between towns in order to give the President extra sleep.

More Gold Brail.

Roosevelt's contacts thus are limited by remaining in Washington, and in Washington also, he is more circumscribed than ever. He does not see nearly as many members of congress and men from many walks of life as formerly. This is because he is concentrating so much time on national defense and foreign affairs.

All important decisions in the state department come across his desk. The freezing of Axis funds, the closing of German-Italian consulates, the speeches of Secretary Knox, have to get the President's O. K. Important decisions regarding the army and navy come to him, and a constant stream of questions regarding OPM and aid to Britain confronts him daily.

So the President sees far less of the men who helped to build up the New Deal, far more of army-navy officials, One Dollar Men and diplomats. Much of this is unavoidable, though part of it could be eliminated by more diversification of control.

However, this change in the President's mode of operation is not as important as the change which gradually has crept over his general outlook. On the surface, and in press conference, he is the same old wise-cracking, fun-loving Roosevelt. But underneath he is not.

No longer does he have the same zest for what he is doing. In the old days when he was building PWA bridges and WPA schoolhouses, writing labor laws, crusading for social security, fighting the big utilities, he loved every minute of it. He was building up, crusading for human needs and human rights. And his enthusiasm was boundless.

No War Enthusiasm.

Now, however, he knows that every step he takes in foreign policy, every dollar he spends for the navy, every man he inducts into the army, may be a step toward tearing down rather than building up. He believes the steps he is taking are absolutely necessary. But he has no enthusiasm for them. In other words, he has no enthusiasm for war.

Most of the men around Roosevelt believe that war is inevitable, and it may be that he does, too, though he has not admitted that publicly. But judging by his hanging back in opposition to his more vigorous military-foreign policy advisers, the President hates and dreads the idea of this nation going into war.

He hates the reactions and after-effects of war, and he hates the idea of having history record him as a War President.

At the same time he believes that this country will have to move fast, and if it does not move now it may be too late. For the best definition of an isolationist, Roosevelt firmly believes, is one who by procrastination wants to see his women and children in the thick of the fighting here at home.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Ben Welles, son of Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, is working as a newsman in Panama. Nelson Rockefeller, government worker, gets up at five in the morning, shuns parties, goes to bed at ten.

The Rockefeller office has been flooded with requests from movie stars who want to tour Latin America.

When senators fail to pay their bills at the senate stationery room, the disbursing office, instead of dunning them, merely docks the amount from their pay checks.

"America," latest popular booklet by David Cushman Coyle, has been officially endorsed by the American Legion, General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Council for Democracy, and the selective service board.

Spotlight

by GRANTLAND RICE

ONE of the leading features of the Yankee comeback, for those who know his sprightly or spritely nature, is the return journey of one Vernon Lefty Gomez, sometimes known as the Great Goof.

Vernon Lefty came to the Yankees from San Francisco 11 years ago at the tender age of 20. For the greater part of 10 years the thin left-hander played one of the main roles in the big Yankee act. For just one matter of detail, he contributed six world series victories without taking a rap.

But when spring came to Florida this year and the Yankee camp began warming up, there was more than passing doubt that Lefty would be hanging around much longer. In the losing campaign of 1940 the depressed left-hander had turned in only three winning games against three defeats.

Most of his mates, including Joe McCarthy, felt about this situation since Gomez is not only extremely popular all around, but also one of the gayer notes in a serious Yankee community. The one fellow who refused to back away from a rough fate, who refused also to surrender his mirth, was Lefty himself.

Turning Back

"I came here in shape," Lefty said the first day he landed in camp. "I'm going to get in still better shape and I'm going to stick. After all I'm only 30 years old. I won't be 31 until November. If Lefty Grove can keep on winning at 41, why should I be all through when I'm 10 years younger than he is?"

All present cheered Lefty on and backed up his sentiments.

"I had a bad arm and a bad side last season, but I'm O. K. now. I'd like to lay one bet, anyway. I'll bet nobody on this club works harder."

At this spot the Great Goof is still more than holding his own. Now and then he hears the "call of the wild," but not too often. He still has his share of stuff packed away in his portside portfolio and hopes to win his seventh world series start this coming fall.

Lefty the Sage

The Gomez sense of humor rarely departs, even under dark clouds. I asked him what happened when he seemed to be holding up a game in a debate with the umpire.

"It was this way," Gomez said. "The bases were full and there was



LEFTY GOMEZ

nobody out. Also, there was a tough hitter at bat. So I just held the ball."

"Go ahead and pitch," the umpire said.

"That would be a foolish thing to do," I answered.

"As long as I hold this ball they can't hurt me. But who knows what will happen if I let it go."

"What happened when you finally threw the ball," I asked.

"I was right in the first place," Lefty said.

Gomez should stick around several more years, since he knows how to pitch.

Form lasts a long time. Here's an example. Back around 1898 Findlay Douglas won the amateur golf championship of the United States. Forty-three years later—this last winter—he helped Byron Nelson get a draw in one of the main Florida shows.

The veteran Mr. Douglas still shows, with much pride, a letter received from Nelson to this effect: "A good swing never gives out. The years can't touch it."

Plenty of Heart

The willowy Goof, who is far from being goofy, always had his full share of heart. You need the Big Tick when you start out to win six world series games without a defeat.

When the Yankees were at their old peak a few years back—when they were mopping up by 12 or 15 games each season—Bucky Harris of the Senators paid Lefty this tribute: "I'd rate the Yankees as the greatest ball club of all time—especially when Gomez is pitching."

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

WE THINK TOO LOCALLY. NOT ENOUGH NATIONALLY. THERE IS in America too much local and not enough national political thinking. We fail to realize that the foundation on which the Republic is built is national in scope, that the national government can, and does, dominate our entire system.

National legislation can take from the states, and through them, from the counties and municipalities, many of the rights and privileges we have felt belonged to us locally.

In our two-party system, those of each party are interested in controlling the state, county and municipal patronage and the election machinery of these political subdivisions.

We pick candidates for representatives and senators on the basis of local service to the party, rather than on their ability as statesmen. We continue them in office so long as they produce national funds for local use, or support such minority legislation in which we have a self-interest.

The result of it all is a wild orgy of spending and government by and for minorities. If we do not learn to think nationally along political lines, we will some day awaken to the fact that Washington controls us locally.

A MIGHTY FACTOR IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

THERE IS no institution or business enterprise that does so much for the community in which it operates as the newspaper. Directly and indirectly, it promotes the interests of the community. It produces acquaintance, friendship and good will between people of the town and the surrounding farm homes. It works week by week, year after year, for the interests of all. It keeps each individual informed of the joys and sorrows, the comings and goings, the activities of his neighbors. That is a service which promotes the welfare of the community as a whole. It makes of the community, the people of the town and surrounding farms, a homogenous whole.

PARITY PRICES FOR THE FARMER

IN 1941 THE GOVERNMENT is to see that the farmer gets the 1904 to 1914 parity price for what he raises. That means, they tell me, that what he may raise this year is to pay proportionately for as much and as many things bought per year during the years from 1904 to 1914.

Just how they figure it out, I do not know, and it is a safe bet that the average farmer will take the government's word as to the answer. It is estimated that it will take close to half a billion of government dollars to make the difference between what the public will pay for the 1941 crop and what the farmer is to receive.

It certainly will take mathematical experts to arrive at the right answer for each farmer, but I do not know how much these experts are to get for the job. Einstein probably come high.

BOTH PARTIES NOW SUBSCRIBE TO DEMOCRACY

OUR FOUNDING FATHERS organized and wrote a Constitution for a republic, not a democracy. The term "democracy" does not appear anywhere in the Constitution. Washington and Hamilton believed in a republic, with a ruling class. Jefferson insisted upon a democracy, with the power of government in the hands of all the people. Today both major political parties subscribe to a democracy. Despite all the complexities of government, America can survive as a democracy if the people—all the Toms, Dicks and Harrys, as well as the Oswalds, Percivals and Warrens, are given accurately all the facts about the operation of government. The American people can be trusted, but American leadership refuses to take the people into its confidence, and that lack of information will in time do for us just what it has done for Europe.

PROSPERITY

REGARDLESS OF how the war may end, or how long it may last, William A. Irwin, educational director of the American Institute of Banking, says America is in for a long period of prosperity. He sees this country as the one great creditor nation that will be in a position to rehabilitate the world. It sounds plausible and may it prove true for us and for the rest of the world.

EXECUTIVE 'CRIMES'

THERE ARE several thousand federal laws not enacted by congress, the violation of any one of which can send you to jail or subject you to a fine. These are executive orders issued by more than 150 different departments, bureaus or commissions. Many American citizens have served jail terms or paid fines, or both, because of a violation of these executive order laws. Lawrence Sullivan, in "The Dead Hand of Bureaucracy," tells us new ones are being issued one each day.

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