

SERIAL STORY

This Could Be Your Story

MARGUERITE GAHAGAN

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CHAPTER III

Mary found going to bed a slow affair. She came back to reality with a jolt, finding herself waving her hand and looking like a fan. She started to hang up her dress when she sank down on the bed for another moment of dreaming. The day had been the first free day in which she hadn't dragged. There had been the first few hours at the art exhibit, when she had been so busy that she had not had time to think. But then Nick had come, and when he had seen that she was there, merely because she had nothing better to do, he had had time to waste. He had assumed control. Other people came during the next hour, but they were casual greetings, and it was Sue Mary who held his hand.

"I can see I'll have to take you in hand. We'll have to continue your education."

He changed the conversation abruptly. "We might start with a party. Ever go to parties?"

"I don't mean the kind where you sit around and drink tea. I mean where people talk and think. This crowd's always throwing parties. None of them has money enough to make it much of an affair. We get some sandwiches and beer or coffee, play some records, and criticize somebody's latest picture, or poetry, or idea on how to make the world a better place."

"You'll have to get better acquainted with Natalie and Vera. They'll find things for you to do on your time off."

The rest of the afternoon had passed in a blur of confusion. Nick had jumped up and taken her from

group to group, introducing her to everyone now crowding into the rooms.

Vera Oliver, dark, with black hair parted in the middle and drawn back smoothly from a broad brow, a vivid painted mouth and dark eyes that flashed emphasis to her rush of words, had accepted Sue Mary as one of them, when Nick informed her that there was a girl interested in the things they were doing.

"What he hasn't explained is that I know nothing about this," Sue Mary hastened to add. "I mean, I don't know anything about modern art and poetry, or politics."

"No barriers to break down then," someone said. Sue Mary turned around to the tall girl who had been hanging pictures with Nick when she first came in.

"If you want something to do with free time you've found the right ones to help you out. Vera's starting now with a new project for the Youth Progress group. I bet she's already planning on how you can help."

Natalie was a striking contrast to Vera. Her honey-colored hair was worn in a shoulder-length bob; her eyes were blue and calm; her voice almost languid. She wore a simple print frock with an air, but there was a hidden forcefulness about her that Sue Mary had never associated with artists.

"She'll have to come to one of our parties," Nick said. "Meet the crowd and get adjusted."

"Oh, I guess you'll take care of that," Vera added. "Nick's boss. He pushes us around—and do we love it!"

She looked at Sue Mary with interest. "Can you type, file, do stenographic work?"

"Yes, of course. I work in an office."

"Then I put first claim on you. Whom do you work for?"

"Clark, Kenny, Malone and Clark—they're lawyers."

"Divorces and murders?"

"No, not much, anyway. Corporation law. They handle the work of the companies, like Centerville Motors and the Gull Plane Company."

There was a moment's silence. Sue Mary wondered if they had ever heard of the firm. "It's a pretty big business—"

"Yes," Nick said. "I guess it is. And I guess your office must be busy right now. War orders. At least that's what the papers say."

"Yes, I read that too," she agreed. "I know that the plane people are working on something new. For the government I suppose. I heard Miss Grant say there were a lot of new patents—"

She stopped abruptly, blushing again. "I don't really know much about that. I just heard my boss say something. I didn't mean to talk office. I guess it's just because I don't have much else to talk about."

"Sure," Nick said. "But we'll fix that. All work and no play—you've heard that one. Well, work with us and play, too. We'll start before you're a day older."

"We're having a studio party at Natalie's after we close the show here tonight. And you're going with me."

But Sue Mary had not heard Natalie and Vera whispering behind her.

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LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



POPEYE



Secret Agent X-9



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



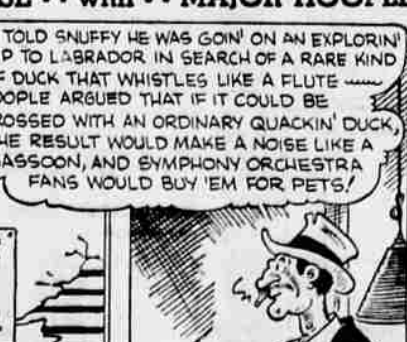
WASH TUBBS



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE .. with .. MAJOR HOOPLE

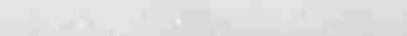


OUT OUR WAY

EMPLOYEES ONLY



THE PAPER KICK



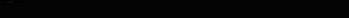
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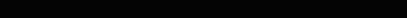
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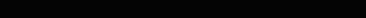
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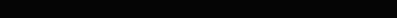
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