

SERIAL STORY **LUCKY PENNY** By GLORIA KAY

COMMUNITY SING

CHAPTER XI

BACK in the office of the Courier next day, Penny checked hurriedly on proofs of the literature she had prepared for her Friday night meeting. Circulars, posters for store windows, the newspaper ad—all were in readiness.

No one would suspect, from the innocent wording, the real intent of the mass meeting. "Community Sing" and "Concert" were the big headlines. The men in the mill had been given double notice by Penny's friends there.

The weatherman proved cooperative when Friday evening arrived. The auditorium was filled. The Kirktown Glee Club took its place on the stage. Rattlers echoed to the lusty lilt of their voices. Men predominated in the audience, and their voices lifted in song as the concert proceeded.

Quietly, before the last refrain died down, Lou MacDonald, Jim Dickers, and Penny seated themselves in their appointed positions on the stage. With cheers for the glee club still ringing, MacDonald stepped forward.

"Friends," MacDonald started. "My story is not pleasant, but it must be told. It affects every one of you." He told the audience, simply and truthfully, of the tragic cases that came regularly to the attention of the Humane Society.

He laid the blame squarely on Castro's machinations. There was no mirth in the sober faces uplifted to him.

When Jim stepped to the speakers' platform, a spontaneous cheer attested to his popularity. The men admired his courage and respected his judgment.

"Fellows," Jim said simply. "Not long ago there was a tragic bridge accident here. You or some member of your family was saved from death only by the will of Providence. A crooked city administration was responsible for the death of two of our best friends. I call it plain, cold-blooded murder."

Eloquently Jim recited the many factual instances of graft and favoritism and crookedness.

Now Penny stood before the sea of faces, displaying no sign of the nervousness she felt.

"I haven't known you very long, but I feel I know you very well," Penny began. "There isn't a coward in the crowd! You have power! You're strong! Let's show Castro he can't run Kirktown! Tonight—together—let's chase him out of town!"

There were shouted affirmatives.

Men jumped from their seats, ready for action. "Wait! Just a moment!" Penny shouted. "No one wants to start any violence. We are all interested only in peaceful means with which to remedy conditions in Kirktown. The sheriff is here tonight. He has named Bud Walsh and several of your men as deputies. Let's go as an army of citizens—not as a mob. You won't need to start a fight. When Castro sees you, he'll know he has had enough."

Bud Walsh was already organizing the eager crowd. They were flooding through the wide-open doors in orderly fashion. Their march to Castro's hangout had begun.

Jim was white with anxiety. "What have you done, Penny?" he worried. "The Castro gang won't give up its easy pickings without a fight. Someone is sure to get hurt."

"Perhaps this will change your mind," Penny handed him the red-lettered warning to leave Kirktown. "It's up to you to make up your mind, Jim. Either Castro goes or I go. Both of us can't stay here."

Grimly Jim said, "Come on!" With long strides he reached the head of the column of marching men. Bud Walsh had naturally fallen into leadership. Penny was right. The men were as orderly as a disciplined army—and no less tough!

"All I want is five minutes alone with Castro," Jim told Bud. "You'll have your five minutes," Bud promised. As they approached Central avenue, Bud halted his column.

"Quiet, men," he ordered. "We want to surprise Castro. No one has had a chance to tip him off. We'll all wait while I send a couple of scouts ahead." The men liked this game. "Like the old covered wagon days, looking for Indians," someone whispered.

"Let's go," Bud shouted when his scouts signaled him. They pushed through two swinging doors into a back room. There, in a room filled with slot machines, gaming tables and gambling devices, sat Castro and a prize group of city officials. The surprised mayor of Kirktown opened his mouth in a moronic stare. An unlighted cigar dropped from the lips of the safety director. Castro swung around, a vicious revolver in his hand.

"Shoot—if you dare," Jim invited through set teeth. Castro hesitated. He studied the silent crowd. Bud Walsh had a gun. So did at least a dozen others. Castro glanced quickly at the

badges they displayed. He dropped his weapon.

THE crowd cleared a space for the returning men who had rounded up other members of Castro's gang. "Take a good look at this prize collection of apes," Bud Walsh invited. "This is the last time you'll see such specimens in Kirktown. They're going to be so rare that there will be a reward for their capture, even in slightly damaged condition, within the city limits."

Bud turned to the mobsters. "You guys have just two hours to get packed and beat it," he warned. "We mean business and we're plenty tough. If you can't understand our nice treatment, we'll have to teach you a lesson."

A good movie director would have found a note of comedy in the way guns, marked cards, extra axes, and a special collection of crooked dice were piled on the cement floor, awaiting destruction. "Start moving," said Bud, twirling his gun menacingly. There was relief in the faces of the gangsters as they left. They had expected much worse treatment.

"I've waited for this for a long time," Jim said softly.

The fight which followed, Bud Walsh always said, was the toughest, noisiest, bloodiest battle that had ever raged in Kirktown. Jim had asked for five minutes—actually, Bud stood guard outside the doors for an hour.

Castro tried in every way he could imagine to kill Jim. He bit, he kicked, he kneed, he gouged, he punched, he butted. He swung heavy chairs at Jim's head. He narrowly missed Jim with the jagged edge of a table leg. Jim met each furious attack, each vicious thrust calmly, alertly. In his own heart there was murder.

Desperate, Castro drew a murder-bladed knife from a hidden recess in his trousers. He lunged viciously. Jim felt no pain, but he knew from the red on Castro's weapon that the dagger had found its mark on his shoulder. Cautiously, he circled out of Castro's reach.

The room's unshaded light singled out the gangster's knife. Swiftly, painfully, Jim lifted a broken chair and shattered the bulb. Automatically, he lunged forward as darkness shrouded the room. He twisted the knife out of Castro's hand. Then he lifted Castro to his feet.

For weeks, Jim would show the scars of his battle. For months after the scars were gone, he would look back happily to the day when the Castro gang left Kirktown forever.

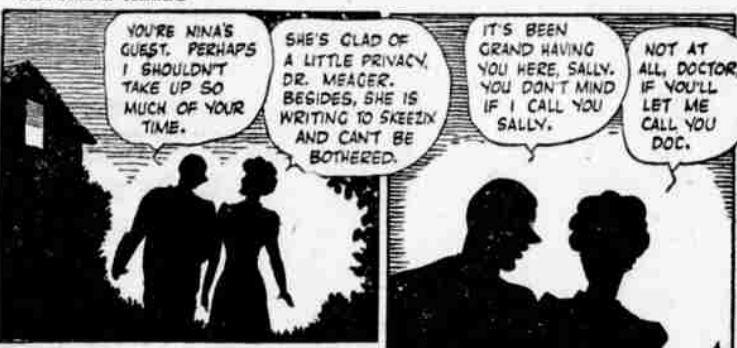
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LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



GASOLINE ALLEY



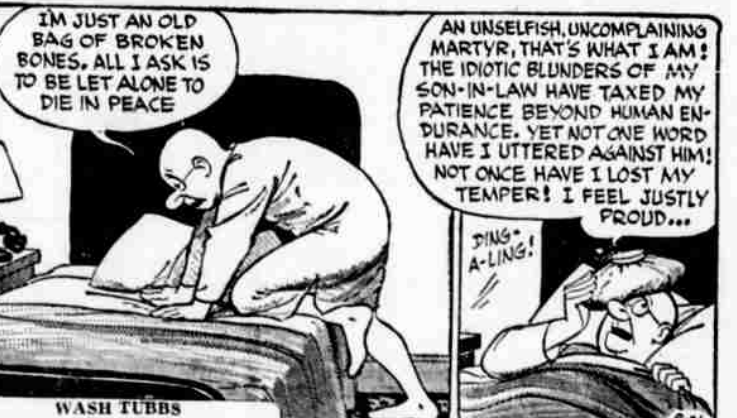
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BOOTS and HER BUDDIES



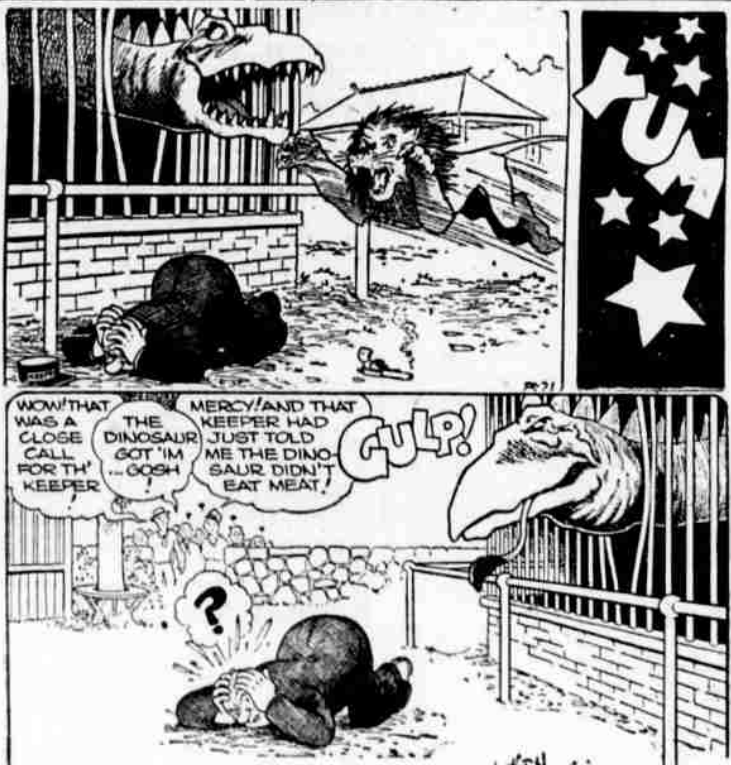
WASH TUBBS



OUT OUR WAY



FUR BOARDING HOUSE



ALLEY OOP

SIDE GLANCES



What will our friends think of you as a doctor—throwing your cards into the air because your partner over-aid her hand?

Labor Shortage Threat To Lumber Industry

PORTLAND.—(U.P.)—Disaster is facing the lumber industry—and its role in the war effort—within a few months, for lack of loggers in the forests, predicts F. H. Brundage, western log and lumber administrator.

"Production is being held up in the lumber industry, because loggers are seeking better paying jobs in shipyards and aircraft plants. Which is most important, I wouldn't say—but if someone doesn't stay on the job—the shipyards and all the war industries are going to suffer," Brundage emphasized.

The greatest shortage is in the men who fall the trees and prepare them for yarding and hauling to the mills, the lumber administrator explained.

"There was only a way of convincing those men who plan to quit that their job is vital to the nation's war effort, and if they quit, the country's war industries would suffer, the situation might be solved," Brundage said.

Brundage added that every man who is able to swing an axe should work in the forests, because if something isn't done "You can kiss the lumber industry goodbye."

During the first half of 1942 the Agricultural Marketing Administration bought more than 825 million pounds of pork.