

The Secret of Mohawk Pond

Chapter 28
HER HOUSE OF CARDS
The shock of the news stunned Peggy and Philander Chase looked at her sympathetically. Her fortune vanished or at least that part of it with which she had planned to make her father and mother happy in their declining years.

A moment of silence and then Peggy looked up, anxious for further details.
"When did you discover this, Mr. Chase?"
"When I was making an appraisal of the estate for my report to the probate court. So that you will understand, perhaps I better start at the beginning."

"As I told you when I saw you in New York, your uncle was a very wealthy man. When he retired, he placed a small fortune in building and furnishing this place. After it was built, he turned all other real estate holdings into negotiable securities. These he put into a lock box in his vault in the guarantee Trust company in New York. I was not only present but an official of the bank, the vice-president to be exact, was present also."

"Well?" questioned Peggy; her throat felt dry and parched. "Go on, please."
"Prescott's fortune was estimated then, and we have a list of the securities, at more than \$1,000,000."

"Thursday, in the presence of an official from the registrar of wills' office, and the vice-president of the bank, I opened the safe deposit box and found not one security—not so much as a dime."
Peggy eyed Chase in despair.

"But," she exclaimed, "Uncle must have put the securities in another bank."
"His will, Miss Prescott, states that in that box would be found all his earthly possessions," broke in Chase, "and the will, remember, was drawn up two months before his death."

"But then, some one must have broken into the box—gained access to it in some way—by trickery—forgery," as Chase shook his head.
"Utterly impossible," he declared, with disheartening firmness. "A thief could as well break into the Rock of Gibraltar as get into a safe deposit box in the vaults of that company. Besides," he paused and took an envelope from his pocket; from it he withdrew a slip of paper. "This paper was lying in Prescott's box—all that it contained. Read it, Miss Prescott."

Peggy stared at her uncle's legible handwriting:
"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."
She repeated the quotation in a hushed voice.

"Oh, Mr. Chase, what does it mean?" she asked. "Was Uncle—?"
"Mad?" "I presume so." He looked at her pityingly. "I was most reluctant to tell you this—"
"Oh, but it was right to do so," quickly. "I—" she swallowed hard. "It's hard to comprehend."

"Surely; to have a fortune slip away," he sighed. "It's devilish tough, Miss Prescott."
Peggy closed her eyes; Chase must not, should not see the blinding tears. Oh, the man did not know how dreadful it was; her plans for her father—her invalid mother—and Jim, Chase's voice came to her from far off—what was that he was saying? Gaiety, despatchly, she pulled herself together.

"There's no telling what your uncle did with the securities," he began; "thrown them in the river—given them away piecemeal—to

churches; you know he went dippy on religion after his wife's death." "I wasn't aware of it. Poor Uncle Herbert." She drew a long, long breath. "Is there no way to trace the securities?"
"I've callin' in Pinkerton detectives," answered Chase. "We plan a consultation with the bank officials on Monday—I'd like you to be in New York then."

"Oh, but I can't leave here for more than an hour, until after the seventh of June," she exclaimed. "If I do, Jamieson Sinclair inherits Yew Lodge."
Chase regarded her dubiously. "I believe any court would excuse your absence on such an errand," he explained patiently, "and that it would not invalidate your claim to the inheritance under the will, which, if your uncle was mad, would be set aside anyway."

Peggy stared at him. "And who would inherit then?"
"Your uncle's next of kin—" "That's father," interrupted Peggy; she hesitated.
"You are sure the property would not go to Commander Sinclair if the will was set aside or broken?"

"Quite sure; Sinclair is Prescott's wife's relative, and she predeceased her husband."
Chase arose with some abruptness. "However, before I send for you on Monday—and I'll phone the exact hour of the meeting that afternoon in time for you to reach the trust company—I will consult an eminent lawyer, E. H. Blair, regarding your uncle's will and ask if your absence for such a cause will jeopardize your inheritance. Now I must go."

"Can't you wait for supper? Julia, my maid, will be back shortly."
"Your maid is out?"
Chase put the question with a quick, nervous twist of his head. He drew a step nearer, a queer gleam in his eyes.

"Miss Prescott, I—" Bang, went the knocker on the front door—a second time its imperative summons echoed through the house before Peggy recovered sufficiently from her surprise to answer it. Obadiah Evans faced her on the threshold.

"Howdy," he exclaimed heartily. "I've brought the milk and cream; sorry it didn't get here this morning but Jim and I were both away and Deborah forgot to remind Simon. Let me carry the pails to the kitchen; they're heavy."
And he stepped into the room.

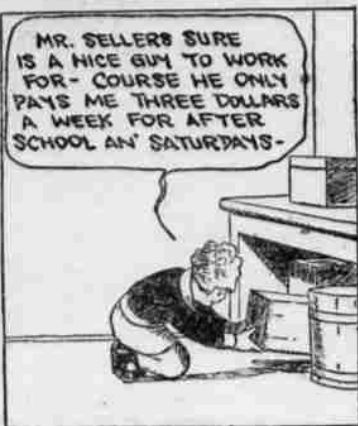
Peggy closed the front door and followed him toward the dining room.
"Wait, Mr. Evans," she exclaimed. "Have you met Mr. Philander Chase?"
Deliberately Obadiah transferred both pails to one hand before facing the other man.

"I heard Mr. Prescott talk about you," he said, extending a huge hand, "and I know your brother; taint any doubt about you being twins," regarding Chase closely.
"Our mother had difficulty telling us apart."

Chase rubbed his hands together, this time tenderly to feel his fingers which still felt the pressure of Obadiah's grip.
"I'll say she had," Obadiah chuckled. "We missed meeting at Philo's Tavern last night."
Chase smiled wryly.

"I'd have been wiser had I stayed there instead of trying to make Stone Tower; as it was I stopped overnight at Goshen and then missed Aquila this morning."
"Sure; he was down my way, so Debby said," Obadiah clicked the given them away piecemeal—to

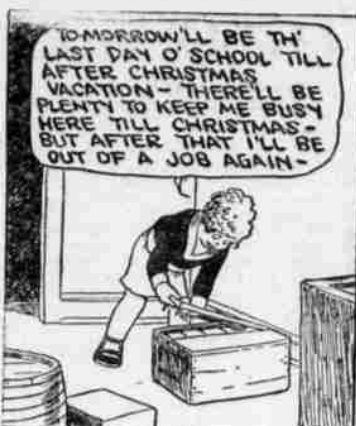
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE The End In Sight



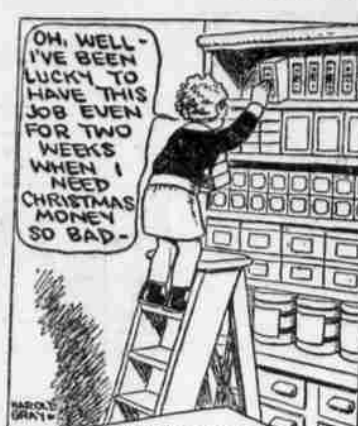
MR. SELLERS SURE IS A NICE GUY TO WORK FOR— COURSE HE ONLY PAYS ME THREE DOLLARS A WEEK FOR AFTER SCHOOL AN' SATURDAYS—



BUT I'D RATHER WORK FOR HIM AT THREE BUCKS A WEEK, THAN FOR LOTS OF BIRDS I'VE KNOWN AT FIVE A WEEK—



TOMORROW'LL BE TH' LAST DAY O' SCHOOL TILL AFTER CHRISTMAS VACATION— THERE'LL BE PLENTY TO KEEP ME BUSY HERE TILL CHRISTMAS— BUT AFTER THAT I'LL BE OUT OF A JOB AGAIN—



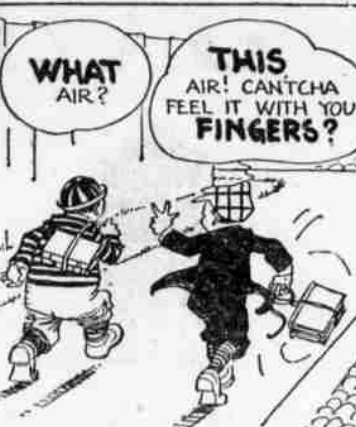
OH, WELL— I'VE BEEN LUCKY TO HAVE THIS JOB EVEN FOR TWO WEEKS WHEN I NEED CHRISTMAS MONEY SO BAD—

REG'LAR FELLERS

Ballon Juice



THE AIR IS NICE AN' CRISP TO-DAY AWRIGHT!



WHAT AIR? THIS AIR! CANTCHA FEEL IT WITH YOUR FINGERS?



DON'TCHA EVEN KNOW WHAT AIR IS? NO! WHAT IS IT?



ITS ER-ER- SUMPIN' SURROUNDED BY A DOUGHNUT!

TAILSPIN TOMMY

Tommy is Still A Prisoner

Tommy
— IS STILL A PRISONER. HE HAS NOT SEEN BETTY FOR DAYS— HAS NOT SEEN ANYBODY. BUT THE SILENT, SULLEN GUARD WHO BRINGS HIM BREAD AND WATER ONCE A DAY. HIS COURAGE IS NEAR THE BREAKING POINT AS HE SITS IN HIS CELL HOUR AFTER HOUR, WAITING— WONDERS— 305—



THESE BIRDS CERTAINLY KNOW THEIR INQUISITIONS! ANOTHER DAY OF THIS AND I'LL BE GOOFY ENOUGH FOR A PSYCHOPATHIC WARD!



LISTEN, DEAD PAN, WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN? AND WHEN?— I CRAVE ACTION! NO SABS!



WORMS IN THE WATER AND CHALK IN THE BREAD— ALL I NEED IS A COPY OF OSCAR WILDE'S "BALLAD OF READING GAOL" TO MAKE MY PRISON LIFE COMPLETE!

AND SO IT IS— DAY AFTER DAY— WHAT IS BEHIND SUCH TREATMENT? WHAT ARE THE REBELS PLANNING TO DO WITH TOMMY? CONTINUED—

DUMB DORA

Dollars And "Sense."



SORRY, YOU'RE QUITTING, DORA— HERE ARE YOUR WAGES AND ROD'S FOR THE LAST WEEK— IF YOU EVER WANT YOUR JOBS BACK JUST DROP IN AND SEE ME— I LIKE YOU AND WANT TO HELP YOU—



BIG-HEARTED AREN'T YOU? WELL, THAT'S WHAT I THINK OF THAT MONEY!— I WOULDN'T TAKE TWO CENTS FROM YOU!



THAT'S THE STUFF DORA— SHOW HER WE HAVE PRIDE—



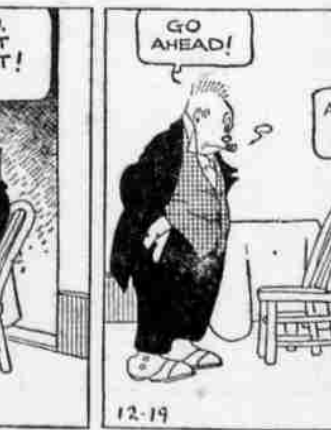
WELL, IT'S YOUR OWN MONEY! IF YOU WANT TO THROW IT AWAY, I SHOULD WORRY!

BRINGING UP FATHER

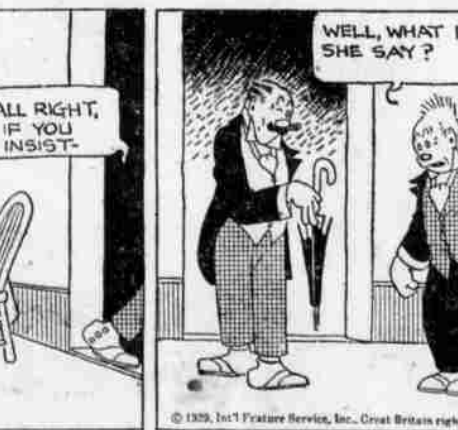
By George McManus



GO TO THE PHONE AN' TELL MAGGIE I WON'T BE HOME



NO, NOT THAT!



GO AHEAD!



ALL RIGHT, IF YOU INSIST—

MUTT AND JEFF

Killing Two Gifts With One Dime

By Bud Fisher



IT'S ABOUT TIME I WAS GETTING MY CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR LITTLE JEFF! HE'S MY BEST PAL AND A WONDERFUL LION TAMER! FOLKS, LET ME THINK!



I MIGHT GIVE HIM A SILVER COCKTAIL SHAKER— BUT THASS AGAINST THE LAW!



A YACHT WOULD BE NICE BUT HE GETS SEASICK SO EASY. MILITARY BRUSHES WOULD BE NIFTY— IF HE HAD ANY HAIR!



M-M! I THINK I'LL GIVE HIM A TOOTHBRUSH— SOMETHING WE CAN BOTH WEAR!

ACROSS
1. Fourth of July
4. Divide
10. Pierce
14. Morbid breathing sound
16. Why
18. Large volume
17. Ireland
19. Winged
20. Open court
21. Profiler
22. One who is entitled for a contest
23. Mental images
24. Solilo
25. Three stones
26. Slightly bitter white, crystalline substance
27. Projecting corner
28. Insect
29. Fishlike
30. Irregularly shaped
31. Flower's old spelling
32. Character in "The Fairy Queen"
33. How
34. Part of a harness
35. Expense
36. Done of the
37. Bilingual
38. French name for I Chai, 1112
39. Ventura
40. Matched

Solution of Yesterday's Puzzle

S	E	A	T	A	P	S	E	A	L	P
U	N	T	O	F	L	E	A	L	E	A
P	A	T	E	S	A	C	T	I	O	N
P	M	O	M	I	T	E	N	E	S	
L	O	T	S	O	T	I	C	E	R	E
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W	N	A	R	E	N	A	T	A		
A	T	R	I	V	E	Y	E	L	L	S
B	A	L	P	E	C	K	O	M	E	A
A	P	E	R	A	I	N	A	I	N	T
S	P	E	A	R	E	R	O	R	I	E
E	E	R	E	S	T	E	A	L	E	
S	T	E	R	S	T	E	M	T	E	N

DOWN
1. Chiefs
2. Underdone
3. American Methodist divine
4. Inspiring
5. Gained
6. East Indian food dish
7. Ancient, classical wine vessel
8. Ceremony
9. Kind of tuber
10. American journalist and diplomat
11. Heraldic bearing
12. Feminine name
13. Valley
14. Slave
15. Short for a woman's name
16. Roman household god
17. Law of
18. To be it
19. Hammer
20. Famous garden
21. Make late
22. Philologist
23. Interior
24. Apparatus
25. One who departs
26. One who departs
27. West Indian
28. Large oil can
29. Room at rest house
30. Interior
31. Apparatus
32. One who departs
33. supposed
34. American mountain
35. Western Indians
36. West Indian
37. Fast office order shirt
38. Cable meters
39. Humble
40. Kind of tuber

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