

THE BIG SHOT

by FRANK L. PACKARD

Chapter 29
THE CURTAIN FALLS
 Waiting in the darkness for the grim reckoning with the Big Shot that seemed inevitable, Enid and Phil cleared up the misunderstanding that a few hours before had threatened to smash their romance.

Neither mentioned the mental anguish they endured with stout hearts but Enid related the strange story of her three days' adventure for which she was now to pay a terrible toll.

Through it all Phil came to see the great love of this girl who had given no thought to her own personal danger in an effort to first turn the footsteps of her brother from a criminal career and then to save the Big Shot and the man she loved from each other.

Then followed long minutes of silence as each made another effort to free themselves from the bonds that cut into their wrists.

"Have you loosened your hands any?" she asked tremulously.

"No," he answered. "Have you?"

"No," she said; and then, suddenly, tensely: "Phil!"

"What is it?"

"Did you hear anything?"

"No."

It was more audible now. "Listen!" she breathed. "Now do you hear it?"

"Yes," he said. "There's someone working at the bar that fastens the door—and doing it as if he didn't want to be heard. That's queer!"

Neither spoke now. A minute passed—another. Then the door creaked slightly, and Enid could see that it was being slowly opened—and the next instant the ray of a flash light picked out both Phil and herself.

"Keep yer maps closed while I cut youse loose!" cautioned a voice in a hoarse whisper.

A man was standing beside her; a knife was sawing at the cords around her. It couldn't be true that they were to be set free!

"Who are you?" she breathed wildly. "Why are you doing this?"

"Didn't I tell youse to keep yer face shut?" he answered brusquely. "If youse don't ask no questions youse won't be told no lies—and youse don't know what hurt youse. See? Youse're in luck dat youse picked out tonight to come here—dat's all!"

She was free! A moment later Phil was at her side. His arms enveloped her for a moment.

"An' come along now, de both of youse—an' watch yer step, an' don't make no noise! Get me!" their liberator admonished.

She felt Phil's arm go round her and hold her for a moment. The guide, still indistinct and shadowy, led them across the yard to the road. The man halted and pointed along it.

"Dat's de way youse goes," he said; "not de other way! Understand? The road'll get youse some, wheres if youse stays wid it long enough."

"Now beat it—an' beat it hard!" He had disappeared in the shadows.

"Phil, what does it mean?" she asked.

"I don't know," he answered. They went on along the road—but it was not two miles, nor indeed more than a meager fraction of one, before they halted. And the minutes sped. And then they went on again.

There was no sign of life. They saw no houses. The road itself was little more than a wagon track. "Do you know where we are, Phil?" she asked.

"No; I don't," he answered. "There's nothing to do but keep on going."

"Yes," she said. "I—"

The words died on his lips. They

had come to a sudden halt, and were staring through the darkness each into the other's face. From far behind came the muffled sound of an explosion—another—and still another. And then, more faintly, but still distinct and unmistakable on the night air, the sound of rapid firing.

"What is it? Oh, Phil, what is it?" she cried sharply.

"Bombs! Machine guns!" His answer came through tight lips. "That's it—I see it now! Don't you remember that warning over the telephone that the Big Shot wouldn't listen to? It was 'inside stuff,' after all—and evidently not merely a matter of the trucks, either! It looks like a clean-up! I fancy we know now why we were let out of that barn—we were obviously not friends of the Big Shot!"

"Twisty Morgan's gang!" There was a sudden horror in her voice. "What—what do you suppose has happened?"

There was another burst of firing. Then silence.

"God know," he said soberly. "I only know that I must get you somewhere where you will be safe tonight. Tomorrow we will know."

They went on along the road again, but Enid stumbled a little now.

It was evening in the Gondola restaurant. Phil who had joined Enid at her table but a moment before was speaking.

"I've just made the rounds," he said. "There are some in the hospitals who are not likely to pull through; but the dead so far have all been identified—the Big Shot, the Kanon, Izzy Myers, and a fellow known as Alias Joe."

He pulled a paper from his pocket and laid it down on the table before her. "Here's the latest edition. Do you want to read anymore about it?"

Her eyes caught the headlines: **FOUR GANGSTERS KILLED**
Woman Among Victims of Bombing
 by Rival Gang

Eyes blurred, she shook her head as she pushed the paper away from her.

"Oh, Phil," she whispered. "It—it is awful enough to think that these murders mean safety for us; but it—it all seems to mean something so much more, to go so far beyond anything in a personal way. Don't you understand? It is the fact that such things as these can happen. It—it seems almost beyond belief!"

"And even yet, and though I know it all to be so terribly true out of my own experience, I can hardly bring myself to realize that these conditions not only exist in all their murderous defiance of the law, but are actually flourishing in the heart of a civilized community today!"

He reached his hand across the table and laid it over hers. He remembered the night when at this very table she had told him her reason for coming to New York; and now his smile was gently quizzical as he looked at her, and there was a strange mingling of tears spoke.

"Why don't you write a book about it?" he asked.

THE END.

LADIES' AID MEETS
 Turner—Mrs. I. H. Small entertained the Ladies' Aid society of the Methodist Episcopal church in her home Thursday afternoon. The members spent several hours busily quilting and considerable work was accomplished. Due to the busy season only a few members were present. Mrs. William S. Burgoyne, Mrs. R. O. Witzel, Mrs. C. A. Bear, Mrs. J. W. Ransom and Mrs. I. H. Small.

Solution c: Yesterday's Puzzles

ACROSS

1. Captain
 2. Transgression
 3. Fortifications
 4. Metal-bearing rocks
 5. Atropin
 6. Photographic chemical
 7. Animal flesh
 8. Fish eggs
 9. Cylindrical
 10. Symptom
 11. Kitchen utensil
 12. Flow
 13. Confederate general
 14. In a row
 15. Title of a knight
 16. Nuisance
 17. Exposed
 18. Golf term
 19. The bully
 20. Crown
 21. Type of Greek architecture
 22. Usable sea god
 23. Torture
 24. North river
 25. Abate
 26. Move slowly and steadily
 27. Additional
 28. Sports center
 29. Not hollow
 30. Epic poem
 31. Black shield

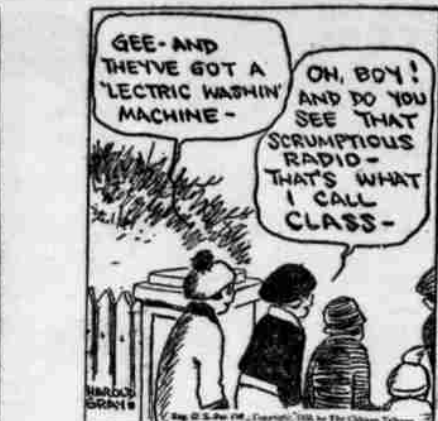
DOWN

1. Lake in Italy
 2. Surface
 3. Travellers by sea
 4. Superlative ending
 5. Hunk of grain
 6. Trees
 7. American
 8. Common back
 9. Country
 10. Directors abbr.
 11. Mosaic characters
 12. Fine driving
 13. Particles
 14. Legume
 15. Long narrow hole
 16. Dog's name
 17. Stutter
 18. India
 19. Account of goods sent toward the sheltered side
 20. A weight of India
 21. Portable bed
 22. Musical composition
 23. Fagot
 24. Air comb.
 25. Turn
 26. Necessity
 27. Thrice
 28. Goddess of dawn
 29. Naval distress call
 30. Swamp
 31. Passer
 32. Carpenter's tool
 33. Obliterate
 34. Feeder
 35. Think
 36. Hatched
 37. Hatched
 38. Weathered
 39. Precious
 40. Hilt
 41. Dry, as with
 42. Tuck a seat

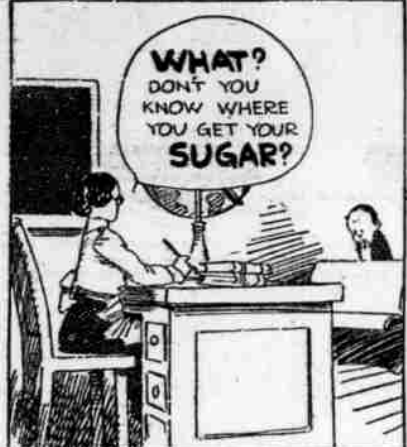
ACROSS

1. ROB
 2. ALLAH
 3. ANI
 4. PIECE
 5. DOT
 6. WAS
 7. HASTENERS
 8. PEARLS
 9. DO
 10. TEARS
 11. ESSENES
 12. ORT
 13. ILEO
 14. LEVI
 15. RITUAL
 16. RASPED
 17. ICER
 18. EBBS
 19. ENE
 20. CAREFUL
 21. PANTS
 22. DI
 23. ANENT
 24. THEORIZER
 25. HAM
 26. RUT
 27. SLOTS
 28. ERA
 29. YEA
 30. TENSE
 31. SET

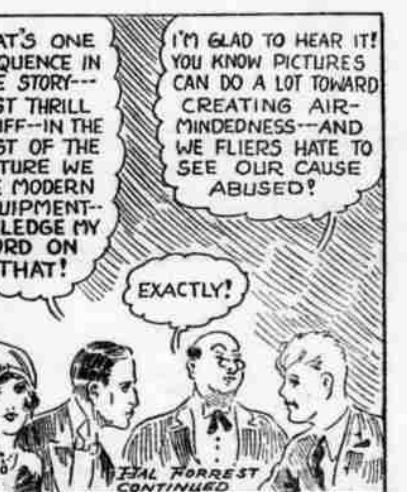
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



REG'LAR FELLERS



TAILSPIN TOMMY



DUMB DORA



BRINGING UP FATHER



MUTT AND JEFF



ACROSS

1. YES
 2. MEAT
 3. HEART
 4. CREAM
 5. BREAD
 6. STAY
 7. TANG
 8. YAP
 9. RISEN
 10. VENUE
 11. YECTS
 12. YES
 13. YAY

DOWN

1. YAY
 2. YES
 3. YAY
 4. YES
 5. YAY
 6. YES
 7. YAY
 8. YES
 9. YAY
 10. YES
 11. YAY
 12. YES
 13. YAY