

By Harold Gray

Masked Longing

Chapter 26 TWO VISITORS

As Arnold Kronberg entered, Allen was certain of only one thing.

Whoever Adrestra might be, she knew that the former Miss Santa Clara and the mystery lady of the mask were one and the same person. That meant that the sender looked Allen with the shooting of the man who was handling his hat and stick to Nora Nolan now.

His manner was perfect as he bowed and thanked her for her kindness in permitting him to come.

"I flatter myself that Mademoiselle may know something of me," he said. "As it happens, my theater—for the new form of drama—operas a week from tonight. Naturally, it is my desire to make this a gala occasion. Mademoiselle, of course, has the English?"

He was almost apologetic as he put that question. It gave Allen a start. How stupid he might have trapped her and might even do so now, if she was not careful.

"My theater's musicals are from the brush of an artist friend of yours. Perhaps Mr. Channing has told you. I tried to reach him by phone today, but it seems he is out of town."

If that was true, Allen did not know it. She wondered whether this excuse for coming to her directly was a deliberate falsehood.

"I wanted to ask Mr. Channing whether he and his model would not be my guests that evening. You have seen the girl perhaps? Expensive and charming!"

Allen only shrugged.

"But to my mission," he went on. "Hearing you sing this afternoon gave me a great inspiration. Mademoiselle is new to the radio—and my theater to the public. What a wonderful combination if you would sing for me that night! A broadcast, week-end could be arranged, and it would result in notions of advantage to us both. Of course, I should expect to pay—the customary fee."

That gave Allen a loophole. "I'm afraid my contract with Mr. Gluck would prevent my doing that. You see he has retained me as an exclusive feature."

"What a pity!" lamented Kronberg. "And yet I cannot blame him. But perhaps you would consent to be my guest that evening also?" Allen saw that he meant to insist on her presence if he could.

"May I tell you later?" she asked. "If my engagements permit. And now, will you excuse me—if I receive my callers." Allen felt like shouting for joy as she heard the telephone.

"Certainly," said Kronberg. He gave no indication that the purpose of his visit was anything but accomplished. "May I trust that your answer will be the one I hope for?"

"Enormous to speak to Mademoiselle," Nora Nolan interrupted apologetically.

"It is possible I shall be glad to accept," Allen answered.

answered. "By the way, I ran into Gluck. I think he'll be dropping in. Tell him about the doctor. That ought to tickle him."

"What about Kronberg's suggestion?" "Mix on that!" he vetoed. "Well, I've got to run along. I'll be seeing you."

He had hardly hung up when the office announced Doctor Saunders. A few minutes later, she gave him her hand as he introduced himself.

"So," he observed with a whimsical smile, "your mask is more than a fragment of the announcer's imagination. I rather wondered just how true these stories about you were."

From the way he spoke, Allen was convinced that he had no suspicion of the mask's real purpose.

"Oh, yes," she answered lightly. "You see I am a mystery, and it's really quite amusing—being one, I mean."

"I must be," he smiled. "Most people are so transparent. It's rather intriguing to meet someone who stirs the imagination. You see, I've been trying to picture you ever since I heard your voice. Only somehow, I expected to see you—face to face."

"Perhaps I'm more appealing—as a mystery," she suggested. "But speaking of voices, I know what you mean. When I first spoke to you, over the wire, I'd an idea what you would be like."

"And am I?" he inquired.

"Almost—exactly," she told him. "But it doesn't always work that way. I've often listened to singers over the radio. Then, sometimes, when I've met them, they didn't fill my picture. Perhaps that's because all voices sound different on the air."

"Really? That's very interesting. I've never been in a studio."

"Then you must come sometime."

"I should like to," he assured her. "To me, there is something marvellous in what radio may become. As a physician, I can see an even greater mission that it may fulfill. To-day, it not only brings us great, but mediocre music. But the air is already creating its own artists and composers. Suppose, if you will, that some day, there may be broadcast physicians. Perhaps they will prescribe with music for our national ills. Not lectures on habits and nostrums, but tones compounded of melodies that may make us a better world."

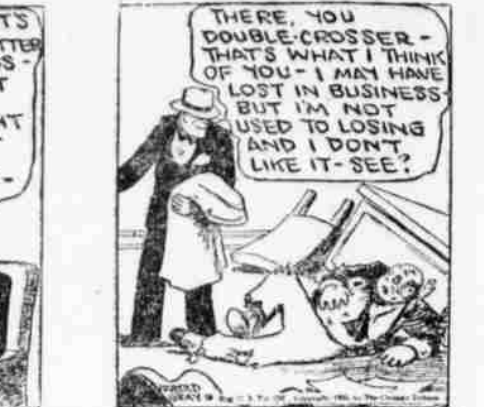
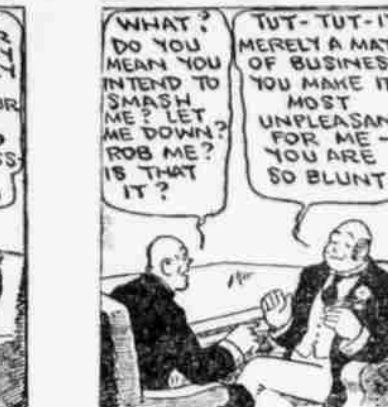
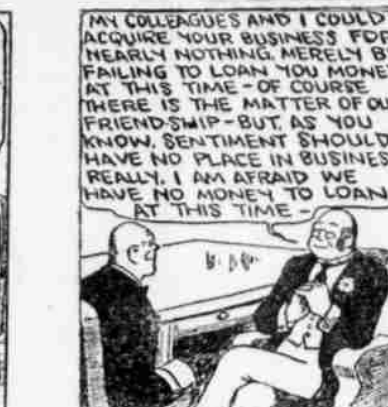
"What a wonderful thought!" Allen exclaimed. "You really must see the station."

"And perhaps he hailed as a humbug!" Doctor Saunders laughed. "Still, my dream is no more fanciful than radio itself would have been two decades ago. When I see the marvellous effect of radio on my patients, it naturally appeals to me as a medium that may possess curative powers we doctors have never yet conceived."

"You really believe that possible?" Allen was impressed.

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By Gene Byrnes

REG'LAR FELLERS

Very Perishable



By Gene Byrnes

TAILSPIN TOMMY

A Fast Aerial "Check-In"



By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

DUMB DORA

Hired, But Fired



By Paul Fong

BRINGING UP FATHER

Mutt Hates The Subject—And Hates To Chagge It



By George McManus

MUTT AND JEFF

Mutt Hates The Subject—And Hates To Chagge It



By Bud Fisher

SOLUTION OF YESTERDAY'S PUZZLES

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