

The SHINING TALENT

By ELEANOR EARLY
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THIS HAS HAPPENED MOLLY BURNHAM'S love life is all upset. There are two men in Molly's heart—JACK WELLS, a young architect, whom she loves, and RED FLYNN, a playboy, with whom she has written the play that made her famous.

Newspaper people pre-suppose a romance with Red, and write various stories, anticipating Molly's marriage to the famous Jack. Molly writes a letter, protesting that he is crazy about her, but will never be in a position to ask her to marry him. His mother is ill, and Red has promised he will never marry while she lives.

On top of her distressing situation, Molly encounters tragedy, when she visits Rita Newton, a college friend who has given her a year to live. She asks if Molly will take care of her baby when she dies. Molly, fearfully upset and saddened, promises.

A little later she sails for Italy. First, Molly urged Rita to go with her. Then she invited her mother, but they both declined.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE sun was sparkling on the water when the Conte Biancamano rode the shining sea into the Bay of Naples. Molly stood at the rail beside an elderly Englishman who took off his glasses to rub away the moisture.

His voice was tremulous with emotion, as he murmured: "Thou hast the gift of beauty."

"It's heavenly," she whispered—a little apologetically, because she could not break into verse also. Molly had always envied people who could breathe an appropriate bit of poetry for almost every occasion.

"It fills the air around with beauty," he declared.

She nodded soberly and wished she could think of a poetic comeback. "You're going to Rome, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed," she said. "And Venice—I simply adore Venetian life!"

Her companion regarded her stonily. "You stood in Venice," he proclaimed, "on the Bridge of Sighs. A palace and a prison on each side."

"And Florence," she added hastily. "Trafalgar Square," he cried. "Date sleepers star."

Life's drama, buried by the up-braiding shore.

"Really?" she exclaimed. "Well, I don't know about that, but they say the water is simply poisonous, and you have to drink out of the river. But there are all sorts of darling little shops. And, of course, everyone knows what Florentine jewelry is! And embroidery! And all those stunning leather things with the gorgeous tooling."

"Oh, quite. Quite."

The poetic traveler fixed his eyes on Signora Benvenuti's face, and said, "My word! Another American tourist!"

That afternoon Molly visited Pompeii, and loitered up and down the ancient streets. She wandered through the ruins of houses 2000 years old, and picked flowers in a garden where roses bloomed in the day. Veranda wined all life away.

And she was sitting on their faces, the bodies of Romans and a negro slave, preserved, through the centuries, by the lava that fell for days and nights on old Pompeii. There was the petrified body of a little dog too. He looked like a fox hunter. The excavators found him at the doorway of a school house, waiting, perhaps for his master, a boy who perished when the volcano erupted so long, long ago.

The next day she went on an excursion to the island of Capri, where the Roman Emperor Nero lived, and sacrificed his favorite to the sun—an Egyptian boy named Hyacinthos who was bludgeoned on an altar within a dreadful day.

At Capri everyone goes in a row-boat to visit the Blue Grotto. Molly felt as though she were in a fairy tale when she saw it. Daylight and the upper world had disappeared. And she was in the hollow earth, in the midst of a twilight of blue fire. The walls were of a ghastly and mysterious blue, like the palaces of fairs that gleamed like thousands of jewels.

And the old boatman, bending over his oars, whispered that the true life was in the water, and rising again, he said, "You could be a little child, and men and women born on Capri."

Molly loved Naples, and stayed there a fortnight, buying coral and glass, and eating blue lobsters. By that time she decided there must be a letter from Jack waiting in Rome, so she left Naples early morning and arrived in Rome for evening.

But there was no letter there from him, and though she waited for weeks, none arrived. She thought of sending a cable, but decided forthwith against it, remembering herself that it is never good to get a girl to even, too eager. Then she reflected dimly that, in the beginning of a love affair, man is the wooer. But, at the end, it is always the woman.

"It isn't fair," she fumed. "Because when the man is pursuing, it is a delicious pursuit. But when the tables are turned, and the woman pursues, it is humiliating and sorrowful."

There were plenty of men in Italy to pay court to her. Their manners were beautiful, and they contrived to arrange presentations in the most desirable fashion. There was one duke—who secured an introduction through the embassy. Molly was rather thrilled. The duke was a beautiful blue uniform, with a lot of gold braid, and a dash of red. He had a perfect Roman nose and searching, passionate eyes. His English was delightful, and he danced and made love like a man who was nothing else to do.

But one night, after they had danced at the ambassador's, the duke, and her husband, as she spoke, she saw the Colosseum in the distance. And there, under the moon that shone on ancient Rome, Lorenzo sought to take Molly in his arms.

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

The Anvil Chorus

By HAROLD GRAY

HUMPH—THERE GOES THAT WHILD BLUNDER JOHN! I THINK HED BE ASHAMED TO BE SEEN ON THE STREET—

YES—SUCH ESCAPADES—NOT AT ALL QUIET AND REFINED LIKE HIS FATHER—

YES, I HAVE ALWAYS ADMURED MR. BLUNDER SO MUCH—BUT YOUNG JOHN IS A SCAPE-GRACE. IF EVER THERE WAS ONE—

YES, INDEED—THEY SAY HE WAS A WONDERFUL SOLDIER—HUMPH—KILLING PEOPLE—IMAGINE GIVING HIM ALL THOSE MEDALS FOR THAT—AT LEAST HE DOESN'T WEAR THEM—

ONE HEARS SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS ABOUT HIM—HE SEEMS TO BE IN ONE SCRAPE AFTER ANOTHER—I CALL IT SCANDALOUS—

HIS FATHER HAS NO CONTROL OVER HIM—AND THE WORST OF IT IS YOUNG JOHN DOESN'T EVER SEEM TO BE ASHAMED OF HIMSELF IN THE LEAST—

OLD BLATHERSKITES!!! BAN! SURE, HES FULL O' TH' OLD NICK—THIS TOWN NEEDS MORE LIKE HIM—NOBODY EVER HEARD OF HIM HURTING ANYBODY, BUT HES ALWAYS DOIN' SOMETHIN' TO HELP SOMEBODY—BUT THATS TH' WAY IT GOES—FOLKS REMEMBER ONE MISTAKE AN YAP ABOUT IT FOREVER, BUT FORGET A THOUSAND GOOD THINGS YUHVE DONE—

SALESMAN SAM

So Absent-Minded

By SMALL

WELL, IF I KEEP ON TRAVELIN' LIKE I'VE BEEN DOIN', I'LL BE UP WITH THE ESKIMOS SOON—GUESS I'LL CAMP OUT HERE FER TH' NIGHT—

SO THEY EAT CANDLES UP NORTH, HUH? WELL, I'LL JUST PRACTICE UP A BIT—THEN I'LL READ A WHILE, AN' TURN IN—

BY GOSH, I DOWNED THE WHOLE THING—KINDA TASTELESS, BUT MEBBE I'LL GET USED TO 'EM—

WELL, KIN YA BEAT THIS? I CAN'T READ NOW—I ATE MY LIGHT!

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

All Jim's Fault

By MARTIN

HANG IT—I NEVER DATE TH' QUEEN ANYMORE BUT WHAT THAT BABY HOGS TH' ACT—I HAVEN'T ANYTHING AGAINST TH' KID, BUTS—

TH' LITTLE YELPER OUGHTA BE ASLEEP BY NOW—GUESS I'LL CALL UP TH' THRILL AND SEE WHAT TH' CHANCES ARE FOR A DATE

OH—BLAME THAT SO N'GO PHONE ANYHOW

WLO, SUGAR—IS TH' KID ASLEEP YET?

IT WAS—B'FORE TH' PHONE RANG

WAAH AAAAAH WAW

MOM'N POP

Mom Forgot Something She Can't Forget

By COWAN

WELL, THINK! THINK OF EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID BEFORE YOU LEFT THE HOUSE

I LOCKED THE WINDOWS, I KNOW, AND PULLED THE BLINDS. THEN I WENT TO THE DESK AND WROTE A NOTE TO THE MILKMAN TO STOP THE MILK. LET'S SEE, THEN—

—IF I TURNED IT OFF IT WAS AFTER I CALLED MRS. TYTE AND ASKED HER TO TAKE CARE OF OUR MAIL—THEN I—NO SIR, I DIDN'T TURN IT OFF. OH, DEAR! NOW IT'LL BE RUNNING ALL THE TIME WE'RE GONE AND THERE ISN'T A THING IN IT

WELL, LET IT RUN AND FORGET ABOUT IT

I COULD FORGET IT BUT I'M SO PROVOCKED AT MYSELF, I HAD IT ON MY LIST OF THINGS TO DO. OH, WELL, THERE'S NO USE FRETTING OVER IT BUT THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT—SAY, I BELIEVE I TURNED THAT THING OFF AFTER ALL

WILL YOU STOP GABBLING ABOUT THAT ICE-BOX? I PAY THE BILLS, SO YOU SHOULD WORRY

WELL, IF I JUST KNEW FOR SURE WHETHER I LEFT IT TURNED ON OR OFF, ONE OR THE OTHER, I COULD GO TO SLEEP BUT AS SOON AS I CLOSE MY EYES I KEEP GOING BACK AND TRYING TO RECALL EXACTLY WHAT I DID BEFORE WE LEFT AND THINKING WHAT I COULD HAVE BOUGHT WITH THE MONEY THAT THING WILL EAT UP

MOM, IF YOU DON'T STOP BLABBERING ABOUT THAT INFERNAL ICE CHEST I'LL STRIKE CAMP AND WE'LL GO BACK HOME

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By AHERN

THE TINYMITES

By KNICK

WHY—YOH OUGHTA BE TH' HAPPIEST GUY IN TH' STATE, WITH YOUR WIFE AWAY ON A VACATION!—I WISH MY FROWN WOULD GO SOMEPLACE FOR TWO WEEKS ON A VISIT—YEH—TH' ONLY REST AN' CONTENTMENT I HAD WAS NINE YEARS AGO IN TH' HOSPITAL!

—BUT, HANG IT, AVERY—MY WIFE'S ABSENCE HAS GROWN OUT OF PROPORTION OF A REASONABLE VACATION—EGAD—SHE HAS TURNED IT INTO DESERTION, BY JOVE!—DRAT IT—I HAVE A MIND TO DIVORCE HER ON THE COMMON GROUNDS OF DESERTION!—SOUNDS DRASTIC, BUT—

DIVORCE HER FOR DESERTION AND NON-SUPPORT, MAJOR!

"Oh, goodness, what a fall we took," cried Clowny. Then he added, "Look! The aviator's still in the air. I wish he'd come down here. He's awfully nice. Say, he's grand. I'd rather like to shake his hand. He's a brave man, though again let's give him a cheer!"

The bunch then jumped up to their feet and watched the plane do queer stunts. It seemed the aviator was a flyer of much worth. He'd spin along to left and right, and rise up most out of sight. In just about a moment he was back down near the earth.

"Oh, look," cried Scouty, with a whoop. "I guess he's going to loop-the-loop. His plane is almost upside-down. He has a heap of nerve. I think I'd like to ride with him. Just watch him dive and watch him skim. It seems that he will fall each time he does a sudden swerve."

"Was thrilling as a cloud he'd skirt. They watched until their small necks hurt. "I can't stand this," said Cappy. "Guess I'll lie flat on the ground. Then I can look straight up with ease. What funny things a fellow sees." The others joined him as he flopped and started gazing "round."

In about an hour the plane swooped low and Scouty jumped and shouted, "Oh! I think he's going to come right down. At least it looks that way." And, sure enough, the motor stopped and to the earth the plane then dropped. It made a perfect landing and the Tines yelled, "Hurrah!"

Of course they all began to run. Said Cappy, "Twill be heaps of fun to meet this dandy flyer. Look, he's out and there he stands. The flyer walked across the ground and all the Tines gathered round. He said, "Hello there, little folks," and started shaking hands.

(Read the Story, Then Color the Picture)

(The Tynmites take a plane ride in the next story.)

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