

TIM O'FARREL SEES SELF IN BETTER LIGHT

(Continued from page one)

"Well, Molly, why don't you come along with us, and we'll go to Medford," he ventured.

"Oh I can't! I have to take care of the station, Tim. I'm sorry, too. You used to be a sort of idol of mine, until I grew up."

Tim's eyes widened and he grinned mirthlessly. A bitter thought came to him.

"I suppose you've been to the big city and it seems pretty dull back here."

"No, Tim. People are the same everywhere. But I did hear about your conquest at the carnival. Couldn't help it."

"Oh, that!"

"Yes, and Tim I've been wondering why you haven't been around with Narcissus since then. You know it was your own fault, taking her into that place."

Tim paused a second and then retorted, "Well if you won't go to Medford with the town roughneck I guess I'd better be getting along. Get in, Axel."

"I didn't say I wouldn't go! I said I couldn't go because Mother and Dad have gone to church. Axel, wouldn't you stay here for me? Just for an hour?" Her eyes beseeched the old miner, who had climbed into the car.

"Oh sure, Miss Goul, sure. Ay stay."

So Axel scraped his knees out from under the dashboard again, slid over the door to the road, then turned and opened the same door for Molly to get in. "Be sure you're back in an hour," he grunted, with a chuckle weakening his injunction.

The hour stretched into three while Axel placidly made three sales of gasoline. The Gouls came home and all three took charge of the service station, the gangling Swede being rewarded with a bulging piece of pear pie made by Molly's own capable hands.

Meanwhile Tim was having his eyes opened.

"Tim O'Farrel, you're making a darn fool of yourself and I don't care who knows it," Molly was impetuously accusing her Lochinvar before they had fairly gotten away from the service station.

"Everybody in the valley knows that our hero, our he-man is making himself a sulky boob over a dizzy blond who bounces him like a monkey on a string."

Tim's middle finger stiffened again and he throttled the car down suddenly. "Now don't start out like that, Molly, or by heavens I'll take you right straight home again." He put a long arm across the back of the seat. "Besides, there's no market in this valley for advice to the lovelorn," he grinned, flashing his even, white teeth between lips that usually won with either a smile or a scowl.

"Well, I won't preach. But you're the handsomest man in the Rogue River valley, you big brute. You're six feet four and strong as a steel crane. And you're naturally steady with some common sense."

"Granted."

"But you evidently haven't grown up one bit since I left here to go to the university, and you never will grow up without getting hurt deeply. I'm going to keep you from getting burned."

"Well! That's a big order for a little chunk of a girl like you. But the plot is thickening. Now don't spoil it by saying you love me before we've gone four blocks. Just let it go as sisterly interest, or because you want me to keep buying gas." Tim liked flattery, but here it resembled salting a wound.

"But I do love you, Tim. Always have," Molly burst out impulsively. "What do you think of that? It's only when you're acting like a bull ape at a dance or like a poodle at that girl's heel that I despise you."

With vague discomfort Tim realized that the latter classifications covered most of the time when he wasn't pounding hard rock back in the solitude of his tunnel. He felt the ruddy tan deepen on his cheek bones.

"Just let me tell you about yourself just once, Tim; then I'll be quiet." Molly held her gaze on his stony face as they jogged through Jacksonville to turn east on the pavement toward Medford.

"You're getting along," Tim blurted, his eyes not leaving the road.

"You came here four years ago this spring from Seattle. I'm the only one here who knows you were graduated from the university as a mining engineer. You had an allowance of a hundred dollars a month from an estate or something, and I learned you are an orphan."

"You worked for John Thorp until he died and left you his property. Then you settled into a rut and haven't amounted to a hill of beans since. I can prove it by showing you that there's not a single other person in the valley who even suspects that you are a college graduate. Even your grammar has taken on the sound of hill-billies and drill steel and dance hall alleys."

Tim managed a tolerant grin.

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Meets Sonnenberg



Don Wagner, shown above, is the husky young UofO grid star who will meet world-famous Gus Sonnenberg next Monday night at the Medford armory.

"They all think you're a great fighter. They think you're fair enough but pretty nearly a bully. And they all agree you will end up with a knife in your stomach while you're baiting some of these Indians—oh, I heard about you and your gang up at Chiloquin kidnaping squaws—shut up!—I know you didn't want a squaw but you did want trouble! Fighter! Sometimes I think you pick the easy fights, Tim."

"Maybe I've just begun to fight, like John Paul Jones, Molly," Tim remarked, poorly concealing his hurt. "Anyway, you old hen, how about the dance next Saturday at Jacksonville? I promise to ditch the flask and play Fauntleroy for you."

Though neither spoke another word for 10 minutes, which brought them into Medford, the "date" was tacitly understood accepted.

Tim drove past the Medford hotel and started bumping across the railroad tracks that divide Medford's business district. Molly made no remark on his quick glance toward the spot where the carnival had been, though perhaps her pretty auburn marcel tightened about her scalp momentarily.

Mischievously, Tim hummed two bars from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," until Molly, quick as a young panther, jerked the hand throttle downward out of his grasp so the roadster fairly leaped the next two tracks and Tim perforce gave his entire attention to regaining control of the car, bursting with laughter.

"Shall we see a show?" Tim asked when their merriment subsided.

"Let's do. Axel won't mind."

"Which one?"

"The Craterian. I like Clive Brooks, don't you? It looks like a good story, too."

They walked into the theater after Tim had parked his car, and not a few eyes watched their progress in gossipy interest. "Ha!" ran the undertone. "Tim O'Farrel's got him a new girl. Guess Narcissus Deane has given him the air."

Tim half heard their comments, or thought he did. But soon, seated in the darkened theater where a Mickey Mouse cartoon was eliciting waves of laughter, he again became conscious of the strong charm of the calm, competent girl whose shoulder rested against his. There was a sort of restful contentment about being with her, he reflected. You could always count on Molly.

His reflections carried him far from the rollicking humor on the screen, into the haze of self-analysis. Why, he asked himself, why couldn't he love a girl like Molly?

Beautiful, yes; intelligent too. Healthy and vivacious, full of fun yet reared in an atmosphere of sober industry.

Why must his thoughts run to Narcissus, the hot-house orchid whose least whim had become his command? In what way could Narcissus claim superiority over Molly? Molly, too, he reflected, was a college girl, if that need make any difference. Molly danced smoothly, made amusing company at all times. Well, suppose she did lack that intriguing air of promise and coquetry which Narcissus carried like a chip on her shoulder? He guessed that after a man was married he wouldn't find much use for such qualities.

Too, he was amazed at the way Molly's frank conversation, her insight and moods of passionate speech followed by calm composure focused his attention so that the old dream of Narcissus in a filmy summer dress came before his eyes only when Molly mentioned her.

A moment he spent in heatedly condemning Narcissus with all kinds of charges, telling himself that he hated her for sapping his self respect, urging himself never to look at her again. The next moment he knew that he had been waiting for a ring from her for weeks, and that things were just about at a breaking point. He'd go up to the house, knock down the butler or whoever was in the way, and carry her off! That's what he'd do!

Tim started nervously. Molly, giving him a knowing look, nodded toward the screen and whispered, "Don't miss the feature." Then she turned back to study the cast of players, frowning slightly with her nose pertly lifted a trifle higher than normal.

The cinema story was an inspiring one; picturing the noble love that finally came to a man, twice married, who had never found a woman who would make a home for him. Wealthy before the market crash of 1929, he was left after the crash with an heritage of heavy alimony obligations and a broken business. Going abroad for forgetfulness, he met in Paris the girl who had served as his competent and understanding private secretary. Through her encouragement he made a grand coup to recover the lost fortune against terrific odds. There followed the usual happy ending.

Both Tim and Molly completely lost themselves in the drama, their imaginations filling in between the lines of the pictured story with diverse emotions.

Afternoon was merging into evening when they came out of the theater, walking slowly. Both were thoughtful, and their hands unconsciously joined as they strolled toward the car.

"Oh, how sweet!" Narcissus said, catching Tim's eye as she swept by them, looking her best in a fine-grained gray tweed suit with a brilliant organe muffler, and leading a waddling Spitz puppy. She bestowed a quick smile on the man, but it withered as her glance swept Molly. She was gone before Tim could return her puzzling greeting without shouting after her, as he was sorely tempted to do. Molly had managed a cool "Hello, Narcissus," and laughed airily as she saw the tell-tale anger in Tim's face.

Spring in the Medford valley outdoes the beauties it bestows on any other part of the world as it lifts the mists and light snow that have been winter's appetizing contribution, to spread out its golden mantle and cast a shadow of brilliant green on lawn and countryside.

Swaying against this backdrop are the carmine of the bark and berries of manzanita trees, and the blue and gold of myriad mountain flowers on the low hills rolling westward to the sea.

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Through the heart of this splendor, winding like an Irish lane, Captain Gray's great western commonwealth has laid a broad, paved highway. Along this Tim drove slowly homeward while Molly stretched her perfect legs in the ancient roadster and leaned her head backward as though to watch the maple branches overhead bursting their buds. Her throat formed a graceful arc, and one hand lightly gripped the car door while the other carelessly rested on Tim's bent knee.

Molly's mood was pensive, but her spirit would have bounded to a new pinnacle of hope had she possessed the intuition of a Voltaire with which to know the tides of sentiment that were casting tinder on Tim's emotions.

With a fellowship for the buds breaking above him, Tim in his youth and vigor felt the surge of spring. It caused his mighty sinews to flex, and put a strange, empty feeling in the pit of his stomach as he again extended his arm tenderly across the back of the seat, this time under Molly's warm neck.

He saw the robust fullness of her form as an artist views a portrait subject; could find no fault in profile nor coloring. She was exquisite as only a perfect woman can be, he became aware with an unexplainable feeling of pride. There surely was no secret about Molly; no artificial allure upon which attraction must depend. She was simple Molly Goul. Obscurely different. Poignantly sweet and good. The values one found in her were deep, restfully permanent.

"God! You're a beautiful child, Molly."

"That way, Tim?" she rejoined with a tremulous smile. "Aint it just a helluva world?"

"I know, Molly, but—" (Tim was unquestionably stuttering) "but in that dress and just as you are, you've got it all over Narcissus Deane. She isn't half the woman you are in any way."

"Now don't get a vicious complex against your secret love," Molly mocked, laughing until a postman, standing beside his cart at a wayside cluster of mailboxes, looked up with a broad smile. "Beware of sinister psychology, young man," she admonished, still apparently enjoying the humor of the repartee despite the knife turning in her heart.

"But you are going to the dance with me Saturday night, aren't you?" There was a strange tinge of anxiety in his tone.

"Sure thing, Tim," was her airy response.

(To be continued)

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LASKY JR. GETS REAL BREAK IN FILM, 'BERKELEY SQUARE'

By exerting his influence on Producer Jesse L. Lasky, 12-year-old William R. Lasky became an actor for a day. It is true that he didn't have a speaking part, not even a close-up, but it was his biggest opportunity and the thrill of a lifetime.

The boy walked across the "Berkeley Square" set at the Fox studio with a horde of extras and the cameras caught him for a fleeting second. It was Lasky Junior's first motion picture work, and the film, "Berkeley Square," will be shown at the Roxy theater in Medford Sunday and Monday.

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