

You Can't Marry

by Julia Cleit-Addams

SYNOPSIS: Jenny travels over- hours a conversation between her cousin George and Garth Aveney which she believes refers to George's secret engagement to Eddie Townsend. She is unhappy because she liked Aveney whom she first met him that evening, and she seems to prefer George. Unknown to Jenny, George's loyalty to her employer, Graton Matching, has an unusual job, complicated by Matching's eccentric regulations such as his threat of discharging any woman in his employ who marries. George has promised to marry Eddie tomorrow, since he agrees to keep the marriage secret so that she can go on with her work, which pays very well. She has made plans for the marriage which will take place in the next room. Jenny hears Aveney say to George, "I'm going to marry Miss Lopez. I'm forgotten then!"

"No," she said heavily, "I wouldn't make the faintest difference to me."

Old Graton Matching took up his bedside telephone, gave the number of his general manager, shook the instrument viciously when no voice immediately answered him and, holding the earpiece in position re-absorbed himself in his model dynamo.

"Who's that?" he muttered absently when at last the voice of Harold H. Croze came to him. "No, I didn't ring you up. Yes, I did." His voice climbed to its nerve-racking squeak.

"Yes, I did. I wanted you to know that my nephew, a complete stranger to my secretary, this evening offered her \$25,000 down, \$2,500 a year, half her salary—to repeat the estimate that have gone by plane tonight. And she refused and reported the bribe to me. . . . Naturally he was acting on my instructions—who else's? . . . You didn't know her salary was so high? Let me tell you that unless she's fool enough to get married, it'll be half as high again before she's done." His squeak became almost a scream. "Only person who can hear what I say."

He threw aside the telephone, switched off the lamp and, fumbling for a pear-drop, lay sucking contentedly in the darkness.

Jenny strayed into a park with a gasp of gratitude. She had an hour to wait before George got married; here was the place to wait in. She sat down on a bench and a tabby cat came and began to slide round her. It was a fat, friendly cat and Jenny hoped it would not soon go away; she would have enticed it on to her lap but she had on a clean white frock. Not by any means a "wedding-garment"—George had been emphatic about the omission of wedding-garments. "If we can all three slip in—and especially out—of the City Hall without attracting attention, we've a good chance of getting away with the whole scheme."

"Yes, I see that. I should think so long as Eddie isn't recognized we shall manage all right. It's afterwards, George, when I'm at the hotel, that your secret will want such a lot of keeping."

But George had not admitted that. The janitor of the apartment could be squared—hoaps of people, if the worst came, could be squared. When Jenny had installed her belongings in the nicest room she could find in the nearby hotel, would she be a helpful pet and call at an employment agency about a really competent daily servant—and hang the expense? . . . Of course, Jenny would; and did. And by one of those chances that do occasionally happen, before she had even finished explaining "Mrs. Townsend's" requirements to the clerk, a cheery, capable-looking woman came in who seemed quite pleased to be engaged to start work next Monday.

So that Jenny, who had allowed a full hour for this task, found herself at a loose end. She didn't want to go back to the hotel, which was stuffy; or to the apartment where George, an efficient whirlwind, was transforming their tiny lumber-room into a dressing-room for Eddie. So she made a leisurely way downtown.

Sitting now on her bench, Jenny looked across the snapdragon-bed and tried to identify the building from the back. . . . She saw a man lower a green blind at a window and thought that might well be the room in which this furtive wedding would take place.

Furtive! She caught her breath. She had no right to call it that. George couldn't ever do anything furtive. If she and Eddie had agreed that the job at Matching's must be kept at any and every cost—and certainly it made a difference that Eddie was soon to go so far away and for a whole year—Jenny, in a tangle, stopped haranguing herself.

A man—a tall, slim-built man—swung round the corner and came past the snapdragons. Jenny's finger under the tabby cat's imperiously lifted chin went rigid.

A mild clamor went up in her heart—will he see me—will he stop—will he pass on? . . . And then, like an axe backing at the roots of a budding tree, there pounded in upon her the knowledge that if George's secret were to be kept, Garth Aveney must pass on his way without seeing George's cousin there at all. . . .

How can Jenny hide? She must, tomorrow, and yet she wants Aveney to see her.

Chapter 8 DEAD SECRET

"I S'POSE so, I'm glad you feel ashamed of yourself, though," George was saying to Aveney.

"I don't know that I feel ashamed exactly. After all, you agree that I wasn't given any choice. But you've been magnificent. He ought to thank his stars for you," Jenny heard Aveney answer.

"He won't. Takes me for granted. Goodnight."

Jenny burrowed down into her pillows. "He," she had no doubt, was Eddie. And Garth Aveney was quite right. Eddie ought to thank his stars for his splendid George. He probably did. Jenny really couldn't agree that he took George one scrap for granted. And now Garth Aveney, dismissed, empty-handed, was driving alone through the gleaming streets. He would not carry even the shadow of laughter, now.

The cool linen comforted Jenny's aching eyes. It was not that she was crying—oh, no, not that; only—only it was bitter: hard to care so much for someone who, whether she wanted him or not, was George's.

"Jenny!"

George had clicked on the light and stood amazed in the doorway. Jenny struggled up.

"I had a headache, George, and I felt I couldn't face the Crescendo, so I came straight home. Mr. Vale didn't mind a bit; some friends of his, stage-people, were going on there and he joined them. Anyway, it was no fun for him once you and Mr. Aveney couldn't stay."

"Aveney?"

George laughed. She sounded pleased, discomfited, amused all in one. She came and sat on the edge of the bed.

"Garth Aveney brought me back from Rochester Gate—I didn't feel like the Crescendo, either."

"Mr. Aveney is awfully interested in you, isn't he?" It was what Jenny had determined not to say; and she had said it.

"Oh—Aveney?" repeated George. "He's—a queer fish. But he's a good sport. I'll tell you all about him one day." With that she brushed him out of the conversation. "I've something far more thrilling to talk about now. Ed and I are getting married, Jen, tomorrow. At mid-day. Ed's flying tonight, but he seems to think he can be back in time. The ceremony is to be kept a dead secret but you must come."

"Oh, George! Oh, I am so glad you're marrying Ed, after all!"

"But, you dear little fool, whom else did I ever think of marrying?"

"As long as no one actually spies on me during the next week, the risk isn't too terrible," George continued, and lit a cigarette. "After that, with Ed away, I can always spin some yarn—any yarn. Even—"

"—she giggled suddenly—"that it was you Eddie married, not me!"

She sobered suddenly and sat staring at her cousin.

"Infant, that's rather an ideal. The Old Man knows we share the same names. At a pluck I could tell him—but, of course, the pluck is not remotely likely to come. Only if it did, well—Eddie would never know it, out there in Mexico. And you wouldn't mind, would you? It wouldn't make the faintest difference to you? Would it? . . . Well, would it?"

"No," stammered Jenny. "No, I suppose I shouldn't mind."

She was taken aback, tingling with that sense of affront that George could so suddenly rouse in her. How—how dared George—coarse-grained, reckless, successful—how dared she?

Then, on to the dark screen of her anger slid the outline of a tall man walking away from her without farewell; threatening his path eagerly round a crowded room; to pass out at a door through which George had gone. . . .

TAILSPIN TOMMY—The "Padmini" Changes Hands Again!



S'MATTER POP—A Noodle Is Substituted

By C. M. PAYNE



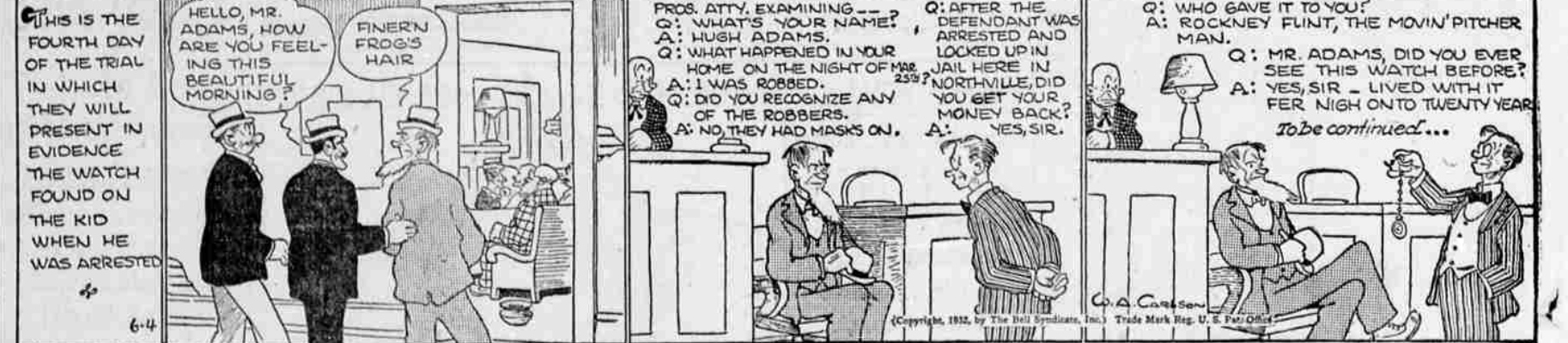
BOUND TO WIN—Eli Brankin Departs

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Now, What?

By SOL HESS



MUTT AND JEFF—Quick, Watson—Call In Sherlock Holmes

By BUD FISHER



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DAUGHTER OF KNIGHT CHARGED AS SLAYER

LONDON, June 4—(AP)—Mrs. Elvira Dolores Barney, daughter of a wealthy knight, was arrested to-night and charged with the murder of Michael Scott Stephen, socially prominent young man who was found shot to death a few days ago in her west end flat.

Pierce's Hothouse Tomatoes can now be had at your grocers. Remember they are vine ripened.

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

