

Nothing Venture

by Patricia Wentworth

SYNOPSIS: Nan, horrified at what she is sure is a plot to kill Jervis Weare, the man she has married on a "business proposition" to save for him a large fortune, dashes to meet and warn him. Jervis, however, is a former hood who has thrown him overboard in a future attempt to secure for himself Jervis' large inheritance from his grandfather, instigated the plot. In the ferry house Nan meets Jervis and Jervis' good friend the journalist Ferdinand Francis.

Chapter 3 A "FAIRY TALE"

FRANCIS left Nan and Jervis standing where he had found them. Nan and Jervis looked at each other, and for a moment a shared glint of humor gave to each of them a sense of intimacy. To be able to laugh at the same things is one of the three indissoluble bonds.

Nan said, "What a lamb!" And Jervis said, "Good old F. F.!" And then the moment passed. The laughter went out of Nan's eyes.

"You'll explain about my not being able to dine with him—won't you?" she said.

Jervis put his head back a little; he made his chin jut out. It was an obstinate chin.

"Why can't you dine with him?" If Nan had assumed that she was going to dine with them, Jervis would probably have felt annoyed.

"You'll have heaps to say to each other. I should be in the way."

"Well, if you don't come, he'll think you're offended."

"Do you want me to come?" she asked.

"Well, I do—I wouldn't bore you too much."

"Oh, it wouldn't bore me."

"You see," he said, "if you don't come, he'll think it odd, or he'll think you're angry. I'm very fond of F. F. and I hate to have his feelings hurt that way, and—" He hesitated, then fixed her a look of something like appeal, "I— it struck me there isn't really any reason why he should think there's anything unusual about—us."

"I'll come if you want me to," said Nan.

Their eyes met, and Jervis felt something that he had not felt before.

Both of them came out of that moment with a faint sense of shock. Jervis caught sight of the station clock and exclaimed,

"Poor old Page will be cursing me!"

With a queer leap of pulses Nan realized that she had forgotten, actually forgotten, why she had come to meet Jervis.

She said, "Please;" and then, "I haven't told you why I came to meet you. It's very important."

He turned half round, frowning. "Can't you tell me at dinner?"

"No, I can't. It's urgent."

He stopped, faced her, and said, "What is it? Page will curse me!"

The colour burned in Nan's cheeks. How can you tell an impatient, champing man that you believe someone is going to try and kill him in the open street in broad daylight?

She said with a gasp, "It's no good—you won't believe me!" and could have said nothing that would so instantly have caught his attention.

"Why—what's up?"

"I don't see how you're going to believe me," said Nan desperately. Jervis stared at her. What on earth was she going to say? He decided that it wouldn't hurt Page to wait.

"Go on!" he said.

"People do get run over," said Nan breathlessly.

"Oh, constantly."

"Someone's going to try and run over you."

"What for?"

"Money," said Nan in a shrill voice.

Jervis stared harder. She was pale. Her eyes were wide, and solemn, and frightened.

"My dear girl, what are you talking about?"

Nan began to tell him as well as she could. Now that she had put the thing into words, it set not only her voice but the whole of her shaking.

"I don't understand," said Jervis. "You heard these two men talking?"

Nan nodded.

"I came up behind the taxi."

"Tell me exactly what you heard."

She said it all over again.

"He said, 'It's the four-fifteen all right. You'll have to hurry.' He

"Let him come out of the station and get well away!" He said you were sure to walk because you had a cruse for exercise.

Jervis was bending forward looking at her intently.

"You heard my name?"

"No—not your name."

"Then what does all this amount to?"

"Please, please listen."

He moved impatiently.

Nan went on.

"The driver said, suppose you took a taxi; and the other said, 'Then you must do the best you can.' And the driver said he wasn't keen; and he said, 'Take it or leave it!' And the driver said that twenty-five hundred dollars, and that jail was jail. But in the end he said, 'All right, I'll do it.'"

"And what's all this got to do with me?" said Jervis.

"I knew they were talking about you."

"But why? What made you think of it? Who were these people? Did you know them? What made you listen to what they were saying?"

"I knew them," said Nan in a small steadfast voice.

"Who were they?"

"She got out of the taxi. I knew her at once."

"She? This is the first time you've mentioned a woman. Who was she?"

"Rosamund Carey," said Nan.

Jervis threw back his head and laughed incredulously.

"Go on with the fairy tale!"

A fire of rage burned in Nan's cheeks and brightened her eyes. She stopped looking at her hands and let Jervis have the full benefit of the glare.

"Mr. Leonard got out after her and went into the house. That was when I got behind the taxi. I wasn't going to listen—I just didn't want him to see me. Then he came out of the house and talked to the driver. I told you what they said—and I told you before I began that you wouldn't believe me."

"What have you got against Leonard? Good Lord—what a mare's nest! What conceivable motive could there be?"

Nan looked up at him, white and steady.

"Who would come in for your property if you were killed in an accident today?" she said.

Jervis did not start, he stiffened. There was a tingling pause. Nan felt as if she had hit a lump of dynamite. She waited for the explosion, but it did not come. The silence went on. She could not take her breath while it went on like that; and just as she was feeling as if something must give way, he said in a low, concentrated tone,

"What a perfectly fool thing to say!"

This time Nan felt as if it was she who had been hit. She said, "Yes, it's foul—!" She paused. "But not because I said it."

He became vividly aware of her. There was a bright stain of color high up in her cheeks—a round bright stain. Her eyes were bright and wide. There was something in them that winced and yet held firm. In his own consciousness an impulse flared—the impulse to beat down that winching, resisting something. It flared, and went out.

He rose abruptly to his feet.

"I expect there's some explanation. Bits of a conversation are very misleading. Thank you for taking so much trouble about it."

Nan got up too. His being polite was worse than anything. It made her feel giddy with pain. The color went quite out of her face.

She said, "Good-bye—I'd better not come tonight."

It was a relief to see him frown. "Of course you'll come! We settled that. Give me your address, and I'll call for you."

He wrote it down on the back of an envelope with a scrap of pencil which he fished out of a trouser pocket.

"Old Page will be cursing me!" he said, and turned to go.

When he had gone a couple of yards he became aware of Nan running to keep up with him.

"I'm sorry—but—oh, you will be careful, won't you?"

This time she got a black frown. And then suddenly he laughed.

"I'll take a policeman along to pick up the bits!" he said, and was gone.

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Nan spends hours of worry, tomorrow, and writes her first check.

STRADIVARIUS USED FOR BOY'S TOY CART

DESIO, Italy—When Pietro Sala, music teacher, saw a small boy dragging a toy cart made out of a violin and some wheels, he paid the lad 25 cents for it. Inside the instrument he found a tag saying: "Antonius Stradivarius—Cremonusa/Fabrizi."

Portland Seeking Brooklyn Pastor

PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 31.—(AP)—The Journal said today that Dr. Russell Morse Brougher of Temple Baptist church, Brooklyn, N. Y., has been nominated to the pupil committee of First Baptist church (White Temple) of Portland for pastor. The church has a membership of 1,600.

RAILROADERS FAVOR SIX-DAY WORK WEEK

SALT LAKE CITY, Aug. 31.—(AP)—Resolutions favoring the six-day day and the six-day week were passed by the western states convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen here today. Federal regulation of bus lines is urged in another resolution, which declares bus competition has caused thousands of train workers to lose their jobs as a result of reduced railroad operations.

DISGUSTED PRISONER HURLS SHOE AT JUDGE

REGGIO, Calabria, Italy.—Brought to trial on a minor charge, Giorgio Manari didn't like the way the judge was conducting the case. He took off his shoe and flung it at the justice, who ducked and said: "Four years."

Author Receives Share Of Estate

NEW YORK, Aug. 31.—(AP)—Isaac F. Marcoson, writer, receives \$729,286 from the estate of Mrs. Carolyn Prevett, sister of the late David Graham Phillips, novelist, a transfer tax appraisal filed here today revealed. Mrs. Prevett died May 2, 1930. Her will disposes of an estate valued at \$863,525 gross and \$788,616 net. The testament described Mr. Marcoson as a "tried and loyal friend."

Economics Give Savant Headache

NEW YORK.—The world's bread and butter problems are a headache to Sir Arthur Eddington, British astrophysicist. The man who figured out that the universe is expanding finds finance just a puzzle. "Give me something simple like the Einstein theory," he said on a visit here. "Economics is a horribly confusing and paradoxical subject."

WEST LINN—Improvements to be made on Buck street.

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORBES

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Can Be "Hard," Too!



BOUND TO WIN—A Glimmering Of The Truth



By EDWIN ALGER

S'MATTER POP—Does It Pay To Be Polite?



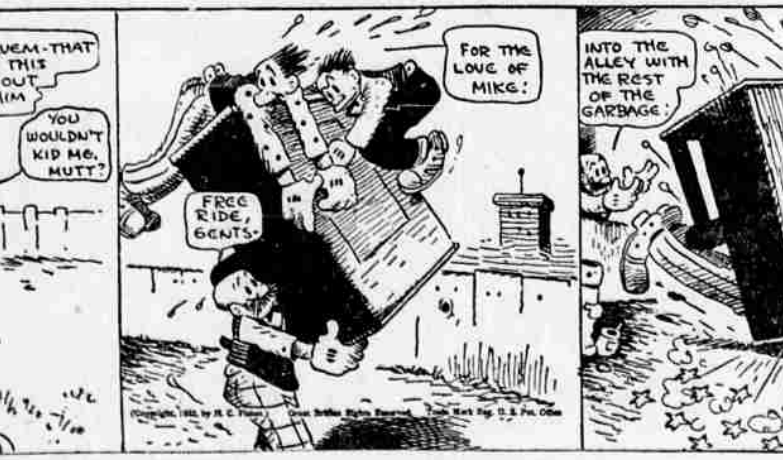
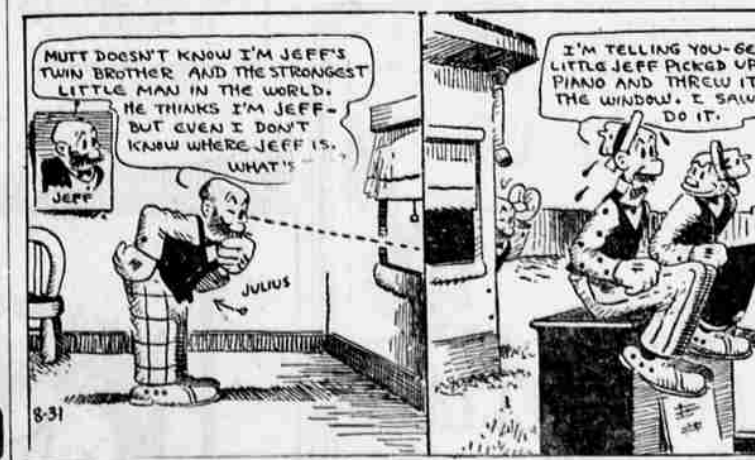
By C. M. PAYNE

THE NEBBS—Hurrah!



By SOL HESS

MUTT AND JEFF—Another Demonstration Of Strength



By BUD FISHER

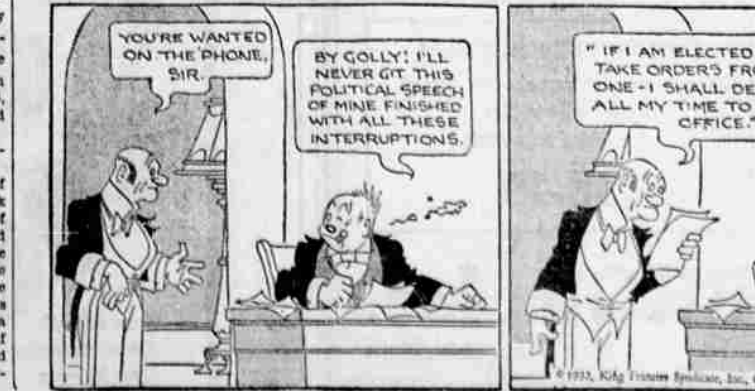
LOVING HUSBAND CAUSED JOB LOSS

DETROIT, Aug. 31.—(AP)—Because she charged, her husband paid too much attention to her after they were married, and eventually caused her to lose her job, Mrs. Vera M. Miller has been granted a divorce. Mrs. Miller told Circuit Judge Homer Ferguson that her husband, against her protest, sent her flowers every day at the office where she was employed. She said her employer informed her they could no longer employ a woman whose husband could afford to send flowers every day. As soon as she lost her job, she said, her husband lost interest in her, and even gave up his job as a railroad engineer. Miller's attorney protested that Miller did not give up his job, but was fired because he stopped a passenger train to go to a farmhouse near the railroad and buy a pound of butter to take to his wife.

FARM COMMODITY PRICES ADVANCED

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31.—(AP)—The upward climb of commodity prices was reported by the department of agriculture today to have sent the farm index up two points on August 15 as compared with July 15, and seven points above the record low in June. The index was 59 per cent of pre-war prices. The improvement in the prices of cotton, corn, potatoes, eggs and milk and material gains in the prices of wheat, rye, cottonseed, butter and wool were held responsible by the department for the advance since July 15. Advances in these more than offset downward price trends for oats, barley, flaxseed and hay, a sharp break in the farm price of apples and a reaction in prices paid producers for meat animals following the advance from June to July.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus