READY MADE WIFE

BY CORALIE STANTON

SYNOPSIS: Laurie is in love with Rex Moore, but they are in the midst of a misunderstanding. So Laurie has promised to marry Mark Albery, airplane manufacturer who employs both Rex and Laurie. Albery has forbidden Laurie even to see Rex Moore. To complicate matters, Laurie is worried about her sister Gladys and Jimmie Dallas, and when she goes to ask Dallas not to see Gladys again, she is seen leaving the flat by Wanda Steele, whom Rex has asked to marry him.

Chapter 42

CAUGHT

THE next afternoon, Laurie was in her office in London when the private telephone line from Fen Gretton rang through to her. She expected to hear Mark Albery's voice. He was not in London. But it was Rex Moore speaking.

"Laurie, do you still want me to take you up in the air?" he asked.

His voice rang in her ears. She had not heard it for days. She trembled with a joy that was half fear, and switched off the connection to Albery's private room. If she must not see him, at least she could speak to him.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because there's a good chance tomorrow. I'm going to do a rather interesting little flight, with an altitude test. Quite safe. It was a sort of bargain, wasn't it?"

"Mr. Albery has told me I must not see you any more," she said in a shamefaced voice. "He said it would be dangerous. I mean to your plane."

Rex's voice came over in a rough laugh.

"Albery won't be here tomorrow. He need never know. He's off to Berlin tonight. You're not a slave, Laurie—yet? Or a prisoner, are you?"

She choked down a little sob. He didn't understand.

"Never mind, if you don't want to!" he said angrily.

Again she was seized with one of those inexplicable, irresistible impulses.

"Yes, I'll come," she said. "I'd love to."

He gave her quick directions where and when to meet him.

As she listened, her heart leaped in her breast like a live thing.

It was the most beautiful early morning Laurie had seen in her life.

She was up with the dawn and caught the first train of the day to Cambridge. Already, in the train, she felt that she was flying—that she had left the earth and would never come down again.

The car was there, outside the station. It was nearly an hour's drive to Albery's private air field.

Rex Moore was there, waiting for her at the entrance to one of the great hangars. But he told her he was not going up for another half hour or so, and insisted on taking her to the canteen to have a cup of coffee and something to eat.

"I can't find my usual mechanic anywhere," he said, as they left the canteen. "He seems to have entirely disappeared and nobody knows where he is. Quite a new man is on duty. I found him filling my tank when I got here."

"Does that matter?" she asked.

"Of course not. Only I can't think where Brown can have got to. I was used to him. Now we may as well push off. It's a two control machine. Perhaps I'll let you take the controls when we're up—if you're very good! He gave one of his rare boyish laughs.

"That will be grand!" said Laurie excitedly.

"In you get."

AND then a voice came from the ground behind her.

She heard Rex Moore give a sharp exclamation of surprise and anger. She almost fell back, and Rex lifted her to the ground.

Mark Albery had just come up, hurrying, with his swift, light, graceful strides. His face was as impassive as ever, but his voice was like a whip.

"What can this mean? What are you doing here, Laurie?"

She said weakly: "I thought you were in Berlin."

He gave a low laugh that made her tremble.

"Obviously. I was prevented from going at the last moment." He paused, as if trying to control himself. When he spoke again, his voice was silky. "Have you forgotten my warning about being seen with Moore? Or did you deliberately take advantage of my absence?"

The girl's spirit rose.

"I did not think this once could matter," she said. "Some time ago Rex promised to take me up in the air with him. I didn't suppose anybody would know anything about it," she added recklessly.

Albery turned to the airman.

"Are you quite out of your mind, Moore?"

"As Laurie has told you, it was an old bargain. This seemed a good chance, in perfect conditions."

"Is there any reason why I shouldn't go, now I'm here?" the girl put in warmly. She had forgotten her fear of Albery in her bitter disappointment.

"I absolutely forbid you to go," Albery said. He spoke with inexplicable violence. "You will come back with me to the house at once. You seem to have forgotten how much depends on this."

She met his eyes, so cold, so vengeful, so full of something like hatred, that all the spirit went out of her. He was her master; she could do nothing. She turned away from Rex Moore, not daring to look at him again. That beautiful dream day was not to be.

Moore shrugged his impatient shoulders, as if throwing from him all the bothers and complications that infest the earth, and climbed into his plane.

Albery stood still to watch him take off.

It was a perfect performance; the plane rose, after a short skim, birdlike into the air.

The next instant Albery turned to her, impassive, smoothly courteous, inviting her back to the house.

"I am glad I was in time to prevent you from making a fool of yourself, Laurie," he said.

ALBERY drove straight back to London, taking Laurie with him. They set to work in the office as soon as they got there, although it was already four o'clock. Albery had a great many letters to get off. He was going to Berlin tonight, instead of yesterday. He had been held up by the unexpected arrival of his chief business colleague in Australia, the very man who had discovered Laurie in Sydney and sent her to England.

Now, he was the business man, concentrated on his work. Laurie was the perfect secretary. Not a personal word passed between them.

When she brought him the letters to sign and he had finished them and handed them back to her, he said in his smooth voice:

"Laurie, have I your promise that you will not repeat this folly? Will you please give me your word that you will not see Rex Moore again?"

"Yes, I give you my word," she answered quietly.

"You can get off now," he added. "I will call for you at your place to take you out for a late meal before I leave for the station. I am going by the night service. If I could only take you with me!" he added, fixing glowing, ardent eyes on her.

She went cold and stiff, expecting him to take her in his arms, but just then one of the departmental managers came into the room, and she escaped.

A little later, as he was leaving the office, Albery's telephone rang.

He heard Rex Moore's voice.

The receiver dropped from his hand. He went as white as a sheet. His lips curved into a ghastly grin of horror. As he picked up the receiver again, he shook so that it rattled against the table. It was several seconds before he could find his voice, and then it boomed in his own ears like thunder, although only a whisper went over the wire.

"Is that Mr. Albery?" Moore was asking. "Please put me through to Mr. Albery's private 'phone! Mr. Albery? Rex Moore speaking!"

"Albery speaking! Rex—how did it go?" His left hand clutched at his throat.

"A devil of a mess," came the answer. "It might have done for me. A fool of a new mechanic filled my tank with the new fuel. Where could he have got it from? Brown was nowhere to be found. He isn't here now. I tried altitude first. That went. I was just getting speed when I noticed something queer. Bang it went—same as before. I was four thousand feet up. But I'd taken a parachute, so I'm still alive. The plane is burnt out in a field. That stuff is impossible. I thought I'd let you know at once."

Moore's voice was ordinary enough. But was it just a little too casual? Did Rex Moore guess at something? Did he suspect the new mechanic. The new fuel—by mistake?

With the greatest effort of his life Albery recovered himself.

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Laurie again has cause to be worried over Gladys, tomorrow.

CAPITOL PORTICO MAY BE MEMORIAL

SALEM, Aug. 22.—(AP)—An appeal from Mrs. C. C. Geer, regent of the Daughters of the American revolution, and Miss Sabra Nason, Salem librarian, temporarily saved from destruction today a section of the west portico of the burned state capitol building.

Referring to the portico as the "pillars of yesterday" Miss Nason declared the partially destroyed section would prove of historic value and should be saved as a fitting memorial to the old structure.

The women stated, however, they would have no objection to destroying the portico, provided it was decided to construct the new capitol on the site of the old buildings.

KEEP COOL and ENJOY meals and fountain service at the What Not New air conditioner.

UMATILLA CO. JUDGE DIES OF HEART ILL

PENDLETON, Ore., Aug. 22.—(AP) Clive S. Chesire, 55, Umatilla county judge, died from heart disease at his home here today.

Judge Chesire was a son of the late Thomas J. and Hulda Severns Chesire, pioneers of Oregon. Following his education at the University of Oregon and Portland business college, Chesire engaged in restaurant business in Eugene with his cousin, Major General Creed Hammond.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Rarely, if ever, do you actually drink coffee. The beverage that you usually have at breakfast is more properly tincture of coffee—the coffee itself, that is the grounds, stayed in the pot. In Turkey, however, you drink the grounds and all. The bean is mixed, like a coco bean in chocolate, and mixed with boiling water.

Modern police systems have hidden microphones in rooms and cells so that officials can overhear what their prisoners talk about. This is more generally used to gain an unwitting admission from a suspect who believes himself to be out of earshot. Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, used this same system 24 centuries ago.

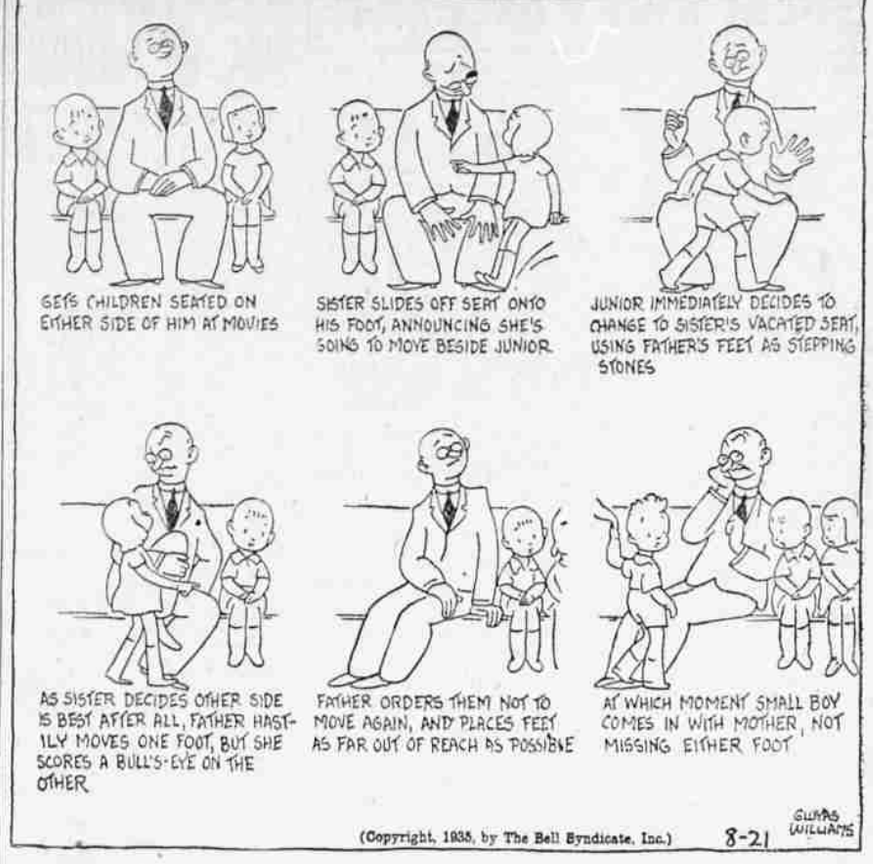
He had no modern equipment, but he did have a knowledge of the use of acoustics. The cave in the above drawing had the remarkable property of echoing whispered words along its walls so that they could be heard great distances away. Dionysius used it for his prison. He could sit at a certain point along the walls and hear whispered conversations of his prisoners. Unwary captives often gave themselves away, thinking no one was near.

The ancient cave is still a marvel of acoustics. A single hand clap resounds with thunderous applause—a single spoken word sounds like the babbling of a crowd. Travelers still test the method used by Dionysius—whispered words against the cave wall can be heard 210 feet away.

Tomorrow: The Symbol of Christianity.

MOVIE FEET

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S-MATTER POP—

By C. M. Payne

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tropical Strategy!

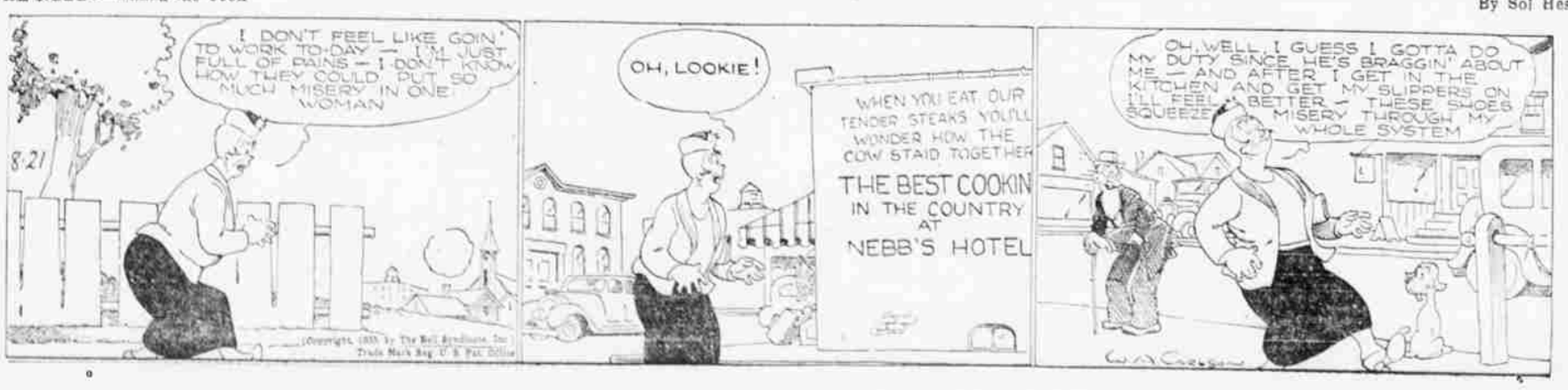
By Hal Forrest

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Briar's Peril!

By Edwin Alger

THE NEBBS—Emma the Cook

By Sol Hess



OCEAN SHIPS AIM FOR DALLES FRUIT

THE DALLES, Ore., Aug. 22.—(AP)—Officials of the Hood River Traffic association announced today they will apply immediately for public works administration funds to build wharfage facilities which can accommodate refrigerator ships.

The plan was revealed by Association President Richard Scearce and Secretary Floyd Wright who were here to learn details of procedure in making out application similar to that already made by The Dalles.

The visitors said plans were for river boats to call for fruit, but the terminals would be constructed to accommodate ocean ships later.

Women's clubs have inaugurated a campaign to preserve the first house built in Oregon, erected near the Willamette river in 1841 by George Gay.

STUDENT AVIATOR FREEZES TO STICK

TULSA, Okla., Aug. 22.—(AP)—A flight instructor and his student were dead today apparently because they "didn't know which was doing the flying."

A. W. Meadows, department of commerce inspector, ventured this theory after inspecting the wreckage of a training plane that crashed late yesterday with Ward Crawford, instructor, and Fred G. Hill, student.

Meadows said he found Hill's hands had "frozen" the controls, which were found still in working order.

BEND, Ore., Aug. 22—(AP)—Construction of a high dam and pumping plant on the lower Deschutes river to lift water to the fertile Madras plateau was under consideration today by reclamation officers.