NEVER MIND THE LADY

by David Garth

SYNOPSIS: Allaire West, proud, unattainable, has at last succumbed to her love for Terry Willett. She even has begged him not to return to his South American job but to stay in New York with her. And he has refused. Allaire has killed the time since Terry left with George Fox, who is slated to be attaché at the Court of St. James. Now, at the horse show, Fox is asking Allaire to marry him, and Allaire is confessing that she does not believe she ever will be able to forget Terry.

Chapter 35

BREAKUP

"OH, darling—" said Allaire. Her voice seemed to catch. "Oh, darling," she began again, "Don't you think I've thought of this? I'll marry you—if you want me to, only—"

"What?" said Fox. "Only what?"

"Only, George darling, I don't think I'll ever get over that fighting engineer terror. I've tried to, heaven knows I have. But," there was a far-away look in her eyes, "somehow the note still rings."

He thought of that thin gold cigaret case with the vanity mirror set in platinum on the cover, and the detectives demanding to see the girl behind the door in Willett's hotel room. Maybe that ringing note would be stifled if Allaire knew about that.

Her pride had lowered its colors once, but this— Fox was suddenly convinced that if she knew about this, she would get over the memory of that striding son of the engineering camps. And she deserved to know. Her future and his were at stake. She couldn't go on like this.

He was silent so long that the girl looked at him anxiously.

"Don't hate me, George. I couldn't stand it."

"Good Lord, Allaire, why should I hate you because you can't forget Terry Willett? But—"

"That's the second time you've said 'but.'"

"Did I?" said Fox. Well, I forgot what I was going to say." He smiled grimly. 'It couldn't have been important."

They decided to drive back to Westlands and Allaire went to change from her riding clothes. Fox waited for her on the verandah.

Quite a few of the Show crowd adjourned to Westlands that afternoon, a tide of people eddying around tables on terrace and lawn, swirling through the house; backgammon and bridge going full blast, buffet tea and hors d'oeuvres served both on the lawns and in the taproom, cocktails being shaken up in a dozen places.

Fox was absorbed by a bevy of girls and departed with a half-hearted grin. Allaire looked after him a moment and then went into Ray's private study. Ray was conferring with Blythe, the majordomo of the household, on plans for the evening. He dismissed the butler as she came in.

"Come on, baby," he said, "get tidied up. You may have a tremendous board to preside over tonight."

"Ray," she said idly, "what would you say if I told you I was going away?"

"Going away? Where?"

"South America."

He stared, astounded.

"What the devil do you want to go there for? I thought George was taking up his duties in London. Has he been shifted back?"

"No, he's still London-bound."

"Then what—?" He stopped and regarded her suspiciously. "Don't tell me you've called it no dice with him too."

"We both called it no dice. Only decent thing to do."

"And when did this South American idea pop up?"

SHE shrugged.

"It's been in my mind for a long time, only I couldn't quite bring myself to it before. But I've felt like a person with one arm ever since he left, oh, sort of lonely and uncertain and there's no use trying to kid myself any longer, I should have gone after him a long time ago, but nothing is going to stop me now."

"You're talking about Willett, of course?"

She nodded.

"Of course."

Ray started to smile. And that little smile lasted while he lit a cigaret and leaned back, viewing her enigmatically through a cloud of smoke.

"Allaire," he said, "I've tried to warn you. You're heading for fog. You don't know anything about Willett."

"I know enough."

He threw back his handsome head and laughed.

"Allaire, the unattainable. Untouched by scandal, possessed of the pride and ideals of a goddess—"

She started to rise. He sobered quickly.

"Wait a minute," he said. "I owe this much to you. To both you and George before it's too late." He opened a drawer of his desk and took out several typewritten sheets clipped together. "Ever read a detective agency report? Very detailed. Makes it interesting. This is the report on the search for you when LaMarr was pulling his blackmail stunt. Take a look at it—page four particularly."

He pushed it across the desk to her.

"Ray, I'm not interested—"

"All right, I'll read it to you myself." He picked up the report, ruffled through to a certain page, and leaned back. "I had them looking for Willett," he explained. "I thought he could give some clue to your whereabouts. This is an excerpt:

"'Willett was located in the aforementioned hotel at six-forty in the evening. All signs pointed to the presence of a woman in the room. Willett admitted the fact, but denied that it was the party sought. On Mr. George Fox's advice and responsibility the investigation was not pressed. A woman's cigaret case was taken, however, for identification and possible evidence.'"

He paused. "You never knew that, did you?"

"I don't," she said deliberately, "believe it. You and your damn detectives."

"No?" He rummaged in the drawer again and brought out a thin gold cigaret case.

"You'll find this described in the back of the report under detailed evidence. This is the one they found. It was left with me and I didn't know who owned it. But," he added positively, "now that I think about it, I could give a pretty good guess. You see, we got in touch with Willett through Puff Harrington—"

SHE started.

"Carolyn—! Say, you're a fool. That little—"

"Chaser?" he finished. "Well, we'll see."

He rang for Blythe and gave directions to see if Miss Harrington had arrived as yet and if so to ask her to drop in and see him right away.

Then he put the case in prominent view on the desk. He was getting set for a Field Day. Allaire sat numbed through all these elaborate stage preparations. And Fox had been so non-committal about how Terry Willett came to be mixed up in the LaMarr business. But then, Fox was a friend of Terry's.

Puff came in shortly afterward with a cocktail glass in each hand.

"Hello, Ray beloved," she greeted. "Hello, Allaire. Look what I've brought."

A sense of repugnance at seeing her trapped swept over Allaire. She picked up the cigaret case and held it out to Puff.

"Did you lose this, Carolyn?" she said impulsively.

Puff's eyes widened in delight.

"Why, where on earth did you find that? I wondered where I lost it." She set down a glass and took it gratefully. "Thanks so much, Allaire."

Allaire knew her father's eyes were on her ironically.

"I understand," she said calmly, "that you know a friend of mine—Terry Willett."

"Terry?" exclaimed Puff. Her eyes rested on Allaire, first in surprise, then in quick alive reminiscence. "I should say I do know Terry. He and I did the rounds, had a big time in New York. Did the rounds and ended up in Night Court at dawn. He can fight like anything—"

"Yes," said Allaire absently, "like anything."

She bit her lip, then suddenly excused herself and left the room.

"What's the matter with her?" Puff inquired.

Ray seated himself on the edge of the desk.

"Don't worry about Allaire," he advised. "And thanks, Puff. You've saved her from making a fool of herself. But, baby," he grinned and shook a finger under her nose, "what I know about you—"

Luckily, dinner under Ray's roof, although beginning formally, seldom stayed that way. People were always dropping in, and those at the table would get up and wander out between courses like intermissions between dances. Allaire thanked her stars for that.

She appeared at dinner to take her place at her father's wifeless board, but having started things off, she found it no great task to leave the dining room and go up to her apartment.

She dropped into a chair and stared out of the window. Hum of conversation from the terraces below, the sound of motors in the drive and laughter—and Puff Harrington dancing from one man to another.

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Monday, Allaire again takes to the air.

LIONS CLUB GIVEN TRAVEL LECTURE

Mrs. Margaret S. Fabrick gave a graphic description of her travels before the Lions club at its weekly meeting-luncheon yesterday at Valentine's cafe.

The speaker told of her journeys in New Zealand, Australia, the South Sea isles and other distant places, illustrating her talk with photographs passed among the club members. She recalled meeting Mr. and Mrs. Frank Buck, big game hunters, in Singapore.

Dr. William F. Roney spoke on the president's ball to be held here January 30 and the club voted to support the affair, which is to raise funds for combatting infantile paralysis.

The Lions went on record as favoring civil service for Medford firemen. The question is to be decided at the special election January 31.

Carold J. Parker stated he was trying to bring the state convention of the Disabled American Veterans to Medford next June.

ST. PAUL, Jan 23.—(AP)—Ratification by directors of the Great Northern railroad of a Reconstruction Finance corporation proposal for refunding a maturing obligation of 7 percent bonds with a new issue of $100,000,000 at four percent was announced today by President W. P. Kenney.

Over 11,000 different species of animals inhabit North Carolina.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

A whole fountain full of punch—approximately 2,300 gallons of it—was served by Edward Russell, English captain-general and commander-in chief of the British forces in the Mediterranean, at a party at his home in Cadiz. The punch was served by a young servant boy who paddled around in a small boat in the sea of punch, ladling out drinks to the guests.

The recipe for this remarkable bowl of punch has been preserved. In it went four hogsheads of brandy, twice that amount of water, a little over 500 gallons of dry mountain Malaga wine, 25,000 lemons, 1,300 punch, ladling out drings to the grated nutmegs.

President Harrison, whose term of office was cut short by death, never saw his wife after his inauguration. She was ill when he took office on March 4, 1841, and remained at their Ohio home, expecting to join her husband later. Before she started for Washington, however, came word of his death.

Healthiest of all the West Indian Islands, and more than 95 per cent of its acreage under cultivation, Barbadoes island is one of the world's most thickly populated colonies. The land is largely given over to sugar cane cultivation, a purpose to which it is ideally suited. The island is about 166 miles in area. Highest point on it is 1,100 feet, sometimes called a mountain, but really a terrace of coral limestone. Although the island has no rivers or lakes, abundant water is supplied by rain and underground streams.

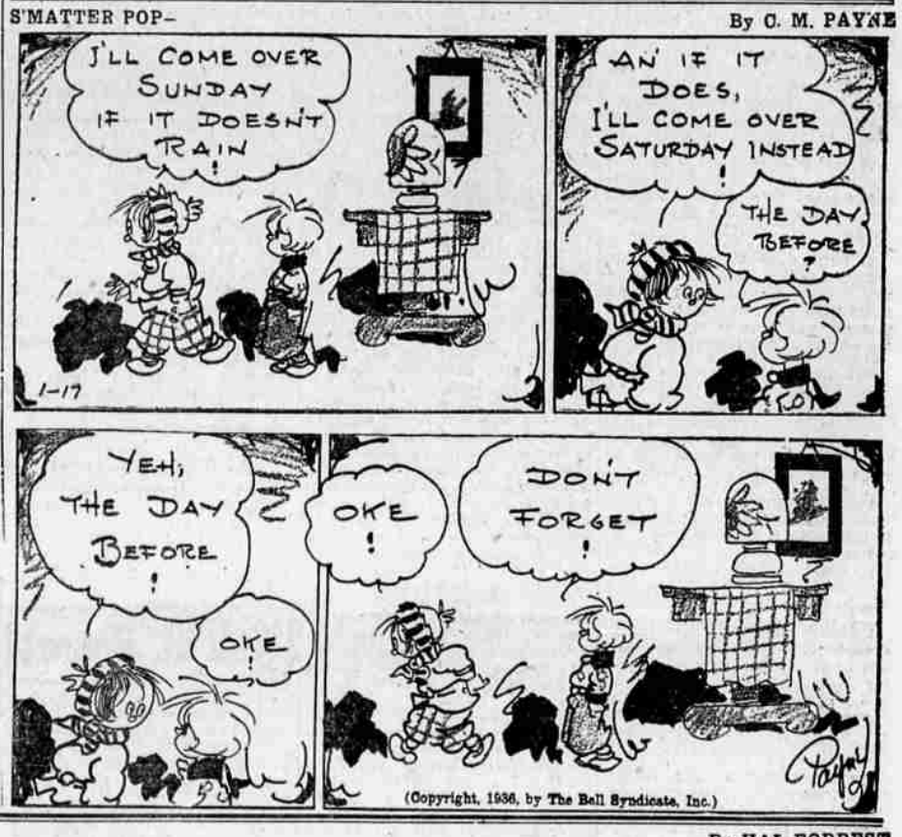
Tomorrow: The Horse Nobility.

THE FAMILY ALBUM—LAMPLIGHT

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Bad News for Skeeter!

By HAL FORREST

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Telling Crip

By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—Tit for Tat

By SOL HESS

STEAL FIRECRACKERS LEFT FROM FOURTH

The joke, one of explosive mirth, is on whoever stole the $30 worth of firecrackers from Earl Owings, 1813 West Main street Tuesday evening. Owings reported to city police that while he was hauling a load of equipment to Talent preparatory to opening a service station there, the firecrackers were taken from a store room in the rear of his house.

Since firecrackers can't be set off without being heard, police will have a fair chance of nabbing the "crackees."

Owings had the fire crackers on hand after the Fourth of July trade at his service station on the Jacksonville highway.

ADDED DEVELOPMENT TONGUE POINT AIM

WASHINGTON, Jan 23.—(AP)—Senator Charles L. McNary (R-Ore.) today offered an amendment to the naval appropriation bill calling for $1,800,000 for the further development of the naval base at Tongue Point, Ore.

The money would be expended in constructing hangars, ramps, barracks, shops, storehouses and other facilities for aviation squadrons, dredging, and enlargement of the piers and shore facilities if desired.

Heads of families in Nurnberg, Germany, who fail to provide for their wives and children are dealt with severely, with 22 sent to concentration camps in three months.