

# Golden Rain

by Margaret Wildmer

**SYNOPSIS:** Iris Lanning has been snatched out of the aristocratic but poverty-stricken home of her Aunt Ella and Uncle Will, in Paris, Pa., by the broker Owen Peris. She has known Owen since she was a child, and she and the aunt Phina who turned out to be the most famous courtesan in America. She realizes the change to Phina's Park Avenue apartment will be considerable—so do Aunt Ella and Uncle Will, and Morgan Black, through whom Iris found her other relatives. But even the railway station seems marvelous to Iris.

## Chapter 17 LUXURY

"Who were those people who spoke to you?" Phina asked. "I don't know," smiled Iris. "I was in the observation car. The red-headed one had something to drink, and was trying to get me to go over and join his crowd. The tall man, the older one, stopped him from being a nuisance." "You didn't think of going?" "Why, no!" "It might have been better. If people are objectionable you can always drop them," said this astonishing aunt. "They look like the right kind." "She's not what you thought a chaperon was, is she, little country-mouse?" said Owen lightly. "Nothing as outworn as that, I hope," Phina smiled, slipping an affectionate arm through Iris's. "We're going to be companions, not old people and young people, aren't we, dear?" "I hope so," Iris said shyly. It seemed topsy-turvy. She supposed Phina would have approved of her staying away from the hotel and strangers. Well, she was a country-mouse. She laughed.

"You'll have to let me work up to being a sophisticated by degrees," she said. "I've been living in the sixties or nineties or something like that, you know."

"Good line," approved Owen. Then they were at the apartment house. A slender silver-gray terraced tower toward the upper end of Park Avenue. Iris stepped around the foyer, as they stood waiting for the elevator.

It was all sharp-lined metal and silvery velvet. A single strange twisted picture, all red-and-silver lines and planes, dominated a mantle and fireplace which gave the place a look of a deserted room, not a hall.

The smiling uniformed operator swept them upward, a royal procession, a door opened in the rear of the elevator and let them directly into Phina's apartment. A maid in violet taffeta and lace apron took their outdoor things, another swept away the baggage.

The hall where they stood was paneled in silvery wood like the one downstairs; over a console-table hung one dry-point of Phina, signed by a famous etcher; a Lalique vase holding out-of-season flowers of the valley stood below it on a scrap of exquisite Chinese brocade; jade toys lay about.

"Don't dream dear—come up to your room!" Phina was laughing. "But it's so lovely." She could not help contrasting Phina with shabby, tense Aunt Ella and her immutable social lines. A woman who had made herself a position and could have a place like this was still beyond the pale to Ella. Phina, to Aunt Ella, was a dress-maker. No matter how successful.

Poor Aunt Ella, such queer things mattered to her. Of course, Philadelphia had always worried over such things. And little Paris, a province of Philadelphia, a back-water, held to the old lines more than Philadelphia itself. And Aunt Ella was an old lady. Iris's people had all been middle-aged when she was born, and probably old-fashioned for that, as provincial gentilefolk who have been "poor" and are apt to be.

"I'm jumping fifty years," Iris told herself as she stepped across from the elevator to the gray-velvet rug of the foyer. The excitement of it rushed over her again.

AND then, somewhere in her mind came the thought of what Morgan would have said. "Be sure you don't alight on the wrong square when you come down, like Alice in Wonderland."

He said clever, disturbing things like that. Oh, dear, was Morgan to haunt her through everything she said and did in this amazing new world?

The elder violet-taffeta maid and Owen followed Iris up a pair of dolls' stairs and a loud voice took her mind from Morgan for the moment.

Somebody in the drawing room below was wailing suddenly. "Oh, Phina, I'm in such a mess about 'em!' and Phina, in her tailor-made, calm as a doctor or a nurse, was saying in her cool carrying

voice, "Now, Mrs. Russell, just what seems to be the matter?" Iris peered back over the carved gray banister and said, "Owen who is she?"

Owen followed Iris into the rosy, lay bedroom to which the maid led her. He sat down on the edge of the graceful ivory dressing-table, rather endangering its silver brushes and buffers, and grinned as he lit a cigarette.

"Just one of Phina's pets in need of financial reassurance. Nothing unusual."

Iris sat down on the nearest thing, a scroll-shaped Empire loveseat.

"Phina must be awfully kind—and isn't it expensive?"

"Oh, well, most women like Phina (and I may say there aren't many of them) are sort of unofficial Little Helpers to the Rich one way or another. Phina's been taken up by a lot of smart people. She's more or less the fashion."

"She helps people like this Russell woman out with their bills, or maybe puts an extra polish on some dud debutante's clothes"—Owen frowned as if this thought had annoying connotations—"and she lunches with them, or runs down to keep them company when they're alone in the great big country house with dear stupid George away."

"But—" began Iris. Phina's steps clicked up the dolls' stairs before she could continue. She came in and spoke rather sharply to Owen.

"Sigrid's downstairs. I told you she had to come over to work with the fall plans, but I certainly didn't mean you to ask her to dine."

"I can ask her out to dinner," said Owen, more quietly, but as sharply.

"Nonsense. Now she's here she may stay. I only thought you might like to have your sister to yourself the first evening."

"I wanted her to see Sigrid," said Owen, flushing, and went downstairs.

"The wrong girl, at his age!" said Phina, throwing out her red-nailed capable hands in a despairing gesture. "Perhaps you can help me, little niece. With his looks and charm Owen could marry anywhere. And—well, you'll see."

She put her arm around Iris, and finished, "I'll count on you. And now you'd better get your bath and dress. Honora's drawn it, I see."

"Hadn't I better let you have yours first?" Phina laughed outright. "Every bedroom has its own, you cunning thing! Wear the rose-quartz with the frock on the bed. You're the most adorable thing!" But, dearest, no light on it, or people won't think it's real."

Iris was lying luxuriously in clear green water in a bathtub lined rose like the rest of the room before the meaning of Phina's parting remark struck her. Phina seemed to think that the way people acted was a garment to put on and off as they pleased.

For a moment the excited enchantment slipped a little; all the delight of this fairyland apartment, her beautiful clothes, Aunt Phina with her power and her air of owning the world, Owen—no, not Owen! That was real, no matter what else wavered.

Well, anyway, middle-aged people were queer. And a frock she'd never worn was in the next room, and undreamed-of delights were downstairs and out in New York City and on Long Island. She was homesick, that was what it was—she missed Uncle Will; she missed loving driving Aunt Ella; she missed Morgan, with his crookedness on top and his eager kindness and honesty beneath, and the disturbing love beneath that.

She turned on a sharp cold shower that made her alive and thrilled again; she ran back and was in the adorable rose chiffon with its beads and slippers, her hair coaxed into smooth close waves she loved, and down the toy stairs, ready for anything in this most alluring of worlds.

The other two were before her. Owen in his dinner jacket, Phina in a marvelous gold tissue frock down to her fingertips and out to the waist behind. The tiny beautifully-made blonde girl in black velvet lounging with exaggerated nonchalance on the piano bench must be Sigrid. She spoke, lifting thickly blackened lashes. "This is the long-lost sister!"

Except for her stature she was as Scandinavian as her name. Iris liked a certain honesty she felt in her. She had gray eyes set wide apart, a milky skin, piquantly high cheekbones to a pointed face, lips made just the right red, and wheels of very fair hair framing the heart-shaped outline.

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Iris meets her red-headed boy, tomorrow.

## AUTO INSURANCE HIKE IS OPPOSED

SALEM, April 14.—(AP)—Proposals of automobile insurance companies for an increase of 18 per cent in rates on public liability premiums, if proposed in Oregon, will be rejected by the state insurance commission unless the firms show sufficient justification, Commissioner Hugh Earle said.

Earle said he had heard of the proposals and expected them to be presented in this state. To date, he said, he could see no justification for the increase, and unless the companies can show ample reason, a rejection order will be issued.

## REAL ESTATE SALESMEN MUST SECURE LICENSE

SALEM, April 14.—(AP)—The fact that a real estate salesman is employed by a licensed real estate broker on a regular salary basis, does not exempt such salesman from the necessity of obtaining a license, Attorney General Van Winkle held today.

## KEEPING CLEAN

The opinion was requested by Hugh Earle, state real estate commissioner.

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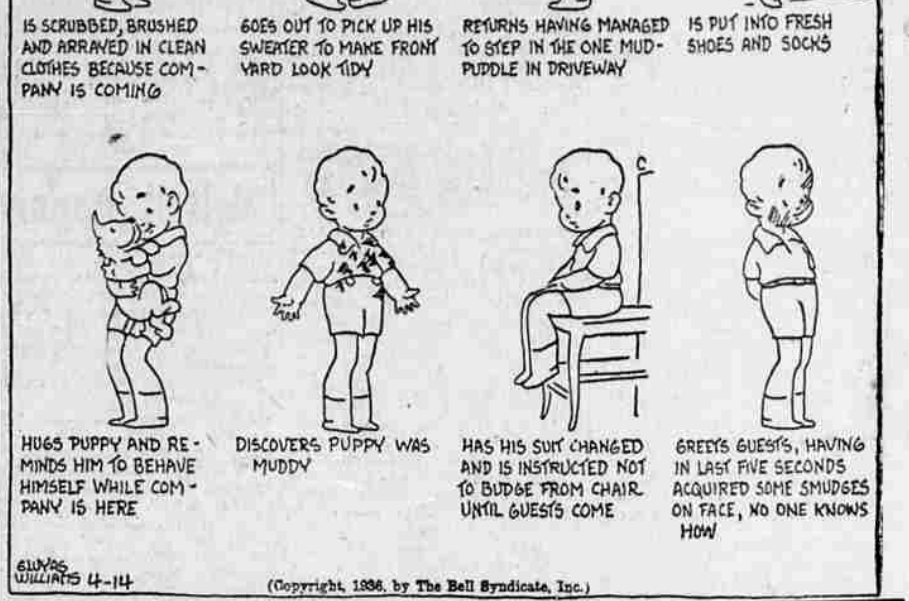
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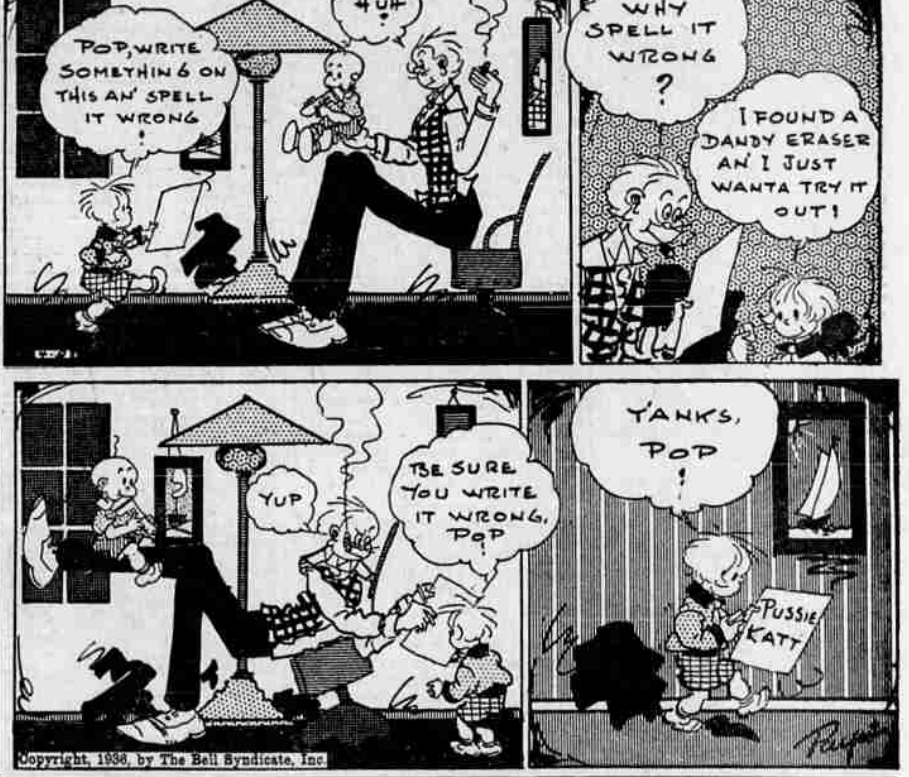


4-11-36 Multicart Syndicate, Inc.  
Pitcher Ira Ball's spectacular baseball accident all happened between the time he wound up and a few seconds later when he beamed a spectator. Ball threw the ball so hard that his arm flew around against his side, fracturing the arm. At the same time the blow broke three ribs, and after that his fist flew up and hit him in the eye, blanketing it. The ball, missing its mark at home plate, struck and knocked down a spectator.



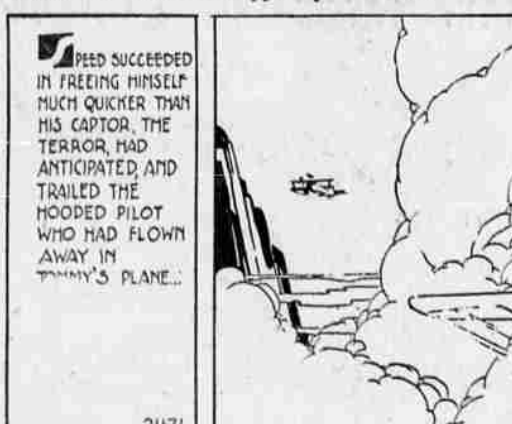
ELLYAS WILLIAMS 4-14 (Copyright, 1936, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

## SMATTER POP—By C. M. PAYNE



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## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Trapped by Television!



## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What Crip Learned



## THE NEBBES—Nothing Doing



## GOV. ROSS TO SPEAK TO YOUNG BOURBONS

SALEM, April 14.—(AP)—Governor Ben C. Ross of Idaho will be the guest speaker at the April 25 banquet meeting of the state convention of young Democratic clubs at Salem beginning April 24. U. S. Burt, president of the Oregon association, announced.

## MAGICIAN THURSTON SUCCUMBS, AGED 66

MIAMI BEACH, Fla., April 14.—(AP)—Howard Thurston, the magician, died here today.

## THE NEBBES—Nothing Doing



## THE NEBBES—Nothing Doing



## THE NEBBES—Nothing Doing



## THE NEBBES—Nothing Doing

