

Two's Company

By MARGARET CLUON HERZOG

The Characters

Nina, a nice girl with hazel hair, has fallen in love with her stepfather.

Richard, the charming, well-tailored stepfather, pays considerable attention to Nina.

Honey, Nina's gay, plump, youthful mother, is crazy about her new husband.

David, a young auto salesman, has begun to adore Nina.

Cerella is Nina's closest friend.

Chapter 14

David's Proposal

THE second horse—which was the dreaded Worthington creature—fell also, but while its rider was thrown clear, Nina was pinned under the two animals in a tangle of reins, stirrups, and eight wildly kicking black hoofs.

Twice, Gray Dawn struggled up a little, but could get no foothold on the hard, frosty surface of the road, and fell back again... knocking the breath clean out of her mistress's body. Nina's right leg was twisted behind her into an unbearable position and a weight like the rock of Gibraltar was resting on her left.

The sky overhead was segmented by what seemed, to her tortured eyes, a thousand waving legs; and over and above the grunting of the animals, a rushing sound was filling her head, like the overflowing of a mighty river.

Gradually her legs ceased to ache, and the sky above became overcast by a great dark cloud.

... In a detached sort of way, she wondered if she were dying.

"Hey! Careful there... You'll get kicked to death!" Through the whirling noises came Lillith's voice, harshly frantic. Dear, sweet Lillith, she'd turned back.

And another voice: "What the hell... are you just going to let her in there?"

And now Nina was quite sure she was delirious, if not actually at death's door.

The voice she heard was David's. "You damn fool! They'll quiet in a second..."

And David's taunting: "Oh, yeah? ... Coming, Ninal! Hold everything, darling. I'll get you out!"

Into the blackening sky came David's copper head... His brown eyes, with a mad, terrified light in them... His arms reaching down to her...

She was beyond trying to reason it all out, why he should be here... but she made an effort to gasp "Don't!" before the dark closed in. She thought she heard a cry of pain, and hoped, frantically, that it was she, not David. But she could not be sure.

"Nina You've GOT TO!"

NINA opened her eyes and discovered that she was in the bottom of a station wagon. The back seats had been removed, and they were progressing at a snail's pace. She could see the legs of two horses and two riders, one on either side. Carl was one, and as she turned her head to see who was the other... she looked straight into the troubled brown eyes of David Day, lying on a pile of coats, beside her.

"David! ... So it was you!"

"Nina—angel—are you all right?"

"The funny thing is, I think I am... practically. But you, you crazy lamb, you brave fool you... how do you happen to be here? What happened?"

His nice face was glowing with relief.

"Nothing. The very efficient young lady on your right, got them up. I only succeeded in getting myself knocked out, so that there were two of us to rescue instead of one... Great little helper, David!"

"Great little helper."

"Don't be too nice to me, darling. I'm unstrung. And speak quietly," he was whispering. "I don't want them to hear us till I've proposed marriage... Darling Nina, I'm so crazy, madly in love with you... Sweetheart, I only make 80, or at best 60 dollars a week... could you? On that? I was delivering a car. Remember I said I'd try and catch a glimpse of you? Well, suddenly, you all tore out in front of me, and when I saw you go down, and thought you were being smashed by a pulp... Nina, you've got to!"

He was incoherent and—dear. He was pale and breathless, and a tiny trickle of blood oozed from his temple.

"Nina... dear. Could we stop talking, just for now? My head is whirling." He looked instantly contrite. "But, David, if you would just lean over and kiss me..."

He winced with pain as he lifted himself on his elbow and bent over her... but when he drew away again, he was the happiest looking person in the world.

"I know," he whispered, against her cold little hand. "You didn't mean it. You're not committing yourself to anything. I'm not to take it seriously; and we'll talk of this again later... but Oh, my God, Nina... if you only knew what that did to me!"

He sank back onto his pile of coats with a sigh.

In a minute he looked out over the side of the car with a sublime innocent expression on his face, and told Lillith that it was all right. Nina had come to at last... But in the meanwhile Nina had done some tall thinking about that kiss.

She remembered hoping, in New York that night, that when he did kiss her, it would do something tremendous... Well, in a way, it had... only something reassuring and peaceful, instead of something—exhilarating. Although she didn't actually form the words, she had the feeling: "I have David," and life seemed sturdier because of it, and she wished he would lean over and kiss her again.

They were driven back to Harmony, and—after a thorough examination had proved that nothing was broken or otherwise seriously injured—they were ensconced on two leather couches coming out at right angles from the fireplace in Carl's library.

Nina's legs went one way, and David's the other, so that they faced each other... a little pale and shaken, but beginning to have fun. A bright log fire burned in the hearth, and some rare old Napoleon brandy began to do things to their color.

David Fits In Easily

"I've made arrangements to have my man deliver the car to your customer for you, Day," said Carl, genially, "and I sent along a note explaining what had happened... I'm expecting some people along presently, but while we're still alone, I want to thank you for your..."

"Attempt at heroism, eh? Listen, Mr. Semple, I'm ashamed of myself. Forget it, will you. I'm the one who should be grateful."

Carl beamed at him, and Nina could see that he approved of his young guest.

Their slight aches and pains, he treated more lightly. They were all part of the day's work, he figured. Having broken a good many bones himself, and hunted with a dog, he was well-knit together, a few strained ligaments more or less, meant nothing to him... Nothing, that is, unless it happened to one of his horses. Then it was another story.

Hester, on the other hand, had looked like death when they carried him in. She couldn't do enough for them, and when she finally went away with her liniments and bandages, they were both relieved.

Lillith came in then, with a slap on the shoulder for David, and a kind word for Nina, and presently others drifted in, still in their riding habits, for some of Carl's famous grog.

But it was Hester, Nina noticed, who saw that David met all the guests—there were about 14 in all—that each of them got food and drink; that the cold were warmed, and the wet dried, and she moved among that booted, mud-spattered crowd, like a calm, ministering angel. And suddenly Nina felt a rush of sympathy toward her, for she noticed that they paid her scant, or no attention at all.

And she was or Carl, spare and handsome in his hunting pink standing with his back to the crackling logs, and going over the day's run, as though they had none of them taken any part in it.

David was drinking in his surroundings, as though he were at the theater. Nina could see that he was fascinated and a little amused.

When somebody asked Carl: "What do you think of old Worthy's wife...?" referring to the thrusting woman rider who had caused Nina's accident.

And Carl said: "Well, she's a good seat, but..."

David looked at Nina, and murmured: "Really!" in a shocked aside.

He was having a marvellous time.

Nina was surprised at the easy way he fitted in. She felt disloyal to be surprised... but after all, his background was so vague, and he was so poor and all... She only knew that he had been born in Syracuse, and attended public school there, that he had gone to work immediately, and then come to his selling job in New York a little over a year ago on the recommendation of a business friend of his father's.

Now, he evidently had a capacity for hard work, and he most certainly was a dear... but that didn't necessarily imply an aptitude for fitting into luxurious surroundings of this sort.

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Tomorrow, Aunt Cerella upsets Nina with some firm advice.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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Strange as it seems, only one of the first four presidents of the United States, John Adams, failed to marry a widow. Martha Washington's first husband was Daniel Parke Curtis who died in 1757. Two years later she married George Washington.

Martha Jefferson lost her first husband, Bathurst Skelton, before she was 20. Married to Thomas Jefferson four years later, she died in 1782, 19 years before her husband became president.

Dolly Madison was married at 19 to John Todd, a Pennsylvania lawyer. Two years later her husband died in a yellow fever epidemic and three years after that she married James Madison.

Three of the presidents who married for the second time chose widows as wives. The second Mrs. Fillmore was the widow of Ezekiel McIntosh, of Morristown, N. J. The second Mrs. Benjamin Harrison was the widow of Walter Dimmick, a lawyer, and the second Mrs. Wilson was the widow of a Washington jeweler, Norman Galt.

Two of the presidents' wives were divorcees. The first was Mrs. Andrew Jackson, divorced from Captain Lewis Roberts. The other was Mrs. Warren G. Harding, divorced from Henry de Wolfe.

Butterfly Lives
Through the number of metamorphoses through which butterflies pass varies with different species, it is usually about six. Starting as an egg, the butterfly-to-be hatches out as a caterpillar. Then, in a period of about five weeks, the caterpillar crawls from its skin five times, each time changing greatly in shape, color, and hairiness. In its final "rebirth," of course, it spins a cocoon and ultimately emerges in its last form, a butterfly.

New Game Refuge
SALEM, Nov. 8.—(AP)—Stayton Island source of Salem's new mountain water supply, will be made a game refuge under a proposal advanced by the city water commission today.

Export Pear Ships
PORTLAND, Nov. 8.—(AP)—Ninety-four refrigerated ships will load fresh apples and pears for European delivery in November, December, January and February.

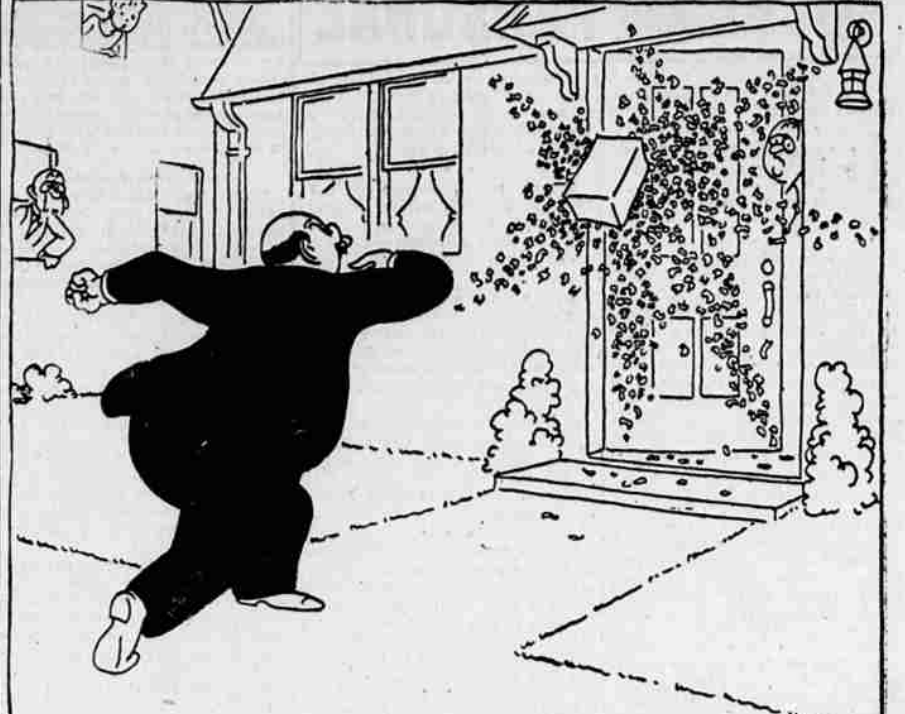
Flood Control Hearing
PORTLAND, Nov. 8.—(AP)—District U. S. engineers said today a hearing on a flood control project for the Alsea river and tributaries would be held at Waldport December 6.

English Actor Passes
LONDON, Nov. 8.—(AP)—Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, for a generation one of the great figures of the English stage, died today at his home at St. Margaret's Bay, near Dover.

Train Gets Deelion
CASADE LOCKS, Nov. 8.—(AP)—J. L. Hoover had mashed potatoes without gravy, a cut face and a smashed potato truck today, the result of a collision with the Union Pacific streamliner, four miles east of here.

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



11-2
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S'MATTER POP

By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—What Has Happened to Tommy?



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Double Promise



THE NEBBS—Delicate Sarcasm



JOBLESS BUREAU SET FOR PAYING MOTHER WEEPS AT MURDER HEARING

ST. HELENS, Nov. 8.—(AP)—Tears coursed down the cheeks of Mrs. Agnes Ledford Saturday as she listened to reading of indictments charging her with the death by poison of her stepdaughters, Ruth, 13, and Dorothy, 15, in September.

She was given November 15 to enter pleas but she has previously denied any plot against the girls' lives. They died, presumably after eating berries upon which wind had blown poisonous spray from an orchard.

Golden Gate Crash
SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 8.—(AP)—The ocean freighters Makawao and Abasco collided in the Golden Gate early today, leaving a gaping hole just above the waterline in the 3,253-ton Makawao.

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