

Two's Company

By MARGARET GUION HERZOG

Characters

Nina impulsively married David, but finds she can't forget her intense love for her stepfather.

Richard, the charming, well-to-do stepfather, shamelessly talks of love to Nina.

Honey, Nina's gay, youthful mother, is wild about Richard, her newly acquired husband.

David, a bright young auto salesman, adores Nina and strives to make her happy on his small salary.

Chapter 30

'Business Conference'

"HONEY is much more apt to obey you, Doctor," Nina went on. And besides, you can see my position... just newly married and still honeymooning, really—it might look as though I wanted to be... well, left alone, for a while."

Old Dr. Fellows laughed. "Well, I'd be glad to speak to her about it, Nina, but you know your mother's a bit obstreperous when it comes to acknowledging ill health... or fatigue, as it is in this case."

"Speak to her husband—to Richard, then."

"That might be better."

"Call him up, see him, and... and let me know what he says, will you? If that doesn't work, though I'm sure it will, I'll get on the job."

"All right, child, I'll do that. Now you won't alarm yourself about your mother's condition, will you? Rest is all she needs."

"Dr. Fellows, that was an attack of grippe she had, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was grippe."

They said goodbye... and, as always in her thoughts concerning Richard, Nina found herself torn between two conflicting things: what was right... and what she wanted.

The door-bell rang, and Nina took a deep breath... opened it. "Nina," she heard a voice say. "She backed away, hastily. 'I asked you to come here, Richard, dear,' she found herself using an absurd, Sunday-school voice, 'because there's nothing—well, clandestine, about it. This is a business conference.'"

"May I put my feet up on a chair, and light a cigar? May I keep my derby on?"

Nina said, reproachfully: "You're making fun of me—bad Richard."

And he said: "Of course I am... bad."

She moved to an isolated walnut chair. "Sit down, won't you?"

"Thanks."

He was evidently humoring her. "Honey tells me that you're planning to leave on a cruise, in about 10 days," she began... innocently.

Richard pulled out his cigarette case, but stared at it, without pressing the spring.

"Yes-s-s." He frowned a little. "Nina, my dear, I couldn't do anything but agree to go... urge Honey, in fact, since it involved a matter of her health."

Something more than the terrible feeling of attraction she felt for him, welled up in her... a feeling of admiration, as well. He was fine.

It was especially moving, because it was the first time she had felt it about him. Her love for him had been a wrong thing, and therefore, his love for her was, too. She had had to acknowledge that. But now he was being—splendid; and she had a hard time to keep from going over into his arms.

'It Was a Miracle'

QUITE suddenly, she found herself asking a question that had been in her heart for weeks. "Richard... tell me how do you feel about Honey?" She had to know.

He lit his cigarette now, blew a puff of smoke up to the ceiling. It looked like a cloud against the blue of the walls.

"I wonder if I can explain to you," he answered slowly, weighing his words. "I'm tremendously fond of her, Nina. I... I love her, I think, too; only..."

"Why did you marry her, Richard, so suddenly? You must have had some greater urge than fondness... than thinking you love someone... to do a thing like that."

He laughed a little... bitterly. "You had one, didn't you... dearest?"

"Yes..." softly. She was looking down.

"To answer your question: I thought, at that time, my feeling for Honey was the biggest thing I had ever known... it was—then Nina... Nina, dear, am I to be blamed if I do a perfectly honorable thing, and then a miracle happens... like our meeting?"

She said, more softly still: "How can you be?"

"It was—a miracle, you know. I think I knew it from the first... but I wouldn't admit it to myself. 'Oh! Who manages these things? What a dreadful, cynical sense of humor! Oh, Richard, why... why couldn't we have met before?'"

Richard's Flower

NINA opened her handbag and reached in for her latchkey. From under the crack at her front door, loud sniffling sounds could be heard; and a few particles of dust were actually sucked under, by Button's vacuum-cleaner noise.

Followed a loud sneeze, as a result of the inhalation; and—when Nina opened the door—his usual welcoming onslaught.

She just let him go ahead and maul her, and she patted his head in a detached sort of way... while all the time her thoughts were winging their way down the harbor, to Richard.

She had just come back from the pier. She could see him standing there at the rail... so brown and handsome, with his polo coat over his arm.

Honey had kept walking up forward, as the ship backed out of its slip to prolong their adieux... and Nina could still see her reaching up and taking the flower from her husband's lapel... throwing it, wildly. For once her aim had been good, and it had landed on the hat of the man in front of Nina. She retrieved it quickly... it was on her breast, now.

Poor little Honey, throwing Richard's flower to Nina... all unsuspecting.

She could still see her stepfather's smile.

(Copyright, 1937, Margaret Herzog)

David turns the budget making into a gay affair, Monday.

They were looking at each other from their two little stiff chairs. Nina thought that they both looked taut and strained... ready to go to each other... like runners waiting for the crack of the starter's pistol.

She was so afraid that one of them would break away and ruin all chance of further thoughtful discussion, that she said: "Wait... although neither of them had moved."

"I called this a business conference, Richard... well, in a way, it is. Here's what I wanted to say: it seems to me that the necessity of a rest for Honey, immediately, has taken this... this whole matter out of our hands... Do you hate the word 'Providence' as much as I do?... well, that's what it is, all the same."

"Divine Providence!" His under-lip shot out for a moment, and one of his eyebrows arched itself cynically. "I know... you're going to tell me that this separation will—cure us!"

"It will," she told him, soberly. "If we try."

"Do you want to—try, little Nina?"

"Don't... you?"

He said, after an instant's pause: "Honey never forgot her love... And it was so true that there was no answering him."

After a minute, she said: "But we can't go on... this way..."

"No."

"It's... it's nothing, is it, Richard?"

And when he echoed: "Nothing!" it was a passionate outburst of all the things their love might mean... all in that one word.

"Nothing."

And now he did cross over to her. Took her two hands in his, and looked down at them, solemnly.

"Nina," he said, "if I put every effort that's in me to forget you while I'm away... to realize what a wonderful wife I have got... to be good, and then if all my endeavors fail, if nothing can change my longing for you... Nina, will you...?"

"Wait, darling, till we have failed." But the barest hint of a possible future happiness, with Richard sent the blood thundering through her veins. Her cheeks burned, and the little pulse at her wrist hammered so that he felt it.

He bent his lips to it, and murmured: "Why, you're not the doctor, believe me... you're the patient!"

With his head still lowered, he glanced up at her... a wicked, human, amused glance, that gave the lie to all his previous grave behavior.

Be serious, Richard, and go farther away from me. You've got to be serious. We're two disgraceful people."

And he said: "We're two people in love, Nina... and all the dictates of your heavenly little conscience can't alter it. Oh, I'll try all right... but your interruption, and you'll try, but it will make no difference. Mark my words."

A pause.

"Then, 'I don't have to ask you to be—dear, to Honey?'"

"No. You don't."

"Goodby, then," Richard. "I'll see you again, but this goodby is ours."

He wanted to kiss her, and she wanted to have him, but some feeling of loyalty to David made her turn away. Silly, probably this one denial—in view of the tremendous disloyalty of her desires... but she said: "No... Richard," and she held out a small hand. Icy cold.

"Goodby, then... my dear."

His smile was mocking and—loving, all in one.

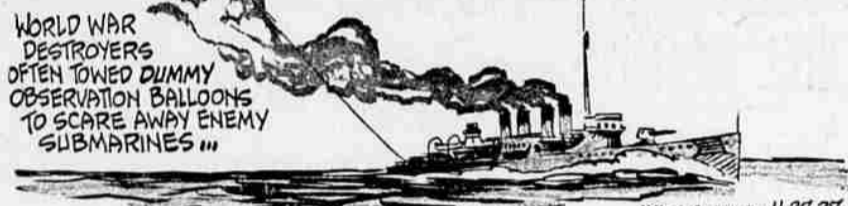
THE MODERN CASH REGISTER WAS SUGGESTED TO ITS INVENTOR, JACOB RITTY, BY THE REVOLUTION COUNTER OF A STEAMSHIP PROPELLER...

WASHED EGGS SPOIL QUICKER THAN UNWASHED EGGS...

WORLD WAR DESTROYERS OFTEN TOWED DUMMIES OBSERVATION BALLOONS TO SCARE AWAY ENEMY SUBMARINES...

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Elizabeth Manning, Governing South Carolina has been a family custom of the Mannings and Richardsons for the past 100 years or so. Since 1802—when Mrs. Elizabeth Peyre Richardson Manning's uncle, James B. Richardson, became governor of the state—six members of the family have held the gubernatorial position.

Elizabeth Manning's husband, Richard Manning, served as governor from 1824 to 1828; her brother, John P. Richardson, served from 1840 to 1842; her son, John L. Manning, from 1852 to 1854; her nephew, John P. Richardson, Jr., from 1886 to 1890; and her grandson, Richard I. Manning, from 1915 to 1919. Today, Wyndham Manning, her great-grandson, is bidding for the seat as South Carolina's next governor.

Washed Eggs Spoil
Washing eggs removes a natural and protective mucilaginous coating which serves to prevent the entrance of harmful bacteria, according to the U. S. department of agriculture. Clean, unwashed eggs bring the highest market prices.

Balloon "Scare-Crows"
It was the custom during the World war for destroyers to tow captive balloons during anti-submarine warfare. An observer, stationed in the balloon, telephoned the ship immediately on sighting the wake of a "sub."

Leopard Rides Train
ALLAHABAD, India.—(UP)—A passenger on an Indian night train opened the door at a wayside station and found he had admitted a leopard. This is the amazing story which has just reached here from Bareilly.

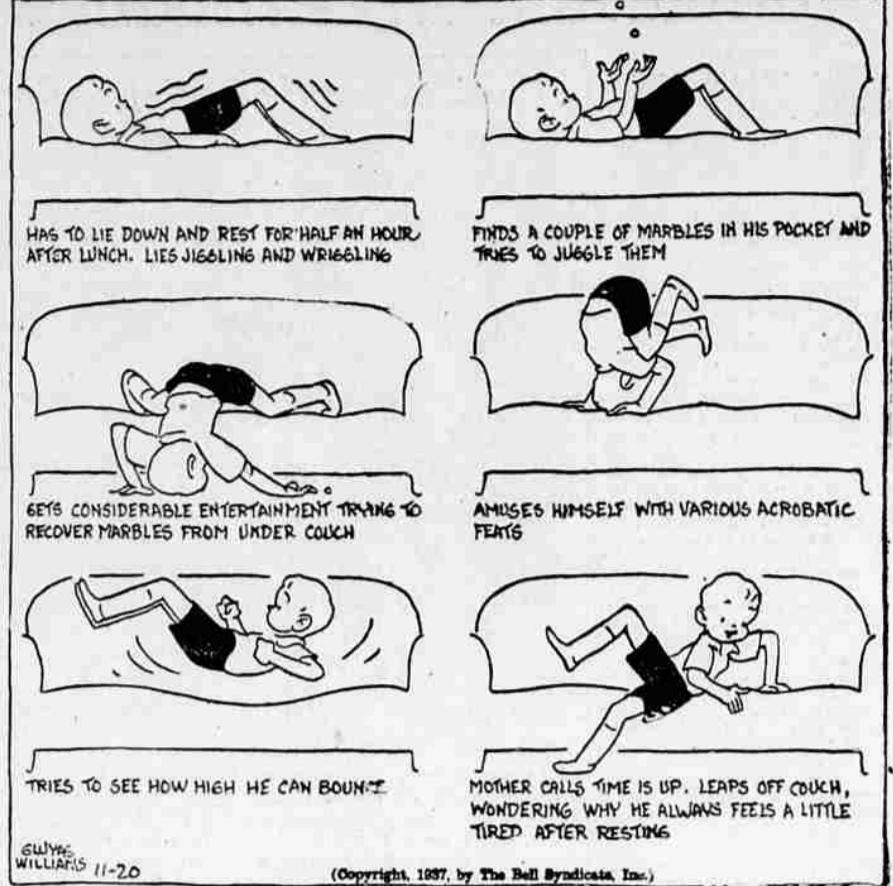
Lands Like 'Chute'
BREMEN, Germany.—(UP)—A new autogyro which stands still in the air, starts and lands vertically, and is described as crash-proof, has been tried out by the Focke-Wulf Aircraft company here, it is said.

Mail Marriage Fails
ELYRIA, O.—(UP)—Annulment of the "matrimonial bureau" marriage of the Peter Vanderwerf was asked by Mrs. Vanderwerf, who said her husband had failed to live up to pre-nuptial promises made in the correspondence.

First-class travel is to be abolished on London's subway system.

MIDDAY REST

By GLUYA WILLIAMS



S'MATTER POE

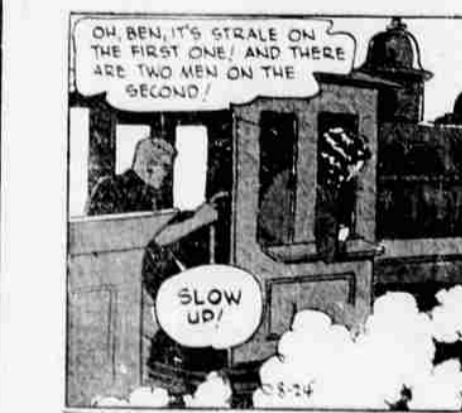
By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Dirkman Acts Strangely!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Round Two!



THE NEBBS—Please Be Charitable



been under treatment for a kidney ailment.

Francis A. O'Neill, attorney for Machado, had said his client, who had come from Canada to New York for an operation, would surrender Monday. He refused to disclose Machado's whereabouts but published reports that the man who was twice president of Cuba was in a mid-town hospital were followed by the appearance of a United States deputy marshal there late yesterday. A continuous guard was placed in the room, although Machado's lawyer and nurse said he was so ill it was "distantly possible" he might die soon.

The attorney said the alleged Cuban murders charged against Machado before his flight in 1933 were "death due to the exercise of police power."

O'Neill said he expected the murder charges and accusations that Machado had embezzled \$80,000,000 in government funds would be considered political offenses by the United States government and therefore failing to justify extradition.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Dirkman Acts Strangely!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Round Two!

THE NEBBS—Please Be Charitable

MACHADO, FORMER CUBAN DICTATOR, HELD AS SLAYER

NEW YORK, Nov. 28.—(AP)—Gen. Gerardo Machado, one-time dictator of Cuba, was under guard in a hospital today after a surprise move by federal authorities led to his arrest on an extradition warrant based upon an old Cuban murder and embezzlement charge.

President Laredo Bru in Havana was silent as to Cuba's course when his 68-year-old professor was given a hearing Monday, possibly in the hospital bedroom here where he has

By HAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGEE

By SOL HESS

By SOL HESS