

The Boxwood Barrier

By BLANCHE SMITH FERGUSON

The stars... one else, gently bred Judith Goodloe marries Reuben Oliver for his money, only to discover that his fortune is lost. Judith's code insists that she stick to her bargain and follow Reuben to a dismal mining town, Fordney Gulch, Nevada. It is hard for Reuben, desperately loving Judith, to see her struggling with poverty. And it is hard for Judith, whose resentment toward Reuben grows stronger. Then twins are born.

Chapter 24 Old Lady Fate

REUBEN, more shaken and frightened than he had ever been in his life, awkwardly welcomed his son and daughter upon their arrival. "Well, young man and woman!" He tried to assume a joviality. Achieved only a raucous huskiness at which both babies burst into a thin, indignant wall—the first words, broadly speaking, which passed between them.

He went in to see Judith with an unaccustomed lump in his throat. "Hello, Reuben!" Judith's eyes were very blue in her white face.

The best Reuben could achieve was a taut jerking of his facial muscles. He felt exactly as though he had stood by and let a smaller boy take a licking that was intended for him. He was glad to get out of the room and out of the hospital.

When he came again it was to take his family home to Casper Street. "Gosh, Judy!" He looked wonderingly at his offspring. "They're all bred ugly, aren't they?"

"Ugly?" Didn't he know beauty when he saw it? Look at the cunning little hands, the adorable turned-up noses—

Gingerly he carried the twins down to the hired car. When he stopped being afraid he would drop them, he found there was something strangely alluring in the feel of their squirming little bodies. He summoned up courage to nuzzle one fat chin, then the other. "How do you like your old Dad?" he demanded.

The startled babies howled in unison. "No so good," Reuben decided. "Well—don't raise such a row. Let's get going!"

He and Judith found plenty to talk of now. The children leveled all barriers, upset all traditions. They kept their inexperienced, adoring parents on the jump every minute. The future, immediate and remote, could be discussed without reserve.

"Maybe we can find a house with an extra room," Reuben said, after he had snugged his trousers and raked a shin trying to squeeze between the twin's bathing paraphernalia and the open door of the oven.

"Maybe you can find a better job," Judith suggested. "You bet I will!" He sounded convincing. Judith must not guess he was hanging to his present job by the skin of his teeth. Each day saw a cutting down of the working force, a lessening of production—

Each day he tried to lay by a dollar for the inevitable rainy day. Meanwhile the twins continued to fill every inch of space. They smiled over the edges as it were.

"Let's get rid of some of those doodads," Reuben suggested, after the Royal Sevres vase had gone crashing to the floor.

Judith consented half-heartedly. "I want the children to grow up appreciative of the finer things of life."

"They'll grow up fatherless if I have many more collisions with the stove. We'll stop about half of this plunder!" Wondering at the ways of women, Reuben went out in search of a vacant attic.

Judith had thought her first year in Casper Street hard. She knew now it had been easy. Two babies to be washed, fed, put to sleep, aired, sun bathed. Milk must be sterilized. Bottles cleaned. Afraid to speak above a whisper, lest a twin would awake, howl and awaken the other.

Laughter And Tears
THEY found a part time maid named Helga. She spoke only when she was spoken to. When in good humor she hummed in a dreary monotone. When in bad humor she barked things about and broke them. She cooked the dinner, washed the clothes, washed the endless dishes.

For the first time in her married life Judith was almost entirely happy. When she thought of Reuben at all she supposed he was happy too. She had no time to analyze her feelings. Whether she loved Reuben or whether she didn't made little difference now. He was her husband. Together they must take care of the children.

Reuben would have been happy too if he could have forgotten the depth to which he had dragged Judith. Saddled her with his children. Made a slave of her. She would have been better off with Brent—

These thoughts went with him as he sluiced through the mine. He heard them in the tap, tap of the

click, the raucous sound of the pills, the creak of the derricks. The twins were crouchy babies Judith spent anguished hours hanging over cribs. Reuben made record runs for doctor, medicine shopful neighbors. Life was a heart-wasting affair. Laughter followed pain, joy followed fear as naturally as day follows night and season follows season. The little house that was a sweat box in summer and an ice-box in winter became the hub of the universe for the man and woman who were rearing their young there.

Miraculously the twins survived all their mishaps. Grew dimpled adorable cuddly. Proudly Judith sent their pictures to Gran—"Love to Gran from Jim and Judy Goodloe Oliver."

In due time Gran responded with two little dresses, beautifully embroidered by herself and two silver porridge bowls. Gran, however, wrote nothing except a greeting card. She considered herself ungraciously used. It was unthinkable that a granddaughter of hers should be tied to an impossible person, whose only saving grace had been money which he had not the sense to hold on to. Perhaps Gran was wise not to write.

When the twins were 11 months old Reuben lost his job. "You'll get another," Judith, transferring a steak from pan to platter with new expertness, said cheerfully.

"Sure!" Reuben tossed his gurgling daughter high and turned to pick up his riotous son. "We'll probably have to move from this place, though."

"No tears will be shed over that," Judith assured him. "Not unless we strike a tougher one."

"As if we could!" "I've seen worse, but why worry about that until we have to? Things may boom here in a week or so."

"Of course. You'll go back to your old job." He didn't go back to his old job or on to a new one. Milk, meat for broth, fresh vegetables, eggs—the twins must have them all. Reuben's few surplus dollars melted rapidly as snow before a sun.

Moment of Desperation
THEY let Helga go. One day Reuben grim-lipped, went to the city carrying Judith's emerald engagement ring, her pendant, and bracelets. He came back with a blue pawn ticket and a sizeable roll of greenbacks. "Bore that money is gone I'll have a job."

He didn't have a job. He didn't even have the prospect of a job. "I should be able to earn," Judith wondered what she could do. She had enough wedding presents to start a gift shop but there were no customers. She could give riding lessons—But Fordney's Gulch was singularly horseless, except for a few weary nags that worked ceaselessly at the mines. The latest model Ford was the badge of prosperity and immeasurable social standing in Fordney's Gulch.

Quietly Judith commenced to sell off her precious things—hook glasses, Egyptian silver bowl with all the Pharaohs on it—The prices were pitifully small. Fordney's Gulch did not take kindly to things that looked old and battered when they were supposed to be new, but Mrs. Kraus grabbed at Judith's silver fox, her fur coat, Garv's bracelet—

And so old lady Fate piled up hazards for Reuben and Judith. With a fair measure of prosperity they would have gradually worked out their happiness, would have made a go of things. As it was—

Poverty gnawed at Reuben's self-respect—at his scant remaining faith in himself, riddling it. Inevitably the hour had struck for the Oliviers. Gran must be appealed to. There could be no further argument about it. The time for pretense had passed.

"Write the letter now, Judith," Reuben avoided his wife's eyes. His voice was raw. He was tasting the wormwood of defeat. "No use to put it off."

"No—no use." Six dollars upstairs in the bureau drawer. "If it wasn't for the babies I'd die before I'd write to Gran."

Reuben handed her his fountain pen. "Ask for \$500."

"I'll say we'll pay it back soon." "Say we may never pay it back." "I'd rather they get it straight this time."

Reluctantly, as though it were a hot coal, her fingers closed over the pen. On the little spinet desk near her was paper. "You'd better take it right down to the post office, Reuben!"

He thought: "I don't believe they'll send a cent. Probably force her to go back to them—to leave me." He said: "I'll send it special." Into this moment of defiance and desperation walked Cissy.

Tomorrow: Cissy knows what she wants.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



THE BIRD OF FUTILITY!
USING ITS TINY BEAK, THE ENGLISH SAND MARTIN TEDIOUSLY EXCAVATES ITS NEST BY REMOVING EARTH PARTICLES ONE AT A TIME!
IF IT ENCOUNTERS A BOULDER IT ABANDONS THE PROJECT...

ALL "SMELLS" ARE DERIVED FROM FOUR BASIC ODORS: FRAGRANT ACID BURNT AND CAPRYLIC (GOATY) ...

ALL CHAUFFEURS WERE AT ONE TIME OUTLAWS!

Bird of Futility
A single day of eternity, according to the eminent historian, Hendrik Van Loon, can be measured figuratively as the time it would take a tiny bird to wear away a rock 100 miles high and 100 miles wide by flying there once every 1000 years to sharpen its beak.

Strange as it seems, this expression, in itself, has its living counterpart in the sand martin, a tiny bird common in England.

Although its beak is small, the sand martin employs it exclusively to dig deep tunnels in hard clay cliffs and river banks, which are used as nests. And, oddly, the sand martin does not jab at the earth as you might do with a penknife; it lifts the dirt meticulously, one particle at a time, carefully and tediously digging far into the earth.

Four Basic Smells
All smells, scientists claim, can be broken down into four basic odors—fragrant, burnt, acid and caprylic, or goaty. From these fundamental odors and combinations thereof come

Sometimes when the sand martin is burrowing it comes to a hidden boulder, which stops further progress in that direction. Then, instead of changing its direction to go around the stone, the bird deserts the project and looks for a new place to dig!

The average sand martin's hole, slanting upward, measures two or three inches in diameter, terminating in a widened chamber about six inches across. This is lined with a grass or straw nest, softened with down.

Chauffeur Outlaws
Uniformed chauffeurs today owe the origin of their name to an 18th-century band of French outlaws, led by John the Skinner, which terrorized northern France during the Reign of Terror, robbing their victims and torturing them by fire.

This latter custom gave rise to their name, meaning "to heat." Stokers hence were called chauffeurs, and when the first steam-powered automobiles were born, the drivers were "chauffeurs." The name stuck.

Tomorrow: The Man Who Sold Out His Country.

Catches Fish
TILLAMOOK, May 2.—(AP)—An 18-pound chinook salmon measuring 30 inches was caught on a fly rod by Everett Wells, wire chief of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., of Tillamook, while fishing on the Trask river.

Noted Jockey Dead
NEWARK, N. J., May 2.—(AP) The body of Charles Korb, 55, who as a jockey rode 832 winners in 5,000 starts on American and European tracks two decades ago, was found today in Dranch Brook lake.

The sequoia trees of California are thought to be the oldest living things. Some are estimated at 4,000 years old.

Britain has placed orders for several thousand air raid precaution fire engines.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Torture in Store for Jerry!



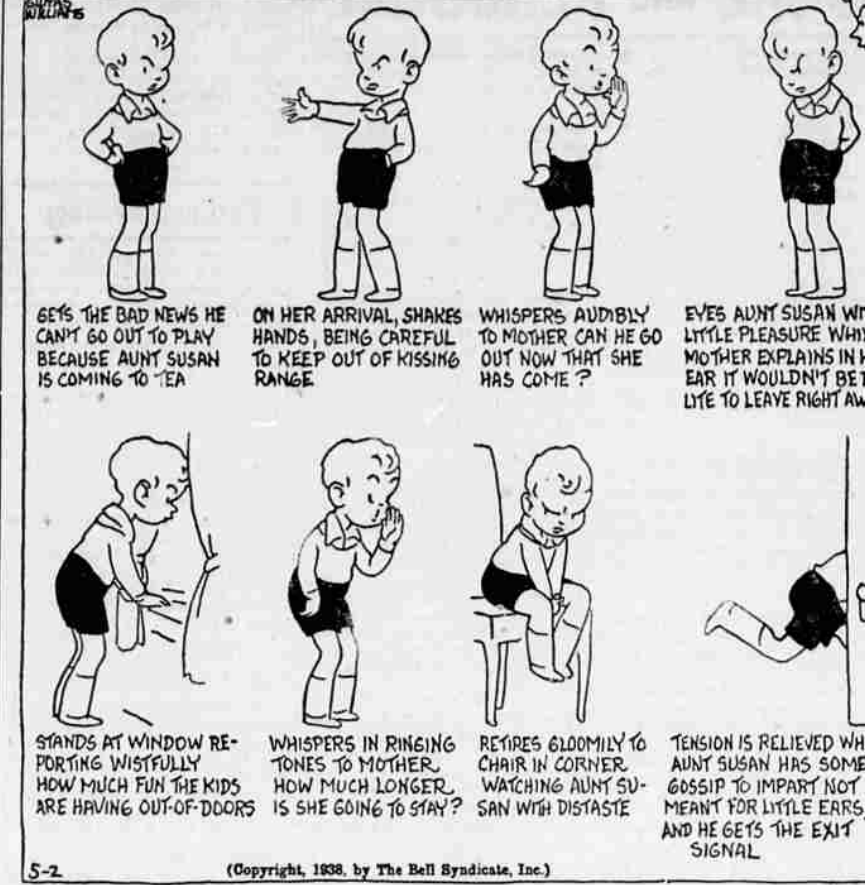
BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Omega's Farewell!



THE NEBBS—The Traitor



STAYING IN



S MATTER FOR



By HAL FORREST



By EDWIN ALGERP



By SOL HESS



PORTLAND MAYOR TOLD TO RETRACT

PORTLAND, May 2.—(AP)—An "immediate and complete retraction" of "unwarranted attacks" upon Harry Bridges, west coast C. I. O. director, was demanded from Mayor Joseph K. Carson by the Portland Industrial Union council, C. I. O., Saturday.

The council charged in a letter to the mayor that he had indicated his "utter disdain for the working people of this community, a disregard for established national law, and a bias for the vested interests as opposed to the welfare of the whole people."

Closing time for Too Late to Circulate Ads is 1:30 p. m.

YREKA ACCIDENT SCATTERS FRUIT

YREKA, Cal., May 2.—(AP)—Oranges were scattered for a quarter of a mile along the highway and tourists spent hours in picking up the fruit after a truck accident late Saturday.

Ira Crawford, Portland truck driver, escaped serious injury in the accident north of Gaswell. The truck and a semi-trailer unit loaded with oranges from Redlands piled up in a ditch.

Crawford's helper, asleep in the sleeper, was not hurt.

Closing time for Too Late to Circulate Ads is 1:30 p. m.