SHOW BOAT GIRL

By ROBERTA COURTLAND

Chapter 25

Dolores!

THE game room attendant let her into the room, not quite willingly, but she brushed past him and stood for a moment looking swiftly about her. Then she saw Randy. He was at the roulette table, bending his dark handsome head above a woman who sat there with a stack of chips before her.

The woman was blonde; her evening gown was smart and very becoming. And as she lifted her face, laughing up at Randy, a cold hand seemed to close suddenly about Melissa's quivering heart and squeeze it until every drop of warm, life-giving blood congealed.

For the woman above whom Randy bent with such devoted interest and admiration was Dolores.

As though the shock and pain and distress deep within her had called to him, Randy straightened and looked at Melissa. Across the crowded room their eyes met and held. Melissa saw him say something to Dolores, and she saw the lovely blonde head turn and heard Dolores' laugh, which was triumphant and derisive and which lashed at the younger girl. And then Randy came swiftly across the floor to Melissa, his face set and stern, his eyes cold.

"I thought I told you to stay out of the game room," he said harshly, and took her by the elbow, turning her about, guiding her toward the door.

"I'm sorry," Melissa stammered faintly. "But I wanted terribly to see you—"

"Was it so important it couldn't wait?" asked Randy as he guided her down the stairs to the moonswept deck.

"I thought it was," said Melissa shakily. And then she cried out sharply, "Oh, Randy, Randy—why are you hurting me so? What happened this afternoon isn't important—not to me—"

"It's important to me," said Randy grimly. "It opened my eyes to a lot of things. I've been doing some pretty tall thinking ever since. I'm afraid there's been some unpleasant gossip going the rounds about you and Jimmy Marston."

Melissa caught her breath, staring up at him, wide-eyed, white-faced. "But I told you, darling, about Honey Stevens' visit—what she told me—"

"I know, but only you and Honey Stevens know that. Maybe it is the truth—I wouldn't know," answered Randy grimly. "The point is that to the general public, as much of it as is represented by the people who come here, who are our customers, who pay the expenses of the River Queen—you're a soulless, brazen little hussy who drove a fine young fellow to his death. And they seem to want no part of you."

Melissa stood with her slim back against the rail, her mittened hands outstretched on either side, clenched about the wood so that the frail delicate lace mesh of her mitts was strained to the breaking point. She couldn't manage words; speech was beyond her. That Randy, her dearly beloved, Randy who had held her close and hard in his arms only a few hours before should be saying such cruel, callous things to her seemed unbearable.

The Contract

"BY THE way," asked Randy after a tense, rather dreadful moment. "I saw you at the table with a customer just now. Who was he? What did he want?"

"His name was Beasley," said Melissa, and found it very hard to get the words past the agonizing pain that tore at her heart. "He wanted to offer me a radio contract."

"Radio, eh? Well, that's wonderful — congratulations!" said Randy swiftly.

His back was to the moonlight, his face in shadow so that his expression was lost to her. She could only guess at it, as she stared at the pallid oval that was all she could see of his face.

"When are you leaving?" he went on, and Melissa's heart fell straight into her little black strapped slippers.

"I told him I wasn't interested," she stammered faintly.

"What?" barked Randy, as though he couldn't believe that he had heard her correctly. "A radio offer — and you turned it down? Are you crazy, girl? Where is he? I'll find him and tell him you've changed your mind—"

"I told him that I was going to marry you and stay on the show boat," she said very faintly.

Randy had turned away from her. He paused now, turned away so that she could no longer see even the pallid oval of his face. There was a little tense moment of utter stillness, and then he said curtly, "Oh, yes—I meant to tell you — I—ah — I'm afraid that we're going to have to alter our plans a bit, Melissa."

She held her breath, waiting, one small hand clenched about her heart as though by that pressure she could ease a little of the pain that burned like a live coal there.

"Yes, Randy?" she said at last very low, her voice stricken and very faint.

"Don't make me feel any more of a heel than I know I am, Melissa," said Randy shortly. "After all, marriage for a man in my racket is a fool's game. I should have realized that. As a matter of fact, I suppose I did, only I was trying to kid myself along. You're pretty and cute, and — well, I guess I lost my head for a bit. But I seem to have both feet on the ground now—"

"Is that why you brought Dolores back to the boat?" asked Melissa quietly, her voice a sick, dead thing.

"The truth is, Melissa," said Randy grimly, "Dolores belongs here, and you don't. I've been wondering how I'd tell you. I couldn't simply heave you off the boat and bring Dolores back, and of course, I couldn't have both of you here at once. But now this radio offer for you—why, it's the perfect solution. You'll go into New York and make a career for yourself on the radio, and Dolores will come back to the show boat and everybody will be happy."

She caught her breath on a little sob. Happy! She'd never be happy again! She'd never know joy and delight and gladness again. Her heart was broken. That was what that awful pain there meant—

Randy said suddenly, harshly. "Well, don't just stand there. Say something, can't you?"

"There — there's not much to say, is there?" whispered Melissa piteously.

Randy stood very still, almost rigid for a moment and then he said roughly, "I'll find Beasley and tell him you've changed your mind."

Melissa turned, her shoulders sagging a little, one hand pressed hard above her aching, frightened, bewildered heart, and crept, like a sorely wounded animal, to her stateroom.

It was all over: the lovely dream of love; the perfect idyll toward which her every thought and emotion had been turned since that black night on the Point when she had found Randy on the path and had helped him to the cabin.

Parting

THERE was no sign of Randy at breakfast. Melissa, her eyes dark and bleak, great circles of fatigue and grief marking the night of weeping through which she had gone, drank half of a cup of coffee and refused anything else. As she left the dining-room, one of the game room attendants said gently, "The boss wants you, Melissa—he's in his office."

For just the merest breath of a moment hope rode high in her eager heart. But the moment she opened the door in answer to Randy's voice, her heart dropped sickly and the tiny, new-born hope withered and died painfully. For Randy was pale, his face set, his eyes stern and cold.

"Good morning, Melissa," he said formally, as if never in all his life had he held her close and hard in his arms and kissed her as though he could never have enough of her kisses. "I've got your contract here — and it's a darned good one. I threshed out all the details with Beasley and you're to report to him in New York on the fifteenth. That will give you five days. You'd better arrange to go in town this afternoon; one of the boys will take you in the station wagon."

Melissa said nothing. She couldn't.

He looked up at her and then swiftly away, and went on rather hurriedly, "Not that Beasley is going to let you get lonely. Mrs. Beasley is going to see to it that you meet some nice young people—"

He unfolded the contract. "If you'll sign here, I'll get this off to Beasley and you'll be all set."

And then pride and all the other emotions that had tried to keep her silent melted, and she cried wildly, like a hurt, frightened child. "Oh, Randy, Randy—what's come over you? Don't you—don't you love me any more?"

There was a tiny, tense pause. Randy did not turn. His hands were sunk deeply into his pockets, and his face was turned to the morning visible through the window.

"I'm sorry, Melissa," he said after a little, and his voice was colorless, cold. "I'm afraid I never did—not the way you wanted me to. You're cute and appealing and all that, but I'm not the man ever to be tied down to marriage. I'd hate it—and maybe some day I'd even hate you."

She was crying now, as a child cries—her lower lip caught between her teeth, the tears sliding down her white face, while she made no effort whatever to check them, to wipe them away.

Randy took out his handkerchief and touched her face with it, wiping the tears gently with a hand that shook a little. He said on a sharp, agonized breath, "Oh, my darling — don't! Don't!" But the next moment he had jerked away from her.

To be continued

On the Radio Chains

STATIONS:

Chain affiliation and where they are on the dial:
KALE (MBS) 1330, Portland
KEX (NBC-Blue) 1190, Portland
KGA (NBC-Blue & MBS) 1510 Spokane; KGO (NBC-Blue) 810 San Francisco; KGW (NBC-Red) 620, Portland; KJR (NBC-Blue) 1000, Seattle; KNX (CBS) 1070 Los Angeles; KOA (NBC-Red) 850 Denver; KOIN (CBS) 970, Portland; KOMO (NBC-Red) 950 Seattle; KPO (NBC-Red) 680 San Francisco; KSL (CBS) 1160 Salt Lake City.

Time Shown is PST

Monday

5:00 p. m.—Floyd Wright, KOMO; Vox Pop, KSL, KOIN, KNX; Flying Patrol, KGO, KJR; Stars of Today, KGW; Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO.

5:30 p. m.—News of the World, KEX, KGO, KJR; Harry W. Flannery, KNX; Voice, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Eyes of the World, KOIN.

6:00 p. m.—Radio Theater, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Music by White, KEX; Voice of Victory, KGO; Old Timers, KJR.

6:30 p. m.—For America We Sing, KGO, KEX; Dr. I. Q., Jim McClain, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Greater Washington Hour, KJR.

7:00 p. m.—Monday Merry-Go-Round, KGO, KJR, KEX; Freddy Martin's orch., KNX, KOIN, KSL; Contented Hour, KPO, KGW, KOMO.

7:30 p. m.—Blondie, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Cavalcade of America, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Jimmie Fidler, KGO, KEX, KJR.

8:00 p. m.—Amos 'n' Andy, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Edward Tomlinson, KGO, KJR, KEX; Fred Waring, KPO, KOMO KGW.

8:15 p. m.—Irene Rich, KGO, KEX, KJR; Lanny Ross, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Lum and Abner, KPO, KOMO, KGW.

8:30 p. m.—I Love a Mystery, KGO, KEX, KJR; Hawthorne House, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Gay Nineties Review, KNX, KSL, KOIN.

9:00 p. m.—Telephone Hour, KPO, KOMO, KGW; I Was There, KNX, KOIN; Excursions in Science, KSL.

9:30 p. m.—Paul Martin's Music, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Hollywood Showcase, KNX, KOIN; News, KSL, KJR, KEX; Let There Be Music, KGO.

10 p. m.—Ran Wilde's orch., KGO, KEX, KJR; Reporter News, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Masterworks of Music, KSL; News, KNX; Five Star Final, KOIN.

10:30 p. m.—Ed Stoker's Music, KOMO; Claude Thornhill's orch., KGO; Alvino Rey's orch., KSL; Broadway Bandwagon, KEX; Moonlight Sonata, KGW; For America We Sing, KJR; War Time Women, KOIN; Concert Hall, KPO.

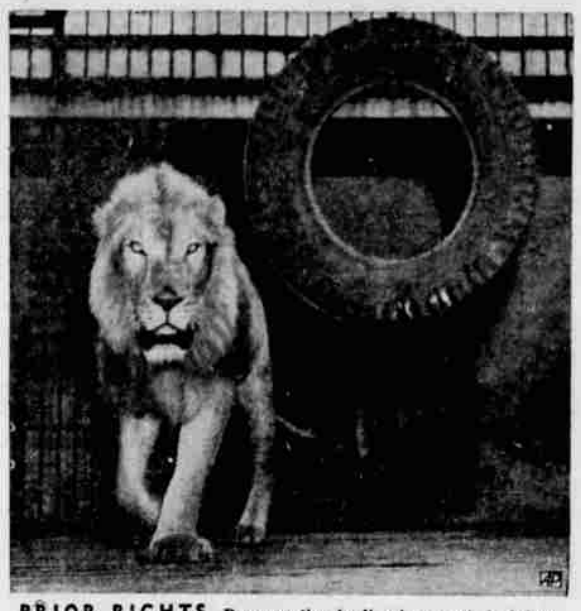
11 p. m.—Wilbur Hatch's orch., KSL, KOIN; Music and Moonlight, KPO, KGW; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; News, KNX, KGO; Reveries, KOMO.

Tuesday

5:00 p. m.—Flying Patrol, KGO, KJR; Don Winslow of the Navy, KPO; Are You a Missing Heir, KSL; News, KOIN; Musical Portrait, KOMO.

5:30 p. m.—Bob Burns Show, KSL; Horace Heidt's Treasure Chest, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Bill Henry, KOIN; News of the World, KEX, KGO, KJR; Harry W. Flannery, KNX.

6:00 p. m.—Burns and Allen, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Second Husband, KSL, KNX; Dance Time, KJR; What's The Answer, KOIN.



PRIOR RIGHTS—Pre-war tire in lions' cage at Audubon park zoo in New Orleans is safe from tire-thieves, you can bet.

6:30 p. m.—Fibber McGee and Molly, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Symphony Concert, KGO, KEX, KJR; Report to the Nation, KNX, KOIN.

7:00 p. m.—Bob Hope, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Talk by Lord Halifax, KSL, KOIN.

8:00 p. m.—Amos 'n' Andy, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Three Ring Time, KGO, KJR; Rhythm Time, KEX.

8:15 p. m.—Lum and Abner, KPO, KGW, KOMO; Lanny Ross, KNX, KSL, KOIN.

8:30 p. m.—Information Please, KGO, KEX, KJR; Are You a Missing Heir, KNX, KOIN; Johnny Presents, KPO, KGW, KOMO; News, KSL.

9:00 p. m.—Duffy's Tavern, KNX, KOIN, KSL; News, KGO, KJR, KEX; Adventures of the Thin Man, KPO, KGW, KOMO.

9:30 p. m.—Don Bestor's Orch., KGO, KJR; Battle of the Sexes, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Bob Burns Show, KNX, KOIN; News, KSL, KEX.

10:00 p. m.—Cugat Rumba Revue, KGO, KEX, KJR; Reporter News, KPO, KOMO, KGW; Masterworks of Music, KSL; News, KNX; Five Star Final, KOIN.

10:30 p. m.—Stan Kenton's Orch., KSL; Al Donahue's Orch., KOMO; Claude Thornhill's Orch., KGO, KJR; Broadway Bandwagon, KEX; Moonlight Sonata, KGW; Concert Hall, KPO; War Time Women, KOIN.

11:00 p. m.—Swing Your Partner, KPO, KGW; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Anita Carol and Erwin Yeo, KOIN; News, KNX, KGO; Reveries, KOMO.

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

WHEN MRS. PERLEY WHO HAS NEVER COMPLETELY MASTERED THE FINER POINTS OF DRIVING A CAR, DECIDED TO TAKE TO A BICYCLE FOR THE DURATION, FRED AND THE NEIGHBORS WERE MUCH RELIEVED—BUT ONLY FOR A WHILE

The Grange

Roxy Ann Grange

Roxy Ann Grange officers took their stations Friday evening following seating drill. Master Roscoe Roberts presided.

Dr. R. P. Mortenson gave an instructive talk on the essential materials for an emergency center and how we can best be prepared to render first aid.

Tuesday evening a special meeting will be called for people of the entire district to register and complete plans for a course in first aid. Everyone is urged to attend as we will greatly need experienced workers in the days to come. Defense Chairman Luman asks for the cooperation of all.

A motion picture, "Sentinels of Safety," added much to our evening's program in education. Suggestions on safe-guarding our school children on the way to and from school were a fitting climax to our safety program for the year.

Community night was announced for Friday evening, April 10 with a good program under way and everybody welcome.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS by JOHN HIX

AIRBLITZ PROPHECY

According to an old news clipping in the pos session of Dr. Edward Saint, noted archivist, Rudolph Martin of the German Interior department, in 1907, issued a pamphlet in which he "foresaw" that Germany would finally vanquish Britain in a sky war. The Reichstag had recently appropriated large funds for the development of airships and airplanes.

ENEMY MONUMENT

Colonel Patrick Ferguson, killed at the battle of King's Mountain in 1780, was admired for his courage in cutting down white flags raised by the Tories. He fell with eight bullets in his body.

HAP HOPPER, Washington Correspondent — **He Didn't Talk** — Edited by Drew Pearson and Bob Allen

LI'L ABNER—The Wolf Pack! — By Al Capp

THE NEBBS—Busy Lines — By Hess

MORE TRESTLE FIRES

Brawley, Calif., April 6.—(AP)—The Southern Pacific railroad disclosed today that two isolated branch line trestles had been burned approximately 10 miles from where two others were set afire a week ago.

• SHOP AT NIGHT

Barker's are open until 8 o'clock EVERY night.

Barker's

Store for Men

TURN ABOUT

New York, April 6—(AP)—Mlle. Josephine Eberli, 82, who as just plain "Josie" waited on the tables of the Steinbugler family of Brooklyn for half a century, played a new role last night. In honor of her 50 years of uninterrupted domestic service, she sat at the head of the table while 33 of the Steinbugler clan waited upon her.

PRINCE TO LECTURE

Washington, April 6. — (AP) — Crown Prince Olav of Norway will make a three-week cross-country lecture tour this month, starting at New York City April 11, the Norwegian legation announced today.

Closing time for Classified Ads 9 a. m.—Too late to Classify 12:30 p. m.