

The Singing Fullback

A serial story of youthful love and hair-raising football games. Second installment begins below. Read the synopsis, then go on with the story.

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THE SINGING FULLBACK

Barney Reid, after a year's work in a small iron mill in his home town, goes to Howard University to study law. His father being a poor minister, Barney decides to help himself as much as possible by working in a restaurant. This takes up a great deal of his time, and he cannot afford to leave his work to try out for football.

In his early days at college he meets Duke Hart a former star on a high school team on which Barney had also played, and Sally Martin, a beautiful young co-ed whom he also knew in high school. Hart has always disliked Barney, and when he hears that he cannot afford to go out for football, remarks that he must be yellow. Barney resents this deeply, and fight ensues in which Hart is knocked to the ground.

Sally warns Barney that Hart is a dangerous man to fool with, but Barney believes that he can take care of himself.

CHAPTER III

Barney and Sally walked across the campus in silence. For the moment Hart was forgotten.

"Tell me," said Sally, "do you ever do any singing these days. You used to be just swell back home."

"Not much," Barney was a trifle

embarrassed. "You see, I've been working in the mill, and there isn't much chance for a fellow to sing in there, with all the noise and the hard work to be done."

"Weren't you in the choir of your dad's church?"

"Yes—of course. But why?"

"I was just thinking..."

"Thinking what?"

"Well, I happen to know one of the music teachers here at college. He's the choir director of one of the churches in the city. He told me only the other day that he was looking for someone with a real mellow tenor voice—for solo parts. I thought maybe you'd do. Your voice was always pretty good."

"But it isn't trained. There're lots of fellows who can sing much better than I can."

"That's just the point. He doesn't want a man whose voice is cultivated and everything. There are plenty of them around here. He wants someone who sings the old spirituals—naturally."

"I see, but—"

"You'll go up and see him, won't you? I'll go along."

"Oh, all right."

Professor Hill of the school of music welcomed the two into his office later that afternoon.

"How do you do, Miss Martin," he greeted the girl. "Won't you two come in?"

"This is Barney Reid," Sally smiled at him. "I think he's just the man you're looking for—for your choir."

"I see. I'm glad to know you, Mr. Reid. Have you had any experience in singing before?"

Sally hastened to detail what Barney had done in his father's choir. She described his work in glowing terms.

"We'll give you a chance," said the professor. "Let's hear you sing some old spiritual—just as you would if you were home."

Barney was nervous. He arose. The smiling eyes of Sally and the austere ones of the professor were upon him.

"Get—" he said.

The professor dimmed the lights and sat down. "Go ahead," he urged. "Sing anything."

Barney started out hesitatingly, but gained courage as he launched into an old-time spiritual which his father had taught him many years ago.

"My Lord, what a morning
When the stars begin to fall,
You'll see the world on fire,
You'll see hite moon a bleedin' an'
The moon will turn to blood..."

When he finished, there was silence in the room for a moment. Then the professor arose and grasped Barney's hand.

"Boy," he said warmly, "you've got just what I want. That was great."

"I was wonderful," she murmured.

"If you want the job," said Professor Hill, "it's yours. It doesn't pay much—ten dollars a week—but you sing only on Sundays and come to one rehearsal a week. Is that all right with you?"

"Ten dollars a week! Barney's heart leaped with joy. Why, that would pay his board bill, at least. He wouldn't have to work in the restaurant any more. And he could go out for football!"

"Sure," Barney said simply, "I'm on."

CHAPTER IV

Next day found Barney out on the field limbering up his muscles, happily booting the pigskin, getting back into old-time shape. The restaurant job had been given up; his evenings were free now except when special rehearsals were being held. It gave him an immense thrill to climb once more into the moleskins and padded breeches, to feel the cleats of his shoes dig into the soft earth, to see the ball shoot from his hand across the field in a long spiraling pass.

Under the tutelage of the freshman coach, his old speed and accuracy returned. And the driving power which had been lacking while in high school now was his. He hadn't worked those long hours in the iron mill for nothing.

Barney didn't find it hard to make the freshman squad. He fitted in perfectly at the fullback position. His work in practice—scrimmages brought forth warm praise from the

coach and from those who watched from the sidelines.

Of course, the freshman team didn't really count for much at Howard. Freshman teams are generally watched only because of what material they will furnish for next year's varsity aggregation. Generally it's hardly worth while to keep track of them, so many flunk out or quit school.

But the varsity was going to lose a large number of seasoned players next year through graduation and other causes. So the frosh team began to take on importance.

Barney found himself being watched. Sometimes he could distinguish Sally or Duke Hart or Professor Hill along the sidelines. Barney did his best.

When the frosh were holding their first practice scrimmage against the varsity, Barney was told to take the ball. "Break through the center of the line," the coach ordered. "I want to see how it'll hold up."

Aud Barney proceeded to do just that. Like a shot from a gun, he started off-tackle, then cut back through center. He got clear and eluded the half-back who lunged toward him. He sidestepped another and streaked for the open field. Half the varsity team was on his heels, but only one man in front. That man was Duke Hart!

Barney put his head down. Hart came in from the side. Barney streaked past him. And then he felt a sharp twinge of pain in his ankle. He stumbled and fell.

Barney knew what had happened. Hart had deliberately clipped him. And had not tackled at all, but had thrown his whole weight against Barney's leg. And Barney's leg had collapsed.

The trick is illegal, but they still get away with it. Nobody seemed to have noticed this time, and Barney was not one to squeal. But the incident didn't cause him to like Hart any more.

CHAPTER V

Barney got up gamely, dusted off his togs, and went back into the tussle. He smashed through the varsity line for two touchdowns after that, each time treating Hart, who was playing safety, to a stiff straight-



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