

The Hollywood Story

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CHAPTER I

Dan Rorimer had been in Hollywood two weeks when he got an airmail letter from Ziggy Young in New York. Ziggy was in the Herald-Tribune, and he was occupying the apartment in East 42nd street that Rorimer had recently vacated to go to Hollywood and a scenario-writing job with Continental Pictures.

Rorimer was in a hurry to get up to his room and change his clothes. It was Saturday afternoon, and Paul Collier was going to pick him up to play golf. So when the clerk at the Roosevelt handed him the letter Rorimer stuck it in his pocket and made for the elevators.

Later on, attired in linen knickerbockers and a light pull-over sweater, he telephoned for a bellboy to bring him some gingerale and ice and pick up a suit to be pressed.

At the knock on his door he said "Come in," and Collier entered, triumphantly escorting the grinning Filipino boy and carrying the tray himself.

"Just in time," he announced, cheerily. "Playing the nineteenth hole first."

"I'm hot," said Rorimer, "and I'm thirsty, and I'm not in the best of humor. Help yourself while I clean out the pockets of this suit."

Collier, mixing himself a drink and taking it over to the comfortable arm chair beside the window, said, "What's the matter, Dan? Finding they don't appreciate your talents at Continental?"

He stretched his long, well-proportioned frame lazily and reached for one of Rorimer's cigars.

Dan granted. "I learned today that they've cast Frederick Atwood as the newspaper reporter in 'Grim's Holiday.' Can you imagine that sheik doing a convincing job as a newspaper man?"

"You should be glad," Paul Collier told him. "That they're starting at last to make a picture of your story. When they buy them it doesn't always mean that they produce 'em. They do funny things in Hollywood." He sighed. "Hurry up and grab your drink, Dan. I'm parched."

Rorimer tipped the bellboy and dismissed him. "Here's a letter," he said, "from Ziggy Young." He picked up his glass, said "Here's how," and sat on the bed.

"Down the hatchway," Collier responded mechanically. "What's Ziggy up to?"

Rorimer ripped open the letter, read and frowned. "It's long enough," he said presently. "I'll read the postscript—Ziggy always puts his news in a great big P.S. He was never known to put the punch in his lead."

"How much does he want to borrow?" Collier asked lazily, and Rorimer got up from the bed with an oath. "Can you beat that?" he exclaimed. "He wants me to look up some girl friend of his out here and try to get her a job in pictures. Me! . . . Listen:

"P.S.—Be a regular guy for once in your life and be a favor. And I've been doing nothing but favors for him ever since I've known him!—There's a swell little girl out there in Hollywood from that dear old Tulsa, the town that gave Ziggy Young to the world. Her name is Anne Winter, and her family and my family have been just like that ever since my voice began to change."

"That's a long time," said Collier.

"Don't interrupt," said Rorimer. "I just learned from my mother." He read, "That Anne left for Hollywood about two weeks ago, all fired up with ambition to break into the movies. Her folks don't think much of the idea, but Anne's a trifle bull-headed."

"Most of them are," Collier observed.

"Listen," Rorimer said, and continued reading. "I haven't seen Anne for about five years. She was nothing but a kid-then—a trifle leggy and with lots of freckles. If she isn't good-looking by this time she never will be, and if you don't look her up and buy her a dinner whenever she's hungry I'll be off you for life. Maybe you can get her a break in the movies. You've got

some kind of a pull or you would a't be out there yourself. And those big stars like Clara Bow and Dolores Del Wozzles can't last forever, so why not give Anne a chance?"

"That," Rorimer announced, flinging the letter down on the bed, "is what I call a lot of crust. I should spend my time and money being nice to a friend of Ziggy Young's family down in Tulsa!"

Collier was laughing heartily. "You haven't got a chance in the world to duck it," he said. "I'll bet Ziggy's already written to dear little Anne and she'll be expecting to hear from you." He added that the next time he saw Dolores Del Rio he would tell her something to give her the laugh.

Collier saw them all. He wrote a daily column on Hollywood for

extra trouble to drive out to her address to look her up.

"Send a telegram," said Collier. "Tell her to call you up and leave her phone number."

"All right. And I'll send Ziggy Young a telegram, too."

They went downstairs. At the telegraph desk Rorimer wrote a message for Anne Winter, explaining that he was a friend of Ziggy Young's, and would like her to get in touch with him at the Roosevelt.

To Ziggy Young he wrote: "Am looking up Miss Winter stop I hope you get murdered in a speak-easy."

When he and Collier, two slim, well-molded young men in golf togs, proceeded to their game.

It was half past six or later when Rorimer got back to the hotel. There was a message for him at the desk when he asked

talked about the opportunities for good dialogue writers. And then the contract.

Ziggy Young had called him a lucky dog and Rorimer supposed he was. He grinned in recollection of the party he had thrown for some of his newspaper friends. His farewell party. To a man they would admit it. They made dire prophecies. They predicted he would be back in New York before the summer, with a pair of smoked glasses and a tin cup.

And they had done it. Rorimer was out of town. . . . Oh, well, it was a good party.

His mind went back to Anne Winter. The slip of paper bearing her message lay on the little stand beside his bed. Paul Collier had said, in parting, "Don't forget to call Miss Winter. And if she has a girl friend I'm out of town."

Collier had said he was going to Long Beach. Rorimer picked up the slip of paper and read it again. He thought, "I don't have to call her up—not tonight, anyway." Still, he had committed himself to Ziggy Young, and he had nothing to do tonight.

He rang for some ginger ale and finished dressing. It was warm, February 15 and just like summer. Probably snowing in New York, he thought. He hoped Ziggy Young was knee deep in slush, covering a fire or something.

When the bell boy came Rorimer filled a glass, drank it, and picked up the telephone. "Gladstone 5855," he said.

Waiting for the connection, he reminded himself that he never did have any luck on blind dates. Just a big sap, he thought, and fervently cursed Ziggy Young again.

"Hello," he said. "Is this Miss Winter?"

It was. "This is Dan Rorimer—Ziggy Young's friend. You got my telegram, I see."

Miss Winter said she had, and that it was kind of him to take the trouble. She added that it was nice to hear from one of Ziggy's friends.

Her voice was pleasing. Rorimer was altogether unprepared to find it so. Nice and low, and he had expected a strident sound, full of freckles and long legs. It had poise. It made him think that its owner knew exactly what to do with it.

For an awkward moment he paused. Then he said, "Well, how do you like Hollywood?" And thought immediately that it sounded very silly.

"I'm in love with what I've seen of it," said Miss Winter. "You see, I've had a rather bad cold and have had to stay in. I'm not," she hastened to add, "blaming it on your climate. I caught it on the train coming out."

Rorimer laughed. "I'm not a Californian," he said. "I'm a stranger here, too."

"Oh, really? That encourages me."

Rorimer said he felt a little courage himself, and glanced toward the tray on the writing desk. "Are you busy this evening?" he ventured.

She was not. "That's fine," Rorimer said. "If you haven't eaten, perhaps you'd like to dine with me. If you're at all like me, you're not crazy about eating alone."

"I think that would be lovely," said Miss Winter. "I was just about to go out to dinner when you called."

"It's a date then," said Rorimer. "And later maybe we can dance—unless you think your cold . . ."

"Oh, I'm entirely over it now. And I'd like to, very much."

Rorimer said he would be over as soon as she was ready. "We

needn't dress unless you want to."

"Then I'll be ready when you arrive."

He hung up the receiver, feeling decidedly better. He even felt friendly once more toward Ziggy Young. Standing before his dresser mirror he gave a final careful adjustment to his tie, and with military brushes did a little unnecessary work on his hair.

It was brown hair, rather wavy, and of a slightly coarse texture that, once combed, required little attention. But Rorimer brushed it anyway—straight back above the ears—and glanced critically at the part. A tanned reflection looked back at him from the glass, strong-mouthed, firm of chin and blue of eye. A not unpleasant face, especially with regards to the eyes, which had little laughter

ter lived in Number Two. A door opened half way down the ground floor corridor in answer to his ring, and the "blind date" came advancing to meet him.

She said, "Hello, Mr. Rorimer," in a nice comradely manner. "You see, I was ready."

Dan, feeling her warm hand-clasp and noting the brilliant perfection of teeth revealed by her smiling lips, vowed that he would send Ziggy Young a couple of the finest ties on the Hollywood boulevard. His "How do you do, Miss Winter?" sounded stiffly formal to him, and entirely inadequate.

Holding the street door open for her to pass through ahead of him, he murmured something about hoping he hadn't kept her waiting too long for dinner.

"Of course not," she assured him. "You got out here as quick

and vivid, shone brightly in the gloom of the car and her hair, he suspected, must be coal black beneath the tight-fitting, helmet-shaped hat.

He said, "Have you been to the Brown Derby?"

"Just once—for lunch."

"Let me see, now. Would you like to go to the Blossom room at the Roosevelt? That's a good place to eat and dance, but it's a little early. I'll tell you; let's have dinner at the Brown Derby and then go to the Blossom room to dance."

She nodded her head vigorously. "Check!"

"We're taking off. Stand by for a loop," he said, and swung the car around in the street in a tight arc.

Some minutes later, as they were being shown to a table in the restaurant, Rorimer heard someone call, "Hello, Dan," and he turned to see a young man waving to him from one of the tables along the wall.

Rorimer said, "Hello, Johnny," and saluted, and when he helped Anne Winter with her coat he informed her: "That's Johnny Middleton. He's a free-lance press agent. And the girl with him is Olivia Madden."

"I saw her as we came in," Anne Winter said. "I've heard a lot about her, of course. I think she's lovely. I'm tempted to turn and stare."

"Let's of people do," Rorimer said. "I'll have to tell you about Johnny later. He's quite a boy. You see, he has a bunch of movie stars for clients—Olivia Madden is one—and he falls in love with every one in turn. . . . Shall I order for you?"

She nodded. "I'd love to have you. It's so comforting to have someone do it for you."

"It's a gift," said Rorimer, laughing. "I merely choose what I want myself and then double the order."

Nevertheless, she noted, he studied the menu with considerable care and turned now and then to ask a question of the waiter.

When he had finished and offered her a cigar, which she declined with a murmured "No, thanks—not before meals," she leaned across the table toward him and said, "And now you'll have to tell me all about yourself."

Rorimer smiled, and his nose exuded thin streams of smoke. "All?" he said.

"Well, all you discretely can."

"Well, I'll give you a tabloid version. Born in Knoxville, Tennessee. Went to school at Vanderbilt. Worked on a paper in Nashville, and another one in Detroit. Went to New York and worked on a couple of more there. Met Ziggy Young on the Herald-Tribune and roomed with him for a while. When I went over to the Telegram we split up, Ziggy having night hours and I working days. Not so good for sleeping, if you know what I mean."

She nodded and smiled.

Rorimer continued: "Wrote a short story while I was on the Telegram, based on a murder story I covered. Much to my surprise, it was accepted. Wrote an-

other one about a certain high-class prizefighter, and that was accepted. Then I got a swell head, and listened too attentively to my literary agent, who advised me to give up newspaper work and devote my time to fiction. . . . In a little less than a year I wrote 12 short stories and a play. Two of the stories were accepted. The play is still kicking around Broadway and by this time must have been turned down by every producer in New York."

He stopped. "Still interested?" She nodded eagerly.

"All right, if you insist. Two out of 12 is not so good—especially at the prices I got." He smiled wryly at some recollection as he explained that more than once during his year of free-lance he had regretted divorcing himself from a weekly payroll.

Pride, he said, was the only thing that had kept him from going back to ask for his old newspaper job—pride and the good-natured razing his old associates would have given him.

"They used to call me O. Henry, and ask me if I was eating regularly. I always did," he said, he said, studying the caviar in his fingers, "but toward the last I was going without lunch and trying to kid myself that three meals a day was too much."

"Then Miss Hunt—my agent—sold one of my stories to Continental Pictures." He stopped abruptly and extinguished his cigar at sight of their waiter returning.

Anne Winter watched him attentively. She was a good listener. She rested her elbows on the table, supporting her chin in her hands. She leaned back now at the waiter placed dishes before them, but said, when he had departed again: "You haven't finished. I can't eat until I hear the rest."

There was, Rorimer said, little else to tell. Someone at Continental had thought he liked Rorimer's stuff well enough to offer him a contract. "Someone without much judgment. . . . And that's the end of the story."

His deprecating way of telling it gave Anne Winter the impression that he was not too fond of talking about himself. She said gravely: "I'm sure that's not the end; it's just the beginning for you."

"You're very kind," Rorimer said, "but now that I'm here they don't know what to do with me." He added that he guessed he was lucky. In fact, he said, eating her with laughing but bold intentness, "I know I'm lucky."

She laughed delightedly, a pleasing low ripple of sound, but ducked her head in pretended confusion. Rorimer liked the way her long lashes swept her cheeks when her eyes were lowered.

"Have they made a picture yet from your story?" she asked. "What's the name of it?"

Rorimer said that production was about to start. "Grim Holiday," he said, was his story. "But Lord knows what they'll call it when they're through with it."

He spoke with a shade of resentment. Anne Winter, watching him, thought she saw rebellion in his eyes and in the set of his lean jaw.

(To Be Continued)

BOUND OVER
SALEM, Ore., July 29, (AP)—Herbert Kewen, Paul Hansen, Robert Goodwin and Albert Walters were bound over to the federal grand jury at a hearing here yesterday for operating a still near Mehama. They were arrested by federal officers.

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KAMATH FALLS, OREGON



Anne Winter comes from Tulsa to break into the movie.



Dan Rorimer came from New York to write scenarios.

SIDE GLANCES

By George Clark



"Oh, all books are such bargains now. I just take the first ones I come to."

Freckles and His Friends



The Mission!



By Blosser



Mom'n Pop



The Lost Is Found



By Gowen

