The GOLDEN FEATHER

by Robert Bruce

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BEGIN HERE TODAY

JEAN DUNN, secretary to DONALD MONTAGUE, lawyer, delays her answer when BOBBY WALLACE, automobile salesman, asks her to marry him.

At The Golden Feather night club she meets SANDY HARKINS whose business connection is vague. Sandy introduces Bobby and Jean to a MR. and MRS. LEWIS. Bobby sells some bonds for Lewis, who buys a car.

LARRY GLENN, federal agent, is trailing WINGY LEWIS, bank robber. He learns about the bond transaction and questions Bobby. The bonds were stolen. Larry believes the car Lewis bought is armored. Bobby undertakes to find out.

Jean goes home for a vacation. Sandy comes to see her and she agrees to a secret engagement.

The bank of which her father is president is robbed. Larry starts a search for the robbers.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XXX

IT did not occur to Jean Dunn—until it was far too late to make any difference—that the robbery of her father's bank was to be a profoundly important event in her own life.

Her father wrote to her about it and she saw accounts of it in the newspapers; but although Jean shivered pleasantly as she read and wrote a long letter to her father bubbling over with thankfulness that he had not been hurt—still it did not seem to be anything that really touched her. A few days after it had happened she was going her way just as she had before.

She had other things to think about. She had promised Sandy to become his wife, at some hazy, unsettled time in the future. She had spent a miserably unhappy evening explaining to Bobby Wallace that she could not be *his* wife—and the misery had flared up into an outright quarrel when Bobby, learning at last that she loved Sandy, had tried, once again, to tell her that Sandy was a shady character.

Afterward, to justify herself in her own mind, Jean had assured herself that she did love Sandy, deeply and truly, and that her affair with Bobby had been, after all, only a boy-and-girl romance.

With things standing thus, four or five days after the holdup, she answered her desk buzzer one morning and went into Mr. Montague's office with pencil and notebook in hand, expecting to take dictation. Instead, she found Mr. Montague looking at her with grave sympathy.

Sandy Harkins, he told her, had been painfully hurt in an accident.

She gasped with surprise. No, Mr. Montague did not know any of the details—it was a traffic accident, apparently, somewhere down in the southwestern corner of the state. Sandy was in a critical state, and he wanted Jean to come to him.

Long afterward, Jean remembered an odd thing about her own emotions at this moment. She remembered that instead of feeling a sudden outpouring of racking anxiety and fear she had been chiefly concerned with the thought, "My lover has been hurt and he needs me—I mustn't let him down. I mustn't fail to be properly worried about him." In other words, she felt the need of emotion, rather than emotion itself. But it was a long time before she bothered to analyze her feelings in this way.

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MR. MONTAGUE was asking her if she wanted to go to see Sandy—she nodded, her face pale—well, then, it just happened that Mr. Montague had a small sheaf of papers which he was anxious to get into Sandy's hands. If Jean wished, she could take a day or two off, go down and see him, and take the papers with her. That, said Mr. Montague, would be more satisfactory, as far as he was concerned, than entrusting them to the mails, anyway. Would Jean care to do it?

She would; so Mr. Montague made the arrangements. Sandy, it seemed, was in a little town named Midlothian—far off on a branch railroad line, inconvenient to reach by train. By a lucky chance, Jean's friend, Mrs. Lewis, was staying at the town of Plainfield, which was halfway between Dover and Midlothian. If Jean cared to take a train to Plainfield, her employer would see that Mrs. Lewis met her there with an auto and drove her the rest of the way to Midlothian.

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SO it happened that at about 2 o'clock that afternoon Jean Dunn got off a train at the junction city of Plainfield and met Eve Lewis, who was waiting on the platform. Eve led her to a roadster, parked beyond the station, and slipped behind the wheel. As Eve started the car, Jean turned to her anxiously.

"Have you—have you seen Sandy?" she asked.

"Sure," said Eve. "Where'd you think I've been?"

"How is he? Is he badly hurt?"

"Not so badly. Just a bullet through the shoulder."

"A *bullet!*"

Her voice was so startled, and her face, when Eve glanced over at her, was so suddenly white and shocked, that Eve bit her lip and fruitlessly wished she had not spoken.

"Why, yes," she said, somewhat uncertainly. "I thought you knew."

Jean was still staring at her.

"No," she said, her voice hardly above a whisper. "I thought he had been in an accident."

Eve smiled, rather grimly.

"He has," she said.

"I mean an auto accident."

"Oh." Eve paused. "No—"

Jean's hand was on Eve's forearm.

"Eve, *please* tell me what happened."

Eve disengaged her arm.

"Watch out—you'll make me swerve off the road," she said. Then, more gently, she added, "I don't know the details, Jean. We'll be there in an hour or so. Then you can ask him. I really don't know."

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THEY drove on, with Jean huddled in her corner of the seat in a dismayed, bewildered silence. Once she asked, almost timidly, "Do you know what—what kind of an accident it was?" And Eve answered, "Honest, Jean, I don't. I didn't mean to startle you. Anyhow, don't worry—we'll be there pretty soon."

There was another silence—a rather long one. Once Jean asked if Eve's husband was with Sandy in Midlothian. Learning that he was, she asked, "Are they in business together? I've always wondered. You know, I never did quite understand just what Sandy does."

Eve looked at her, wide-eyed, and seemed about to speak; but she checked herself, smiled softly, as if she had some private joke, and at last added, "Yes, they're more or less in business together."

Late in the afternoon they passed through Midlothian, a tiny, sleepy farming community. A short distance beyond the town Eve turned off the road into a little lane and abruptly pulled to a halt before a pleasant white farmhouse.

"Here we are, kid," she said.

There was a lawn in front of the house, an orchard on one side of it and a cornfield on the other. A man came down from the porch to greet them. He was Mr. Lewis, Eve's dapper little husband.

"How's Sandy?" Jean asked anxiously, as he nodded to her. He grinned and said, "Oh, he's dying—to see you." Then he stopped grinning, looked at the heavy manila envelope which Mr. Montague had given her to take to Sandy, and said, "Got it?"

She looked down, following his glance, and saw the envelope in her hand.

"Oh, yes," she said. "I don't know what it is, but it seems to be important. Mr. Montague told me to give it to Sandy."

"Yeah," said Lewis. "Well, come on in and see him."

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HE led them into the house. A stout, red-faced woman in a faded house dress was setting the table in the dining room; as they passed Lewis called to her to set two more places. Then they went up a flight of stairs and entered a cool, pleasant bedroom; and there, propped up among pillows in a big bed, lay Sandy.

Jean ran to him, bent over, and kissed him. He reached up with one brawny arm and hugged her; and as she raised her head he looked fondly into her face, the old, half-mocking light dancing in his eyes again, and she felt her doubts and worries fall away.

"So there you are," he said. "I knew you'd get here."

All she could find to say was, "Sandy—are you badly hurt?"

He grinned, and pointed to a bandage that swathed his left shoulder, visible beneath his pajama coat.

"I'm all right," he said. "Kind of sore, but that's all."

"How did it ever happen, Sandy?"

He grinned again.

"Oh," he said, "another guy and I were out doing some shooting and he just pointed his gun in the wrong direction."

Lewis, loitering by the window, laughed. Sandy scowled at him. "Hey, you—scram," he said. "We don't need you."

The Lewises left, and Jean drew a straight-backed chair up beside the bed. Sandy saw the envelope in her hand, and reached out and took it.

"Oh, yes," he said. "There was this, wasn't there?"

He opened the envelope, drew out some papers, and glanced at them. Then he nodded, as if satisfied, put them back in the envelope, and slid it under his pillow. He laid one hand casually on Jean's knee, and began, "Well, baby—" when there was a step in the hall and a man came into the room.

He was a big man and he had reddish hair and expressionless eyes of a chilly blue. He looked briefly at Jean, and then asked Sandy: "Well, how about it? Got it all right?"

(To Be Continued)

A new type of automobile bumper now being manufactured in England makes it impossible for a person being struck to pass under it to the wheels. It is lowered to the ground, and simply rolls the victim until the brakes are applied.

A recent survey revealed that, on an average, trucks in fleets were involved in only 3.11 accidents per 100,000 miles of operation.

Piston-skirt pressures must be sufficiently uniform under all operating conditions not to break through the oil film and produce dry streaks in the cylinders.

The English horsepower registration tax, which was equivalent to more than $100 on the lowest priced car, has been reduced.

The American highway system now has more than three million miles of roads.

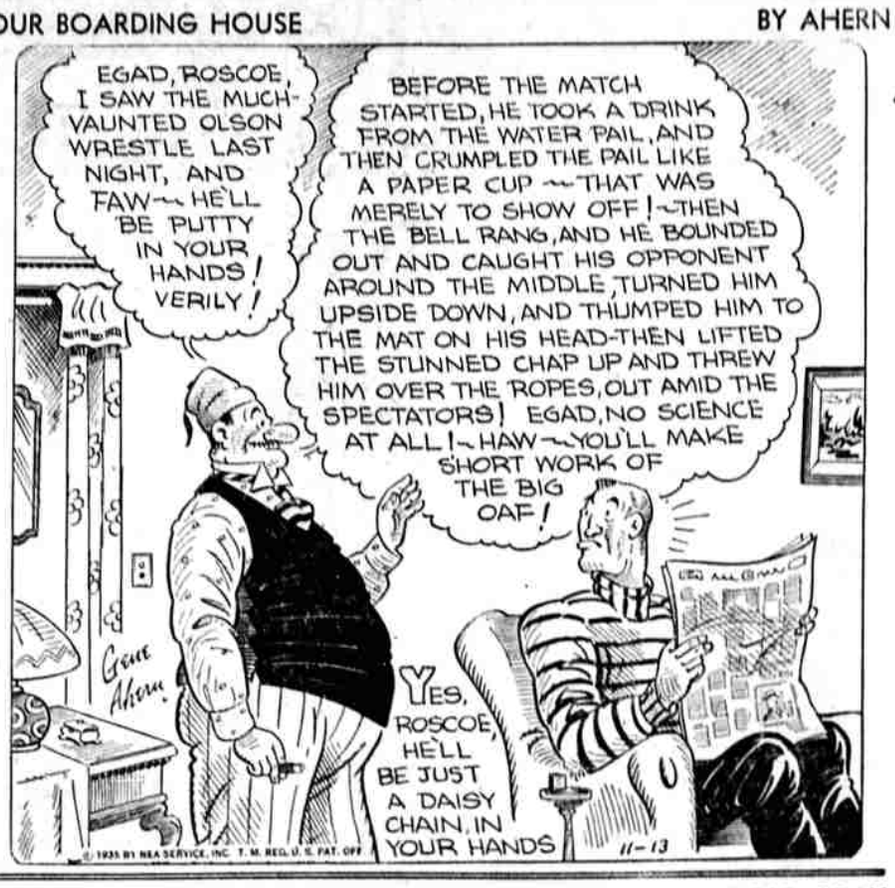
Motor vehicle imports into the United States in 1934 totaled 589.

Flapper Fanny Says

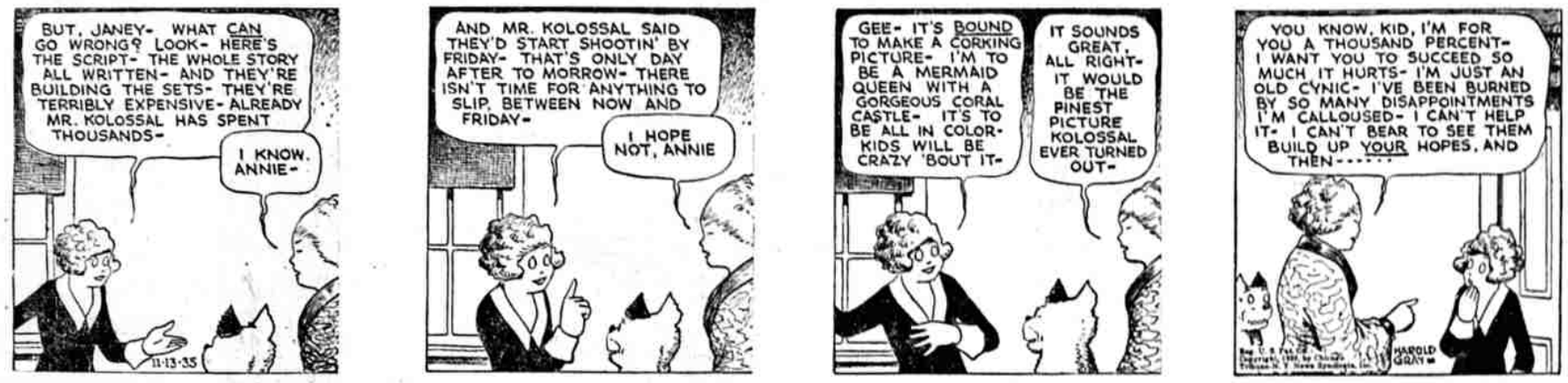
Pa thinks the ideal big family is two children big enough to support themselves.

OUT OUR WAY — BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE — BY AHERN

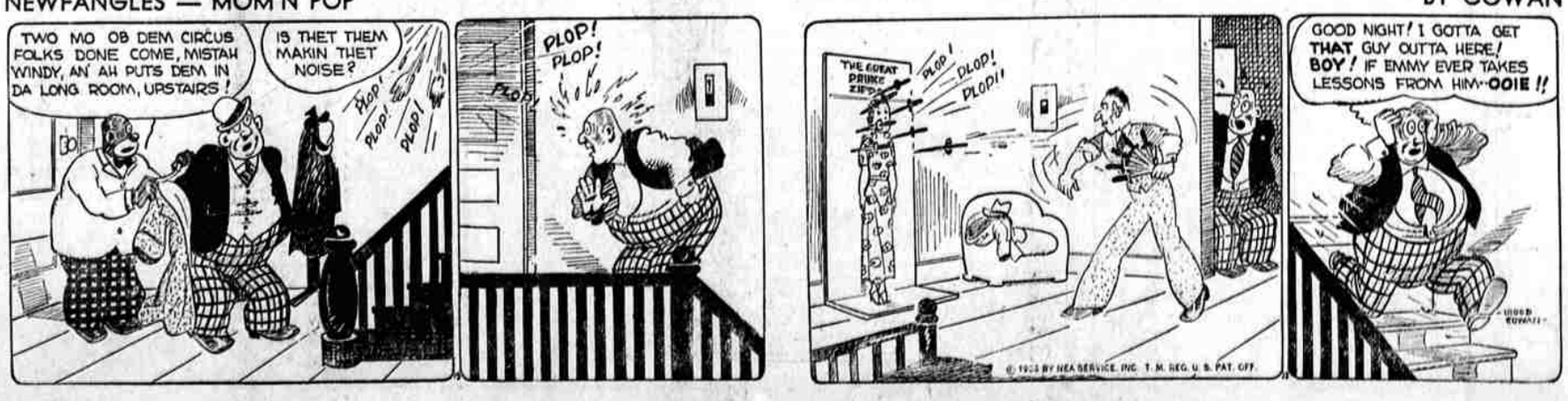


LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE — BY HAROLD GRAY



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS — BY BLOSSER

WASH TUBBS — BY CRANE

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES — BY MARTIN

THE NEWFANGLES — MOM'N POP — BY COWAN