

# The STRANGE CASE of JULIA CRAIG

by Nard Jones

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BEHOLD HERE TODAY JULIA CRAIG, pretty young secretary to GEORGE WOODFORD, lawyer, is smiling and becoming a night club singer. Julia shares an apartment with AMY BAKELY.

PETER KEMP, young lawyer, is in love with Julia but they quarrel, and Julia declares she never wants to see him again.

Woodford gives a party aboard his yacht and asks Julia to come to sing for his guests, including CINTRIA LEE, famous singer, JOSEPH, widower, HUGO NASH and ROYAL NESBITT.

On board, Julia discovers the trip is to be much longer than a week-end. The yacht lands at Evergreen Island where Woodford has a lodge. Julia meets TOM PAYSON who agrees to help her get away. He is discovered on the yacht and accused of tampering with the radio. After an angry scene he is allowed to depart.

The men go hunting and Nesbitt is injured.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

WHEN Royal Nesbitt had been administered a stiff brandy by the excited Obo he went immediately aboard the yacht so that Captain Bakely could give him adequate first-aid from the medical kit.

At the lodge, under the direction of Woodford, preparations for leaving were swift indeed. Julia was certain that it was not the seriousness of Nesbitt's wound which prompted the sudden break-up of the party. It was not, she felt, the wound itself that worried Woodford, but rather its implication. She was almost sure that Hugo Nash's aim had been calculated—and obviously the Lee girl thought so, too.

But Julia's thoughts were directed more toward Tom Payson than toward Royal Nesbitt. As she hurriedly packed her bag she planned an attempt to see him before the Wood Nymph should leave the little bay.

It proved an easy matter to leave the lodge without being seen. Nash and Woodford had already gone to the beach, while the widow and Cintra Lee were still in their rooms getting their luggage packed for Obo to take down to the beach. Julia slipped quickly out the door and down the path she had taken the night before.

Mindful that the Wood Nymph would be leaving within the hour, she ran along the path as swiftly as the clucking collage and ever-nagging coughs would let her. Soon she was relieved to see an open place ahead, then the pine waters on the other side of the island. The path ended at beach, and there were marks where the bow of a small boat had cut into the sand. But beyond this there was no indication of the recent presence of Payson. What he had called "his island" was within shouting distance, but Julia could see nothing but a thick green wood.

SHE stood there, uncertain whether to return to the yacht or stay behind in the hope of seeing Payson again.

Showing her hands helplessly into the pockets of a skirt she encountered a cool small cylinder which was a silver pencil. Amy Sanders had given her months ago. But neither of the pockets revealed even a scrap of paper on which to write a message for Payson. Then her glance happened to fall upon a piece of driftwood on the beach.

Holding the little silver pencil tightly she printed in black capitals on the wood: WOODFORD HAS DECIDED TO LEAVE FOR THE CITY. WISH I COULD THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR TROUBLE. J. C.

Then she set the white wood near the marks on the sand, out of reach of the tide; and with another and last look at the island beyond, she started reluctantly back along the path.

Halfway to the other side of the island she met Woodford.

"Didn't you know we were leaving?" he said petulantly. "Why run away without telling some of us?"

"I'm sorry. I thought you weren't going before an hour."

"Everybody's a board and ready," Woodford told her.

Smiling, Julia followed him down the path. She had never seen him like this and she was moved to ask how Nesbitt was getting along.

"He'll be all right. It wasn't serious."

THEN why, Julia wondered, all Woodford's seriousness? Perhaps he was only piqued because his vacation jaunt had broken into troublesome fragments. But she could have asked him no more questions even if she'd wanted, for he rushed on down the path quite as if the Wood Nymph might leave without its owner. In a moment she saw Captain Bakely waiting in the stern of the power boat.

Cintria Lee was the only one in sight aboard the yacht except the members of the crew. When the tender reached the larger craft, Woodford and Bakely went at once to the wheel house, and Julia sauntered aft where Cintra sat smoking a cigarette.

"I was a little surprised when I saw you in the boat with Woodford," the dancer said.

"Why?" Julia sat in the deck chair beside Cintra, felt the sudden vibration of the engines as the Wood Nymph got under way.

"I had a notion perhaps you'd decided to stay marooned with that handsome young man who tried to rescue you last night."

Julia turned to the girl. "You won't say anything?"

"It's no affair of mine."

"I almost wish I had stayed. Somehow I don't like the idea of being on this yacht again."

Cintria gave her a curious glance. "So you feel it, too?" She looked over the rail a moment. Then: "I must be right about it."

"Right about what?" asked Julia quickly. There was something in the girl's tone that frightened her. Something ominous and sure.

But at her question Cintra only laughed. "It's probably just the jitters. I've been feeling that our bad luck hasn't run out. I've a

notion to get into my berth and stay there until we land."

"Do you think Mr. Nesbitt is all right?"

Cintria nodded. "He's very lucky—lucky that Nash didn't shoot much last night that his aim was shaky."

Her words might have meant everything . . . or nothing; and something told Julia not to press her for an explanation.

OBO served luncheon from his tray, seeking out the guests wherever they happened to be. Julia, who remained on the deck after Cintra had gone to her cabin, supposed that Woodford was attempting to avoid the strain and embarrassment of bringing them all together in the main cabin. She wondered if the whole cruise back to the city was to be like this. Almost afraid to move from her place, she consumed her sandwiches and coffee, then set the plate by her feet.

It wasn't long, however, before Woodford appeared. His mood seemed to have lightened, for he greeted her with a pleasant smile. As he sat down in the chair which Cintra had vacated, Julia caught a faint odor of whiskey.

"Sorry to leave Evergreen Island," he asked.

"Well . . . I'll be sort of relieved to get back to town," she told Woodford frankly. "I'm afraid I'm not very good at just—well, loafing."

Woodford laughed. "We'll both be back in the office soon enough, Julia. I'm dreadfully sorry, for your sake, that the trip turned out like this."

She did not answer at once. Then she told Woodford quietly that she didn't intend to resume her place as his secretary at Woodford and Brooks.

"When did you decide that?" he asked, astonished.

"A day or so ago."

"What's the reason? Not enough money—or have you decided to plunge right into this night club business?"

"I still intend to sing in a night club," Julia told him. "But I'm leaving Woodford and Brooks for—"

"Personal reasons?" interrupted Woodford, and laughed. He faced her squarely, leaning forward in his chair. "I think I know what you mean, Julia. And I think you're right about it, too. The truth is that I'm glad you're resigning. You see, I smiled. 'I don't like the idea of making love to my secretary. Perhaps it's because these cartoonists make so much fun of men who do.'"

"I'm—I'm afraid I don't understand you."

"I think you do, Julia. All you have to do is decide whether you'll let me make love to you."

"I can make that decision very quickly, Mr. Woodford. It's no."

"I could still manage that interview with Smith Garland," he went on quietly. "And I wouldn't object to your having a career."

Her face white, Julia got to her feet. Anger rushed full into her throat and choked her words.

"That's really big of you, Mr. Woodford—and now let's not discuss ourselves for the rest of the cruise!" She turned on her heel and hurried to her stateroom.

(To Be Continued)

## Princess Awaits Motherhood



Awaiting the birth of her first child in her palatial home in Rome is Princess Torlonia of Italy, above, eldest daughter of ex-Queen Victoria of Spain. The former queen slipped into Rome quietly to be present at the birth of her first grandchild. The princess was the former Infanta Beatriz.

## Flapper Fannie Says



On the days he calls you, everything is daisy.

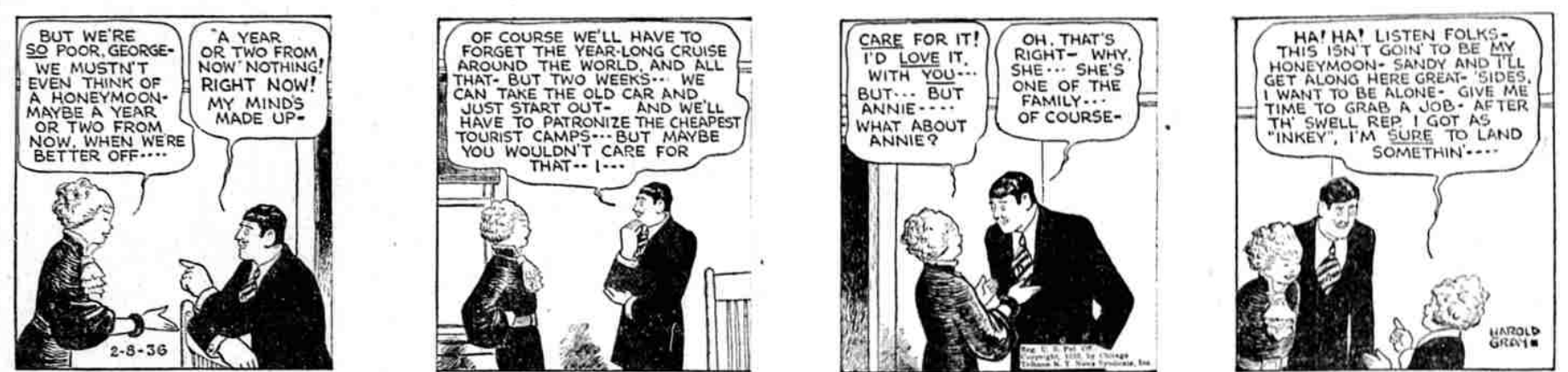
## OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS



## 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

