

HOUSE OF SHADOWS

by Ida R. Gleason

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CHAPTER 1A

Hannah shrugged. "Plain food, if you ask me. That he could put up with that trifling Susie Spratt for housekeeper proves enough. Then look what he called his outlandish house—the House of Long Shadows. Nobody but a crack-wit would ever put such a brand on that kind of a place. All carved walnut woodwork to catch the dust, and those goosh-awful high ceilings! That house wouldn't be much of a loss, if you did have to let it go. And I don't envy Eb Spratt and his sister, Susie, trying to take care of it for you, either."

"But it was the pride of Uncle Lyman's heart, Hannah. He spent a small fortune copying the eastern mansions he'd known. He thought nothing was too grand to build in his beloved mountains. That house and his jewels were the passions of his life."

"Yep, the Fosticks always were up in the air about some fool thing. Your Uncle Lyman was the worst o' the mess, but even your own father was a dreamer. Rest his soul. Lucky for you that your mother was a real western woman with her feet on the ground and her head full of horse sense. Or you might be goin' 'round, too, with your ideas in the clouds. What you goin' to do now?"

Claire had jumped to her feet as though she had come to a sudden decision. "I'm going up to the House of Long Shadows right now, and start looking again. If there's anything hidden there I'm going to find it. I've got to help me in my riding clothes—there's a dear!"

"But, Claire, it's past 9 o'clock. You can't go galaventin' up to the mountains alone at this time o' night. You wouldn't get there for hours. It's 50 miles from here."

"Nonsense, Hannah. Remember, I'm going in my car. Not on horseback. I'll be a heap sight safer out on the road than here, wasting precious time. Besides, the Spratt family is there. They'll take almost as good care of me as you would."

Still Hannah shook her head doubtfully. "Well, if you're set to go—but this Nick Baum. Does he know about this—this jewel or whatever it is, Claire?"

"I don't know," the girl replied. "We haven't known Nick so very long, you know, but Daddy was awfully fond of him, so he might have mentioned it."

"Um," Hannah reluctantly held out Claire's coat. "I'm tellin' you, I got a hunch about all this that I ain't likin' any too well."

"Hannah! Your hunches—you're worse than an Indian medicine man. Go on to bed and forget it. I'll send you word tomorrow that I'm all okay. Probably Eb Spratt'll be coming 'down or can send the man." Claire pulled on a pair of driving gloves. "Remember you taught me yourself never to be afraid of anything. Besides, what on earth could happen in such a peaceful old place as the mountain house? It's an event if even a peddler finds his way up there from the village." She dropped a light kiss on Hannah's nose, and without waiting for any more objections went downstairs.

AS she passed the library she halted a minute and softly closed the door which was half open. She had been pretty hard on Nick. And he had done so much. Why couldn't she love him as she had always hoped she would love the man she married? She let herself out into the garden and hurried to the garage. Here she got her own little car and soon was threading her way through the traffic of the city, headed for the road that ran straight as an arrow toward the mountains.

The way was too familiar to make the trip at night seem an undertaking. Hadn't she driven it more times than she could remember when she and her father had gone to the House of Long Shadows to spend the week-end? She settled down to a steady pace which would bring her to her destination long before midnight.

After half an hour the houses began to thin out and small dry farms took the place of suburbs. The cool evening air of the open country blew against her cheeks. As always, a tingle of anticipation ran through her when she entered the foothills, with the high peaks hunched dimly behind them.

The mountains invariably held that attraction for Claire, no matter how familiar she was with them. For her, nothing could ever take the place of their changing moods. All the mad, colorful life of the hardy seekers for gold, their tragedies and romances, successes and failures, seemed embodied in the towering snow-capped crags that jagged against the skyline.

That was why going to the old house in the mountains had always been an adventure to the girl. The House of Long Shadows—the very name her uncle had given his home made it a house of dreams. Here she could live again, in imagination, the exciting days when the little mining town nearby had been a blaze of hectic life. When fortunes were won or lost in a night and the haunting quest for gold turned the heads of the steadfast men.

NOW the road began to wind sharply upward, coiling about the rugged side of the mountain. Higher and higher went the car, each succeeding loop in the road lifting it above the plains below. Soon the city became a miniature, twinkling fairyland, its streets

outlined in rows of tiny points of light. Claire never tired of this picture. She threw back her head and filled her lungs with the bracing air, a sense of exhilaration sweeping through her.

Unconsciously she pressed on the accelerator. The car leaped forward with a sudden spurt of speed that sent the gravel flying down the steep side of the mountain. Instantly she jerked back from the danger of taking the curves too fast. She knew only too well how narrow the strip of road was that lay between her and a hurrying death into the dark depths below.

Now she was coming to the narrow, twisting road that led from the main highway to the House of Long Shadows. As she turned into it, another car passed behind her, going along the main road. In just a few minutes she would be at her destination. She sat back in the seat and relaxed her grip on the wheel.

There was a sudden grinding crash as the car hit a huge log that lay directly across the narrow road. Instantly the lights went out, and splintered glass showered about her. The machine lurched tipsily and stopped. Claire fell limply forward over the steering wheel.

Quick footsteps sounded dimly behind her and the last thing she knew she was being lifted in a man's arms.

(To Be Continued)

We must face the competition that marriage is going to face in the next few years. . . . Marriage will never lose out, but it will have to be a better bargain than one based on the formerly predominant considerations of property and fear.—E. R. Groves, University of North Carolina.

There are still laretdoy many Englishmen who are so blind in their prejudices that they sincerely believe Britain entered the war from sheer kindness of heart, solely in order to aid her friends, the French.—Alfred Duff Cooper, British secretary of state for war.

The rate of our civilization rests on the outcome of a race between catastrophe and education.—Sir Alfred Zimmer, professor of international relations, Oxford university.

At last the identity of the group who march off with grid goal posts is explained. They're delegates keeping in midseason trim.

After 100, a man is too old to marry.—Charles Jeannette, Old Forge Civil war veteran, before his bride jilted him.

Baby Prince Gets a New Home



Without any of the fanfare which attends coming and goings of other members of royalty, a chubby, curly-haired Prince Edward of England is pictured above, with his nurse, when they left London for the Buckinghamshire home of his parents, the Duke and Duchess of Kent. The prince now is 8 months old.

Flapper Fannie Says



A rival who's trying to edge you out of the picture is apt to knife you.

OUT OUR WAY



BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON.

OUR BOARDING HOUSE



With MAJOR HOOPLE

MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE



BY THOMPSON AND COLL



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



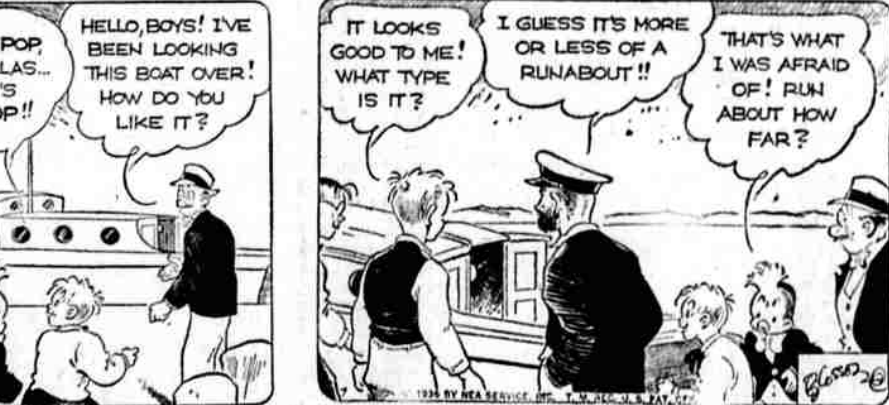
BY HAROLD GRAY



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



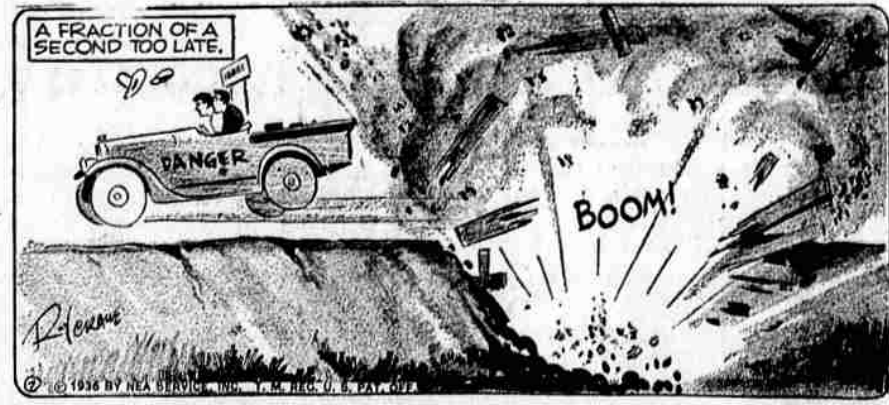
BY BLOSSER



WASH TUBBS



BY CRANE



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



BY MARTIN

