

Rich and Reckless

By Mary Raymond

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CHAPTER I

It was the end of the season. Reason enough, Molly told herself, for feeling tired and rebellious and dissatisfied. Debut time was almost over. And what had it got her?

A lei of orchids, petals only slightly crushed by last night's wearing, met her eyes. They had been placed on the window ledge through habit. Rita, her maid, would wear them some place to night when she stepped out after serving hours.

There would be more orchids for Molly, arriving in glittering cellophane covering from Wick. Or gardenias from Donald. Or perhaps yellow rosebuds from Brent. Or violets, waxy green leaves curled about their deep purple hearts, from Hubert who was romantic, like his flowers.

Debut had brought her Wick, Donald, Hubert, Brent—and the others. The other men were like lesser stars twinkling against the definite, authentic brightness of desirability represented by the quartet.

Wickersham Ross was wealthy, handsome and nice. Donald Livingston represented the inner circle of the "four hundred," a small, hand-picked group that claimed top place socially through right of heritage, boasting ancestral lines that stretched into a past so dim it shouldn't have mattered in modern times. Yet somehow it did. Tremendously. All the famous families would open their arms to Donald's wife. Donald, arrogant, cocksure, correct, with his splendid old town house that was rightfully in need of redecorating, and his country place, keeping up a pretense of a comfortable income. Donald had found it necessary to retrench for some vague reasons concerned with stocks and bonds.

HUBERT WALLACE was just a debutante rusher. This year he had picked Molly. Hubert was a good playfellow, but perhaps after a time you would become tired of a life that was an endless merry-go-round, and then where would you be?

"Golden girl!" She could hear Hubert's caressing voice, now. "Marry me, and you'll dine on strawberries and cream like the good little girl in the nursery rhyme."

"No thanks," Molly had retorted. "Strawberries give me indigestion and cream might make me fat. I'm not a good little girl, and I'm too old for nursery rhymes."

Brent Stuart, who had been listening in on one of Hubert's numerous and quite casual proposals, had queried, "What do you want, child? What kind of girl are you?"

"Don't know, to both your questions," Molly had replied. "I want to find out."

Thinking about Brent's nice matter-of-factness stilled for the moment the tumult in her mind, a tumult started often these days by the sight of flowers and the small white cards with their scrawled messages. They raised interrogation marks, these small white symbols of a decision she must make soon.

For, of course, every girl should end her debut with an announcement of her engagement. That was what debuts were for!

In Molly's case it was more urgent. It was two years now since her father's marriage to Donna, who was only five years older than herself. Donna was getting sick and tired of a stepmother role. It aged her a bit. Pressure, subtle as it was, was being brought to bear on Molly toward a decision.

"Goodness, Molly," Donna had said. "What is the matter with you? Four of the season's most eligible men at your heels and you can't make up your mind. You could draw straws and win a husband any girl would be proud to get."

MOLLY stirred restlessly on her pillow. It wouldn't be Hubert, who babbled things like "Golden Girl" at her. Nor Wick, with his casual acceptance of her as a suitable wife. Nor Donald, with his suave flattery and appraising eyes. That, of course, left Brent. Brent, with his teasing, gray eyes, his good-looking, but not hero-hand-some face, his strong man's shoulders. The thought of Brent both steadied and stimulated Molly. Strange. But Brent was like that.

There was just one thing wrong with choosing Brent. You couldn't accept a man who hadn't asked you to marry him. Donna didn't know that, and persisted in the theory that Brent was in a sort of delirium about Molly.

And all the time there was Brent with his big-brother-like devotion that might mean something and might mean nothing at all. Perhaps she didn't want it to mean anything. Brent wouldn't call her "Golden Girl." But he'd be certain to call her "child," as he had done ever since Molly was 12 and he was a perfectly mad-den and insulting 16 years old. Who wanted to be called "child" all her life?

Strangely, he hadn't mocked at the name Hubert had suggested during an intermission at Molly's debut ball. "Golden hair, golden eyes with amber lights, golden skin," Hubert had said softly.

"Sounds Chinese," Molly had laughed.

"Not yellow, Golden," Brent had corrected. "You have a sunny kind of skin and it's deeper gold when you put on tan in the summer."

"Why, Brent!" Molly had exclaimed. This from matter-of-fact Brent Stuart!

If he should ever propose and if Molly said yes, she would live in that fine old home of Brent's, with its mellow paneling and gracious air of age and dignity. A house that was the proper setting for the son of a famous architect, who was making a name for himself in the same profession.

THE telephone tinkled and she heard Rita, the maid, answering.

"I'm awake, Rita," called Molly. Anything was better than going over the same ground and getting no where—no where beyond men and flowers and telephones . . . and security.

That was it! Molly wanted a dangerous current in her life. Something to stir her pulses—not this smooth, endless succession of parties and parties, leading finally to a brilliant wedding.

The voice over the wire was only Hubert's.

"Sorry," Molly told him, trying to keep boredom from her tone. "I don't feel up to luncheon today. Give me a rain check, won't you, Hubert?"

Just being polite. The conversation of their crowd was always polite and meaningless, when it wasn't brittle and stinging.

"Sometime I'll be so bored and bitter that the claws will come out. I'll be like Sophy and Barbara and Donna," Molly thought.

You couldn't help feeling sorry for Donna, who had gone hither and yon, after an unsuccessful debut, but had finally attached Dad and his millions. Though perhaps marrying one of the richest men in the country (that was what the newspapers and income tax people said), hadn't been a bad compromise for missing romance.

The telephone again. Molly answered and felt a pleasant, reassuring feeling rushing over her. That couldn't mean anything more than devotion, since it lacked the strong, wind-in-your-ears sensation which any girl knew meant being in love!

"Hi, mutt! I'm coming out." "I won't be taken for granted this way," Molly thought, suddenly mischievous. Aloud she replied sweetly, "No, you aren't. I'm feeling not so top, Brent. Cold and headache."

"Rebellion," declared Brent firmly. "I know the symptoms." (To Be Continued)

Rusting at inaccessible corners about the body can be prevented by an application of liquid wax with a small paintbrush.

The lightning of winter thunderstorms is said to be more dangerous than that of summer storms.

Estimates place the number of people who will spend their vacations in trailer-travel this summer at approximately 1,000,000.

A car should never be waxed until all road accumulations have been completely removed with a good cleaner.

If shock absorbers are not given the proper attention, they may cause annoying noises.

Seeks Lemke's Seat in House



Seeking the seat as representative at large from North Dakota now held by William Lemke, Henry Holt, Grand Forks publisher, shown here in a new picture, is campaigning actively as the Democratic nominee. Lemke is running for re-election as well as for the presidency on the Union Party ticket. Holt was an unsuccessful candidate for the U. S. Senate against Lynn J. Frazier in 1934.

Flapper Fannie Says



When tied and gagged a woman's bound to keep still.

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE



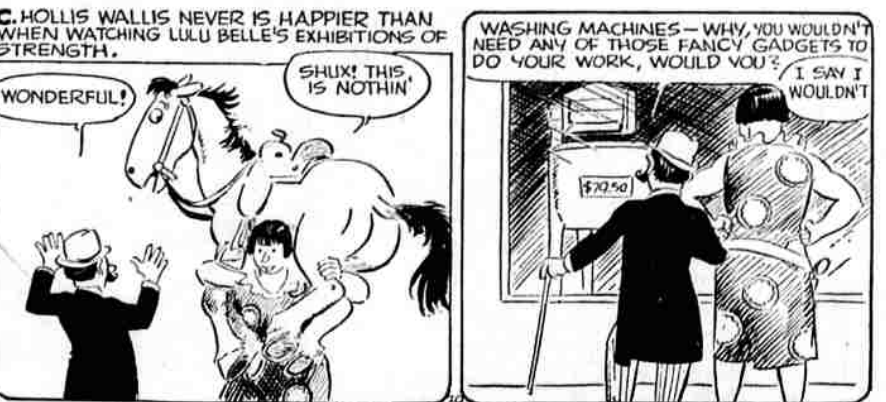
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



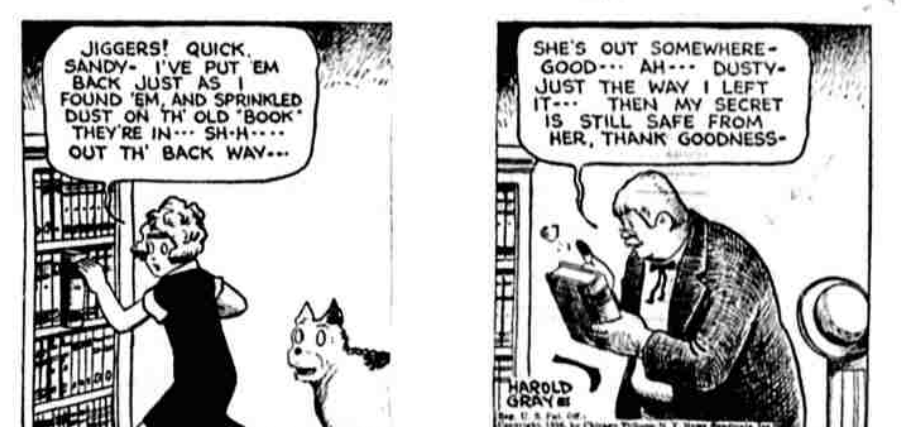
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



BY THOMPSON AND COLL



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN

