

Easter Cruise

BY MARION WHITE

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
JOYCE MILNER, heroine who took an Easter Cruise.
DICK HAMILTON, hero who bumped into the heroine.
ISOBEL PORTER, traveler who sought a mate.

Yesterday Mrs. Porter interfered again, inviting Dick to judge a swimming match. And her look almost dares Joyce to take part with Dick.

CHAPTER VIII

DOWN in her cabin a pleasant surprise greeted Joyce's eyes. In the center of the room, on a dress hanger hooked through the fan, was her white dress, spotless and pressed as if it had never known a drop of water.

She tried the dress on, praying that it had not shrunk. But no; it was as fresh as the day she bought it. She slipped it on, and the stewardess had stretched it out. It fitted smoothly as ever. No one would ever guess that it had spent many hours in the Bermuda harbor.

So Joyce went up to dinner with a light heart, proof against Mrs. Porter's frigid charm and Isobel's sophisticated pout.

Dick, she noticed, was developing a nasty cold, sneezing and sniffing and gasping, yet all the while trying to persuade the doctor that he never had a cold in his life—not a real cold.

But before the meal was over he left the dining room, taking his sneezes with him so that the others might enjoy their own dinner in quiet. As long as he sat there, they waited expectantly, holding their breath, for each new outbreak.

So it was Mr. Gregory who took Joyce up to the dance on deck, and perhaps, she decided, that was as it should be because she was wearing his flowers.

After the first dance Captain Boyer came forward to claim Joyce.

"The only trouble," he remarked gallantly, as he proved himself a more-than-capable master of the waltz, "is that there are so many lovely young ladies that we can't dance with all of them."

Joyce laughed, enjoying the moment. "Why not try a Paul Jones?" she suggested carelessly. "You'd get around more."

"A Paul Jones?" Captain Boyer searched his memory for the meaning of it. Then, recalling, he added brightly: "Of course. That's the dance where we all change partners, isn't it? Why didn't I think of it before?"

As the dance ended, he went over and made the suggestion to the orchestra leader before returning Joyce to her table.

Gaily the orchestra leader blew a whistle and called the changes: "Single line, now, and MARCH! Hands on shoulders!" "Ladies right, gentlemen left!" "Find your partners!"

Faster and faster the music was stepped up; more and more hilarious became the dancing. Joyce went through the changes, her cheeks flushed, smiling in bright abandon because she did not realize that anything so gay as a Paul Jones might bring its difficulties.

THEN Joyce, stepping along merrily, had over her hand, looked down the line of approaching men and caught her breath. "Lord!" she thought, "look what's coming!" For there, directly in front of her, just one man removed now, was pudgy Mr. O'Hara, still swaying unsteadily but beaming assuredly under a Napoleonic hat of vivid red.

Now she was in Mr. O'Hara's arms, and he, unmindful of the routine of the dance, took quick advantage of the situation. He led her out of the circle, stepped her into a brisk, old-time two-step. Presently the whistle died and the others resumed the dancing, so there was nothing to do but enjoy these few moments of Mr. O'Hara's brief abandonment.

"That's the little girl!" he approved heartily. "We'll show 'em. Boy, you're some little stepper, baby!"

In between his casual remarks, his lusty voice would now and then be raised exuberantly, in tune and out of tune, to the orchestra's selection.

After the first few steps, Joyce forgot to worry about him. Let him have his fun, she thought, with a bit of Aunt Martha's philosophy. After all, he doesn't have much chance, not with Old Pickle-Puss always behind him. . . .

The whistle sounded once more, and the dancers fell into a line of march. But not Mr. O'Hara. "Think I'm going to change partners now?" he demanded. "No, sir-e-e-e!"

So they kept up a little dance of their own, a dance which was a bit of a two-step, and something of a fox-trot, and not at all unlike an Alabama cake-walk. And the others who danced turned to look at them, and those who sat at nearby tables laughed appreciatively, and Joyce laughed too because—well, what of it?

INTO a circle the dancers formed, and Mr. O'Hara continued his little specialty in the very center of it, while those about paused for a moment to applaud his efforts. Right and left went the dancers, and presently new partners found each other quickly at the sound of the whistle. And still Joyce danced with Napoleon O'Hara.

Now, prancing past the captain, he smiled proudly. "How'm I doin', Captain?" And Captain Boyer grinned good-naturedly. "Fine!" he assured him.

But enough is enough, Joyce decided. The perspiration was forming in tiny beads on her forehead, and her feet could stand no more, yet her partner showed no indication of giving up.

"Think I'll have to stop," she protested finally. "It's so very warm."

"Nonsense!" protested the gentleman, tightening his hold about her waist. "We're just beginning to step, Beautiful. Say, can you do the Big Apple?"

"No, I'm sorry—"

"What? All the young people are doing the Big Apple. It goes like this. . . ."

In some devious fashion he began to lurch his knees, to bend them this way and that, looking for all the world like a toy balloon on a fork. . . .

Over his shoulder, Joyce cast an appealing glance toward Mr. Gregory, sitting expressionless at her table. But whether he understood the signal or not, he made no move to help her out of the situation.

Now they were indeed becoming ridiculous, yet Joyce only aggravated the matter by attempting to free herself. "I'll look like a fool," she thought, "if I try to saw how-dare-you-sir after letting it go this far. . . . If only Dick were here—"

Finally, across the deck, she caught Mr. Roberts' eye and he winked back, understandingly, and made his way toward the orchestra, thinking, perhaps, if the music stopped so would Mr. O'Hara.

But before he had taken two steps, relief did come to Joyce, and from a very unexpected source. She felt a strong hand on her shoulder, and she was spun quickly about, to face a still furious Mrs. O'Hara.

"Haven't you made a sufficient spectacle of yourself today?" she demanded of her husband through light lips.

Sheepishly he tried to explain. His wife paid no attention. Instead she turned to Joyce, and in a voice which carried over the entire deck, she cried: "As for you, young woman, I'd thank you to keep away from my husband."

(To Be Continued)

There was something missing in that recent dispatch about a 100-year-old man found breaking a colt on an Arizona ranch. It didn't say whether he found any shells in it.

The federal bureau of investigation announces that one person out of every 25 in the country has a criminal record. And about one criminal out of 25, too.

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLI

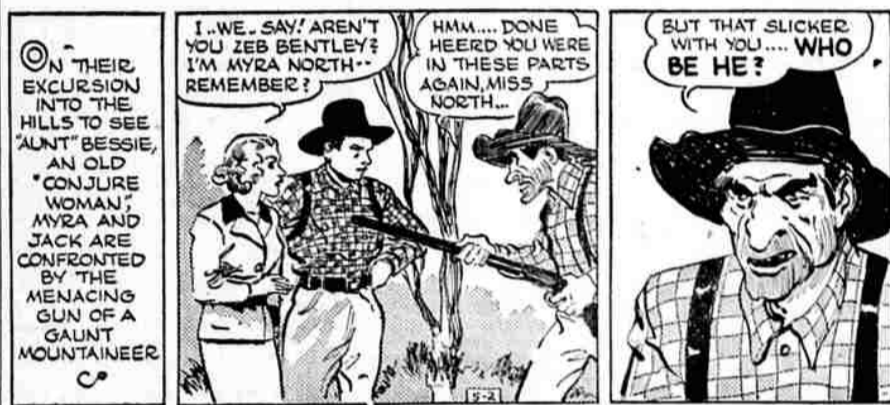


HEROES ARE MADE - NOT BORN



BUSTER STICKS HIS CHIN OUT - 5-2

MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



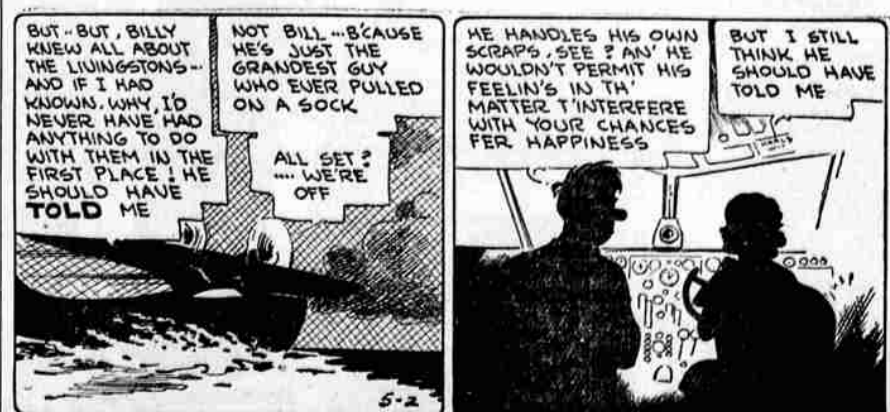
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



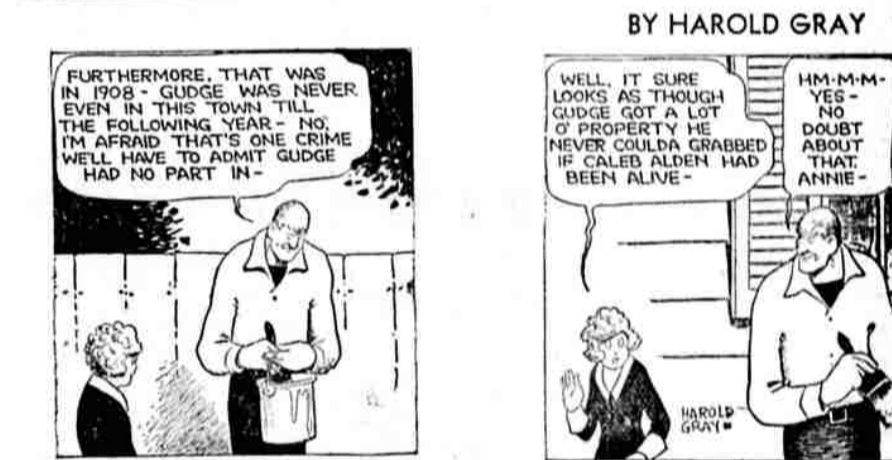
WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



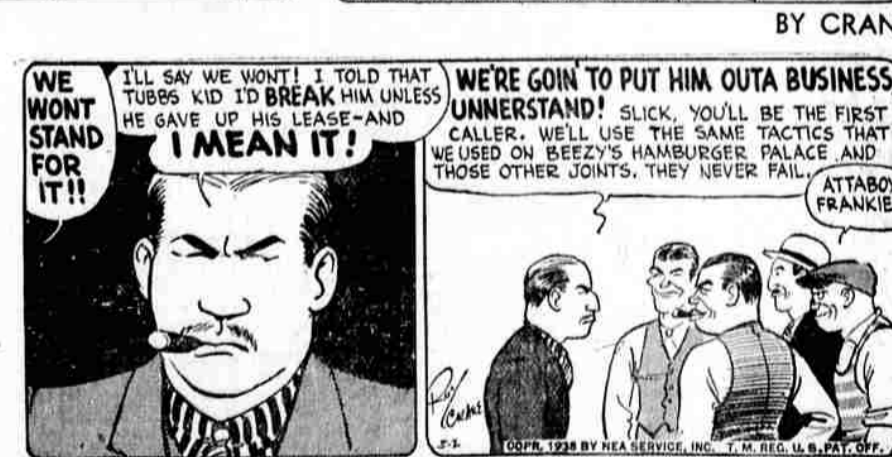
BY THOMPSON AND COLL



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"I don't know the name, but it's that new cowboy story magazine that just fits in a geography."