

SERIAL STORY

WAR AND A WOMAN

BY BETTY WALLACE

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Yesterday, Linda meets a Navy officer at her party. "You can't dream of me," she says. "I've dreamed of you."

CHAPTER II

LINDA felt her heart sink with sick surprise. Then dismay rose and choked her. She could not speak. She was like a girl of stone as Marcia came forward, all unaware, and took Jimmy Cooper's arm possessively.

Jimmy's lips opened, but no sound came. Linda was turning away, the blood pounding in her ears. Never before in all her life had she looked into a man's eyes and experienced that strange and singing ecstasy, that nameless wonder that had stolen over her as she looked up at this man. Her hands were shaking and her knees felt queer, but she had to get control of herself. She had to sound natural.

"I guess I looked so forlorn standing here by myself he thought you all had shoved me out," she said.

"Shoved you out!" Marcia cried. "Every unattached male in there has already asked me who you are. I'll have to keep a careful watch over you, Miss. Because after all, you are engaged."

"Engaged?" asked Jimmy Cooper dully. "Of course she's engaged, luminous! Did you ever see a girl with a face like that who wasn't engaged?"

"Come on, come on! Mother's waiting, and Dad, and everybody."

They went in together, Jimmy and Marcia, while Linda hung back. "I only imagined it," she told herself, over and over. "Nothing happened. He—he didn't mean anything. It just—it was nothing."

Yet she knew, beyond any shadow of doubt, that Jimmy Cooper didn't usually say, "I—I've only dreamed of you, haven't I?"

She simply wasn't that kind, no more than she was the kind whose heart lurched every time a handsome man smiled at her.

She tried hard not to look his way. Not to see how he was devoting himself, conscientiously, to Marcia. Linda was grateful for the rush of faceless forms in Navy white who danced with her and brought her things to eat and asked her questions which she scarcely heard.

At midnight, she tried to slip upstairs. But Marcia caught sight of her. "Tired, Linda?" "Awfully. It was such a long trip."

Marcia hooked her arm in Linda's. "You're not going without saying good night to Jimmy? I've talked about you so much he feels as though he knows you awfully well already."

She wanted to ask, "Did he say that?" She didn't, of course. And then she was standing beside him, her eyes avoiding his. "Good night," she was whispering. "I—I'm going upstairs."

His hand came out, and she felt it burn for an instant along her fingertips. "Good night, Miss Storm," he said. Why, she knew, so irrevocably, in that moment that it wasn't her disordered imagination torturing her? Something had happened between them—something he was feeling as strongly as she felt it.

ALONE in the guest room, she tried to shake the mood from her. It refused to go. Queer how she could still see his face—the laughing brown eyes, the lean tanned cheeks, the way his lips smiled.

But this was madness! Jimmy Cooper belonged to Marcia King. Linda herself was engaged to George Cameron. She loved him. She had loved him for a long time, and she wore his ring. In the fall, they would be married. Resolutely she put the whole fantastic incident away from her.

In the morning, she awoke with a feeling of heaviness, of dread and guilt. Then memory crowded down. Last night. Last night, and Jimmy Cooper's eyes. . . .

She forced herself to concentrate on George Cameron. There was an old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." Did that account for the harness that had slipped over George's face, as she thought of him now? His face. Painfully, she put the features together. His blue-gray eyes, behind their rimless glasses. His square jaw, his stern mouth. But somehow, try though she would, the whole thing did not jell. It was like straining to get a good look at a picture in your hand and finding, horribly, that something was the matter with your eyesight.

"I must be going crazy!" She would not look at him again. She would be casual, and cool and impersonal. He could not be feeling the things she was feeling.

MARCIA came rushing into her room. "Good morning. Hey, where are you?" "Taking a shower," Linda mumbled.

"Guess who's waiting downstairs? Jimmy! He's going to help me take you around on a real tour of the station, Linda. You'll be thrilled. You've never seen We'll inspect all the planes and watch the cadets and you can even sit in the cockpit of a bomber. Too anything like this. That quick glimpse yesterday was nothing, but regulations don't allow ladies in service planes, although I've heard it's been done on the sly." How untroubled she was, how gloriously happy!

the mirror, applying her rouge, facing Marcia's clear eyes, it was terribly difficult to say, "No. I—I don't want to see the station again." But she said it because she knew it had to be said. She had no interest in the station. She mustn't be too much in Jimmy Cooper's company before that wedding a week from Sunday.

"Don't want to?" Marcia echoed blankly. "I never heard of such a thing! Everybody loves to look the station over." Linda was miserably aware that Marcia had offered her a great boon. Not to appreciate it must seem inexplicable to a Navy girl.

"I know most people would like to go—," she floundered. "But I—well, all those planes make me feel uncomfortable. They remind me of things I'd rather not think about. War, and bombs falling on women and children. The world's so upset these days. The papers are full of jittery headlines."

She was not being tactful. Certainly she was not being polite. But this meant a great deal to her, and it was the truth. At least, it was half the truth. The other half was that she would rather sit here in this room alone than get into that car, wedged in between Marcia and Jimmy Cooper.

Marcia sat on the bed with startled abruptness. "Linda Storm, are you stark, raving mad? I know you're an intelligent girl. More intelligent than I'll ever be, maybe. I guess I am flighty and I hardly ever read the newspapers. Except for who married who. But honey, these planes here at Pensacola mean protection and defense for our country! My father and Jimmy and all those boys here learning to fly are what stand between the rest of the world is in!"

Linda took a deep breath. "Look, Marcia. Put me down as queer. I've got a phobia about those planes. You go some place with

your Jimmy, and I'll potter around by myself."

But Marcia was dismayed and hurt. The funny little snub nose wrinkled, and the soft, velvet brown eyes blinked to keep the tears back. "I especially asked Jimmy to be nice to you. Look at me, Linda. Tell me the truth. Is it because you don't like him, personally? I thought last night you were a little stiff. Did he say something out there on the porch? Oh, darling, don't tell me you've taken a dislike to Jimmy!"

(To Be Continued)

Mrs. Little Is After Big Fish



Mrs. Lawson Little is as expert with a fly rod as her famous husband is with golf clubs. Barefooted she fishes for trout in lower falls of Ammonocuc river at Bretton Woods, N. H.

News and Herald Want-Ads get results.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



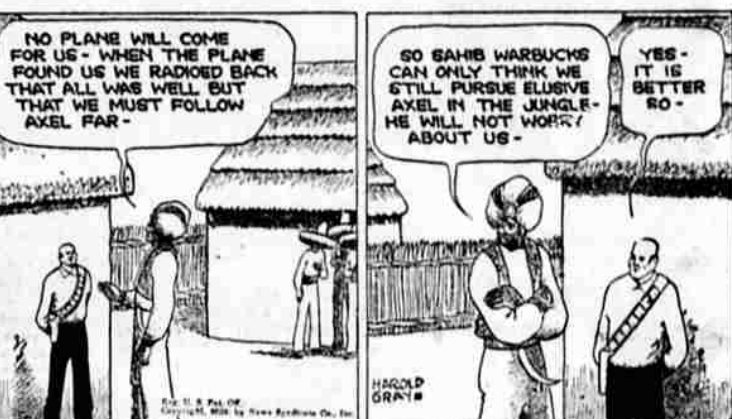
OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FLAPPER FANNY By Sylvia



CLEVER ACTOR

HORIZONTAL: Answer to Previous Puzzle. 1. Actor who specializes in depicting famous mep. 8 He was near screen acting honors. 13 Comes. 14 Provider of food. 16 Conclusion. 17 Warehouse. 19 Accomplished. 20 Onager. 21 Sallor. 23 Lion. 25 Sun. 28 Above. 31 Browned bread. 34 To leer. 35 Chill. 36 Constellation. 37 To depart. 39 English coin. 40 To debase. 42 Cherub. 44 Genus of tree ferns. 48 To spring up. 51 To hoot. 52 To prevent. 56 Blackbird. 57 Deity of war. 58 Carved gem. 59 He is a actor. 60 To evade. 15 Devoured. 18 3,1416. 20 He was born in 1830. 21 Extinct bird. 22 Wagon track mark. 24 Bony. 25 Diocesan center. 27 Blue grass. 29 Monster. 30 To bang. 32 Eager. 33 Positive. 37 Native lead sulphide. 38 Castle. 41 Loom bar. 43 Nautical. 45 Death notice. 46 Skin opening. 47 Venerable. 48 Circle part. 49 Hurray! 50 Bugle plant. 53 Moolay apple. 54 Scarlet. 55 Pedal digit.



WASH TUBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

