● SERIAL STORY

WAR AND A WOMAN

BY BETTY WALLACE

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Yesterday: At the field Marcia leaves to talk to Bill Brooks, a cadet. When Jimmy asks, "Was I wrong, last night, or did you feel it too?" Linda tells him she is leaving for home, at once. Marcia returns.

CHAPTER V

"MARCIA!" Linda cried warningly. In the one word was contained an urgent pleading. Jimmy must not know how she felt about this naval air base, about the planes, about war. What difference did it make—why drag that in to torture and torment him? There was enough keeping them apart without that.

"But if Jimmy knew the real reason why you want to go home—"

"Marcia!"

"But darn it, it's so silly, when you get right down to it! It's making a mountain out of a mole hill!"

It would be a mountain, high and impregnable, if Jimmy ever knew it, Linda thought unhappily. Their fight was hard enough already. Because they were both honorable people, they were trying to reason away the mysterious attraction which was catapulting them toward each other. But even if there hadn't been Marcia King, for Jimmy—and if there weren't George Cameron, in Queensville, for Linda—this thing alone would have split them apart.

Jimmy Cooper was standing, straight and still, the sunlight on his rumpled tawny hair and his eyes on Linda's face. "If it's something you don't want me to know, of course Marcia mustn't tell me," he said tonelessly.

"All right, all right," Marcia moved impatiently. "But she's not going home! She came down here to be maid of honor at our wedding, and she's not going to wiggle out of it!"

Linda wanted to cry out that she dared not stay. She wanted to say, "Marcia, you fool! If I remain here maybe there won't be a wedding! How can you be so blind? Can't you see what's going on? Can't you?"

But Marcia was sunny and assured again. Her arm slipped inside of Linda's. "I'm a rotten hostess, that's what it is. I ran off and left you to listen to Bill Brooks' tale of woe. I'm going to take good care of you from now on and give you a real whirl. You'll have such a good time you'll forget all about—all about everything else."

They cut the sight-seeing short. To Linda's relief, Jimmy stayed on the field and Marcia drove the car home. Nothing had been solved. Somehow she'd have to get through the two weeks ahead.

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SUDDENLY she wanted, more than anything else, to see George Cameron again. If he was here, close beside her, she'd snap back into her senses. Everything would become serene and normal again. On an impulse, after lunch, she went to her room and wrote him a note.

"Dear George—Please come down here right away. I am missing you dreadfully! George, just for two weeks, can't you lock up the laboratory to be with me? I need you. Love, Linda."

It might not have been so bad, if, in the days that followed, Marcia had not innocently insisted on throwing Jimmy and Linda together so much. But she wanted her friend to have a gay time, and she wanted Jimmy beside her, too.

Linda was waiting for an answer from George. The third day after she had mailed the letter, it still hadn't come. She was tempted to telephone him. But he'd wonder what had happened, and so she kept herself from acting too panic stricken.

That night—it was a Saturday—Marcia had arranged a party at the Officers' Club. Linda heard her telling Jimmy, "Don't forget to dance with Linda. You haven't danced with her once since she's been here."

Oh, the fool! The blind fool! A sob rose in Linda's throat. She stumbled blindly away. But the porch was no sanctuary either, because it was here that she had first looked up into Jimmy's eyes.

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THE Officers' Club was not quite what she had expected. Men in uniform, girls in evening dress. But the tables were bare, and the decorations far simpler than those in the night spots at home. Everyone knew everyone else. There was much calling back and forth, much familiar banter and teasing laughter.

Linda was grateful for the lanky young lieutenant Marcia had roped in to escort her. His name was Peter. He, too, was a flight instructor at the field. And he was much taken with her combination of golden hair and golden eyes. "How come the Navy didn't discover you long ago?" he wanted to know. "I've never seen seen you before."

She told him about Queensville. "Aha, just a college widow," he said.

No, he wasn't brilliant. But he stuck close to her, and that was something. It protected her from looking at Jimmy Cooper too obviously. She prayed, too, that Peter's attentions would divert Marcia. "She'll see I'm no wall flower. She doesn't need to force Jimmy to dance with me."

But after she had danced several times with Peter, she saw Marcia nudging Jimmy. Linda grabbed her vanity case, she stood up. "Excuse me. I—" She ran for the ladies' lounge.

That was only a respite. She might have known she couldn't escape forever. The moment she had dreaded came at last. Jimmy Cooper was bending over her. "May I have this dance?"

"I—I'm tired—" she whispered.

He said quietly, "I won't bite you."

So she stood up and slipped into his arms, while Marcia regarded them both affectionately.

His hand on her back was gentle, and he guided her surely and expertly. But she couldn't bear it any more. A soft sob broke from her. "Please, no more." They were standing perfectly still while the music rose poignantly and unbearably. For a long moment, there was no one else in all the world but their two selves.

"Shall we go out on the porch?" he was asking, his voice curiously hoarse.

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THEY shouldn't go. Yet she was walking beside him like a girl in a trance.

"We shouldn't—oh—we shouldn't!" she burst out.

"I know," he said miserably. "But, Linda—I've fought until I can't deny it, even to myself, any more. I haven't slept. I look at Marcia, and she's still the same as she always was. She loves me. It's like a knife in my heart to know she trusts me. But I can't take her in my arms any more. I can't tell her I love her any more. The whole world has changed. There's nothing but you. I see your face up there in the clouds when I ought to be concentrating on the way my student is flying. I hear your voice everywhere. It's driving me crazy! We've got to do something."

He had no right to put it into words! While it had been only a mirage, beautiful and unreal, beckoning and yet threatening, she had still had the courage to run from it. But now these words of his made it solid, inescapable.

"Listen!" she jerked out. "Even if there weren't Marcia—even if I weren't engaged myself—I couldn't—Jimmy, you're a flyer. A man whose career is devoted to war. And I'm a peaceloving girl. A pacifist, if you like. I hate your work! And—and I hate you for being in it, so there!"

(To Be Continued)

Speaker of the House William B. Bankhead heads toward writer's cramp as Congress heads toward adjournment. He's pictured signing last of 244 bills, largest number ever passed by House in one day.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia

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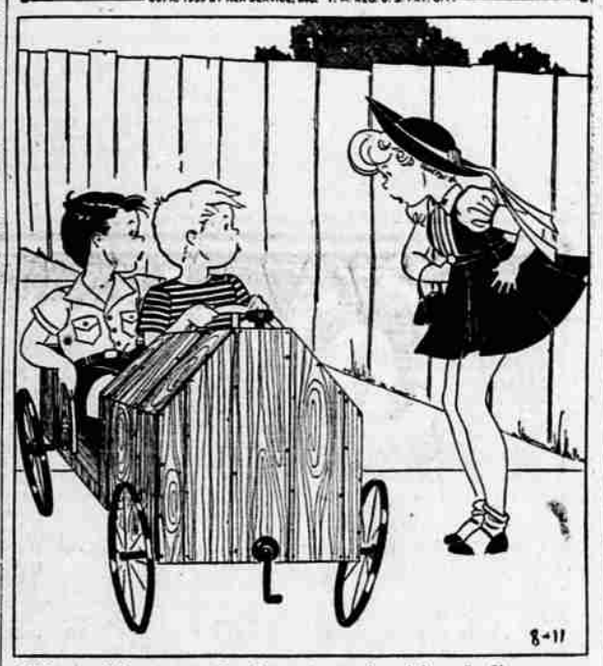

"Wanta drive out to the dump grounds with us? I'm gonna help Bill pick out a new car."

SPORTS TITLEHOLDER

HORIZONTAL

1, 6 Champion golfer pictured here.
11 French measure.
12 Species of annelids.
13 Leg joint.
14 Dried coconut meat.
15 Billiard rod.
16 Hour.
17 Sprite.
19 Point towards.
20 Dye.
21 Young devil.
23 Tone B.
24 To revoke.
26 Eye tumors.
28 To disclaim.
30 Streak.
31 Professional athlete.
32 Auto.
34 Distinctive theory.
35 Electric term.
37 Gaelic.
39 On the lee.
41 Court.
42 Credit.
44 Hawaiian natives.
46 Mother.
47 Arabian.
49 More infirm.
50 Identical.
52 Auto shed.
53 Spat.
55 He recently won the national —— golf championship.
56 Playing golf is his ——.

VERTICAL

2 Siberian.
3 Magic.
4 Unit.
5 Embroidery.
7 Atrocities.
8 To drink dog-fashion.
9 Male ancestor.
10 Land rights.
14 Pert girls.
15 He was once a —— or club carrier.
18 He is rated among the —— players.
20 To worship.
22 Blue.
24 Venomous snake.
25 Printer's measure.
27 To soften leather.
29 South Africa.
32 Dinner.
33 Garden tool.
36 A bit.
38 Orchid tubers.
40 Big.
41 Carved gem.
43 Uncommon.
45 Large pulpit.
46 Chinese sedge.
47 Since.
48 Curse.
50 Sister.
51 Sea eagle.
54 While.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

PIGEON CARRIERS
DORMERED ORLE
ALLE AIL MAKING
LED SPOILERS EL
TR BUS BASS AGA
R PIN SANS SEED
IRIS MUTE FIR E
CAT WIRE VISITS
IT BANE TIL
A CART CAST
LOONY SOP E
TAT LAR MR
COLUMBIDAE

PIGEON

OUT OUR WAY — BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE — With MAJOR HOOPLE

RED RYDER — BY FRED HARMAN

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE — BY HAROLD GRAY

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS — BY BLOSSER

WASH TUBBS — BY CRANE

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES — BY MARTIN

ALLEY OOP — BY V. T. HAMLIN