

## SERIAL STORY

## WAR AND A WOMAN

BY BETTY WALLACE

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Yesterday Linda is infuriated when George refuses to leave his experiments, come to her, George calls again. Linda's father has had a heart attack, is in a serious condition. Linda plans to take the first plane home.

## CHAPTER VII

SHE never remembered, afterward, how she had broken the dreadful news to Marcia and Mrs. King. All she knew was that the blood pounded in her temples, and her knees shook so that they led her to a chair. Marcia was instantly upset, going for cold water, smelling salts, saying distractedly, "Oh, Mother! Linda and her father are so close—so much closer than ordinary parents and daughters! This is terrible!"

"A plane—" Linda murmured. "I must go at once."

"But there are no regular planes at this hour," Mrs. King said, knitting her brows. "If you were a man, and if somehow we could get hold of a service ship. . . . But this way. . . ."

Marcia flew to the telephone. "Jimmy will know what to do." It was pathetic, the way she relied on him for everything. Through the dim fog of her shock, Linda found herself noticing that, Dreading Jimmy's presence, even the help he might be able to lend.

A moment later, Marcia was saying, "Mobile. That's the nearest airport. It's more than 150 miles from here. Jimmy says he doesn't think there's a flight out of there until night. But even so, Linda, you'd be home in the morning. Better than the train. If you caught a train right now, you couldn't be there before tomorrow night. . . ."

"Get hold of yourself, child," Mrs. King said kindly. "Perhaps your father isn't as ill as it seemed at first. You must be brave. I'll help you pack."

Sick grief ached inside Linda. "Anything, I—I can't think. . . ."

Everything else was dwarfed before this horrible tragedy. Her father—her father whom she had left in the best of health, completely happy with his latest rare books. She remembered that one had come the morning she went. A book he had been saving for months in order to be able to buy. She thought of his wise eyes, his fingers that turned the pages of old manuscripts so lovingly. It wasn't fair that this should have happened to Daddy! Heart attack. Why, he'd never even been ill before. He was only 55. Young in the prime.

HER eyes kept blurring as Marcia and Mrs. King were taking her in hand. She watched them pull open bureau drawers in the guest room; watched them take out her trunk and begin to hang dresses inside it.

"One hundred and fifty miles. That's a long ride for you, Linda, all worried and upset. . . ." Mrs. King ventured.

"I'm too jittery to drive all that way," Marcia said. "I know I'd plow into a truck, the way I feel. But Jimmy said if you decided to take the plane, he'd get away and drive you."

Jimmy. His name penetrated that queer, mental fog that enveloped Linda. "What? What did you say, Marcia?"

"I said Jimmy would drive you to Mobile."

"Won't—won't you come, too?" Linda faltered.

Mrs. King's lips pursed in thought. "You'd not be back before one in the morning, Marcia. Tonight there's the Captain's party for you. I—I hardly see how you—"

"But Jimmy won't be there, either, Mother."

"One of you must be present," her mother said gently. "We can't disrupt Mrs. Blair's plans. It would be unpardonable." She did not say so, but the conclusion hung in the air that if the illness had occurred in their own family, it would be different.

"I can get a bus to Mobile," Linda whispered. "I can even take a taxi, if I must."

"Oh, no, my dear. I merely meant that there was no need of both the prospective bride and groom being absent from a party in their honor! Maybe it seems silly to stand on ceremony, but the Captain. . . ."

Linda didn't want Jimmy Cooper sitting beside her for a hundred and fifty miles. But she had to get to Daddy. She had to get to him swiftly. Nothing else mattered. From Mobile it would be overnight until she was home, beside Daddy. Seeing him with her own eyes. Talking to the doctor. Assuring herself that the half-formed disquieting fears in her heart were not true. People had heart attacks and didn't die.

"For things like this, thank God for speed. . . ." she thought. "Thank God for planes." If only men would use all their power, all their miraculous knowledge, for the good things. . . . And that brought her back, in the same endless circle, to Jimmy. He was a pilot. He flew planes every day. But his planes were devoted to war and the teaching of war. Forbidden for an errand of mercy.

HER things were packed, at last. An enlisted man took down the trunk, ready to be strapped to the back of Marcia's car. "You can't take that by plane. I'll send it to the express office myself, after you've gone," Marcia said.

It seemed ages before Jimmy came. At last he was there. Quiet, controlled, his eyes betraying no memory of the blow she had given him last night. Marcia collared

him, talked in swift, low sentences. Linda pressed a handkerchief to her lips, and said shakily, "Goodbye, Mrs. King. I—I don't know how to thank you."

"Goodbye, Linda. I hope you'll find your father ever so much better than you expect."

"Oh, darling, I'm so sorry this had to happen!" Marcia was frankly weeping. "If it's only a false alarm—and I hope it is, for your sake and your dad's—come back for the wedding! Linda, I'd even postpone it, if you could come later."

Linda tried to smile. "Be happy, Marcia."

"Jimmy, drive carefully, sweet." Marcia stood on tiptoe, her face lifted for his kiss. Linda turned away.

The familiarity, the possessiveness of that kiss burned into her eyes even though she hadn't seen it. And she thought that she must be a monster to be thinking about this, while Daddy was lying ill at home.

The last handwavings, the last goodbyes, were soon over. Jimmy Cooper and Linda Storm were alone in the little car. He said nothing for a long time. It was only when Pensacola was behind them, and the white ribbon of the road ahead, that he told her, "I'm dreadfully sorry."

That was all. Curiously, it was enough. A current of strength seemed to flow from him to her. Her lips quivered, but she said steadily, "It was awfully kind of you to undertake this long drive."

"You know I wish I could do more."

And there it was again, naked and throbbing between them. The same emotion, the same compelling urge, the same hopeless feeling of love and despair.

The girl set her lips. She dared not look at him. One hundred and fifty miles. Three hours. At

least. Three hours or more of being alone, of having this thing beating its wings like a caged bird against their hearts. Three hours of knowing that he was beside her—his strength and his love and the longing that racked him.

"It's little enough to have, out of a life time," she thought queerly. But she was afraid, too. Afraid because sitting beside him was driving the thought of her father out of her mind. Afraid because in three hours, anything might happen.

(To Be Continued)

## Oops! Also Ran!



Edward Everett Horton, well-known character actor, is one of the many Hollywood stars who follow the ponies occasionally. And here Horton shows you how to take it philosophically when your favorite nag runs out of the money.

## OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



## OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



## RED RYDER



## BY FRED HARMAN

## LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



## BY HAROLD GRAY

## FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"He oughta do it for half-price. There's nothin' to do now except clean the works an' put 'em back."

## FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



## BY BLOSSER

## WASH TUBBS



## BY CRANE

## BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



## BY MARTIN

## ALLEY OOP



## BY V. T. HAMLIN

## 'ANCIENT COUNTRY'

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

|                              |              |                                         |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 Pictured European country. | HELEN KELLER | 14 To spread hay                        |
| 7 Its capital.               | HELEN KELLER | 16 Slaves.                              |
| 11 Mover's truck.            | HELEN KELLER | 19 This country possesses great wealth. |
| 12 Things bought.            | HELEN KELLER | 21 Acrobat.                             |
| 15 Ever.                     | HELEN KELLER | 25 Meadow.                              |
| 16 Interdiction.             | HELEN KELLER | 27 To jog.                              |
| 17 Married.                  | HELEN KELLER | 28 Pertaining to air.                   |
| 18 Stalk.                    | HELEN KELLER | 30 Imitated.                            |
| 20 About.                    | HELEN KELLER | 31 Vein.                                |
| 22 Small child.              | HELEN KELLER | 36 Painter.                             |
| 23 As if.                    | HELEN KELLER | 37 Expensive.                           |
| 24 Christmas.                | HELEN KELLER | 39 Code of laws.                        |
| 26 To stutter.               | HELEN KELLER | 42 Energy.                              |
| 28 Roof edge.                | HELEN KELLER | 43 Type measure.                        |
| 32 100 square meters.        | HELEN KELLER | 44 Brink.                               |
| 33 Soul.                     | HELEN KELLER | 45 Adult male deer.                     |
| 34 By.                       | HELEN KELLER | 46 Taxi.                                |
| 35 Pertaining to lore.       | HELEN KELLER | 47 Room recess.                         |
| 37 Supper.                   | HELEN KELLER | 48 Split pea.                           |
| 38 Places of business.       | HELEN KELLER | 51 Eternity.                            |
| 40 Land right.               | HELEN KELLER | 52 Cuckoo.                              |
| 41 Surveyor.                 | HELEN KELLER | 53 Ocean.                               |
| 46 Mohammedan.               | HELEN KELLER |                                         |

