● SERIAL STORY

WORKING WIVES

BY LOUISE HOLMES

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Yesterday: Marian revives, tries to laugh off her fainting. She calls Dan but he is in conference with the president of his company. Later she goes to the doctor. She is going to have a baby!

CHAPTER XVII

MARIAN worked furiously, running through ledger pages, sorting financial data. Gradually she regained composure. Early in May was so far away, so much a part of the distant future, that it could be ignored. The thing to do was to forget what Dr. Moss had said, to live each day and let May answer its own riddles.

Working on a chart, she mentally laid the first brick in a wall behind which she would keep her secret, behind which even she would never look. The wall was to be made up of such capable endeavor that Mr. Fellows would look upon her as an absolute necessity to the office. She would work for a new understanding with Dan, take more interest in outside things, parties, lectures, picture shows—she'd start tomorrow night by going to dinner with Dolly and Randy.

There was to be no more irritability. A cheerful, happy manner would make her feel cheerful and happy. Some day she would go to Dr. Moss, she would laugh and say, "You were mistaken."

The more she thought about it, the more certain she became. She relaxed in the belief that the kind fates would clear the muddle if she but let them do it.

At 4 o'clock Dan called. "Want something, Marian?"

"No-o—I feel badly about last night—"

"I guess we've been heading toward last night for a long time. See you at 5." A distinct click said that he had hung up the receiver. The click bothered her for a moment, then she turned back to her work.

Mr. Fellows came to look over her shoulder. "Swell," he said enthusiastically. "Those charts will be invaluable as time goes on. You're leaving space for the next 10 years. Yep—that's swell."

So everything was all right. Dan would be waiting at 5, Mr. Fellows was pleased, the wall was already amazingly secure. She'd beat the game. It was months before she need think of the doctor's verdict again. Anything might happen before she need think of that.

Above everything else, Dan must not know what the doctor had said. If she told Dan it might be real. Dan's ignorance, in itself, denied the facts. In a reaction from strain, she grew light-hearted. It was the emotional pendulum on its upward swing.

It must swing back, but, for the moment, it was enough to be released from torment.

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SHE got into Dan's car, saying in a little rush, "I'm glad to see you, mister."

He said, "Thanks," not looking at her. He was still a little grim, Marian noticed the tight muscle in his jaw.

"I'm a good girl now," she said. "Can you forget about last night?"

"No," he answered, "but let's not go into it again."

She was determined to be pleasant. "All right," she said lightly. "Anyway, I'm sorry."

He nodded briefly. Then, "Did you see Dolly this morning? How did she and Randy Means make out?"

He wanted to hurdle the late unpleasantness and she fell in with him. "Oh, they had a won-derful time," imitating Dolly. "At least from Dolly's standpoint it was mar-velous."

Dan's jaw relaxed a bit. "From Randy's, too, I guess."

"Did you see him today?"

"Yeah—had lunch with him—he's completely sold—sort of inarticulate—you know how people get."

"You don't mean—" She left the surmise unfinished, ready to laugh.

"I think it's the real thing."

"Not really?"

"Sure—and I'm glad for both of them. They're two swell people and I'm glad to see them get together."

"Oh, I think you're crossing your bridges before you get to them."

"Time will tell. He asked us to have dinner with them tomorrow night at the Medinah Club."

"Yes, Dolly told me. I wish I could fix her up a little, Dan. She's so naive in appearance."

"Say, you leave that girl alone. Her personality wasn't made out of plastic wood, it hasn't gone dry and hard—"

Marian glanced at him. Yesterday she would have taken exception to that remark, today she let it go. "I'm not talking about her personality, it's her clothes."

"Just take my advice and leave Dolly alone," Dan was saying. He did not add, "You might spoil her," but the inference was plainly there.

Marian mused, "It'd be a joke on us if Dolly married Randy Means. I'm afraid she wouldn't be cleaning our apartment any more." It was really something of a thought. Who would take care of them if Dolly—?

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THEY stopped at the market. Tenderloin steaks, a glass of preserved figs. Dan loved preserved figs and cream cheese. Marian was deliberately playing up to Dan that night. There were cold potatoes in the refrigerator. She'd fry them crisp for Dan.

Reaching the apartment, she ran up the stairs ahead of Dan. The blow had fallen and it had not crushed her. She was the same, exactly the same. Dr. Moss' news had already taken on the form of a bad dream from which she had awakened.

She took great pains with the dinner, rushing into the bedroom at the last minute to change to a new, and very fetching, house coat. It was pink and orchid taffeta, the colors blending together. It had a lovely metal belt and tiny flower buttons. It swished delightfully. It had cost too much—much too much. Even on a half-price sale, it had been definitely beyond Marian's clothes allowance. She felt a trifle annoyed when Dan did not notice the house coat.

He always cleared the table, rinsing the dishes and stacking them in neat piles for Dolly to wash in the morning. While he worked, Marian hung around the kitchen. Usually he whistled through his teeth. That evening he was frowningly silent.

"What were you doing in Mr. Turner's office this morning?" Marian asked.

He said nothing for a moment, then, "He called me in to ask if I thought he was managing the business with the greatest possible efficiency." He had his back to her, she could not see his face.

"You're spoofing."

"That could happen, couldn't it?"

"Not to you." She hadn't meant to say that. Pointed rejoinders had been coming too readily to her lips.

Dan washed his hands and turned. Marian stood in the kitchen door. "I wish you'd kiss me, Dan," she said wistfully.

Putting a finger under her chin, he raised her face. Long he gazed into her eyes. "Isn't it too bad, Marian?" he said slowly.

"Isn't what too bad?" she asked. He was so strange. He might be looking at her face for the first time—or the last.

"That we muffed it—that we had such a God-given chance and muffed it."

"Do you hate me, Dan?"

He nodded gravely. "I hate you because you have made me hate myself," he said gently. "I used to have pride in myself—belief—it's all gone."

He turned away. He had not kissed her.

(To Be Continued)

When lightning strikes in sand, it fuses together the sand particles into what is known as a fulgurite.

SHIPSHAPE—Rear Admiral S. M. Robinson (above), new chief of the bureau of engineering for the navy, is slated to help coördinate ship-building. He's a former Texan.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia

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"There was another of those crank letters in the mail today—guy wants to know when you're going to pay his bill."

PIONEER MOVIE STAR

HORIZONTAL

1, 5 Pictured former movie star.
12 Genus of fungi.
14 Second trial.
16 Short news article.
17 To irk
19 Bundle.
20 To scatter hay.
21 Sawed over again.
23 Limb.
24 Transposed.
25 A mine.
26 Obscure.
28 Tone B.
29 To pull with effort.
30 To drink slowly.
32 To deposit.
34 On any occasion.
35 Lid.
37 Unless.
38 Bigotry.
41 Within.
43 Trough in gold mining.
44 Sound of surprise.
45 Parent.
46 Hair pad.
48 Preposition.
49 Child.
50 Roof with one slope.
52 On fire.
54 To contend.
55 Sheltered place.
56 She was the greatest star of the —— screen.
57 Her long —— were world famous.

VERTICAL

1 Rhythm.
2 Mocked.
3 Brink.
4 Exclamation.
5 Kettles.
6 Blackbird.
7 Regulated the pitch of
8 Foot.
9 Eye.
10 French coin.
11 Vales.
12 She specialized in —— —— parts.
13 Chinese money.
15 Genuine.
18 She is a —— of Canada.
21 Tatter.
22 To immerse.
25 Consumed by fire.
27 To chew loudly.
29 Rumanian coins.
30 Solar orb.
31 By.
33 Cravat.
35 Ease.
36 Sun god.
39 To honk.
40 New star.
42 Birthmarks.
45 Edible fungus
47 Dress coat end.
49 Row of a series.
51 Born.
53 Influenza.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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