

SERIAL STORY

WORKING WIVES

BY LOUISE HOLMES

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Yesterday, talking to Carmie, Marian mentioned Randy's party, that Pete and Julie are going. Immediately she is afraid of what Carmie may do. As they enter the club, a chilling foreboding grips Marian as she glimpses a woman, richly clad in fur and purple gown. It might be Carmie.

CHAPTER XX

THEY met Pete and his wife in the foyer. He greeted them joyfully and proudly presented his wife. Pete had changed, he was vibrantly alive, his eyes laughed. It crossed Marian's mind that he fairly swaggered with happiness, and her heart sank. With Carmie he had been quiet and unobtrusive, the discontented lover, the impatiently waiting lover.

Carmie had been assured. Cocky, Dan had called her. Now they had exchanged places, Pete gaining the heights, Carmie sinking to depths he had never known.

Pete held Julie's confiding hand as he introduced her to the group. She was a lovely thing, deliciously young, demurely self-confident.

Marian thought: She has the look of a woman who is loved. Dolly has it. A man's love is the most beautifying thing in the world. She looked at Dan and found him regarding Julie admiringly. Marian tossed her head. She'd had a man's love and what had it done for her? Nothing—less than nothing.

"How about a little look-in at the bar?" Randy asked. Talking and laughing, they wandered to the stairs. Descending the stairs, Marian searched the bar for the woman she had seen. Purple ensemble, pointed fox scarf. She could see no one of that description. Relieved, she turned to Pete, who was walking beside her. Dan was laughing with Julie.

"She's very sweet, Pete," Marian said. "Wasn't it—rather sudden?"

He smiled down at her. "In a way, yes. When I finally woke up, it happened fast."

They sat down at a copper-topped table and Marian again turned to Pete. "She's taking it awfully hard, Pete—Carmie, I mean."

"I'm sorry," he said, smiling across the table at Julie. He did not look at all sorry.

"She's bitter, Pete."

"Do you think she has a right to be bitter?"

"Perhaps not, but—why didn't you let her go on working?" She was speaking in her own defense again. "There is more than one way to be happy."

"I know," he said, "but don't you agree that each person has a right to his own idea?"

"Of course—that's what I mean—Carmie had a right."

"And I had a right. We both have what we want, so where's the kick?"

RANDY was telling an amusing story about a girl who had entered a one-way street from the wrong end, parked her car in front of a fire hydrant, and gone shopping for two hours. Pete and Marian listened.

"Did the poor thing get arrested?" Dolly asked, her eyes on Randy's face, trying not to look too worshipping.

"Lord, no—when she returned to her car she found a motorcycle cop leaning against the fender. Without a moment's hesitation, she rushed up to him, just too innocent and pathetic for anything. She said, 'Oh, officer, I've been looking and looking for you. This is my first trip downtown alone. I'm in a dreadful mess. Will you help me?'"

"Cu-ute," Dolly applauded. "What happened then?"

"Believe it or not, the cop stood by while she backed out, then escorted her out of the traffic. Can you beat it?" He shook his head, laughing.

"And they say it's a man's world," Pete muttered amidst the general laughter.

Randy said, "I told the story as a warning to you, Pete."

"Mr. Means," Julie exclaimed, "don't you think you've gone far enough?" She was entirely good-natured, rosy and abashed.

"You don't mean that the little devil was my wife," Pete gasped, his eyes dancing.

"No one else."

"But that was before I knew you, darling," Julie laughed, leaning across the table.

They all shouted with laughter, especially the men. Dan said, "Pretty darn smart, if you ask me."

Marian made herself smile. Men liked girls like that, clinging little vines, trading on their femininity. The woman who stood on her own feet hadn't a chance—the men hated her for it.

They went to the dining room, where a flower-laden table had been reserved for them. Marian was quiet. She seemed incapable of rising above the dull ache in her heart. The dinner had been previously ordered to white confusion. Plates were brought and taken away, the pleasant flow of chatter and laughter went on. Randy paid marked attention to Dolly, solicitous of her every wish. His strong face was constantly turned toward her.

They had finished a frozen salad when Marian's eyes were drawn to the door. Carmie stood there, waiting to be seated. Her escort was a short, stout man, very bald, repugnant in an oily way. Carmie was beautifully gowned, her clothes were extreme, slightly foreign, dark purple and silver. The lovely fur hung carelessly from one shoulder, her hat had a slightly rakish tilt. The only little man said something and she laughed shrilly.

Marian touched Pete's arm. In

a low tone she said, "Pete, there's Carmie. She's had too much to drink. I'm frightened."

He glanced at the doorway. "Frightened? Why?"

"I don't know," worriedly. "I'm afraid she means trouble. I've seen her a lot lately. She's threatened—"

Pete said easily, "You're drawing on your imagination, Marian. Carmie can dine wherever she likes." Glancing again at the figure in the doorway, he frowned. "I never knew Carmie to drink. Her boy friend must be the wrong kind of company."

Marian persisted. "Be on your guard, Pete. I know what I'm talking about."

THE head waiter was leading Carmie and her companion between the tables. They would pass Randy's table. Carmie's eyes were darting this way and that, feverish, harried eyes. Falling on Pete, she blazed. Her nostrils quivered as she drew a sharp breath. Marian looked at Julie, who was happily unconscious of impending trouble.

She turned to Dan; it was the first time she had addressed a remark to him. Dan always knew what to do in an emergency. She said, "Carmie is here. She's up to something."

He darted a glance over his shoulder. "Hm-m," he muttered. "Push horse—tight as a drum."

They were coming nearer. Marian started to push her chair back, then stopped helplessly. There was going to be a scene, she hadn't a doubt of it, and she was powerless to do anything about it. Carmie, who had always been dignified and well-bred, was about to make a fool of herself. She knew it by the mad glint in

Carmie's eyes. Marian sat still, waiting.

Carmie reached their table. She halted, catching at the back of a chair as her body showed an inclination to proceed after her feet had become motionless. Her eyes rested on Pete and he stood up. Randy and Dan followed suit.

Marian's heart pounded. She had an impulse to dash around the table and take Julie in her arms, protect her from the thing that was sure to happen.

(To Be Continued)

News and Herald Want-Ads get results.



AIR-MINDED—To aid the 1,500,000 American youths interested in aeronautics, Air Youth of America has been organized with Winthrop Rockefeller (above), son of "John D. Jr.," as temporary chairman of the agency's organizing committee.

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS



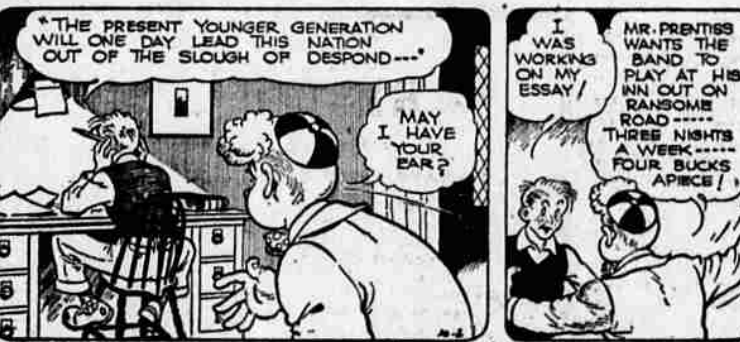
RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Awright, if you don't want the princess killed, I'll let her get married—I got to get rid of her somehow."

19TH CENTURY INVENTOR

