

SERIAL STORY

JOAN OF ARKANSAS

BY JERRY BRONDFIELD

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YESTERDAY: Key Granger is more friendly to Joan after the homecoming queen election. Keith is anxious to go. But Keith is ordered on a scout trip. He urges Dan to take Joan. "Way out!" Webber asks.

CHAPTER XI

INSTEAD of phoning, Keith called for Joan at the library and took her home.

"Take a deep breath and hold on tight," he said. "You're going on that hayride after all."

"Do you mean you're not—"

"You're going, but not with me," he interrupted.

"Say—what's this all about?"

"Dan Webber is going to pinch hit for me."

An incredulous look spread over her face, but before she could say anything Keith plunged on. "Honest, you'll enjoy it. And you'll probably discover Dan is the swell egg I've been telling you he is. Now's your chance to discover it."

Then breaking into a grin: "I wouldn't trust you with anyone else."

She didn't convince easily. "Do you mean to tell me old sour-puss himself consented to escort me anywhere but to the guillotine? Impossible! What'd you do—threaten him?"

Keith laughed. "Why, the guy just jumped at the chance."

"Jumped, did he? Why, I'll bet—"

Suddenly she paused, stared into space meditatively.

"Okay," she said, and there was a smile on her face. "Maybe I'll have more fun than I expected."

It was a crisp, moon-drenched, late October night. Perfect for a hayride. They creaked up Pine Ridge road in two wagons, 10 couples in each.

Someone in the first wagon had a portable victrola and a dozen swing records. Dan and Joan were in the second wagon, up front, just behind the driver. An arm's length away, Tommy Peters fished for some music on a portable radio he had borrowed.

The wagons bumped along over the dirt road, but it was comfortable in the deep, warm hay.

"Mind if I sort of rest my head on your shoulder?" Joan asked without looking up.

"A pleasure and an honor," Dan assured her, and she tossed some hay in his face with a backward slip of her hand.

"Don't be so sarcastically glib."

"Well, after all, I'm only a pinch-hitter, you know."

"Sure—but as far as I know a pinch-hitter always does his best to make a hit."

She happened to look at the stars as she spoke and caught the expression that moved fleetingly across his face.

"Right?" she asked.

"After a fashion, I guess."

Joan smiled in the darkness. She wondered just how far she could draw him out. "Okay, skip it. But look—how about telling me a little about yourself. What makes you tick, and all that sort of stuff."

"Really interested?"

"Wouldn't ask if I weren't."

He laughed and she settled back on his shoulder. It was broad and warm with a certain solidness about it that didn't come from his bulk alone.

He leaned back and told her of his home in a small downstate town. He told her of his kid sister still in high school, and of the time he fell out of the apple tree and broke his wrist. He told her he had a tough time deciding between Tech and an eastern school and finally picked Tech because of its ceramic engineering school.

"How'd you happen to get interested in that stuff, anyway?" she asked.

"First of all, don't refer to it as 'stuff.' If you don't mind, that is."

"I worked in a small pottery plant in our town for a couple of summers and got to like it."

He stuck a strand of hay between his teeth. "And I'm not just putting around. I'm just about assured of a job with one of the largest pottery plants in the country when I graduate."

She liked the quiet confidence in his tone. Somehow she knew how he felt. He was preparing for something and would be ready to meet it. There would be no wavering, no indecision. He knew exactly what he wanted to do and was going to do it.

"Where is this plant?"

"Acme Pottery Products, near Pittsburgh."

"Big, eh?"

"Very big."

"Maybe you'll be president of the company some day."

"Maybe I will."

The evenness of his tone startled her. She had spoken half in jest. He had answered with a calm that was almost prophetic.

"You say you're sure of this job?"

"Just about. My old foreman back home recommended me and the Acme personnel manager liked my application. Going to see him in person during the Christmas holidays."

She caught the eager note in his tone. "It must be swell to know exactly where you're headed," she said softly, staring up at the stars again.

HE was silent for a long minute. "It is. You ought to think about it sometime. Do you good."

She half turned and faced him. "Meaning—"

"Meaning, take you, for instance. You have so much, and yet sometimes I think you have so little."

He paused.

"Go ahead," she said quickly.

Her eyes in the moonlight almost whipped him, but he managed to continue.

"You just slide through things, taking the path of least resistance. But you can't do that and feel as though you're genuinely satisfied with yourself. Or can you?"

That stung just a little but she didn't resent it. "Dan—you're right about me, but not entirely. I—I'm not really like that. Somehow I've just had a faculty for doing or saying the wrong thing since I've been here."

"And—Dan"—she placed a hand on his arm—"I don't want you to think that. I've given you a chance to show me what you were like. Now you give me a chance."

They grew silent then and for the rest of the ride they merely listened to the music.

Her thoughts raced, but foremost among them was the fact that she didn't want Dan Webber to think she was the unpurposeful

creature he thought her to be. There was a time when he might have been right. But those were the days before Tech. He'd said out in time.

(To Be Continued)

Carrying On



Screen star Jane Withers, 13, (above), is pictured carrying on her personal appearance comedy act in Boston, Mass., despite threats of prosecution. State Labor Commissioner James Moriarty had warned Jane and her mother against violating state child labor law.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Haven't you got one for about a dollar?"

MOHAMMEDAN LEADER

HORIZONTAL

1. 4 Pictured Mohammedan leader.
8. His yearly salary is his — in gold.
12. Native metal.
14. Assembly.
16. Born.
17. To jade.
18. Hazard.
19. Prepares lamb skins.
21. Low spirits.
23. Stranger.
25. In case that.
27. To remark.
29. To do wrong.
30. Indian mulberry.
31. Threshed cereal seeds.
33. Rectal.
36. Nimbus.
37. Lemur.
38. Jot.
39. Motors.
41. It is.
42. Exclamation.
44. To soften leather.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

SHIRLEY TEMPLE
DOOR AREAS
ALICE STILLS
NOR STAPLES
C. SEE
ENDEAR
REACT
ART M
PRESTO
A. ETERNAL
CHARM
TULIP
SE BOTANISTS

VERTICAL

2. His title is — Sir Mohammed Shah.
22. He is a — of immense power.
24. Rage.
26. Brother.
28. To scatter.
30. Social insect.
32. Beer.
33. Male child.
34. Sloths.
35. Aurora.
37. Cements.
40. Joke.
41. Little devil.
43. Convex molding.
45. To handle.
47. Indian nurse.
49. Fashion.
50. Extent.
51. Eccentric wheel.
52. Wine vessel.
54. Wand.
56. Mystic syllable.
58. Postscript.



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



BY BLOSSER



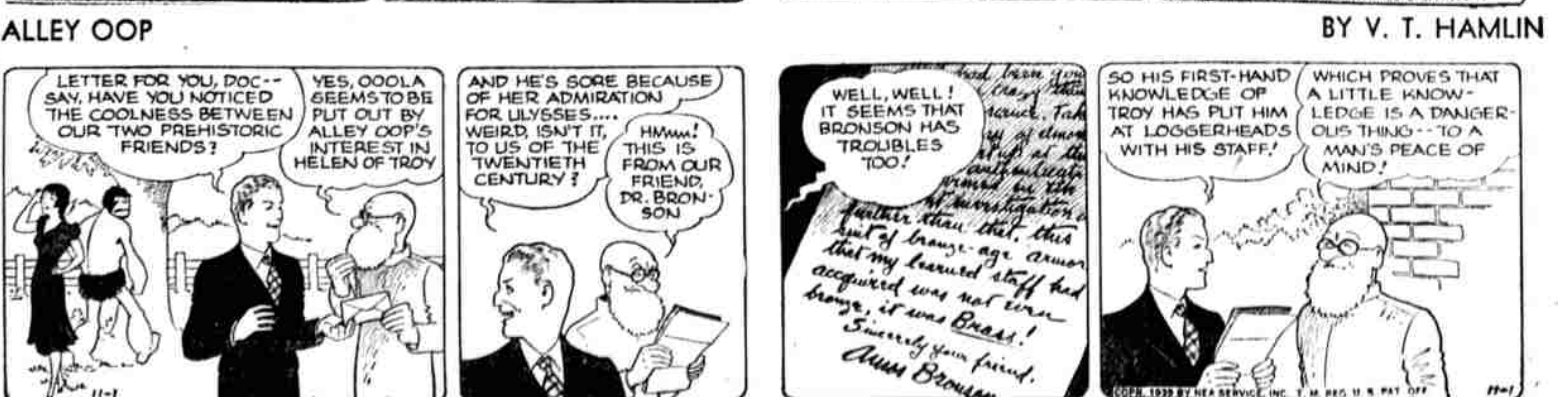
WASH TUBBS



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN