

SERIAL STORY

SANTA CLAUS BROWN

BY MILDRED GILMAN

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YESTERDAY: Mr. Donaldson nagged Jerry to start work the day following Christmas in the Palms Royale. He is through spending money on his son, Mrs. Brown leaves Alice, goes to Carter's to wait the return of Santa Claus Brown. He is late. It is almost midnight when Betty awakens, sees Mr. Brown coming down the street. She can hear his roars on the roof.

CHAPTER VII
JERRY parked his car in front of the Carter house. The street was deserted, except for Santa Claus Brown stumbling homeward, so tired he was hardly able to walk. Across the street from his boarding house, he stopped and leaned wearily against a tree to rest. Alice and Jerry did not see him.

"This isn't where I live—this is the Carter house," Alice said to Jerry.

"Well, you live right next door—and I'm parking here. I want to talk to you, and not have all those boarders listen to me."

"Sure you just want to talk, Jerry?" she asked.

"Yes," Jerry said. Then he embraced her suddenly. "And look—I want to tell you I really think you're a swell girl!"

Alice pulled away. "That's all over, Jerry. You're just—drunk."

"All right, if that's the way you feel about it," Jerry said bitterly. He started the motor again.

"Thanks for the lovely evening, Prince Charming."

Jerry looked at her hard. "Going formal on me? Okay, home for you."

He started the car suddenly. Neither of them saw Santa Claus Brown as he started to cross the street to the boarding house. The car shot out, bore down on him. There was a grating of brakes, a sharp stop, then silence.

Alice and Jerry got out.

"You've killed him—you've killed Santa Claus Brown!" Alice screamed. "Oh—Jerry—"

Together they bent over the old man.

"Darling, it wasn't my fault—he walked right into the path of the—"

Santa Claus Brown opened his eyes with a little moan.

"Don't blame him," he murmured. "I was tired. I could hardly see. I walked right in front of—the—" His eyes closed and he lay still.

"Alice—help me—take him to the hospital," Jerry stammered.

She helped him lift Brown into the car. They drove off in terrified silence to the hospital.

NEWS traveled fast through the small town. Santa Claus Brown was a favorite character. When Alice and Jerry came out of the hospital, there was an anxious crowd outside waiting for news. As Jerry appeared, hostile murmurs ran through the crowd in a rising tone.

"Listen, Brown isn't dead," Jerry pleaded defensively. "He isn't going to die. I'm out getting a little fresh air—in a minute I'm going to give him a blood transfusion."

Another murmur went through the crowd, less hostile this time.

Mrs. Brown appeared on the hospital steps. Mrs. Deakin and Mr. Middleton rushed up to her from the street.

"No need for you to bother phoning your daughter, Mrs. Brown," said Mrs. Deakin excitedly. "I called up over my own phone—long distance—and I don't want you to mind the charges either—70 cents for three minutes. Somebody there is going to get in touch with her, and send her here as soon as possible. But from what they said I don't think she's doing quite as well as you—"

Mrs. Brown interrupted her.

"Her daddy will be—so happy if she gets here in time. Did you tell them to have her fly—get here as soon as she can?"

"Yes, I told them all that," replied Mrs. Deakin sententiously. "They said they'd get her right away. Anything else you want me to do—even if it involves the cost of long distance telephoning, I'll be most glad to do it for you."

"Thank you so much," said Mrs. Brown. "I'm going back to papa now. I felt—a little faint in there." She stifled a sob.

She walked past Jerry without a word or a glance and entered the hospital.

As Jerry and Alice turned to follow her in, a clock struck 12, Christmas bells rang out, merrily at first, but gradually they became deep and sorrowful, more and more like a dirge.

TWO hours later Jerry and Alice left the hospital; the street was deserted except for the few people who still stood nearby, waiting.

"Jerry, shaken and weak, made an attempt to be brave."

"Well—I knock Santa Claus

down—then I try to make him all well again."

Alice, walking silently, doggedly ahead of him, did not answer.

"Gosh—they love him in this town," Jerry went on. "Wouldn't get that turn out if I got hit by a car. Funny thing, he's just a night watchman—gets a punk salary probably—lives in that lousy boarding house of yours, but they come out in gangs to pray for him."

"When I was a little boy—I used to think he was the real McCoy—maybe he is at that—never thought I'd grow up to knock out—Santa Claus—on Christmas Eve."

Alice turned on him suddenly. "I didn't either in those days. You were different. You had feelings, ambitions. You were going to be a great engineer—remember? Then an explorer, do big, dangerous things—you had a quality—I don't know what happened to it. You've turned hard—and hateful—and drunken—"

"Alice—don't!" Jerry pleaded weakly. "Please!"

"I can't help it," Alice sobbed. "I loved you—the real you, not this silly bragging rich man's son—Oh, Jerry—you know Santa Claus Brown hasn't much chance—he's making them tell the crowd everything's all right—he doesn't want to spoil their Christmas. He wouldn't let the officer hold you for drunken driving."

"He loves you and me, all of us. He's trying so hard to give us all a merry Christmas—the last thing he can do for us. And you—"

She ran off, leaving him standing there, staring after her.

"Alice—you hate me!" Jerry said bitterly. "I wish the car had hit my worthless carcass—instead of—Santa Claus."

He watched her disappear in the darkness.

(To Be Continued)

Procopie Attends White House Fete



Finnish Minister Hjalmar J. Procopie seemed undisturbed by the presence of the Russian ambassador at the White House diplomatic reception. There were no international incidents.

Rabbit skins are used extensively in the manufacture of felt hats.

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



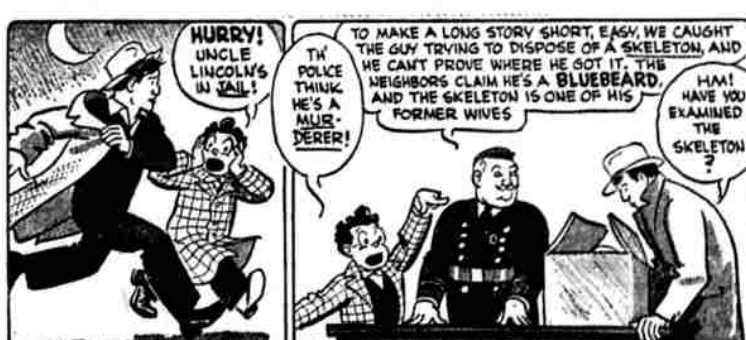
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



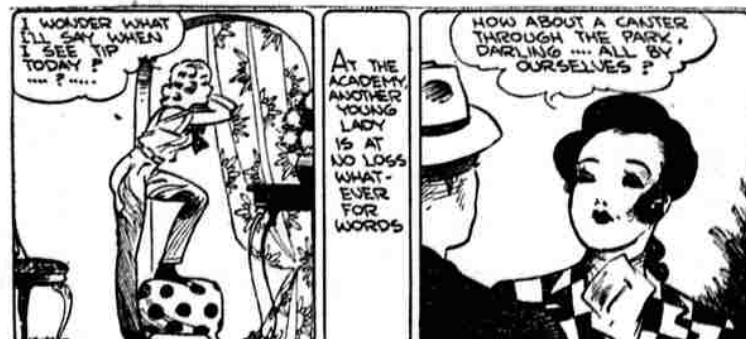
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN



FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



This is the last piece, Mac. Wanta flip to see who takes the rap for it?"

PETITE ACTRESS

HORIZONTAL

1,5 Modern actress pictured here.

10 Citizen.

11 To relax.

13 To endure.

16 Detestation.

18 Divine word.

20 To remain.

21 Sluggish.

23 Chinese.

25 Sister.

26 Not wide.

28 The populace.

30 Note in scale.

31 Crystalline substance.

33 Gaiters.

35 Street.

37 East.

39 To slip away.

41 Aurora.

43 Uprightness.

44 Fabulous bird.

46 To care for.

47 Not as fresh.

49 To devour.

51 Garden vegetable.

52 Bone.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

GANDHI REFORMER
OPERATE RADIATE
RAY CREST ASH
DOT SHELTER SEE
AIN COE US RM
S BOLD LEG CO
SWORD APART
I WAVE BIT IT
VA LEE LAHO
ECO RECLINE PAN
ETA SHADE EAR
PRICE FIRE ARSES
ASCETIC MARATHA

54 North America.

55 Lava.

57 Branch.

59 Fiber knots.

61 She was born in the city of.

62 She—in motion pictures.

VERTICAL

1 Climbing plant.

12 Months (abbr.).

2 Says.

3 Senior.

4 Snaky fish.

5 Not pliant.

6 Makes amends.

7 North Africa.

8 To recede.

9 Coins.

10 She won honors as the woman in "Good Earth."

11 Entrance or tunnel.

15 She—in America.

17 Sinned.

19 To smirk.

22 Japanese gateway.

24 Alliances.

27 Opposite of loser.

29 To narrate.

32 Tennis fence.

34 Backbone.

36 Wrongful act.

38 Southeast.

40 Auto body.

42 Cleansing substance.

45 Free from dirt.

47 Slovak.

48 To acquire by labor.

50 Marbles.

53 To harden.

56 Three-toed sloth.

58 Mama.

60 Dad.